

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY NWR

30



30TH - ANNIVERSARY -- 2013 NWR IN AUSTRALIA -- 30TH ANNIVERSARY

NWR

NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER Australia



Special to be you

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Belgium	Menen	Qatar	Doha
Eire / Meath	Old Naven, Co Meath	South Africa	Johannesburg
France	Jonchery sur Vesle	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo
Netherlands	Soest in Baarn	United Kingdom Communications Coordinator & Overseas Liaison.	
Netherlands	Brielle		
New Zealand	Waipu		

NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER

National Women's Register is an International Organisation of women's discussion groups with members in Great Britain, Europe, Africa and Australia.

Each group provides its members with opportunities to participate in stimulating discussions, on a wide range of topics from the serious to light-hearted and non-domestic points of view.

The aims are to focus on a nominated subject through personal research and communal activities so that a better understanding and deeper knowledge can be gained and shared. Speakers who are expert in their particular field of endeavour are also invited to attend and address meetings.

The Eastern Suburbs Group thank everyone who contributed to this newsletter. We have received so many marvelous items with a range of genre which should entertain all our members.

We hope you get hours of pleasure reading the 2013 NWR Newsletter and delight from the creative works of our women.

NWR Conference 2014 Wollongong, 25th October

VENUE: The Chifley Hotel, Watersedge Room

TOPIC: ***Our Community: Getting it Together!***

The conference is aimed at featuring just a handful of people in our region who are taking care of the many and varied needs of those in our society who are doing it tough – the unsung heroes/heroines who quietly make such a difference physically, mentally and socially, in interesting and innovative ways. These same support systems may be alive and doing well in all the regions our NWR ladies live in. We may not have to look too far.

But wait... there will be more revealed over the coming months as far as incentives to come to Conference 2014.

Bev Shaw

THE HILLS GROUP

LO Report

In April we had an inspirational guest speaker who gave us an insight into the colours we should or should not be wearing. All the members enjoyed this discussion offering their own thoughts and comments. Catherine Preeo owns the company “2 define you” and she was armed with many pieces of accessories including scarves and jewellery and successfully showed us how to always put our “best foot forward”.

May saw the members participating in a book or movie review. This always proves to be a most stimulating meeting as many of our members are avid readers and are willing to share their books so that other members can enjoy them.

At our June meeting we had a guest speaker Belinda Grundy from the company “Senior Movers”. Belinda has a wealth of experience in this area and this proved to be a very informative and interesting meeting. The members gained a very valuable insight into the pitfalls and advantages of moving as one gets older. There are many services available so that the path when moving is considerably easier.

July saw us have a fun whist card night and in August we will be having another guest speaker Brian Powyer. Brian will be presenting a powerpoint presentation on Colonial artists and their works. The title of his presentation is Picturing Australia’s past.

Our forthcoming meetings also promise variety and extension of members. A trivia quiz night is happening in September and in October we are planning a cultural night. This could bring us anything but it will certainly be entertaining.

Many members are planning to visit Caloundra in October. This will be an exciting event filled with the renewal of friendships and much laughter.

Our wonderful year will close with our fantastic fun filled Christmas party and planning for an equally memorable year in 2014.

Christine Hardy LO

ILLAWARRA DAY GROUP

LO Report

It was good to get back into the swing of things with our first NWR meeting for the year in January. What better way to start than with a lively discussion on “Is Feminism Relevant in 2013?” It was agreed by all, that perhaps even more so today given the gains we’ve made previously were being eroded away at an alarming rate in the current economic climate.

Other topics include: Fashions from History, Lessons from Life and in March we had a guest speaker, Jodie Keast, who introduced us to the wonderful world of Social Media – Facebook, Blogs, Twitter – rather timely too, with Margaret setting up our Webpage and Blog. It will be great to follow other groups’ activities throughout the year.

Looking forward to a year of great reports and discussions, particularly our August Meeting which will be a discussion on –

Advanced Care Directive: In case of future incapacity, do we just expect our next of kin to make vital decisions? Is there an alternative? Lead by Zoe Smith.

I wish all our groups a year of good health and fine friendship.

Trish Copeland LO

We are now a smaller group having lost several members over the last few years for a number of reasons. As we all know it is difficult to find ladies to replace them but we have been fortunate to welcome Barbara Bryan to our ranks recently and are hoping that like existing members she will also come to enjoy all things NWR.

One of the topics this year was to discuss Barack Obama's book 'Dreams of My Father'. From the outset it was abundantly clear that opinions were going to be at the opposite ends of the spectrum. One would have to wonder at times if in fact we are reading the same book, or seeing the same film. But of course this is what discussion is about and a very meaty analysis ensued about the pros and cons of this man's life story who will now take a prominent position in American history as well as the world's political stage.

June we digressed from our normal discussion format and held a 'Royal Gala Dinner' in honour of the Jubilee Coronation year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This evening was a huge success due largely to our hostess Robyn Tait and the fact that all ladies rose to the occasion donning tiaras or pearls either of which being compulsory for entry to our soiree.

Gloves were also resurrected (remember when these were an essential part of our going out attire ladies) fur coats (yes even in Qld.) and the royal wave perfected. To commence dinner proceedings we sang God Save the Queen followed by the Royal Toast. Lots of fun and laughter followed as we participated in a quiz and had some fun with 'Celebrity Heads'. We were also asked to recollect our own personal royal memories and to bring along any memorabilia relevant to the topic.

Laminated place mats with photos of royal events or members, a flag was hung and we even had English flag serviettes. Table theme colours were of course red, white and blue. Each lady brought along something to share for the meal and a wonderful evening was had by all. It was unanimously decided that we needed to digress more often and break away from the normal discussion structure.

July 'Colour' was discussed - what is our favourite color and why. August meeting will simply be discuss a film we have seen recently.

September 'Going to the Dogs' Are dogs in epidemic proportions and are they becoming a problem to control?

October we will be celebrating '30 years of Conferences' for NWR and look forward to welcoming members to the Sunshine Coast for this weekend of fun and friendship.

Finishing our year we will be tackling 'Privatization by our Government'. Helen who is passionate about all things pertaining to government is our chairperson. Should be an informative and interesting discussion.

The year will by that stage be drawing to a close as we move towards Christmas celebrations and once again a rewarding year has been had by us all as we have participated in many aspects of what NWR is for us as a group.

Robynanne Bessell LO

EASTERN SUBURBS GROUP

LO Report

2013 has been a busy year for the Eastern Suburbs group of 29 members. Our February meeting was taken up with planning for the year and as usual the program has been diverse and stimulating. In March Libby Hathorn, a talented and popular author of poetry, picture books and young adult novels was our guest speaker. She entertained us with highlights of her literary career interspersed with readings of some of her favourite poems.



At our April meeting we gained a whole new perspective about 'Peace Through Tourism' when Gail Parsonage, President of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism, facilitated a lively discussion about

'PEACE'. We learnt that peace begins with the individual and we all have a role and responsibility to play in promoting peace when we travel.

In May we were amazed to hear about all the different services our local library provides FREE of charge to not only local residents but any person who wishes to join. Jane Moffat who has worked for Randwick City Library for 13 years helped us appreciate what a wonderful library we have at our disposal.

As many of us are now senior citizens who require glasses for reading we were interested to hear our guest speaker for June, Moria Gibson, speak on the intriguing topic 'Yoga for the Eyes'. Sue Perkins has written an enlightening article on the subject.

Our popular book night showed us that our members read just as many non-fiction books as fiction. A list of the books has been included in the magazine.

Each year we have a twinning meeting where we share a topic with the Grantham group in the UK. This year the theme was 'Significant Women of the 20th C'. Jane Miller who organised the night has written an interesting summary.

Our next meeting in September will give us an opportunity to get to know each other better when we showcase our hidden 'talents'. Who knows what will be revealed? Maybe an opera singer!

The October meeting will see Hazel Bromby, a member of the local Historical Society talk to us about a book published this year, 'Buried in Botany' – a Cemetery Comes Alive. Who knows what this will unearth!

In November another local identity Professor Veena Sahajawalla will tell us about her award winning invention 'green steel'. This process incorporates rubber and plastic in steelmaking.

During the year we have enjoyed extra social activities e.g. movies, play readings etc.

In March Caroline Parsons from Devon joined us on a day trip to Kiama where we enjoyed lunch with the ladies from Illawarra NWR. In September members of our group are having coffee with another UK visitor, Lynn Welsher.

Throughout the year we have enjoyed celebrating BIG birthdays with bubbly and cake and four of our members are looking forward to attending the NWR Celebration weekend on the Sunshine Coast in October.

Our final get together for the year is our Christmas dinner in December where we will celebrate another wonderful year of NWR.



Merryl Conn LO

ILLAWARRA EVENING GROUP

LO Report

Here we are into August 2013 and I keep feeling that the year has only just begun for NWR... maybe I'm just in denial that so much time has passed this year and I haven't done half of what I would have liked to do. It will be a race now to the finish line, before Christmas is on us again. Anyway, back to what our Illawarra Evening Group has been up to since May.

May brought us together to talk about Art – from Renaissance to Contemporary and this was definitely one of our most interesting nights this year. The enthusiasm of everyone, bringing along picture examples of their favourite artists and their creations, whether in paintings or sculptures, was so interesting. We watched a DVD of Monet and his home and garden which was dear to the heart of one of our ladies who saw it all for herself some years ago. Another lady in our group proudly brought along photos of the work of an upcoming local artist, who happens to be her nephew and is doing extremely well with his contemporary artworks, far and wide.

June was a book review. Each lady gave her critique of a book she had read that had made an impact. The interesting point was that a number of the authors were Australians who were selling their stories, fact or fiction, of life with an Aussie “background”, and were making it good on the home front and overseas. There was quite a mix of what we like in reading – murder mysteries, a bit of romance but most of all a credible story with a worthwhile plot, especially those that tell of human struggle and survival.

July brought lively discussion about Evolution of family attitudes and values - from generation to generation. The one point of consensus was that things have certainly changed. The points of difference were whether some change was for the better for our families or not. Much food for thought!

August – last Wednesday the topic for discussion was Lucky Numbers – for us and the significance in other countries of certain numbers. Strangely... the LO came along with her favourite colour and the significance!! I wondered why everyone was looking a bit oddly at me. So... we had a bit of both... colours and numbers. It turned out to be a good discussion, pity about the LO being off with the fairies!

September through to November will include a night at the Movies, either at the theatre or a DVD night. We will “link” with our Twinning NWR group in Nantwich, UK, again to share a topic and discussion points and we may have a games night to finish 2013 to push our boundaries to find out whether we are team players or like to compete as a “stand alone”. After that... it will be Christmas dinner again for our December meeting! Yes, Santa's not too far away!

In the meantime three of us from the evening group are getting excited about our trip to Caloundra to join in the celebrations of 30 years of NWR conferences. Up, up and away!!

Bev Shaw LO

VALE DEL MACKNESS

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Del Mackness in March 2013 after being ill for some years.

Del was a wonderful asset to NWR. She was LO for Sutherland in 1998 and again in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 and also served as Vice National Organiser in 1999 and as National Organiser in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

During her time as National Organiser Del visited most of the groups at least once to keep in touch. She also made lots of contacts with overseas groups including the UK, Zimbabwe and South Africa. When we had overseas visitors in Sydney Del would always try to arrange a get together. She was an extremely organized person with good communication skills and was always very dedicated and hard working in her roles as NO and LO.

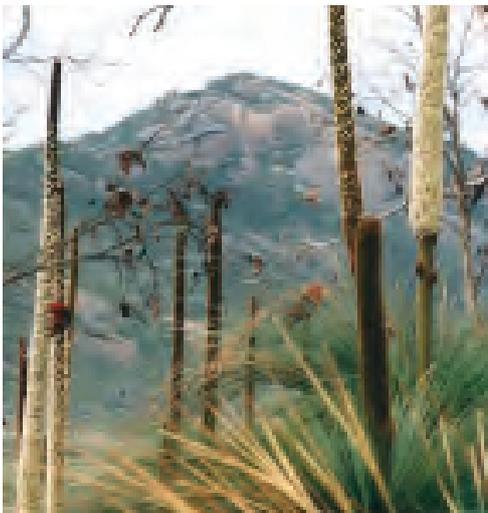
Del's warm personality and enthusiasm for NWR will always be remembered and appreciated.

Desert Oak

Tall and grand will I be
By one hundred and three,
Widespread limbs
From a broad, straight trunk.
Still, graceful and warm
To withstand any storm
I will stand mighty
And strong for all.

'twas from minute beginnings
Our family did spread
Winged seeds from a cylindrical cone.
Desert wind blown
To the dry, dusty ground,
Then moistened with dew
All around.

Alison Smith, Illawarra Day



Xanthorrhoea

A porcupine head-dress
Adorns my strange shape
Long blue-grey leaves
So distinctive, all gape,
Trunks lightly covered
With a fine needled cape.

Many who view me
Are quite unaware
Of the might and the strength
That lies hidden in there
To withstand strong winds,
Fierce fire and not leave me bare.

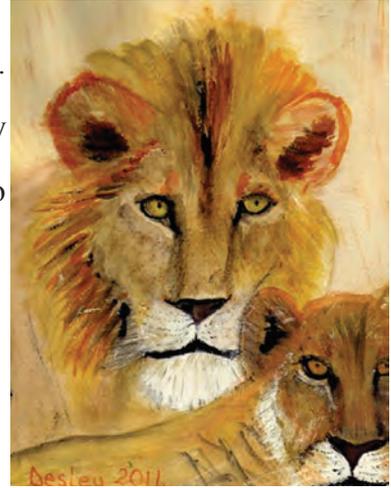
Fourteen years have I grown
Standing alone
Though, not far from my sisters nine.
Tall and slender are we
Perhaps metres three
Looking graceful and slender and fine.

Our beauty remains
After fire burns through
Giving birth to metre tall flowers
Creamy-white, nectar-filled,
So attractive to see with
Myriads of birds at all hours.

Alison Smith, Illawarra Day

Genesis Paint

I retired to the Sunshine Coast seven years ago. That is when I joined NWR and at the same time an artist friend introduced me to water paints. I was hooked! I had won an art prize at school; then went nursing, got married, had children and immigrated. With the economic downturn, my husband went back to work, leaving me time to explore my passion. I have tried painting anything and everything. I disagree with anyone who says it's an expensive pastime as I have spent very little. I have enjoyed my local library for their books and DVD's and my daughter, who gave me my first subscription to an art magazine.



A few years ago I felt confident enough to try and paint some African animals. I grew up in Kenya so they are close to my heart. My lions came out well! We had them professionally framed and they have a prominent place in my home. Others I frame myself. I use inexpensive water paint papers that fit in ready to buy frames.



I have enjoyed sharing my paintings with family and friends scattered across the world via the internet. A friend's photo of bluebells inspired me to paint them; she saw it and wanted to commission me, but I paint because I love it! I painted her houseboat Kyatina (Kya - which means house in Zulu). It was a new turning point as the pressure was on me to get it right. She was thrilled, which made me happy. Many gifts of paintings, bookmarks, and special cards have been given away over the years.

I find painting relaxes me and I look at things differently now. I find shadows and sunlight on everything. I have so much still to learn and to paint but I am having fun on the way.



Desley, Sunshine Coast

Hilary

Hilary nestled into the curve of the smooth sandstone rock that jutted out from the cliff overlooking the most beautiful part of the bay. This was her place, where she had always come to solve her problems. She liked nothing more than to tilt her head slightly and gaze languidly out to sea to watch the waves as they tumbled one after the other in a never ending forgiving rhythm. Occasionally a wisp of the finest spray would tease her lips or the dark shadow of a ship way out on the horizon would beckon her to come aboard.

Sunrise on the beach was her special time. It had such a private and secretive feel about it. She loved to be the first person to leave footprints in the wet sand as the tide ebbed, and to walk back over them later knowing that no-one else had been there. She had never forgotten that morning all those years ago, when she



had decided to borrow extra time and explore the sandstone cliff at the end of the long beach. It was then that she had discovered nature's little curved seat carved into the yellow rock. It had immediately become hers. It was her place where she could dream her most private dreams and solve her most difficult problems. Hilary could not count the hours she had spent there in the past, but now those hours seem to be gathering momentum. She knew she was there much longer, much longer than when the children were young. In those days her time away was limited. There was always something she needed to do, or places she needed to be. But more so, someone was always looking for her, either one of the children, or Tom, so she had jealously guarded her secret place.

Now, Hilary found herself coming to her rock more and more often because she was worried about herself. She knew something was not as it should be and she needed time alone to try to work out what was happening to her. Alone, she thought to herself. How strange that I can only feel truly

alone at my rock when I have every room in my house to myself. But she knew that she could not think in those rooms like she could when she sat and overlooked the water in the bay. The water was her solace. Her unquestioning, faithful friend. The rooms in the house all held memories which came crowding in and suffocated her thoughts.

She remembered how she had missed the children when they had left home. At first she used to gently open their bedroom doors and carefully touch the small treasures that had been left behind on shelves and occasionally look longingly at the yellowing posters on the walls.

She remembered how she and Tom had struggled to accept their empty nest and how she had struggled even more when he had died so suddenly. She thought of those days of numbness as she had packed his things and her girls had taken them away. "It's better mum," they said. You need to

make a new life for yourself now." How could she make a new life? Tom was her life. Tom had always been her life.

But today it was not about Tom or the children or rooms or memories. Today it was about herself. Hilary was worried. She knew she was for getting things, more and more things. She wrote shopping lists as she had always done and then when she needed them she couldn't find them. She found herself not knowing the name of the day or the date and worst still her children's names. Most frightening, was the day last week when she had driven to the shopping centre and could not remember how to get home. It was just fortunate that she had recognised her neighbour getting into her car in the parking area and had been able to follow her.

Hilary had always prided herself on keeping her mind active. She had read copiously, attended courses and insisted that she used and understood the latest technologies. She had always been the one to organize the family financial affairs and never forgot a birthday. But she was truly upset to think that she

could not remember how to get back to the home that she had lived in for over half a century. She had thought about it for a week now and could clearly remember the feeling of dread that had come over her when she put the keys in the ignition and then couldn't remember which way to go.

She was pleased that her girls phoned her regularly, but she hadn't told any of them when they spoke to her that week about her little mishap. Not only was she afraid to tell them and cause them concern, but sometimes she could not work out who was phoning her. She knew their voices, but names and places seem to be eluding her. Not always, but more and more so as each day passed.

"Thank goodness," she thought to herself as she sat watching the waves roll gently into the shore that morning, "I can still find my rock."

Hilary's neighbour, Mrs Lawson, had lived next door for many years and had begun to notice since Tom had passed away that Hilary was acting a little strangely. During the last few months she had watched her neighbour going to the beach much earlier than usual and sometimes not returning until well after sunset. She thought Hilary was looking thinner and not as well kept as she had always been, but last week something happened to make her feel really concerned. When returning to her car in the shopping centre car park Mrs Lawson saw Hilary getting into her car. Then she noticed that Hilary got out again. When she waved to her, she thought Hilary had looked at her blankly, and had then smiled briefly before getting back into her car. Mrs Lawson was sure Hilary had followed her out of the car park and all the way home.

She worried about this all week. Something wasn't quite right. She needed to phone one of Hilary's daughters. "Well yes, no," the girls hadn't really noticed anything strange about their mother. She had always liked to go for walks and sometimes she would go for a little longer than she should. Yes, they had noticed that she mixed their names up lately but she often did that when she was calling them as children so they hadn't been overly concerned. No, they didn't know anything about the shopping centre episode. They had all been very busy lately and no-one had been to visit for a while so they had just made phone calls and

everything seemed to be fine. Perhaps they should come down in the morning."

Mrs Lawson thought she would keep an eye out for Hilary the next morning in case the girls arrived and found their mother was not at home. She would be able to tell them what time her neighbour had left and which way she had gone. She wished she wasn't in this position but she was and the least she could do was to watch quietly in the background.

Even though Mrs Lawson was up much earlier than usual and kept her eyes constantly on her front window she didn't see Hilary go by. Good, thought Mrs Lawson she should be at home when her daughters arrive.

Just before morning tea time she heard a car pull up. She watched as the girls went up to their mother's front door. She watched as they went inside. Her worst fear. Hilary was not home. She answered the knock on her front door. She looked at the girls' worried faces. "No, she hadn't seen their mother. She had watched carefully since very early that morning but Hilary had not gone by. I think something is very wrong girls. You need to look down at the beach because I think that is where you will find her."

Hilary's daughters followed the evenly made footsteps along the wet sand all the way to the end of the long beach. They knew where to look because as children they had discovered their mother's secret, but had promised never to tell. They knew it was something she needed to do without them and they had kept it as a family secret forever. Craning their necks, their eyes searching backwards and forwards along the cliff's edge, until they recognised that familiar spot where they knew they would find their mother. Yes, there she was, nestled gently into her rock. Drawing closer they could see her head was tilted towards the horizon and on her lap she was cradling the jacket she had remembered to take with her. The gentle sea breeze seemed to whisper words they knew well, "Always take your jacket girls, it gets cold on the beach after sunset." They knew then that she had been there all night and something was very wrong indeed.

Susan Smith, The Hills Group

CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS DURING A X-COUNTRY SKIING JAUNT

Rob and Ali decided to x-country ski to Blue Lake. They took the over-snow transport to Charlotte Pass. The sky was blue with some fragmented cloud cover. The village looked picturesque nestled in the basin with a much better snow cover than 10 days previous! We met three other skiers on their way to the lake.

Once past the lookout the weather looked to be a little ominous. Was it simply the mist rising from the western side or was it a definite front approaching? We decided to venture further. The mist (cloud) seemed to come and then disappear. The three fellow skiers all set off straight down to the Snowy River; one successfully telemarking, the others with various types of telemark and snow-plough turns with a few head plants and side-slides!

'Trak' skis were not designed to turn in soft powdery snow. The absence of any metal edge made it virtually impossible for us to display any turning prowess. But the long traverses were simply wonderful. We made our way slowly down to the Snowy. A hare scurried across the open slope to the safety of the bushes. The chimney stack of the ruined Foreman's Hut stood alone as a reminder of days before the Kosciuszko National Park was established.

We crossed the Snowy at Foreman's Crossing, the Park's directives to the summer walkers still visible. Our three 'companions-in-purpose' were well on their upward climb of the 'Lakes Walk', but the clouds were gathering on the horizon. We



wondered how far we would be able to continue. From the first rise we saw the three disappearing into the cloud. Our decision was instant and we turned at that point. There was little reason for venturing further as the main object of the trip was to SEE Blue Lake, not just know that it was down there 'somewhere'.

We enjoyed more long traverses towards Club Lake Creek to view the many overhanging cornices. We then futilely practised telemark turns down toward Foreman's Chimney. We had seen the ruins on many occasions but had never actually stood beside it. It was big enough to stand in and take shelter, although we hoped that we never had to resort to that!



The climb up to Charlotte's Lookout didn't seem as arduous as first envisaged. From the top we looked back to see the other skiers approaching the Snowy on their return. Charlotte Pass Village was now enshrouded. Sandwiches were a welcome respite. Once on our way again at 1pm – only two hours had elapsed since the start – we were on our way down to Johnnies Plain to escape the blistering wind and snow which was following us.

A ski-doo was making tracks for the X-C 5km race which was to be held at Charlotte's that afternoon. No amount of coaxing would encourage us to enter the race that day! We skirted Sugarloaf and once again enjoyed the downhill run to Spencer's Creek.

Incredibly, by the time we crossed Betts Creek the sky was clearing, coats were removed. The new track to the north of Guthrie's Creek was better than trudging up the road to Guthrie Bridge! From the Eyre T-bar at Perisher Gap we followed the creek course down to the Terminal.

A welcome cup of hot chocolate in the Centre with a chat to Lucy and Alan, Marcella, Jenny and Richard who had all returned from skiing at Blue Cow – Guthega, was all that was required before setting off for Smiggins via Piper's Gap. The late afternoon shadow was cast over Smiggins making the final descent a little hard to negotiate – the snow was crusty and icy.

All in all, it was a good day.

Alison Smith, Illawarra Day

White Water Rafting down the Zambezi

White water rafting is an exhilarating sport. The rapids of the Zambezi river just below the Victoria Falls provide the best full, one day rafting experience in the world. The ride is classified grade 5 - extremely difficult, long violent



rapids, steep gradients, with big drops.

The Zambezi river is almost a mile wide where it drops three hundred metres over the Victoria Falls into a narrow gorge with only one exit; all the water flows out in a pounding rush through this one narrow gap

Zambezi River below the Victoria Falls.

This diagram shows the gorges winding 24km through the bush to where the river flows into Lake Kariba. Each rapid has its name clearly marked so you can anticipate its worth.

There is one spot where the rail and road bridge leaps from Zimbabwe to Zambia. For the next 24km the river is up to 60m deep, flowing through zig zagging narrow gorges with sheer steep walls covered in jungle like dense green growth. The current is fast and strong, the water tumbling over the rocks forms rapids and swirling whirl pools.

To reach the water you first climb down through the trees and undergrowth, down, a steep gravel path, some steps, down a ladder, down again and finally the sandy edge of the great river. You board your rubber dinghy and go for a practice run. You learn to do 'high sides' where everybody leans to the right or left to keep the dinghy upright in the choppy water. The rules are strict, wearing a wet suit, life jacket and crash helmet is compulsory.

You are instructed on how to cope when you are tossed out into the river – you must keep away from any rocks and wait to be picked up; if you get sucked into one of the whirlpools, you will be sucked under, round and round and round and hopefully it will spit you out before your lungs burst!

Fifteen dinghies set off one by one, each captained by an experienced African guide. The first of the rapids is called The Stairway to Heaven; safely through that, the next one is more scary, The Devil's Toilet Bowl; your dinghy overturns, you get dumped in the swirling water, you panic when you realise that you are being swept along in a whirl with no control over where you go. In a few minutes the dinghy has been righted and you are hauled unceremoniously back in to face the next ordeal.

After a couple of hours you break for lunch in a calm corner of tranquil water where the walls of the ravine are just as steep and the sun can hardly penetrate. A picnic has been prepared, there are tables loaded with sadza [maize meal] and schebo [vegetables] set out beneath the canopy of the shady trees.

You loll around digesting the food and swap stories of near calamities. Your guide is a dark skinned, muscular young man with a touch of the exotic, he has his eye on the blonde Danish girl who is flirting with every hunky looking man that gives her a second glance.

Off you go again, smoothly negotiating the next couple of frothy rapids, then suddenly your dinghy plunges over a two metre fall and you are all out in the water again, swirling along and waiting to be picked up. Somebody grabs you and dumps you back into the boat - 'Now hold on, this is going to be a dangerous one!' You grip the safety handles, adrenalin pumping through your veins, the dinghy slews to the side, scraping through a rocky narrows and shoots down a cleft, you realise you are screaming in terror? Or is it delight?

Finally you reach the disembarkation point, exhilarated, your muscles taunted from the exertion. Now you have to climb back up the gorge side – up and up the steep sandy path; some people need to be hauled from rock to rock. You stop to catch your breath and are astounded when the guides pass you at a trot, dinghy on their shoulders, bounding up the cliff like mountain goats!

At the top you collapse in a heap, legs like jelly, gratefully accepting a long cold glass of amber liquid - and you smile!

It was exhilarating, it was stupendous, you feel triumphant - and your smile just gets wider and wider - you can't wait to do it again.

Carole Aveley, Brisbane West

LIFE EXPLAINED

Life explained – in case you hadn't figured it out already.

One day, God created the dog and said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years."

The dog said: "That's a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten?" So God agreed.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said, "Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty year life span." The monkey said: "Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog did?" And God agreed.

On the third day, God created the cow and said, "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years." The cow said: "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. How about twenty years and I'll give back the other forty?" And God agreed again.

On the fourth day, God created man and said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy you life. For this, I'll give you twenty years." But man said: "Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty years okay?" "Okay," said God, "you asked for it."

So, that is why for our first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

Life has now been explained to you.....

Trish Crimean, Illawarra Day Group

'A' IS FOR....AN NWR MEETING IDEA

This topic requires a small amount of preparation and a minimum of research, but is fun and informing.

At the preceding meeting each member is allotted a letter of the alphabet. This can be done by drawing letters from a hat or allocating them one by one in alphabetical order around the room.

No-one gets to choose their letter or swap it.

Then the discussion topic is chosen—preferably only one topic, but it can be two.

For instance: education, history, politics, environment, etc

At the following meeting each person will have some information on a word associated with the chosen topic and beginning with their allocated letter. This ensures that there is no replication of information.

This idea worked well and it was suggested that it be incorporated in our annual program. We'd chosen food and health, which initiated many questions and a lot of discussion on such words as antibiotics, backs, eggs, quinoa, etc.

Michele Middendorp, The Hills

THE APRON

Remember making an apron in Home Ec? Remember Home Ec? If we have to explain 'Home Ec' you may not want to read this..... I just don't have the energy to explain anymore. Read on.

The History of 'Aprons' – I don't think our kids know what an apron is.

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few and because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons required less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the autumn, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

REMEMBER: Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw.

Nowadays, the government would go crazy trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron.

I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron – but love.....



Pat Phelan, Illawarra Day Group

Lists

Lists. Do you make lists? Yes I do too. Shopping lists so I don't forget half the things I want and I have lists of birthdays and contacts and who to send Christmas cards to. Yes and my diary which I guess is a sort of list. So I guess I am almost a listless BUT seriously do you have a phobia about lists. I am sure my sister does (but don't tell her!). She writes lists and then she writes lists about her lists and her main delight in life is crossing things off the list. Really! But she doesn't have time to do anything because she is so busy making lists and then when she does manage to cross something off the list she goes into such ecstasies of delight she doesn't get anything done for the rest of the day! She has so many things on her list she worries how busy she is and hardly has time to talk on the 'phone because she must go and look on her list and see what she has to do for the rest of the day!

Actually I am getting worried now thinking about it because maybe it runs in families. Looking around my desk here I have a notebook with a list of sayings and oh yes, one of the books I have read, one of the films I have seen and want to see, one of the things I need to know on the computer and goodness knows what the other three note books are for I daren't look. I also have one of the projects I need to do and not much is crossed off and my God one of all the books I read to the children (and they are all over 40 now). Heaven help me I must have a phobia about lists also!

Di Sankey, Kalamunda WA

Piranha Fishing in the Amazon

Suppose the first question is “Why would you?” They are small, not very tasty and get put back anyway. But there we were on the Ucayali River in the Amazon rainforest and what an opportunity. And what’s not to like about going into a mosquito invested backwater in the dark and trying to get ‘up close and personal’ to flesh-eating monsters? “Oh yes”, I heard myself saying, “I’d love to go.” Ok, put on rainforest gear (long trousers, shirts, boots, etc), then the safety gear (well at least a life jacket), then the mosquito spray (don’t forget your face, mustn’t give the little b’s a sporting chance). At least I wouldn’t be in the water – as long as my canoe didn’t capsize.

So off we went, gliding silently through the swamps, watched by pairs of eyes, usually caimans. We baited our lines by torchlight and threw them in. There were tugs almost immediately, but the water was so murky it was hard to see what was hooked. Landing your catch, without up-tipping the canoe, was quite another problem. When I did catch one (see photo) my face says it all – surprise, disbelief, horror and panic. And, of course, I just had to check those teeth for myself: it’s true, needle sharp and plenty of them.



Back on the mothership and a call from the Captain to assemble in the lounge. A prize for the best catch of the night and, guess what, yours truly had won the cup! It might not look much but it was the biggest!

Phil Waite, Eastern Suburbs Group

I AM HERE!

Harry Potter apparently has not yet realised that his invisibility cloak is missing (no sighting of a reward being offered), but I know it is. I know because I have it. Sometime ago, although I have only just now come to recognise it, it mysteriously found its way to me and I have been afflicted with it ever since. It usually functions as it is meant to, but thankfully it is occasionally temperamental.

On my daily early morning walks I come across quite a few other walkers and joggers, with and without their canine companions, plus school children and bus commuters patiently waiting on the footpaths. This is where my invisibility cloak comes into play. I become invisible--no-one appears to see me, I just don’t exist. My nod or smile or ‘good morning’ greeting is ignored, as if it never occurred. All I see are blank faces.

Often there is another result of my concealed existence. If two people are coming towards me I am the one to move off the footpath to let them pass. I suppose as I am invisible I can’t expect them to keep to the left and allow me my share of the path.

Fortunately the cloak can be capricious at times and I can be quite surprised, startled even, at receiving a nod or smile in response to mine and am at least reassured that I do indeed exist.

As I haven’t sighted a ‘cloak lost’ advertisement anywhere, I feel I should contact Harry directly to (gladly) return his invisibility cloak. I do not want it; however I rather fancy his Firebolt broomstick.

Michele Middendorp, The Hills

Centenary Celebrations

This year Canberra is celebrating 100 years with numerous events of all kinds being planned throughout the year. A new addition to the ACT is the National Arboretum Canberra. This 250 hectare parkland was created on land devastated by the 2003 Canberra bush fires. There are around 40,000 rare or symbolic trees planted in about 100 forests from over 100 countries. Now is the best time to see this new arboretum whilst the trees are still young because you can also enjoy the beautiful surrounding views. Areas of the grounds have been terraced and future major events will be held at this venue.



NSW will also be celebrating the Bicentenary of the Crossings of the Blue Mountains from 1813 to 1815. We moved to Katoomba in February so we have been fortunate to attend most of the events planned so far. The opening ceremony in February at Echo Point in pouring rain impressed us mainly because the event was not cancelled because of the weather and the area was packed out. These mountain people don't let the weather change their plans and spoil their fun.

It rained again during segments of the re-enactment of the Blue Mountains Crossing. Descendants of the explorers Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth took turns during the walk following the footsteps of the explorers who left St

Mary's on 11 May 1813. At Wentworth Falls, on one leg of the walk, we attended a dinner and we were fortunate to sit at a table with the organizers of this event and also some descendants of the explorers. Emotions were high despite the conditions and difficulties they encountered organizing this event. The next morning the party walked a few laps around Leura Mall and up Katoomba St as a side trip for the locals, in the mist, in clothing of the times, it was quite a sight to see.

The Carrington Hotel in Katoomba is also hosting several events for the Bicentenary. We were on the rooftop of the Carrington enjoying food and wine to view the Flyover of 70 aircraft, the largest civilian flyover in Australian history. The two hour aerial show included RAAF Roulettes, Hercules, Seahawks, Gyrocopters and everything in between. There were 11 public viewing sites across the Blue Mountains and from the rooftop we could see the planes diving in the Jameson Valley around the Three Sisters then over our heads towards Blackheath. We wondered what the tourists were thinking. A great day out with many of the guests at the Carrington dressed in vintage and war time uniforms dancing to bands playing music of the past. Three entertainers in uniform sang songs originally performed by the Andrew Sisters. We are so delighted that the Carrington Hotel was saved and restored in the 1990's. Events held here have put the life back into Katoomba. The Carrington will be having its 100th birthday this year.



Queanbeyan will be 175 years this year and Goulburn 150 years. There might be many other milestone celebrations NWR members know about. Our beautiful "young" country, Australia is finally acquiring a bit of history.

Helen Jones, Independent member

CATHERINE THE GREAT

Popular perceptions of Catherine the Great, or Catherine II of Russia are coloured either by the historical view or the Hollywood characterization, so that it is not unusual to hear of her as being a great and progressive ruler, an autocrat with few redeeming features, or a scandalous sex crazy harridan. Her contemporaries Voltaire and Diderot described her variously as “Star of the North”, “Minerva”, “Admirable autocrat, conqueror, Peacemaker and Legislator.” Her people called her Mother Tsarina of all the Russians, Mother of her country and people, Catherine the Wise, Enlightened Despot.

She was a clever politician, intelligent and active. She fostered, developed and built on the political and economic development initiated by Peter the Great. However, she was not Russian, and her name was not Catherine. She was born SOPHIA AUGUSTA FREDERICKA in STETTIN, POMERANIA, on MAY 2, 1729. Her father was CHRISTIAN AUGUSTUS of ANHALT – ZERBST, one of the dozens of petty princelings in 18th century Germany.



The family was VERY POOR, so that to keep up appearances, the cost of providing robes of state meant that the household was chronically short of sheets and linen. Sophia's mother was JOHANNA ELIZABETH of HOLSTEIN-GOTTORP, thus related to the house of Holstein which had a claim to the SWEDISH throne. The family had a strictly pious Lutheran background and numbered Bishops and Abbesses amongst its members. JOHANNA was married at 15 to her prince who was 27 years older. She had a talent for making the most of the family connections, and made a yearly visit to the court of Frederick the King of Prussia. She was an expert in court etiquette and passed this on to her daughter. SOPHIA however lacked loving attention from her mother. She was raised by French Governesses and spoke fluent French, as did all aristocratic families. She also loved French literature, and so she was exposed to the new ideas then stirring in France, which ultimately led to the French Revolution. Her father thought her an angel and loved her dearly. But being a professional soldier he was rarely home. So Sophia had a great hunger for love and great bitterness at being merely tolerated by her mother.

SOPHIA recognized early that as she was lively and tomboyish, and extremely plain, her best chance of making her mark was through her intelligence. She was tall and slim, with a high forehead and attractive dark blue eyes, and a ready wit. At ten years of age she met her second cousin at a family party. He was KARL PETER ULRICH of HOLSTEIN, heir presumptive to both the throne of SWEDEN and also of RUSSIA. He was a year older, small frail and sickly, and anything but well bred. He was shy, an orphan with no other company than that of his brutal and tyrannical tutors. It seems Sophia herself considered him as a possible future husband, and the possibility was not lost on her mother. Three years later her mother's aunt ascended the throne of Russia as Elizabeth I following a coup d'etat. As she was unmarried and childless, she designated Karl Ulrich as heir to the throne, to be

known as PETER FEODOOROVICH. Johanna immediately sent a portrait of Sophia to Russia. On the 1st January 1744, an invitation came for mother and daughter to visit. Her father was not included.

Sophia was barely 14 years old and never saw her loving father again. The trip took almost a month, by sleigh in mid-winter and was a fearsome ordeal. Upon arrival mother and daughter were miserable because the Russians were suspicious of foreigners. ELIZABETH was beautiful and vain. However, SOPHIA charmed her by her diligence in quickly learning the Russian language. She was betrothed to Peter on June 29 and began taking instruction in the orthodox religion. She adopted the name of Catherine. She was married on August 21, 1745, one and a half years after arriving in Russia. So the first step had been taken towards the throne.

But picture the marriage. Here we have two children, 15 ½ and 16 ½, not even playing at marriage. Their days were spent with toys and chatter and army games. Catherine had a sisterly regard for Peter, and felt sorry for him, but when with increased supervision their young friends were banned, she was thrown more and more on her own resources. She turned back to her great loves reading and meditating. She sent for French novels, moved on to Montesquieu and Voltaire, reading which helped shape her political thoughts and actions. Thus for seven years the relationship which was not a real marriage drifted on. Elizabeth was not unobservant, and urgently needing an heir, introduced a courtier, SERGEI SALTYKOV, to Catherine. She immediately fell head over heels in love, though Sergei was inattentive, arrogant, dissipated and extremely stupid. At the same time Elizabeth ordered Peter's keepers to ensure an heir. He finally lost his innocence to a certain Mme de Groot at 24. It is not suggested he was impotent, though he was possibly sterile. The affair with Saltykov did not result in pregnancy, although Catherine had a miscarriage 3 months after the affair began. But life became hell from this time. Prudence and duty meant she had to endure life with a man she did not love. Saltykov also did not satisfy her need for love. However, on September 20, 1754 she gave birth to a son, Paul Petrovich. This event, nine years after the marriage, gave rise to a jealous outburst from Peter. Elizabeth meanwhile, immediately dispatched Saltykov to Sweden.

One would like to think that after her experience Catherine would have been a loving mother, but in fact she was not. The child simply represented hope, a tool, a threat and a weapon. She gave no thought to the child's real interest or his needs. Finally Elizabeth removed him from Catherine's care, and he became a sickly toy of the court, to be coddled and pampered. Once more Catherine was left alone more and more. She and Peter now lived in almost open enmity, each conducting affairs. When Elizabeth became ill Catherine intrigued to keep Peter from the throne, and upon Elizabeth's recovery she found herself in semi-official disgrace, slighted in public by her husband and ignored by the court. It says something for her charm and persistence that she was able to achieve a reconciliation with Elizabeth so that plans for the accession of her son PAUL to the throne was assured.

When on the death of Elizabeth, Peter ruled as Peter 111, he immediately upset all except the nobles. In particular he made enemies of the Orthodox Church when he confiscated the wealth of the church. Six months later he publicly insulted Catherine at a banquet. Finally, when he announced plans for war with Denmark, the unpopular Peter was toppled by a coup d'état, and Catherine was proclaimed Empress. Peter was assassinated 8 days later, and within three months Catherine was crowned Empress, on September 22, 1762. It had taken 18 years from the time of her arrival in Russia, and she was 33 years old. How much of her character and her subsequent actions can be directly attributed to her childhood experiences and the bitterness of her marriage is a matter for conjecture. But it is certain that she was a woman with a fine brain, a strong will, and a burning ambition. She ruled for 34 years and achieved much for her country of adoption and her name is linked with those other great women who ruled in their own right such as Cleopatra and Elizabeth 1 of England.

My information is mostly taken from the book, Catherine the Great, a biography of the Empress of all the Russias, by Zoe Oldenbourg. Her research has been thorough, and her sources are well documented, so that further insight into this remarkable woman is possible to the interested reader.

Lorraine Dudai, The Hills

Eastern Suburbs Book List 2013

One meeting each year we talk about books we have read and enjoyed. It is always a popular night.

South of Broad by Pat Conroy - Set in Charleston, South Carolina it has a unique cast of sinners and saints, spanning from their senior high school years across two decades – from 1960 counterculture through to the 1980s, to the backdrop of Charleston's dark legacy of racism and class divisions.

The White Divers of Broome: the true story of a fatal experiment by John Bailey – In 1912 Broome was as much Asian as Australian. The Federal Government was in the deep grip of the “White Australia Policy” when twelve British Royal Navy-trained divers were sent to Broome to master the perilous art of pearl shell diving, and overcome the Asian stranglehold on the pearling industry.

For Love of a Rose by Antonia Ridge – Memoir. The book traces several generations of three families whose passion for the rose unites them. Through marriage and work together they created the famous Peace rose which became known throughout the world at the end of WWII.

The Daughters of Mars by Tom Keneally. The author draws you in and pins you in as the Durance sisters and their fellow nurses face the full gamut of war, from Gallipoli up to the Western Front.

Quartet by Heather Refetoff – A two-part cross-cultural novel – The first part explores the plight of a fit, healthy wife of a man suddenly disabled in midlife. Part two is about a love affair of a thirties-something English-rose-divorcee and a mid-life-crisis Wall Street escapee.

The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards – On a winter night in 1964 a blizzard forces Dr David Frost to deliver his own twins: the first born is perfectly healthy, the second has Dawn's syndrome. He makes a split second decision that will haunt all of their lives forever.

The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson – Allan Karlsson, the eponymous centenarian, with unlikely sprightliness hops out of the window of his old people's home one afternoon, and does a runner. This romp takes in all the major events of the 20th century.

Round the Tea Totum: When Sri Lanka was Ceylon by David L Ebbels – This is the personal story of six years spent as an assistant manager on the plantations in the beautiful and historic island of Ceylon.

A Lady Cyclist's Guide to Kashgar by Suzanne Joinson – A colonial-era travel combined with a modern meditation on where we belong and how we connect in the world.

A Death in the Family: My Struggle, Book 1, by Karl Ove Knausgaard – The corpse in the book belongs to the author's father. The book is a Proustian exploration of the author's past, in which he creates a universal story of the struggles, great and small, that we all face in our lives.

Tin Dragons by John Biggs – A tale of revenge, romance and redemption in the tin mines of nineteenth century Tasmania.

St Petersburg : A History by Arthur L George and Elena George – This is a comprehensive narrative history of St Petersburg, from its foundation in a swampy war zone in 1703 to its leading role in overthrowing Soviet power and bringing Russia into the twenty-first century.

Solar by Ian McEwan – Ranging from the Arctic Circle to the deserts of New Mexico, this is a story of one man's greed and self-deception; a darkly satirical novel showing human frailty struggling with the most pressing and complex problem of our time. It is beautifully written.

Gunni, Eastern Suburbs

Life as a Retiree.

When I retired from full time work nearly ten years ago I thought life would be less hectic and gave myself a time frame of five years to finish all my half-finished craft projects. I would be lucky if a third of them is finished by now and some of these might have ended being tossed out.

I must admit I have not been idle with my hands as I have been blessed with five grandchildren since then and they have all received quite a substantial birth sampler within the first six months of their life. The last two were the hardest with two babies born one month apart and with eyesight not quite as good as it used to be, the last ones were finished with the help of a magnifying glass. I have also taken up a bit of patchwork, still love my knitting, but those half-finished projects still lay idle.

I ended up doing a bit of casual work in my job for three years after I officially retired, and this was good as it eased me slowly into retirement. By then my husband had been retired for a few years and we have enjoyed some wonderful trips all around the world from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The more you travel, you realise just how many wonderful places there are to visit in the world and how little time you might have left. But not only overseas is there interesting places to see, Australia is also full of them and these last couple of years we have been lucky enough to explore our own country, in fact tomorrow leaving for an inlands tour to Uluru, Alice Springs and Darwin to give us a small taste of the vast inland.

Back to retirement, that is when you are supposed to do all the things you couldn't do when you worked, perhaps sit about and read a book for half the day if so desired. You join clubs and get involved and all of a sudden you are busier than you ever was, how did you have time to work?

Lucky enough to have five grandchildren, but with none living close by, but you end up spending days at a time with them and its a wonderful chance to really bond with them. With both parents often working, there are times when you help as much as you can and you feel you are spending more time in the car than stationed in one place.

The closest grandchildren are nearly three hours away in the car and the furthest away right across the country. Have had to help out with both families at times and fly across to babysit, once even was on the way to the airport for the home trip when there was a last minute hitch and I ended up staying an extra few days. Earlier this year flew to Perth one day, babysat the next and then home the day after. Quite hectic, but at least you can sit back on the plane, get a cooked meal in front of you, with a glass of wine perhaps, and a book to read or catch up on the film you never got to see. Would I have it any other way? Not at all!! Have heard of the grandparents who fly to London to babysit, that would be quite an adventure.

Anne Innes, Illawarra Evening Group

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

There's an annual contest at Bond University, Australia, calling for the most appropriate definition of a contemporary term.

This year's chosen contemporary term was "political correctness."

The winning student wrote:

"Political correctness is a doctrine, fostered by a delusional, illogical minority, and rapidly promoted by mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of shit by the clean end."

Sue Perkins, Eastern Suburbs Group

Twinning Report -August 2013 Eastern Suburbs

The influence of women during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 11

We discuss a common topic with our NWR sisters in Grantham, UK once a year. Last year it was whether Bushrangers were greater heroes than Highwaymen. This year we endeavoured to look at New Elizabethan women - the impact of women during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 11 (**Grantham additions in bold purple**).

Here are some of our findings with some comparisons to the Grantham Group's findings where possible.

All groups had the topics two months ahead. The six women that we chose were from different spheres from medical, political and fiscal spheres. Ours were Edith Cowan (Perth feminist at the turn of the century), Julia Gillard, Germaine Greer, Catherine Hamlin [fistula fixer in Ethiopia], Linda Burney (Deputy State Leader and articulate Aboriginal speaker) and Christine Lagarde (International Monetary Fund CEO).

Grantham chose eleven women: **Claire Balding, Gaby Logan, Ellie Simmons from the world of sport and sports media; Maria Miller, Theresa May, Justine Greening, Theresa Villiers, Betty Boothroyd from the political sphere; Helena Kennedy and the Dagenham Women for their contributions to social justice; business women Harriet Lamb, Zaha Hadid and Kathryn Parsons; Lesley Brown, the mother of the first test tube baby and Princess Diana.** It was great to read and learn of their contributions and we perhaps had a more political slant with our one sportswoman Cathy Freeman not being discussed. We also did not look at women's role in the media. I realise compiling the report and trying to assess your women's contributions what amazing role models they were and are. All ours were Australian except Christine Lagarde.

It did make for an evening of lively discussion and lots of unknown facets of these women's personalities as well as their deeds coming to the fore. **Both groups** discussed the quota system. We generally thought in our somewhat chauvinistic society as demonstrated by the recent treatment of Julia G that more representation of women in key positions would help stop this type of treatment in future and therefore would not be a bad thing. Maybe in the UK there is more gentlemanly gracious behaviour on the surface anyway! This has to start here early in primary schools and later with girls being encouraged and included in executive shadowing programmes where girls in their final high school years go with a female executive and observe her for a few days. **Grantham group discussed positive discrimination, such as the Labour Party policy which significantly increased the number of women in the UK parliament. There were mixed opinions within the group as to whether or not quota systems were appropriate and some members felt that women should strive to get there on their own merit without a "helping hand".**

We felt in 100 years time the women below most likely to be remembered would be Julia Gillard and Germaine Greer. We were surprised nobody in your group did Queen Elizabeth.

I liked Grantham's final paragraph on Family life and work /life balance saying that family life is very different to that of a hundred years ago. **Grantham felt that families are more dispersed, many mothers now work full time and childcare has to be shared with others. Members asked the question - are stay at home mums now looked down upon by their working sisters for not having taken advantage of all the opportunities available to them? The group felt that Margaret Thatcher had not been a good role model in this respect. Couples in the UK nowadays have different expectations from life and there are many more opportunities available to them. They expect to own their own house, travel, have a car, watch sports and live entertainment, own the latest technology and so on.** It is obvious that families have changed since the 1940's and now we need two breadwinners to afford the lifestyle we have come to expect. In a way Germaine G was right in that economic trends have outstripped social changes.



Detailed summary notes on the two we thought would be remembered in 100 years- but who knows?!!

Germaine Greer

Known as a witty and whacky pot stirrer and we were pleased you had heard her speak a lot in your 'Q & A' sessions on UK TV

Early life: Born 20 Jan 1939 – war child in a dysfunctional family because of her post war traumatised father. She had a fraught relationship with her mother who was a dissatisfied housewife. She was brilliant and rebellious at school and fell in with the Push in Melbourne at University and later had a similar involvement at Sydney University.

She was known as a libertarian who hated sexual repression. She went to England and undertook postgraduate study and lectured there. Amongst her six books the *Female Eunuch* (1970) exposes strategies for redressing sex differences. Later she said she was prouder of her later publications but this is the one we all read. In this book she felt the nuclear family is repressive and highlights the female stereotypes which start early. Women's sex desires are repressed thru normal roles mapped out for women. Husband was the breadwinner- main job of women is his happiness- marriage a form of slavery. There are no easy answers but join in the struggle. Women need tireless self- discipline. For her romantic love was a myth.

"Orgasm better for your brain than anything else" is one of the quotes from her many books that we liked.

Today Greer enjoys debates and feels female audiences are articulate and feisty. One of the most important changes is the collapse of the patriarchal family which was triggered not by a book or social change but by economic circumstances.



Julia Gillard

Being PM will make it easier for subsequent women to be PM

She was the first woman to be Federal Labor leader and first female PM. She was born in Wales in 1961 and

by 1966 the family had migrated from Wales as the parents were recommended to come to a warmer climate for Julia's bronchial pneumonia.

She graduated BA LLB and joined the law firm Slater and Gordon and in late 1990's as a Victorian MP took on indigenous and health portfolios and became the first woman deputy leader in 2007 and later the 27th PM and formed a successful minority government in 2010.

Main problems she faced were creating unity in a minority government requiring working with Independent MP's. There were too many gender attacks and sexual abuse which undermined her political progress. There was a lack of respect for the position and her authority. She faced a lot of hostility both inside and outside her Party and from the media as a woman.

She was responsible for disability reforms that now paradoxically Rudd takes the kudos for. She saw through 500 different pieces of reform legislation.

What some called her majestic sorry speech to mothers in March this year over the forced adoption of children was followed by her having to contend with a destabilising leadership meeting in which her opponent did not declare himself.

Jane Miller, Eastern Suburbs Group

Fraser Island

There is a world famous treasure just off the coast of Queensland, Fraser Island, the largest sand island in the world. But it has so much more to offer than simply sand. There are wonderful forests of kauri pine and eucalypts, tropical vegetation, palms, ferns and staghorns, sparkling freshwater lakes, a variety of bird species, adventurous sand driving, and even whale watching in the right season. There are day trips from Hervey Bay, which would give you a fleeting impression of this World Heritage Listed destination. Or you could do as our family did, camp together in a sheltered campground metres from the beach, under a full moon, with the sound of the sea for your lullaby.

But there are many important details to be aware of. Close attention to tidal changes is imperative. The beach is fully driveable on firm sand at low tide, but soft sand at high tide is a hazard, and if caught you must wait twelve hours before you can safely move. The other standout consideration is the presence of the dingos, the purest form of the species, but which are under great stress. There is almost a feeling of paranoia concerning them, but we noted all the warning signs of dingo awareness, kept our children always closely supervised, kept our food well secured, our waste high up in a tree till it could be disposed of, and we never walked around with food in our hands. Certainly dingos visited our campsite in the night, but their tracks were the only evidence we saw.

More dangerous than these poor creatures were the many day trippers, in convoys of self-drive four wheel vehicles, with inexperienced drivers zipping to and fro all over the island, round blind corners or tearing up and down the beach like a race-track. Others arrived at all the scenic features in huge buses, with drivers who believe in the dictum, "I'm bigger than you, so get out of my way." So it was always wiser to avoid these cowboys.



Nevertheless, there is great enjoyment to be had in exploring this wonderful place, swimming in the sea, floating down fast running Eli Creek, examining the rusted remains of the wreck "Maheno" slowly disintegrating on the shore, reading about the fascinating history of the island. If you have never thought about it as a holiday destination, I urge you to put it on your list of future trips.

Lorraine Budai, The Hills Group



Lunch at Diathnes in July

FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS

My catch has been small

In fact, having landed only two males, both of the 'Aries' species, my lack of compliments substantially grew, so I have had to be content with my earlier catches.

I hooked my first in my late teens, on a very cold winter's morning, when to survive my walk to work, I donned my treasured, white fur (Doctor Zhivago) style, hooded hat. I felt warm and snuggly and when stepping outside I was entranced by my 'tunnel - vision' of gently falling snowflakes. This lovely vision did become slightly hazardous when crossing roads however, as I discovered when attempting to look 'right, left, right' my hood didn't! A full body turn body turn became necessary.

I arrived safely and stepped lightly up the stairs to my place of work. I was greeted with a cheery good-morning from 'old' Charlie, an English Dental Technician whose Laboratory ran off our Photographic Studio. (He also was a treasure.)

Later, over our morning tea break, in his Lab, my employer strode in, excited about the beautiful snowy morning. Old Charlie quietly spoke, and said, " I saw real beauty this morning too," looking over at me. " You in your snow-flake covered, fur hat." My under-reaction would not have made him realise, how much this little observation meant to me in my compliment starved world.

My second memorable compliment, in contrast, was on a hot summer's day on the occasion of my 50th Birthday. A lovely morning to soak in the local pool, I thought, as I slipped into the cool waters. Eventually I was joined by two young lads. The older of the two dived in, while the younger one watched, then when he surfaced, he pointed and retorted at him indignantly,

" You went right under that, that(he peered at me)that GIRL." Bless him, he too would never realise how his little words had boosted my 50 year old ego.

Caught in the stream of life ...

Irene Johnson, Sunshine Coast

NWR Yorkshire Visitor



Jenny Hornsey- middle right - NWR Yorkshire, UK
Lunching in Kiama with (L-R)Margaret Patterson,
Lyn Hazell, Alison Smith, Trish Crimean, Trish
Copeland

Jenny was holidaying in Kiama with her son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons. It was a perfect opportunity to meet, chat and exchange ideas. Following is an extract from Jenny's brief letter, as well as, a copy of her poem "Laughter is Therapeutic".

"We are organising a conference on 'Confidence' for 70 members – lots of interest so far. Just been to a day conference on the History of the east Riding of Yorkshire. I'm not really a history buff but was a very interesting day – one speaker made a sculpture of seven World War II pilots to commemorate 70 years – many were Australian and relatives regularly visit this site. Very moving. We also had an author and an actress who told us about the Suffragettes and wore the clothes of the time. Our local group has adopted your idea of coffee and biscuits first plus chat – then the meeting – everyone agrees that it's a great idea."

LAUGHTER IS THERAPEUTIC

Laughter is therapeutic – the ad took my eye
Our NWR said they'd give it a try
I arranged a workshop – a group of nine
Eager ladies to have a fun time.

We began with our names J for Jenny like jam
S for Sue she decided on Spam.
We all laughed a lot at the varies choice
This was for memory and breaking the ice

Posture came next – heads held high
Projecting the voice – we gave singing a try
Relaxation – all on the floor
Don't go to sleep – there's much much more.

The Alexander Technique – we did before lunch
Serious now this NWR Bunch
Once more smiling when the buffet was spread
“Laughter needs feeding I know” she said

Miming games we all had to guess
Mother and daughter got in a right mess!
Object description we really did well
And alphabet fun you don't have to spell

Role play came at the end of the day
Our characters acted with funny display
We laughed till the tears rolled down our cheeks
The best day out we'd had in weeks

Our actress performed – she really was good
A sketch for finale by Victoria Wood
We laughed and applauded – so do take our lead
Laughter is Therapeutic – Whitely ladies agreed!!

Jenny Hornsey, NWR Yorkshire, UK

IT'S IN THE GENES

Mum had black, curly hair,
And lovely olive skin.
She was four foot eleven.....
.....and thin!

Dad had hair of strawberry blonde,
And skin that never tanned.
Tall and thin with bright blue eyes,
And a love of sea and sand.

I've often wondered o'er the years
What genes they passed on down.
I'm freckles faced, with hazel eyes,
And hair that's mousey brown.

Then I had a hip replacement,
I was full of moans and groans,
To discover I'd inherited –
Very small bones !
Thanks Mum.

Trish Crimean, Illawarra Group



Mid year lunch

Phil Waite's item in Column 8

My kids and grandkids have just arrived from overseas to celebrate my 70 birthday. Presents included aprons with the following:

“Let's eat Grandma
Let's eat, Grandma
Commas save lives”

Do you know the famous misplaced comma story about the panda who enters a bar, has some food, pulls a gun on the barman and walks out. All because someone wrote “a panda is an animal who eats, shoots and leaves” instead of “eats shoots and leaves”.

Note: Column 8 is a regular feature in the Sydney Morning Herald

Submitted by Sue Perkins, Eastern Suburbs



Sculptures by the Sea Oct 2012

Ever wonder.....

Why do supermarkets make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their medicines while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front?



Why do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries – and diet coke?

Why do banks leave both doors wide open and then chain the pens to the counter?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavour, and dishwashing liquid is made with real lemons?

Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour.

Why do they sterilize the needle for a lethal injection?

You know that indestructible black box they have on planes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?

Why do they call what doctors do “practice.”

Why is “abbreviated” such a long word?

If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the Terminal?

Why? Good question.

Lorraine Budai, The Hills Group

A FAVOURITE PAINTING AND ITS ARTIST

In the small Victorian country town of Elmore, one night in 1924, Rose Hennessey developed a splitting headache, and walked into her bedroom to lie down for a while. Rose never walked again!

Rose was 33 years old, the mother of 4 small boys aged from a few months to 5 or 6, The doctor visited her at home the next morning when she was unable to get out of bed. She was taken to hospital, where she was diagnosed with poliomyelitis. The family were in fear for her life, as polio had been responsible for many deaths over the three decades since it was first found in Australia. Her legs were bound up tight in splints to stop them from becoming deformed by the crippling illness. That was about the only treatment they had. They couldn't do any more for her. She remained in hospital for about 2 years, and upon returning home, was bedridden for at least another year. She spent the rest of her life in a wheelchair, able to stand on one leg to get in and out of bed, and on to the toilet, but unable to walk.



Her brother-in-law built a set of parallel bars on the verandah of her house, where she tried to learn to walk again, supporting herself on her arms, but she was unable to. Husband Will used to lift her into and out of her wheelchair, as at that time, she was too weak to accomplish this herself. Miss Barlow, a physiotherapist, visited Rose at home twice a week for a long time, probably several years, but Rose was never able to walk again. Her arms became gradually strong enough to propel her wheelchair, but Rose rarely left the house for the rest of her life. And yet, she died, at the age of 73, from a melanoma on her cheek!

During the time Rose was in hospital, the family moved from Elmore, in rural Victoria, to Melbourne. Husband Will was a school teacher by profession, but at the time of Rose falling ill, was running his own small grocery store in Elmore. He ran the store for a year, then decided to return to teaching. His first teaching position then was in Essendon, Melbourne, from where he could be close to his wife who was still in hospital.

Rose's younger sister, Val, aged 17, moved into the family's home when Rose was taken to hospital. She raised three of the boys, for the next 7 years, also looking after all the household tasks. The baby, Jack, was sent to live with his Grandma Conlon for 3 or 4 years. Grandma Conlon lived on a farm, called Dixie, which is still in the Conlon family. Jack believed for a long time that his name was Jack Conlon, and, when he finally returned home, he couldn't be convinced otherwise.

The house they had lived in at Elmore had no electricity, sewerage or town water. Lighting was provided by kerosene lamps, cooking was done on the wood stove, the water was gravity fed from a rainwater tank, and they had a dunny out the back, which was emptied by the night-soil man every week. When they moved to Essendon, Will had to walk or cycle 3 miles to work each day. There were no trams or buses then.

My own memories of the second house they lived in, in Essendon, involved home delivery of groceries, meat, and milk (by horse and cart), and house calls by the doctor and priest. The oldest son, Tom, never married, and continued to live at home all his life, taking care of his parents as they got older.

On Rose's rare outings in the old black Vanguard, it took 2 grown men to lift her into the car, and out again when she got home. She didn't leave the car during the outing. In later years, when she needed to see a cancer specialist in the City, she was collected by ambulance. She didn't wheel around the streets and shopping centres like they do nowadays.

Rose was born in 1891 in Warrnambool, Victoria. She attended St Anne's, a Catholic girls school in

Warnambool. While she was there, at the age of 17, she painted this picture of Gallardias, probably from a picture in a magazine. Her sister, one of Rose's ten siblings, became a Sister of Mercy and in her later years, as Mother Raymond, was in charge of St Anne's boarding school, until her retirement. Mother Raymond (Auntie Min) died at the ripe old age of 99.

Rose Ellwood, Brisbane Western Suburbs

ANYONE FOR LUNCH?

It was the beginning of Trinity term, and the day of my first practical anatomy class. I was new to Medicine, having recently swapped over from Science.

This had come about rather precipitously after I had told my on off boyfriend at the time of my plans to change over to Medicine.

“What!” he had exclaimed. “You’ll never manage it. The biochemistry for one thing.....”

Well if that wasn't waving a red flag in front of a bull! I'll show him!

So here I was a few weeks later, in the hallowed Old Medical School, about to climb the long flight of stairs up to the anatomy dissecting room.

As I mounted the stairs, I was assailed by a pungent sickly revoting smell. It was formalin, and it was pure yuk. It got up your nose, into your hair and clothes, into the very pores of your skin.

But that was all to come.

Trying not to breathe too deeply I ventured into the enormous room, clutching my new lab coat around me.

Row upon row of long tables greeted me. On each was laid out a cadaver, exposed for all to see. Shrunken faces, straggly hair, thin rib cages, sunken bellies, scrawny arms and legs, hands and feet like skeletons with horny nails. Some already had dissected arms, legs and necks; arteries, veins and muscles all on display. They were all a horrible sickly grey colour. The smell of the formalin enveloped the enormous room.

“Ye Gods! “ I muttered “Is this how I am going to end up, looking like this?” I gazed around at the gruesome sight before me.

And then I saw three students, all men, lab coats on, perched up on the tall wooden stools which surrounded each body, chatting away while they ate their lunch. Their sandwiches were perched on the table next to the cadaver in front of them. I could not believe my eyes!

They looked up and saw me gaping at them.

“Hi!” one of them called and waved a hand clutching a sandwich at me. “Come over and join us. Have you brought your lunch?”

As if eating your lunch next to a cadaver was the most natural thing in the world.

Hesitantly I approached.

Thus began my introduction to the sometimes



wacky, sometimes gruesome, but always fascinating world of the medical student in Sydney in 1958.

Do the students still eat their lunch in the smelly dissecting room?

Probably all done now by computer, iphone or ipod, in sanitised rooms with no smelly formalin around to get up your nose.

More's the pity! Those lunches eventually were quite fun in the midst of all those cadaverous bodies.....

Patricia Walters, Eastern Suburbs Group

History Of National Women's Register In Australia

- 1971 Western Australia has a newsletter called "Talkabout"
Not sure when W.A. started.
One organizer was Mandy Amos or Myra Hamilton.
There were ten groups operating in the Perth area.
One group in Ferntree Gully, Victoria
One group in Forest Hill, Victoria called "Thinking Women"
One group in Box Hill, Victoria
- These Groups (Except Forest Hill) were called 'National Housewives Register' until June 1975 Then Changed To "Women In Touch"**
- Oct 1971 **Barbara Lucas** started a National Housewives Register in Dudley (Newcastle) after returning from the UK where she was a LO of the Wolverhampton group.
- 1972 **Sue Barton** started a National Housewives Register in Canberra. (Sue and Barbara both met at their first NHR meeting in Wolverhampton England in 1968).
The Canberra group was later taken over by the Local Health Commission.
- 1973 Sydney group in Bondi formed by **Jackie Piggott** as LO
Barbara Lucas went to the very first meeting.
- 1973 Two more groups started in the Newcastle area due to publicity in the Newcastle Morning Herald.
- 1979 Feb. **Ita Buttrose** wrote about NHR in the U.K.
June WOMEN'S WEEKLY write up about NHR featuring Barbara Lucas.
A large response from this, radio interviews and many letters
Many starter packs sent out and groups started in:-
NSW - Wagga Wagga and Wilson Creek, Vic - Melbourne, Geelong, Qld- Brisbane, Kawana Waters, Rockhampton, SA - Adelaide.
- 1979 Dec Barbara moves from Newcastle to Wollongong.
- 1980 March **Wollongong** group formed by Barbara.

- 1980 Western Australia was still functioning and had a Forum called "Women Together- What can it Mean"
- 1981 June **Anne Burns** starts a group in **Ryde** Sydney. Sydney history follows from there. Changed the name to "Women in Touch".
- 1982 Barbara Lucas hands all group information over to Anne Burns due to "Burn Out" after 11 years of funding new groups and spending hundreds of hours typing (before Computers remember!).
Due to lack of funds (only 4 groups responded to a plea for subscriptions) a Newsletter about all the groups never got off the ground.
Barbara continues being a member of Figtree NHR in Wollongong
- 1986 **Figtree** group folds.
- 1989 Barbara discovered "**Women In Touch**" functioning in Wollongong. This group is part of the **National Women's Register**. The name was changed to NWR in line with the UK and the rest of the world.

Have not been able to find out how or when this group started.
Did it start from a Sydney group?

Bev Kearney, National Treasurer

IDLE THOUGHTS FOR A RAINY AFTERNOON - COMPUTERS

What do you think about computers? I think they are fantastic! I think they are the most amazing invention since sliced bread! As I am quite dilly about keeping up with friends, I used to write dozens of letters by hand but by the time you got the answer back you had forgotten what you wrote anyway and the friend had probably spent ages trying to deciphering my terrible hand writing and it was all stale news by then anyway! So just for emails I am delighted. You get up-to-date news and your questions answered and you can keep up with everyone around the world. If you have lived at any time in Africa as I did, your friends will be scattered around the world in all directions like chickens running from the fox. I get quite anti friends and relations who say it is beyond them especially if they are younger than I am. True, computers are very frustrating at times and you feel like thumping them but then so are husbands and family and you have to learn not to thump them as well, at least the computer can't thump you back!

I find it great for photos also and Google is marvellous but I don't do games. I do Skype but not all the time. I think some of the youngsters spend far too much time on the computer or iPad or whatever and really cook their brains. They don't think they need any general office because anything they want to know they can google and they have little social skills or conversation. They certainly miss out on the fun and outside freedom we had but but when I see 2 and 3 year olds playing with their parents iPhones I am amazed at their ability and knowledge they pick up so easily but I think us oldies are lucky we had super free adventurous childhoods and can now get into the world of modern technology and computers and whatever.

What luck to be our age! Oh my God did I really mean that!

Diana Sankey, Kalamunda, WA

THE GOLDEN WOMEN

Men all write about the drover's dog
Songs to swaggies who sit on logs
And the old grey mare has had her share
Of odes and rhymes and we're all aware
There's the great outback, gold miners and such
And even a few about the knockout punch
Lots of sagas regarding outdoor loos
Dingoes and cockies and kangaroos.

But I'm here today as a walking example
Of a subject on which coverage has never been
ample
The mature woman of a certain age
'Though I doubt the topic will become all the
rage
So here's my tribute to women who survive
Floods, fire and drought and still stay alive
In this wonderful land that we call Australia
I do hope my first effort won't be a failure

Yes, we're the generation now past the half-
century mark
They promised us great changes – that life
would be a lark
So we got divorced and liberated in spite of a kid
or two
Thumbed our nose at tradition – nothing was
taboo.

We had all the latest trends like hormones and
the pill
I.U.D.'S and pap smears, at least the gynos had
a thrill
We tried throwing off our stockings and bra
But the press all said we'd gone too far.

So we settled for comfort in t-shirts (non- iron)
And waistbands elasticised so we could stop
cryin'
Our greying hair's a secret kept with assistance
from Decore
Faces by Max Factor, for our skin there's retin-a

A Walk in a Rainforest

Like a python,
Vines climb upwards,
Twist round and round,
Cling, confuse, constrict.
Leaves tumble so far below,
Insects swarm among the palms.
Birds whistle and whip
Rustle and ring.
Scrub turkeys scratch,
Amid the crumbling logs,
Fallen long ago.

Beneath the lovely lichen,
Lies death, decay and decomposition
And regeneration...

The rhythm of cicadas pulsates.
The waterfall cascades,
Its cool water glistens and refreshes
Its weary intruders,
Who feast on such profusion and
perfection.

The essence of the rainforest
Is its spirituality.
Along its paths we feel enriched;
A connection to God
And our World Heritage

Janet Namey, Eastern Suburbs

In our hearts we yearn for bellies flat,
boobs with points uplifted
Not cellulite on flabby thighs that refuses to
be shifted
But we're not going to age gracefully,
running the country can be heaven
The only problem is that still inside we feel
like twenty-seven!

*Carol Cruikshank, Illawarra Day
Group
Copyright 1994 (when I was 54!)*

AN INTERVIEW WITH MERRYL CONN : LO FOR THE EASTERN SUBURBS GROUP 2013

Could you tell us a little about your early life?

I was born in Melbourne and was the youngest of three children. I lived in West Brunswick until I was married. I have happy memories of a childhood with lots of freedom to play in the local neighbourhood. I explored on my bike, rode down hills in my billy cart, built cubby houses, went rollerskating, ice skating, kicked the footy and played cricket in the driveway with my Dad and brother. To raise money for Christmas presents my brother and I used to pick and sell plums and cherry plums that grew in our backyard.

Holidays at my grandparents' poultry farm with my cousins were great fun. We enjoyed collecting the eggs especially when we found little pullet eggs, rabbiting with the family's fox terrier, mushrooming, catching yabbies in the dam, picking fruit and milking the cow. My grandmother was a great cook so there was a bountiful supply of cakes and biscuits!

What were your interests?

I played a lot of sport at school and throughout my life as I've always enjoyed being outdoors. Netball was one of my favourite sports as a child and I continued to play it until I was 45.

My father encouraged my love of reading and I have special memories of sitting in a big armchair listening to him read A.A. Milne's Christopher Robin verses, my favourite being 'Alexander Beetle'. I enjoyed going to the local church youth group activities and attending their bush and seaside camps which were held during the school holidays.

What influenced your decision to follow your chosen career path?

I attended Strathmore High School and it was expected that I would leave school at the end of Form 5 (Year 11) and get a job in an office. I was only allowed to complete Year 12 if I became a Primary School teacher. Career choices were limited for females in the Sixties! I completed Teachers' College in 1969 and married my childhood sweetheart Bill in January 1970. We spent the first three years of our married life in South East Gippsland, Victoria where I taught at Korumburra Primary School. In 1973 we moved to Sydney so Bill could attend NIDA. My first teaching position in Sydney was at St Vincents De Paul in Redfern. In 1974 I was appointed to Coogee PS and then later on Maroubra Bay PS. My teaching career was interrupted only by the

birth of my daughter Shivaun in 1980. During the first seven years of her life I worked regularly as a casual teacher in many schools in the Eastern Suburbs. I was appointed as a permanent at La Perouse PS in 1988 and promoted to an executive position while there. Ten years later I was appointed to Kensington Public School and retired as Assistant Principal there at the end of 2010. My 41 year career gave me the opportunity to work with children in many different areas including learning difficulties, English as a Second Language and as a teacher/librarian.

How did you come to join NWR?

A friend introduced me to NWR. I attended a few meetings but didn't join until after I retired. I was attracted to the group because of the positive, friendly atmosphere and stimulating program. It helped that I already knew some of the members through a baby sitting club that I had belonged to in the Eighties.

What do you enjoy about the group and becoming LO?

The group has many interesting, like minded women who have a wide range of life experiences and it has an exciting programme of activities and speakers. I have found everyone to be very supportive and helpful in my role as LO and it has given me an opportunity to get to know the members while putting my organisational skills to good use. I have been able to renew some of my contacts (eg: author Libby Hathorn) who have added to our programme this year as guest speakers. A bonus has been the sharing of many social and recreational activities with various members including art classes, Play readings, Bridge, book club, movies etc

Merryl has brought great energy and dedication to her organisational role as LO, which has been greatly appreciated by the members of the Eastern Suburbs Group.

Thank you Merryl for a job well done!

Interview by Sue Lane, Eastern Suburbs Group

Ode to the Joy of Singing

The applause was rattling through the Concert hall, crackling in loud bursts as the soloists were making their way back to the front of the stage at the end of the performance. When following a sweeping hand movement from the conductor, the choir stood up, it sounded like the roof was going to cave in as the enthusiastic audience cheered and stomped their feet! A wave of happiness, great excitement and also relief overwhelmed my fellow choristers and me.

This was after all the culmination of many hours of rehearsals and the ensuing late nights travelling through Sydney had been taking their toll (I did however enjoy the occasional pasta dish and glass of chianti with a chorister friend at the Italian Forum before a rehearsal!). But for now, with the sound of applause still ringing in my head and the adrenaline only slowly starting to ebb away, forgotten were the endless repetitions, the exhortations to lift flat notes, not to screech on a soprano high C, to start on the right beat, to WATCH the conductor... It is only when it all came together at the first dress rehearsal with the soloists and the orchestra that we realised all the hard work had borne its fruit and that pure enjoyment started to take over from doubts and tiredness.

I have the privilege to belong to the Sydney Philharmonia Festival Chorus and also to a seniors' choir performing in local nursing homes. Belonging to a choir not only brings together people sharing the joy of music but also brings this joy to the audience, whether in an expensive concert hall seat or a wheelchair. How moving it is to see the occasional white-haired head bobbing, a sparkle in the eyes, a hand tapping the beat!

Other benefits are the friendship between the singers, the complicity of a team involved in creating 'something' together. The possibility to study particular pieces of music enriches our life and opens our mind to composers we may otherwise not have even considered listening to. It is also the best physical and mental workout, much more rewarding than any at the gym and more uplifting than weight training by far!

My chorister friends and I share unforgettable moments. What an incredible experience it is to hear the applause, see the happy faces and know that we will be back for more at the next opportunity!

Monique Rüeger, Eastern Suburbs

ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE

The Illawarra Day Group met for their monthly meeting on 30th August 2013 – the discussion topic was that shown above.

One of our members 'lightened' the subject with the following:

I, (insert name) , being of sound mind and body, do not wish to be kept alive indefinitely by artificial means.

Under no circumstances should my fate be put in the hands of pinhead politicians who couldn't pass ninth grade biology if their lives depended on it, or lawyers/doctors interested in simply running up the bills.

If a reasonable amount of time passes and I fail to ask for at least ONE of the following:

Glass of wine, Chocolate, Margarita, Sex

Martini, Cold Beer, Chocolate, Chicken-fried, Steak, Sex

Mexican food, Hot chocolate with Kahlua, French fries, Wine, Pizza, Sex

Chocolate ice cream, Cup of coffee with Kahlua, Glass of Scotch – neat, Steak, Booze or Sex.....

Then it should be presumed that I won't ever get better. When such a determination is reached, I hereby instruct my appointed person and attending physicians to pull the plug, reel in the tubes, let the 'fat lady sing' and call it a day!!!

Have a drink..... **IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE.**



Trish Copeland LO, Illawarra Day Group

YOGA FOR THE EYES



Our June speaker was Moira Gibson on the intriguing topic of “Yoga for the Eyes”. Moira herself has very good eyesight and, although a senior herself, does not have the need for glasses. She attributes much of this to exercising her eyes on a regular basis. This she learned to do this at an Eye Clinic in India many years ago where mainly children were being taught eye exercises. Moira feels whereas in India and many other cultures people are taught to look after their eyes naturally, here in the western world many people just head for opticians and eye specialists when their eyes begin to deteriorate. They do not take responsibility for the care of their eyes before deterioration begins.

The exercises Moira taught us are extremely easy to do as part of a daily routine and are also quite relaxing.

These are some of them:-

1. Sun Treatment – sit or stand facing the sun in the morning or evening, close the eyes, face the sun, then rock the body side to side like a pendulum – 2 to 5 minutes.
 2. Washing the Eyes – take an eye cup, fill it with ordinary or filtered water, dip your right eye inside and blink 10 times, repeat with the left eye. Gently wipe at the end.
 3. Palming. Rub your hands vigorously together to create heat and energy, place the palms gently over the eyes so no light passes through. Do not press on the eyeball. Do this for 10 minutes or however long you can manage.
 4. Most of us do not blink nearly enough. Make a point of it. With a tennis ball, throw the ball from one hand to the other 40 times. Then bounce the ball on the ground and catch it in the other hand 40 x. Follow the ball’s movement and blink after each catch.
 5. Vapor or inhaler – place a few drops of eucalyptus oil in a bowl of hot water. Cover head with towel and lean over the bowl and blink in the rising vapour for 1 to 2 minutes.
 6. Cotton wool with cold water – place them over your closed eyes and leave for 10 minutes. Cucumber slices are also good for this.
- Anyone wanting any further information on this subject please feel free to contact Moira on 9700 0029 or 0425 211 463 or iytaemail@gmail.com. She has dvds available which cost \$20 plus \$5 postage.

Sue Perkins, Eastern Suburbs Group



*Lunch at
Diathnes*

Let's see... Let's see... Let's see...

If we could look deeply into a kaleidoscope and see the twists and turns allowing us to review the lives of our families, our friends, our acquaintances along the way, then see the bigger picture and know the outcomes of our lifelong decisions. Would it do us any good? Probably not, because we would have already made those decisions and already felt the impact of both the good ones and bad ones.

On the other hand, if we were to lay our lives out in front of us, using the colours and materials that would best represent what life has dished out to us, how we felt at the time and our reaction; what an interesting tapestry that would make. What colours and fabrics would you use?

◆ This tranquil colour is all around us as a sign of life and growth, wherever we go in this **green** wonderful world. Therefore, we would certainly use green for the more peaceful and productive times we have experienced. What fabric would we use? I think that would be entirely up to the individual. Some of us might use a fabric with a thread running through it, a thread that gave the patches of our lives?

◆ Well, it goes without saying that blue might represent to some the openness and wide **blue** reaches of space, something that all can share. Perhaps the fabric best “speaking” of that could be a soft, almost see-through fibre but one representing strength and persistence and something that cannot be changed no matter how many of life’s “blunt ends” try to invade our lives with turmoil, to tear up our carefully planned lives. Peace no matter what! Stitch it into the tapestry – quickly.

◆ Yes, earthy, could get muddy, might crack if not given the right attention. Do we like **brown** in our lives? Perhaps not, because it gives the appearance of something negative, maybe depressing to pull our spirits down. What fabric then? Hessian? When bad times hit, we don’t see much that uplifts us do we? Life can be “brown” for some time, depending on the depth of hurt or despair. Life can get quite black if we allow it. Hessian would be an excellent choice then? But hessian allows the air to flow through the threads and it allows growth to appear through the open weave. Is this a hopeful choice then? Velvet is soft to touch, brown velvet might look better. But velvet is dense and won’t “give” at all so while it looks more attractive, it keeps the darkness in.

◆ Everyone’s agreed? **White** speaks to us of goodness and purity and everything that keeps our lives enlightened? White for brides – purity? Yes? White clouds – fluffy? No rain? So, what fabric might we use to give these impressions on our tapestry of life? Perhaps soft chiffon, soft like curtains that blow in the breeze and make us feel free and easy. A fur fabric that helps us to think about growing up with our favourite pet or remembering that special cushion at Grandma’s house, fluffy with white, silky tassels on the ends. Something to cling onto when we couldn’t make sense of the “growing pains”. But, white gets dirty so quickly and holds the stains like no other colour!

◆ Oh yes, those painful moments that never seem to leave us alone. The ones there are no cures for. Favourite colour of men! Why is that? It represents power, accolades, winning and being **red** noticed for achieving! So let’s get our hands on a piece of material that outdoes the rest, just so the tapestry can scream of success in our lives. The times when we have had to “put ourselves forward”, maybe even stepped over the top of someone else to reach the next rung on the ladder. Oh, only for the benefit of all, yes, only so that the lives (that I now control?) are much better off! So then folks, we should use the brightest red fabric with the biggest pattern and place it in strategic places on the tapestry to ensure there’s no mistake about this part of life. Do you agree? After all, this is what gives us lifestyle and wealth and survival of the fittest, isn’t it? The spotlight has the last say though. Red fades! As fast as you sew the threads of the big, bold red fabric, it is already fading. The light of honesty and fairness that shines through the windows of our soul, will fade the “win”, will fade the “power” and the people we have touched along the way will leave their lasting “finger prints” on the fabric of our lives, to let us know that they still have a say.

◆ This should be the colour of LOVE. To compliment all other colours and fabrics, we have Yellow the sunniest colour of them all, yellow! Doesn’t this always brighten any room if painted on the wall? It’s the colour of the sun that shines warmth into our lives and helps growth. Beautiful sunflowers can’t help but make us smile. This yellow, this love is what gives the tapestry of life the strongest threads of all and it is what brings us through the muddy or weakening times that we struggle through. Love is what allows us warm and sunny memories of those who are dear to us and whom we have had to leave behind. Love is unconditional in families and links the friendship “chain”. Loves allows forgiveness and gives us freedom. Even love’s disappointments leave us with some happy memories to treasure.

Floral Ah, now we are talking. 'No one is an island' we have been told. How true that is. So the most important fabric in the whole tapestry of life must be the one that shows us many colours, many shapes, strong backgrounds. It can have self-patterns in the material too and threads of all kinds! For all of us, this represents the fact that we need the people around us, to interact with family, friends, work colleagues and people from different cultures and creeds. When we look into the 'picture' that is painted by the many colours and shapes of life, there we see the tears, tensions, laughter and life with all its 'splinters' and 'band aids' and its 'tasty, sweet moments' and love like a stream constantly running right through the middle of it all. For some the love comes not from family but from strangers who may not know them well at all... these "petals" of society... that make the 'flower' so lovely to see.

The rich tapestry of life, how true. Look at it regularly and with honesty! Repair the wear and tear as it shows up without pulling the pieces apart. Add to it with gusto! The kaleidoscope is full of colours and shapes but the images are only as good as the creator's insight.

Bev Shaw - LO, Illawarra Evening Group

Why I felt the urge to complete my own Tour de Dordogne

After two weeks in Paris and Berlin eating gourmet restaurant meals chosen by my travelling companion, a Hobart chef, exercise strategies needed to be devised.

Travelling on the TGV train from Paris to Bordeaux proved to be a great exit strategy.

A warm welcome from my hosts, a quick tour of Bordeaux occurred before being whisked through the French countryside to Capets, their hamlet of six farms bordering two French counties of Lot-et-Garonne and Dordogne.

On this hobby farm they said they could tick the three must haves for the picture postcard -close ups of cows, plum trees and vines.

A ten minute jog saw me and my iphone camera in their local village of Loubes-Bernac with its centre piece - a preserved Roman style outdoor laundry.



To explore anywhere else we had to travel by car. We have been to authentic Bastille day



My favourite meal in Paris at: Pousse en Claire

celebrations in Bergerac, various local day and night markets and of course visited numerous churches and chateaux.

I am an ageing but keen jogger so some exploring on my own was possible. However, I decided that cycling covered more ground than jogging and would give me a chance to observe the locals and best of all to stop as many times as I fancied for photos, sketching or visiting local sites.

My friends had provided me with tasty snacks and lunch plus water to sustain me in the thirty plus temperatures. The route was marked on an ordinance survey map that covered most of my route. It was a circuit rather than a more simple, out and back course. I did not factor in challenges that rapidly made themselves apparent.



Only at my half-way point did the length of my bike journey become apparent. What had I let myself in for? Out and back would be forty kilometres! I was to take a different route home and did not realise just how hard it would be biking up to all the little villages followed by rapid descents to farms below. The process had to be repeated many times.

My heart sank as I noted my allocated mountain bike hired from this fancy golf club had flat tyres. This was duly rectified. I left the manicured greens of Chateau des Vigiers for the country roads en route for Eymet.

My first stop to adjust back pack, camera etc allowed me to peer over at deer behind a stone wall. Continuing on numerous hill climbs my journey ended in a longer stop at the highest ascent, Puyguilhem. Standing up on my bike was the only way to get to the top of this village known for its panoramic views. There did not seem to be so many hills when we travelled by car!! Resting alone in this rambling chateau's garden with mossy statues, tiny goldfish wove in and out of the debris in the pond and the odd ant ventured onto my sarong.



The Pigeonnier of Chateau Des Vigiers

I was fascinated that a part of the public land had been taken over by the local caretaker who had made it her garden with a rustic pigeonier, hot house, vegetable garden, clothesline, garden table and chairs. There are just so many chateaux around France mostly in disrepair so who is going to notice if the caretaker extends her backyard in this manner? There was an amazing 360 degree panorama from the church across from the chateau. Today a shirtless bell repairer was at work. Setting out again my downhill surges were interrupted by many photo stops.

Arriving at Eymet my half way point and needing to rest from the 35 degree heat I collapsed on a step in the back streets. All day long I could



Backstreet, Eymet

feel eyes on me. Certainly no self respecting Frenchwoman my age would be undertaking such exploits.

More sketching occurred before hitting the saddle for the afternoon bike session. I started biking over a bridge but was in unfamiliar territory. So after a kilometre I came back into town. The Information Centre redirected me to the appropriate numbered road. In these temperatures of 30-35 my silk neck scarf dried within ten minutes of being given water.

After climbing to yet another village I descend to the local reservoir complete with blue heron reminding me of my eastern seaboard home. The forested areas although hilly provided a small respite from the heat. My afternoon stop was at a local implement museum at Soumensac. My shaky bike legs needed a rest.



Soumensac curator proudly explains how irons work.

The curator proudly showed me his wooden handled tools which were carefully labelled. His ironing room was particularly memorable with irons heated by hot stones, water, and used in the tanning industry as well as in the home. Irons dated from pre-revolutionary times to modern day with 'le Rolls-Royce' steam iron.



The signs were not exactly helpful and I did not know the name of my golf course that was my destination

Leaving Soumensac was another whizz down from the village only to push my bike back up again as the wrong road number featured on this side of the village.



Last stop at a small war memorial

Finally Loubes Bernac was a reality and below it I could recognise my little hamlet of Capets



Keith & Linda Stevens, Le Tour support crew back at Capets base camp.

On arrival my host kindly returned my bike and I dived in the pool, sat down to a glass of rosé and watched the sunset feeling a great sense of achievement.

Jane Miller, Eastern Suburbs Group

A visit to CERN

If you were tasked with building the biggest machine in the world, how big would you make it? And if you were tasked with making the coldest place in the universe, how would you do it?

Visiting CERN, the European Nuclear Research Laboratory, in the countryside near Geneva in Switzerland, is a lesson in understanding superlatives. I worked there from 2011 to 2012, and in August 2011 I took my mum, NWR member Cherie Hayes, for a tour of the site. CERN's main experiment, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the largest machine in the world: it is a subterranean circuit of vacuum-sealed pipes, 27 kilometres long. The pipes carry beams of protons (sub-atomic particles), and are surrounded by superconducting magnets and cooling equipment with superfluid helium, which drops the temperature of the machine to about 300 degrees below room temperature – making it colder than deep space, and one of the coldest places in the known universe. And if that isn't impressive enough, with 10,000 visiting scientists and engineers from 113 nations, it's also the largest diplomatic effort ever undertaken in science.



But what is it like? Of course, it is immersed in French culture: Mum and I went to the canteen for lunch, served *confit de canard* and local wines, and taking in the views over pastures, across to Geneva and, in the distance, the Alps and Mont Blanc.

I took my mum to see the building I worked in – not just because I worked there, but also because this was where Tim Berners-Lee conceptualised the World Wide Web. The first two computers that he hooked up together in the early 1990s are still on display there, with a scribbled note attached: “Do not power down”.

Ever since CERN opened in 1954, it has been creating historic moment and, when Cherie visited, more history was in the making: data was beginning to pour in from the LHC, and the thousands of physicists at CERN were excited about closing in on the elusive Higgs Boson. The Higgs Boson is a particle first predicted in the 1960's. In the history of particle physics, the Higgs boson is the particle with the longest period between its prediction and its discovery, which is testament to the leaps in engineering needed to build the machinery. It's also exciting because the Higgs boson is responsible for giving particles their mass, responsible for atoms coming together in the early universe and for galaxies and life forming the way they did. In July 2012, the physicists announced that they had finally enough evidence to claim they had discovered the particle. It was the long-awaited proof that we understand the origin of mass in the universe.

Of course, no tour to CERN would be complete without some Dan Brown-esque moments. So I took mum to see my favourite experiment. It is in an innocuous corner, near where the sheep grazed – the bells around the sheep's necks dinged as they grazed, but gave Cherie no indication as to what could be nearby. Down a steep concrete ramp, a heavy door with radiation warning signs leads into the anti-matter laboratory. The huge machine decelerates anti-matter coming out of the LHC.

With this machine, physicists recently formed the first ‘anti-atom’, similar to a normal atom with protons and orbiting electrons, except made of their anti-matter counterparts. And they managed to capture the anti-matter and hold it for a few minutes, which is a lifetime in particle physics. Like the Higgs Boson and many other experiments at CERN, anti-matter doesn't have any applications yet. They are investigating whether it could be used in cancer therapies instead of the current radiotherapy methods. But beyond this, what it could be used for is only limited by the imagination.

Jacqui Hayes (daughter of Cherie Hayes, Eastern Suburbs Group)

Contents

Lo Reports	4 -7	NWR Yorkshire Visitor	25
Vale Del Mackness	7	Fishing For Compliments	25
Desert Oak	8	Laughter Is Therapeutic	26
Xanthorrhoea	8	It's In The Genes	26
Genesis Paint	9	Phil Waite's Item In Column 8	27
Hilary	10	Ever Wonder	27
Changing Weather Patterns	12	A Favourite Painting And Its Artist	28
During A X-Country Skiing Jaunt	12	Anyone For Lunch?	29
White Water Rafting Down The Zambezi	13	History Of NWR In Australia	30
Life Explained	14	Idle Thoughts For A Rainy Afternoon - Computers	31
'A' Is For....An Nwr Meeting Idea	14	The Golden Women	32
The Apron	15	A Walk In A Rainforest	32
Lists	15	An Interview With Meryll Conn	33
Piranha Fishing In The Amazon	16	Ode To The Joy Of Singing	34
I Am Here!	16	Advance Care Directive	34
Centenary Celebrations	17	Yoga For The Eyes	35
Catherine The Great	18	Let's See... Let's See... Let's See...	36
Eastern Suburbs Book List 2013	20	Why I Felt The Urge To Complete My Own Tour De Dordogne	37
Life As A Retiree.	21	A Visit To Cern	39
Political Correctness	21		
Twinning Report	22		
Fraser Island	24		