

ROTARIAN

Issue 30  
May 2008

# Life

Fit for the  
Queen  
australia's royal export



ERG CHEBI

a journey into morocco's past

Rotary Down Under invites you to join John and Shirley Thorne  
on the 2008 'Constellation' Cruise of the...

# Baltics and St Petersburg

**Last chance to join us!**

Visiting Copenhagen, Tallin, St Petersburg (2 days), Helsinki, Stockholm, Riga, Rostock and Klaipeda



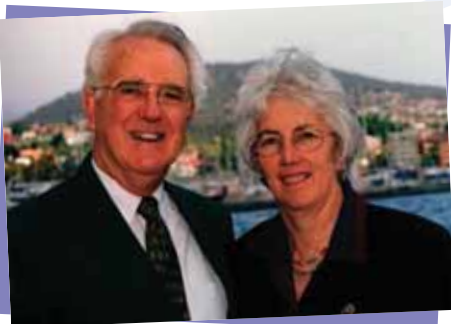
## John & Shirley Thorne

John has served Rotary International on the world scene as an International Director and continues to serve on several world committees. John and Shirley have represented the world leadership of Rotary in many countries, including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Taiwan, India, the Philippines and Thailand. They have also visited several Pacific Islands on behalf of Rotary, assisting with humanitarian aid.

Recently, John was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his community work, including his voluntary work overseas and working with people with disabilities.

Shirley and John have always worked as a team and are enjoying their retirement, offering them a little more time to be with their family.

Their friendly personalities and personable manner make John and Shirley the ideal people to lead the 2008 Rotary Constellation Baltic and St Petersburg cruise.



## relax and enjoy

### The Celebrity Constellation

The "Constellation" is one of the Millennium Class ships in the Celebrity Cruises fleet and was launched in May 2002. Premium in every sense, "Constellation" has been designed with refined elegance in mind, from the finest marble, wood, leather and fabrics to the specially crafted furniture and original works of art. Glass lifts present panoramic ocean views as you glide from deck to deck. Even the beauty salon and saunas have sea views. Another special feature included on this floating palace is the largest and most sophisticated AquaSpa afloat, complete with an Aqua Dome – an entire deck devoted to health and fitness. "Constellation" also boasts the first floral conservatory at sea. "Constellation" brings a truly luxurious cruise experience.

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# ROTARIAN Life

Issue 30 – May 2008

Our cover: State Coach *Britannia*  
Photo by Mark Wallace

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# On the Edge in Erg Chebi

## Tim Dawe takes a slow, sultry caravan into Morocco's past

[Words & Photography] Tim Dawe

**IT'S** a misty early morning and I am in a cramped minibus slowly chugging up the Middle Atlas mountains in Morocco.

Fantastic images of the past two days spent in the royal city of Fez swirl in my mind as the hot, dry dust gives way to coolness, greenery and cedar trees.

Those images of the medina in Fez el-Bali (old Fez) are vivid and indelibly etched to remain with me forever. Stepping into the huge tangle of alleyways is literally stepping into a medieval city – still bustling and hustling, a World Heritage listed city unmoved by time.

Even seasoned travellers experienced in Morocco's bazaars are warned not to venture into Fez's eight kilometre long medina without a reputable guide; it's no stroll in the park. All manner of human activities are played out in this mish-mash of cavernous trails, seething with people at work, school and play – even prayer – and the odd donkey cargo carrier. *Ballack*, goes out the cry! Look out!

Turn this way and there is a quiet, tranquil mosque next to the butcher shop with its camel heads hanging under the awning. Another turn and a metal fabrication shop is practising unprotected welding in the alleyway.

It's a fascinating, jarring, jolting assault on one's senses. At times in the medina I feel like a bit player in *Dante's Inferno*.

Today, however, is a totally different day. We grind our way ever upwards to snow-capped mountains, cedar trees and thoughts of Barbary apes.

After an hour or two of brain-numbing, steady climbing, I find my focus on a totally different landscape; high-plateau pasture land, brown and largely tree-less. Before me is a scene with its central characters – a young shepherd and his flock – drawing me onto their stage. The boy is dressed in rags (perhaps someone's cast-off *djellaba*) and carries a staff in the way of his ancient forebears.

This is the top of the world. In this vastness there is not another soul in sight. The scene is biblical, timeless. I am transfixed by this ragged boy and his goats in the middle of nowhere.

I watch as slowly and deliberately the shepherd boy rummages through the layers and folds of his tattered garment and produces ... a mobile phone!

*Salaam aleikum?* Hello?

Suddenly I am in the present, in the minibus and on the way to Erg Chebi.

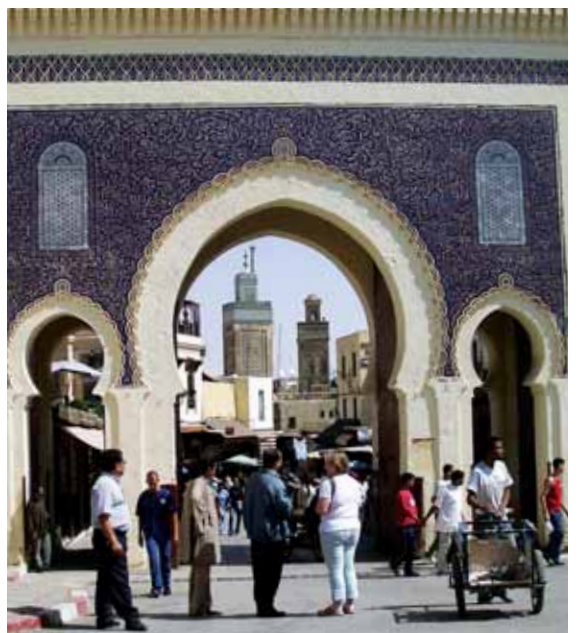
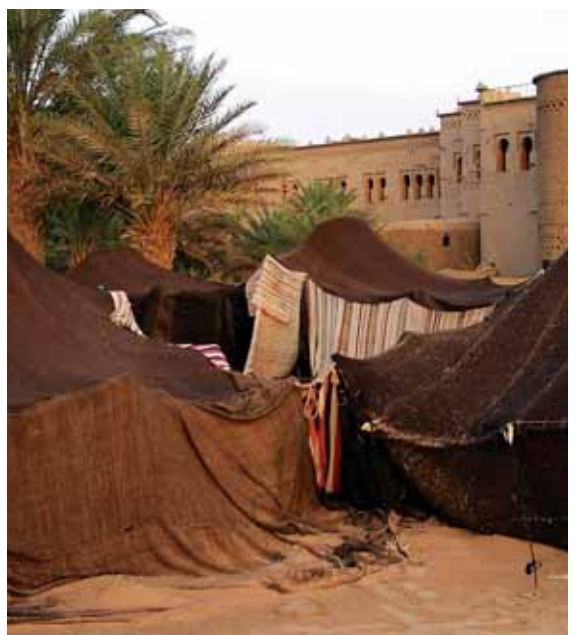
What a wonderful name!

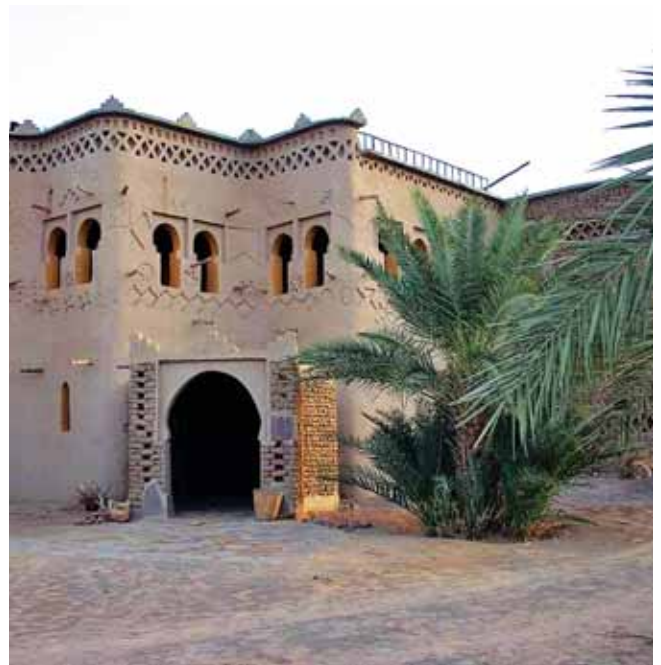
Erg (sand dune) Chebi is the wilderness highlight of our 15-day tour. It is a huge ocean of pure, wind-swept sand. On the border with Algeria, it is archetypical Sahara Desert country.

Erg Chebi is of another world and another time, far removed physically and emotionally from the recently visited cosmopolitan towns and cities on the Atlantic coast. An Australian comparison might be travelling from Adelaide to Woomera.

The fertile lands of the Middle Atlas seem to melt indiscernibly downwards until we are no longer up and cool, but down, dusty and hot. Or it could be that I just had forty winks.







Despite our long and featureless journey, buoyant, expectant spirits in minibus number three remain high – as does the temperature!

We pass the famous sign ‘to Timbuktu, 52 days’, or French and Arabic words to that effect, and know we have come a serious distance.

Twelve hours pass, as do successive towns and villages with exotic names such as Ifrane (a look-alike Swiss village), Azrou, Timahdite, Midelt, Er-Rachidia, and far-off Erfoud (definitely ‘beyond Bourke’).

Our destination, Mezouga, a further 55 kilometres via roadless open sand-plain, is not really a town or a village, just a modern, well-appointed *auberge*, restaurant and faux Kasbah, purpose-built for the likes of us. On our arrival in the gloom of early evening, I notice the entrance sign: Tombouctou à Mezouga!

Timbuktu to Mezouga ... by camel train! We really *have* arrived!  
For centuries camel trains have plodded their way through death-defying desert, carrying their precious cargo of gold and salt to Marrakech, Fez and beyond, returning with European and Asian ‘elaborately transformed manufactures’ to the fabled and mysterious city of Timbuktu.

It is an exciting thought to hold onto when retiring to my four-star hotel suite; more exciting than the forced after dinner tourist entertainment of wailing songs and incessant drumming while sitting cross-legged on the dusty floor.

Before dawn the next day, we assemble as requested near some rugs hung out to dry – later to be identified as the tents of our *Touareg* cameleers. By the sound and smell, we are near the camel compound.

Our treat is to go a short distance into the dunes on camel-back to see the sunrise. Each camel is led by a young *Touareg* man, from that famous nomadic people of Saharan North and West Africa, each resplendent in their distinctive blue *djellabas* and turbans.

The sun is a great disappointment; a tiny ping-pong ball set in a colourless dusty haze.

I sit alone on the crest of a sand dune lost in thought, or rather non-thought, when noiselessly I am joined by a handsome boy of about 15 in full *Touareg* uniform.

Omar speaks to me quietly and gently in surprisingly good English about himself and his life. I speak about living on the edge; the edge of a vast desert, the edge of a tourist compound and at the edge of traditional and modern life. Despite this, we have a connection of sorts.

It slowly becomes clear Omar has trinkets to sell. It is also clear he does not believe I have left my money in my room – unlocked, as it happens. We part company without any trace of rancour or lost opportunity. Omar is of the desert and knows the value of conserving energy. Or perhaps he is just a really nice kid.

With the sun now blazing and a reasonable size, I see my surroundings for the first time. It is unreal.

The hotel and restaurant buildings, set against this quintessential sandy desert, turn 'tourist facilities' into a fort of the French Foreign Legion. Beau Geste would be right at home here. The bizarre effect is like being on a Hollywood film set. But then again, lots of movies are shot in Morocco.

But nothing can detract from the beauty and grandeur of the natural setting; the shapes, the shadows, the colours and the moods of the dunes. It's just sand, but it is wonderful. It is powerful, it is immense, it is clean and it is deadly.

Our visit to the sand dunes of Erg Chebi is for a 'picnic'. Or more accurately, to experience a three-hour camel trek to a squibby bit of oasis with three or four date palms, two hours for lunch and an uneasy rest chasing constantly moving shade around a palm, then a three-hour camel trek home.

This is adventure-grade wilderness trekking and a challenge for over-sized, over-comforted tourists. Interestingly, the older man from Auckland and the soft couple from Philadelphia come up trumps in our ordeal and without a murmur. It is one of our Aussies who is worryingly sick with dehydration and is revived by having lots of our precious drinking water poured over his head.

We return home in the late afternoon in some discomfort from six hours in the saddle of a camel that negotiates large sand dunes straight up and straight down. Forget the romantic notions of *Lawrence of Arabia*, some bottoms should not be put astride a camel!

Now I know why the *Touareg* wear five metres of cloth on their head and walk rather than ride. Now I appreciate our tour has four-star accommodation, showers, air-conditioning and cold beer.

Morocco is a wonderfully diverse country with cosmopolitan cities containing quality shops, cafés and nightlife, ravishing coastlines, high mountain peaks, deep tree-flooded gorges, amazing Roman ruins and medieval towns.

It's a liberal, peaceful Islamic country with friendly, courteous and helpful people and well worth an extensive tour ... all the way to Erg Chebi.

Just don't go too far on a camel! ■



## LE CONCIERGE at your service

**CHOOSING** a good restaurant in India can be fraught with danger, even for a seasoned traveller, but not if your traveling with Le Concierge, a pampering service offered to Australians by one of the country's leading Indian tour operators.

Le Concierge can find you a dining experience, souvenir shop, a yoga session, theatre tickets, or even an Ayurveda spa treatment, if you are traveling on one of Wendy Wu Tours' Luxe India itineraries.

It doesn't matter if you want to eat in Jaipur, shop in Agra or see a Bollywood movie in Jodhpur, a single free phone call to Le Concierge in Delhi will see your problem solved.

Just like the concierge in quality hotels, the Wendy Wu service operates 24 hours a day and is included in the cost of your holiday.

The service is available on the four itineraries with which the company has launched its Luxe India program. It is based around a 10-day olden Triangle tour to which you can add five night extensions to Narendar Nagar, Rajasthan or the beach resort area of Goa.

All tours include accommodation in classic Indian hotels, palaces and other historic properties and travel in a 7Series BMW, S350 Mercedes or Nissan X-trail 4WD stocked with soft drinks, magazines and a selection of music.

Your English-speaking chauffeur will also act as a guide as you move from one place to another, while a dedicated guide is provided for sightseeing at each overnight stop.

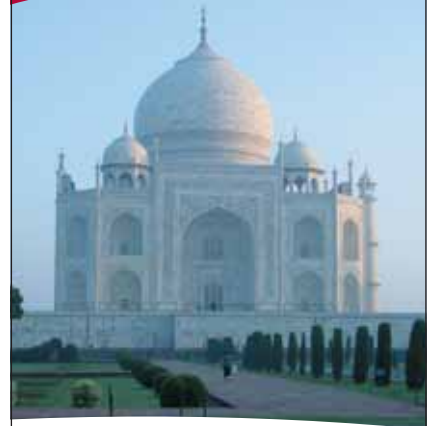
And if you want to try and get a postcard home to family and friends before you arrive back yourself, Le Concierge can oblige.

**More details from Wendy Wu Tours at  
1300-727-998 or visit  
[www.wendywutours.com.au](http://www.wendywutours.com.au)**



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## N.S.W. & A.C.T.

### A Taste of Manly

**Where:** From the Corso to the Wharf, Manly, NSW

**When:** 31 May – 1 June

**How much:** Costs vary

The Manly Food and Wine Festival is a 'Taste of Manly' and one of Sydney's largest regular community-based food and wine festivals. Visitors are drawn to the festival by the scenic beach setting and the range of quality food and wines on offer.

**P:** 02 9976 1430

**W:** [www.manlytourism.com.au](http://www.manlytourism.com.au)

### The Darling Harbour Jazz and Blues Festival

**Where:** Darling Harbour, Sydney, NSW

**When:** 7-9 June

**How much:** Free entry

The Darling Harbour Jazz Festival has established itself as Sydney's premier Jazz Festival. The annual festival transforms Sydney's most versatile and internationally acclaimed events hub into a musical extravaganza with the sassy, suave and scintillating sounds of Blues, Swing, Big Band and New Orleans Gospel Jazz.

**P:** 02 9240 8788

**W:** [www.darlingharbour.com](http://www.darlingharbour.com)

### Winter Magic Festival

**Where:** Katoomba Town Centre, Katoomba, NSW

**When:** 14-28 June

**How much:** Free entry

The Winter Magic Festival is the Blue Mountains' biggest annual event, attracting in excess of 40,000 people. Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> is the festival's big day with the town's main street, Katoomba Street, closed to traffic and opened up to over 150 stalls and 70 performances across 12 stages. The parade, which has a strong emphasis on dressing up and participation, is always one of the festival's major attractions.

**P:** 1300 653 408

**W:** [www.wintermagic.com.au](http://www.wintermagic.com.au)

### National Capital DanceSport Championships

**Where:** Australian Institute of Sport Arena, Canberra, ACT

**When:** 28-29 June

**How much:** Adults from \$49.50

Enjoy the glitz and glamour as 800 of Australia's leading professional and amateur dancers and international dancers compete in Latin American, Ballroom and New Vogue dance styles during two days of dance magic. Be amazed at floor show performances by world-renowned dance couples in the evenings. If you have enjoyed the recent dance shows on television, come and watch DanceSport at its best – it is much more exciting, athletic and glamorous! Keep checking their website for full details.

**P:** 02 6231 4403

**W:** [www.ncdccanberra.com.au](http://www.ncdccanberra.com.au)



## Victoria

### Mt Buller Opening Weekend Celebrations

**Where:** Mt Buller Village Square

**When:** 7 June

**How much:** Free entry

Mt Buller Opening Weekend Celebrations welcome in the winter and mark the start of the snow season. The Village Square is the centre of the action featuring an afternoon of live music, entertainment and the grand firework finale. All visitors to Mt Buller are invited to share the celebrations!

**P:** 1800 039 049

**W:** [www.mtbuller.com.au](http://www.mtbuller.com.au)

### Weekend Fit for a King

**Where:** Various venues, King Valley, North East Victoria

**When:** 7-8 June

**How much:** Costs vary

Enjoy delicious gourmet food, premium wines, great music and warm King Valley hospitality around the 19 participating wineries. Taste artisan wines made from exciting varieties new to Australia including Tannat, Tempranillo, Vermentino and Arneis to name just a few. The weekend also includes the very impressive King Valley Art Show at Redbank Winery with all work available for purchase.

**P:** 1800 801 065

**W:** [www.winesofthekingvalley.com.au](http://www.winesofthekingvalley.com.au)

### Winter Wine Weekend

**Where:** Various venues, Mornington Peninsula

**When:** 7-9 June

**How much:** From \$20.00

Mornington Peninsula Vignerons welcome visitors to warm Cellar Doors this winter to taste new release wines, visit old favourites and to experience the seasonal offerings of the region. Three days of wine, food and song are matched with fine Australian cuisine, pizzas, emu snags, cassalinga food, saucy mussels and regional fare, homemade soup by the fire in a mud brick cellar and long Sunday lunches.

**P:** 03 5989 2377

**W:** [www.mpva.com.au](http://www.mpva.com.au)

### Shepparton and Northern Victoria Australian Great Outdoors Expo

**Where:** Shepparton Basketball Stadium, Shepparton

**When:** 27-29 June

**How much:** Free entry

The Great Australian Outdoors Expo is dedicated to outdoors sporting and recreational pursuits in the fields of camping, caravanning, boating, fishing, eco-tourism and four-wheel-driving. Held annually, the event is designed primarily for the family and enthusiast to browse and buy at a provincial Expo.

**P:** 03 9553 5671

**W:** [www.tavcoexposervices.com.au](http://www.tavcoexposervices.com.au)



## Queensland

### Wintersun Festival

**Where:** Various venues, Coolangatta, Gold Coast

**When:** 30 May – 9 June

**How much:** Most events free

The Wintersun Festival is an annual retro nostalgia festival featuring over 1,500 pre-1974 hot rod, classic and custom cars. It has more than 100 local, national and international bands and performers, many of which are free. There are 250 special interest and market stalls, displays, plus dancing and family entertainment.

**P:** 07 5536 9509 **TF:** 1300 135 847

**W:** [www.wintersun.org.au](http://www.wintersun.org.au)

### Caravan, Camping and Touring Holiday Show

**Where:** Fortitude Valley, Brisbane

**When:** 4-10 June

**How much:** Adults \$12.00

Australia's largest caravan exhibition will cater for all tastes, from the budget camper through to the deluxe motorhome devotee. The overall show will include 300 exhibitors showcasing the latest travel innovations, services and destinations, along with entertaining seminars and displays. Visitors to this year's show will also have the opportunity to win a new Windsor caravan valued at around \$39,000.

**P:** 07 3862 1833

**W:** [www.caravanqld.com.au](http://www.caravanqld.com.au)

### Ride For Daniel

**Where:** Woombie, Sunshine Coast

**When:** 8 June, Registration 7am

**How much:** Adults \$10.00

All motorcyclists and motorbike enthusiasts are invited to participate in Australia's largest annual motorcycle event, the Ride for Daniel fundraising appeal. Last year over 5,000 riders took part – the sight and sound sending a loud and clear anti-child abuse message. The 110km ride will leave at 10am from the Big Pineapple car park heading past Daniel's memorial then north through scenic hinterland to the coastal Coolumb Beach area. The ride finishes at 12.00 noon followed by an after party at one of Australia's greatest icons, the Ettamogah Pub.

**P:** 04 0764 5652

**W:** [www.ridefordaniel.com.au](http://www.ridefordaniel.com.au)

### Bundaberg Volunteer Marine Rescue Fishing Classic

**Where:** Volunteer Marine Base, Burnett Heads

**When:** 20-22 June

**How much:** Adults \$12.00

All funds raised from this family-focused event go towards Volunteer Marine Rescue Bundaberg and its service to the boating community of Bundaberg and surrounding area. This event is open to everyone who registers.

**P:** 07 4159 4129

**E:** [bundaberg@vmraq.org.au](mailto:bundaberg@vmraq.org.au)



## South Australia

### Adelaide Cabaret Festival

**Where:** Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide

**When:** 6-15 June

**How much:** Costs vary

There's plenty to entice at this year's Adelaide Cabaret Festival. Whether you're looking for an uplifting spectacle, some biting political satire, an intimate evening with an artist, an insight into a new work or dancing the night away – this year's program has it all!

**P:** 08 8216 8901

**W:** [www.adelaidecabaretfestival.com](http://www.adelaidecabaretfestival.com)

### Riverland Balloon Fiesta

**Where:** Paringa Street, Renmark

**When:** 7-9 June

**How much:** Free entry

Over the seven years since its inception, the Riverland Balloon Fiesta has proven to be a huge success. Hot Air Balloon flights and demonstrations are an amazing experience for all ages. Another huge draw card of this spectacular event is the hot air balloon night glow, where the balloons are tethered and inflated at night creating a magnificent photo opportunity.

**P:** 08 8580 3000

**W:** [www.remarkparinga.sa.gov.au](http://www.remarkparinga.sa.gov.au)

### Glendambo Outback 4x4 Challenge

**Where:** Glendambo 4x4 Track, Glendambo

**When:** 7-9 June

**How much:** Adults \$6.00

The Glendambo Outback 4x4 Challenge is an annual test of skill and endurance for expert and amateur 4WD enthusiasts. Each year, competitors put their road-registered vehicles to the test through a series of obstacles including hill climbs, the monster mud pit and whoopy doos. There is plenty of action on and off the track – visit the market village and enjoy trackside catering and full bar facilities.

**P:** 0418 322 091

**W:** [www.glendambooutback4x4.com.au](http://www.glendambooutback4x4.com.au)

### BankSA Sea & Vines Festival

**Where:** McLaren Vale

**When:** 8-9 June

**How much:** Free event

Over the two days more than 20 wineries will perfectly match their wines to delicious seafood delights. McLaren Vale venues offer a specially created seafood meal, as well as most wineries having options of an alternative, non-seafood, children's and vegetarian dish. There's plenty of entertainment on offer too. Why not stay the weekend in a local B&B or cottage? Bring your family and friends.

**P:** 08 8323 9944

**W:** [www.mclarenvale.info](http://www.mclarenvale.info)



## Western Australia

### Kalbarri Canoe and Cray Carnival

**Where:** Kalbarri Murchison River Foreshore, Kalbarri

**When:** 1 June

**How much:** TBA

The Kalbarri Visitor's Centre, together with a number of community groups, is staging the inaugural Kalbarri Canoe and Cray Carnival. Canoes, training and tuition will be provided by Canoeing Western Australia and will include supply of the canoes.

**P:** 08 9937 1104 or 08 9937 1495

**W:** [www.kalbarriwa.info](http://www.kalbarriwa.info)

### City of Perth Winter Arts Festival 2008

**Where:** Central Business District, Perth

**When:** 1 June – 31 August

**How much:** Costs vary

The collaboration between the City of Perth and many iconic Western Australian arts organisations aims to promote the city's dynamic arts and cultural scene over the winter months. The festival will offer an incredibly rich tapestry of theatre, music, dance and arts, all revolving around this year's theme – Gods and Heroes.

**P:** 08 9461 3187

**W:** [www.perthwinterartsfestival.com.au](http://www.perthwinterartsfestival.com.au)

### WASO – A Hero's Life

**Where:** Perth Concert Hall, Perth

**When:** 13-14 June

**How much:** Adults from \$20.00

Richard Strauss immortalises the epic struggle between private inner life and the tumultuous outer world, battling for understanding and recognition in *Ein Heldenleben*. A symphonic tour de force sees WASO at its powerful best. Stunning young Dutch mezzo soprano Christianne Stotijn makes her debut with the orchestra in Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, a delicate and wistful song cycle of love. Tadaaki Otaka appears courtesy of Japan Australia (MIMI) Pty Ltd.

**P:** 08 9326 0000

**W:** [www.waso.com.au](http://www.waso.com.au)

### Kimberley Writers Festival

**Where:** Kununurra Community Library, Kununurra

**When:** 20-22 June

**How much:** Costs vary

The Kimberley Writers Festival is a major event on the community calendar. This annual festival features authors, illustrators, musicians and songwriters from throughout Australia and highlights the unique Kimberley landscape as a backdrop for creativity, inspiration and literary, musical and artistic stories.

**P:** 08 9169 1227

**W:** [www.thelastfrontier.com.au](http://www.thelastfrontier.com.au)



## N.T. & Tasmania

### Merrepen Arts Festival

**Where:** Nauiyu, Daly River, NT

**When:** 30 May – 1 June

**How much:** Free entry

Merrepen Arts Festival is fast becoming one of Australia's premier Aboriginal cultural festivals with art, music, traditional dance and bush tucker set in the scenic Daly River Region. The focus of the festival is the beautiful artwork produced by the Merrepen artists to be auctioned on Sunday morning. The 2008 Festival will feature a concert by one of the NT's best Indigenous acts, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, in collaboration with one of Australia's finest string quartets.

**P:** 08 8978 2533

**W:** [www.topendarts.com.au](http://www.topendarts.com.au)

### Brunette Downs Races

**Where:** Brunette Downs Station, Tennant Creek, NT

**When:** 12-15 June

**How much:** Costs vary

The biggest event on the Barkly Tablelands social calendar, these iconic races attract visitors from all around Australia. Running for almost a century, the Brunette Downs races is one of Australia's best kept outback secrets.

**P:** 08 89644796

**W:** [www.abcraces.com.au](http://www.abcraces.com.au)

### Southern Tasmanian Vineyards Red Wine Weekend

**Where:** Hadleys Hotel, Hobart, TAS

**When:** 14-15 June

**How much:** \$15.00 (includes all tastings and tasting glass)

Tantalise your taste buds with some of the best red wines Southern Tasmania has to offer. In 2007 WineSouth brought you the inaugural White Wine Weekend, now WineSouth is pleased to bring to you the Southern Tasmanian Vineyards Red Wine Weekend. A unique wine tasting event featuring popular cool climate styles, museum wines and barrel samples from Southern Tasmania's premium producers.

**P:** 03 6248 1496

**W:** [www.winesouth.com.au](http://www.winesouth.com.au)

### Tastings at the Top

**Where:** Cradle Mountain Lodge, Cradle Mountain, TAS

**When:** 21-23 June

**How much:** From \$1,405

Indulge in a three-day gourmet extravaganza, rated among the country's best food and wine experiences. From degustation dinners to cooking demonstrations; fresh produce markets to wine tastings; wilderness walks to decadent spa treatments, Tastings at the Top encompasses the very best Tasmania has to offer.

**P:** 03 6492 2100

**W:** [www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au](http://www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au)



## New Zealand

### World Environment Day

**Where:** Various venues, Wellington

**When:** 6 June

**How much:** Free entry

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The main international celebrations of World Environment Day 2008 will be held in Wellington. The Day will highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and lifestyles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption.

**P:** +64 4 4994 229

**W:** [www.nzlive.com](http://www.nzlive.com)

### International Rally of Whangarei

**Where:** Town Basin, Whangarei, Northland

**When:** 6-8 June

**How much:** TBA

The 2008 International Rally of Whangarei is the third round of the 2008 Asia Pacific Rally Championship as well as Round 3 of the FIA Pacific Cup and Round 3 of the Vantage Aluminium Joinery New Zealand Championship. This exhilarating event starts in Whangarei and competitors will road race via Waipu and Paparoa, returning to Whangarei.

**P:** +64 9 2760 882

**W:** <http://rallywhangarei.co.nz>

### Fieldays: The NZ National Agricultural Fieldays

**Where:** Mystery Creek Events Centre, Hamilton, Waikato

**When:** 11-14 June

**How much:** TBA

New Zealand's premier agricultural event will run for its 40<sup>th</sup> year in 2008. Fieldays is the largest agricultural trade show, attracting more than 1,000 exhibitors and around 120,000 visitors each year. Don't miss this world-class event!

**P:** +64 7 8434 499

**W:** [www.fieldays.co.nz](http://www.fieldays.co.nz)

### American Express Queenstown Winterfestival 2008

**Where:** Various locations, Queenstown

**When:** 27 June – 6 July

**How much:** Costs vary

American Express Queenstown Winter Festival attracts some 60,000 people for a 10-day frenzy of concerts, balls, races, fireworks, bands, comedy, debates, food, wine ... you name it, you'll find it here! It must be a summer thing!

**P:** +64 3 4412 453

**W:** [www.winterfestival.co.nz](http://www.winterfestival.co.nz)



## Pacific Islands

### Fiji Bula Marathon

**Where:** Coral Coast, Fiji

**When:** 17 May

**How much:** Entry fee US\$40.00

One of Fiji's main sporting events, the Fiji Bula Marathon features a scenic course along Fiji's beautiful Coral Coast. The event includes a marathon, half-marathon, 10 kilometre run, 5 kilometre run, Expo, Carbo Party, Awards buffet, cultural displays and entertainment. Overall male and female winners in the marathon win a return trip to the 2009 Bula Marathon flying Air Pacific.

**P:** +67 9 670 2320

**W:** [www.fijimarathon.com](http://www.fijimarathon.com)

### Ha'apai Festival

**Where:** Various venues, Tonga

**When:** Week of 4 June

In early June, the Ha'apai group celebrates the three-day Ha'apai Festival, coinciding with Emancipation Day. The festival begins on the outer islands of the Ha'apai group and ends on Lifuka Island on the 4 June.

**P:** +67 625 334

**E:** [info@tvb.gov.to](mailto:info@tvb.gov.to)

**W:** [www.tongaholiday.com](http://www.tongaholiday.com)

### Vanuatu Ocean Swims

**Where:** Port Vila & Espiritu Santo Aorea

**When:** 7 & 10 June

**How much:** Costs vary

Quickly becoming the 'must-do' event on the international swim calendar, the Vanuatu Ocean Swims, i.e. Port Vila & Espiritu Santo Aorea swims, take place in the South Pacific's most beautiful oceans with a perfect mix of challenge, fun and adventure.

**P:** +67 822 68

**E:** [trade@tourism.vu](mailto:trade@tourism.vu)

**W:** [www.pacificswims.com](http://www.pacificswims.com)

### 12<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Island Social Ballroom Dancing Week

**Where:** Various venues, Norfolk Island

**When:** 14-22 June

**How much:** Registration fee \$190

The 12<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Island Social Ballroom Dancing Week promises to be an exciting week indeed. The registration fee includes a welcome dinner, daily workshops, six evening dances including theme night (Roaring Twenties) and a gala dinner dance. Participate in the festival and spoil yourself with a beautiful island holiday.

**P:** +67 232 2502

**E:** [debbie@travelcentre.nf](mailto:debbie@travelcentre.nf)

**W:** [www.travelcentre.nf](http://www.travelcentre.nf)



# FIT FOR THE Queen

When Jim Frecklington was just eight years old, he had a pony that refused to take a rider. So he built a cart and coaxed the pony into towing him in it. Extraordinarily, that experience has taken him all the way to Buckingham Palace and into the realms of the Royal Family.

[Words & Photography] Mark Wallace

**JIM** has come a long way since those days on his father's property in the NSW town of Peak Hill, near Parkes. He is no longer building carts for wayward ponies. Nowadays you'll find him in a former military workshop on the North Head peninsula in the Sydney suburb of Manly building a carriage fit for a Queen, indeed, a carriage fit for *the* Queen.

The State Coach *Britannia* is an extraordinary feat of engineering, an exquisite work of art featuring the finest and most detailed craftsmanship from a team of artisans inspired by a desire to do something nobody else can do and to do it better than anyone might think possible.

Over the top? Possibly, but consider this: The State Coach *Britannia* is the first Royal Coach to be built since 1988, when Mr Frecklington's team built the Australian State Coach, which became the Bicentennial gift to the Queen from the people of Australia. That was the first Royal Coach to be built for the British Royal family since 1902.

"If you own a beautiful car, sooner or later it is going to need replacing, and Royal Coaches are no different," Mr Frecklington told *Rotarian Life*. "The fact is that nobody else – not even in Britain – makes them any more."

The State Coach *Britannia* is, however, far more than a mere diamond-encrusted, gold-inlaid indulgence. It is a work of history and creativity. Indeed, the State Coach *Britannia* is a time capsule, featuring inlaid relics of historic ships, cathedrals, palaces and castles and items of historic significance that relate to British history from all over the world. These include HMS *Victory*, the *Mary Rose*, the *Queen Mary*, Canterbury Cathedral, Lincoln Cathedral, St Pauls Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, York Minster, Althorp, Blenheim Palace, Edinburgh Castle, Hampton Court Palace, the Palace of Westminster, the Tower of London and even – if current endeavours go well – a piece of the desk from the White House's Oval Office. And that's just for starters.

"I've had visitors from Africa and the United States who see all that is contained and they've said to me, 'this is part of the history of my country,' acknowledging that the British played such an important role in the history of the world as we know it today," said Mr Frecklington.

"We're constantly on the lookout for items that we can include. We have a piece of kauri from New Zealand, for instance, which is believed to be the oldest piece of workable wood known to man."

There is a list of craftsmen and women who have contributed to the project that is as long as your arm, but typical among them is Paula Church, an established artist in her own right, whose attention to detail and skill with intricate brushwork would be the envy of a micro-surgeon.

Heraldry is an exacting art form in which 'near enough' is not good enough. Comparisons with other artists' versions of the Royal Coat of Arms on other State Coaches show more detail in Paula's work – but you'd probably need a magnifying glass to detect it!

Jim Frecklington's CV would be the envy of many an adventurer, including work in the Arctic region just 100km from the Magnetic North Pole and a stint in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. In between those postings he worked at Windsor Castle looking

after the Duke of Edinburgh's four-in-hand team of horses and then at the Royal Mews in London looking after the Queen's Royal ceremonial horses.

In 1987 he began building the Australian State Coach as a fitting Bicentennial project. Once Queen Elizabeth approved and with the Australian Government's endorsement, he was left with just 11 months to build it following several unavoidable delays. But that's exactly what happened and it now stands on display at the Royal Mews and is used on important State occasions. In 1991 Jim was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his achievements.

Now, as the State Coach *Britannia* is transformed from just another idea to yet another achievement, Jim Frecklington will soon accompany it aboard a cargo jet to London to oversee its safe arrival.

But it might never have happened were it not for that stubborn pony at Peak Hill.

**To arrange an inspection of the State Coach Britannia call Jim Frecklington on 02 9977 1085.**

**For more information visit [www.downau.com/britannia](http://www.downau.com/britannia) ■**





**THE** SkillsOne Virtual Tour is an innovative, unique and fun way to explore the trades and skills sector and a great resource for students, school leavers, teachers, career advisors and training colleges.

The Virtual Tour recreates a real-life Careers & Employment Skills Expo in a 3D animated environment. Visitors to the interactive careers stands are able to explore exhibitor stands, watch videos, view and download brochures in a quick, free and accessible way.

CEO of The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, Mr Brian Wexham, says the alliance with EOC Group and the introduction of the SkillsOne Virtual Tour will further offer industry the opportunity to showcase their businesses in an innovative and interactive way.

## 3D Careers Expo 24/7

Continuing its quest to address Australia's growing skills shortage, The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence and SkillsOne Television have joined forces with EOC Group Pty Ltd to create the SkillsOne Virtual Tour.

"With traditional Careers Expos, there are only two or three days to view the exhibits. The SkillsOne Virtual Tour is a 24/7 Careers Expo where exhibitors get 12 months of exposure."

Creator and Producer of the Virtual Tour, Roy Wright says, "The introduction of the Virtual Tour onto the SkillsOne website will be a great addition for organisations to promote trade skills and engage new generations in a way they want to receive information."

The SkillsOne Virtual Tour is a significant opportunity for industry groups, companies and educators to optimise and promote their business, career pathways and profiles, courses and key messages to domestic and overseas audiences. The Tour will initially showcase 40 exhibitors when it is launched at the Sydney Careers Expo this month. "A very impressive start," says Mr Wexham.

*For more information about the SkillsOne Virtual Tour, contact EOC Group Pty Ltd on 03 8646 6200 or 1300 667 121 or email [skillsonvirtualtour@eoc.com.au](mailto:skillsonvirtualtour@eoc.com.au) To view a demonstration, visit [www.skillsonevirtualtour.eoc.com.au](http://www.skillsonevirtualtour.eoc.com.au) or view the SkillsOne Virtual Tour partner site [www.virtualcareersexpo.com](http://www.virtualcareersexpo.com) ■*

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## DISCOVER CHINA In Comfort and Style

**AS** the world's most populous country and one of the largest in Asia, China offers such a diverse array of cultural, historic and scenic wonders that it's hard to know where to start.

Bob Malcolm from Lifestyle Travel and Cruise Centre understands this dilemma better than most. He's been travelling to China for more than 20 years, designing and fine-tuning itineraries for his personally escorted small group tours.

"There really is just so much to see – from the hustle and bustle of the cities to the enchanted tranquillity of the rice fields and rivers, from historical highlights like the Great Wall and the Forbidden City to the colourful ethnic minorities of the west," he says.

"For first-time visitors, we've developed our 'Best of China' itinerary, which combines all the iconic sights and experiences with the opportunity to meet local families in some of the smaller communities, so you can immerse yourself in the real China."

Priced from just \$7,200 per person twin share, this 20-day program offers a quality travel experience from start to finish with excellent, mostly five-star accommodation and comprehensive sightseeing.

"Easy transport connections, the services of local guides in each area and the fact that I'll be on-hand to assist with any special requests leaves you free to just relax and enjoy all that China has to offer."

*The fully detailed itinerary of this fantastic tour is only available through Lifestyle Travel, phone 07 5599 2929. ■*

# Loaded & Ready

**IF** you have never forgotten to load your camera with film, then either you are very organised, you don't own a camera, or you're not trying hard enough. Still, it is really hard to get great photos without film in your camera!

Often the best shots are fleeting moments and unless you are ready, you may not have time to load a new film to get the shot. On one occasion after shooting a sunset I thought, "Oh well, that's it for the day," and started to pack my unloaded camera away. Then, thankfully, I remembered my own rule and decided to load a new film before putting the camera away. I had just closed the camera case and was about to leave when suddenly the sun broke through the clouds one last time to provide a brilliant light show and everything was happening at once. Fortunately, I was able to grab the camera out and click off just a few shots before the sun went back behind the clouds and the moment passed. If I'd had to

put a new film into the camera, I would have missed the moment because the scene was only illuminated for the briefest time. It's always best to keep your cameras loaded and ready to go.

Those using digital cameras always need to ensure they have downloaded and saved their digital images to make room for new images. And whether you use film or digital, it is important to ensure you have adequate power in your batteries at all times. Don't put your camera away when your batteries are low. Otherwise, when you pull it out to capture that once in a lifetime shot, you could be kicking yourself. You need to be prepared.

*Enjoy the journey,*

*Ken Duncan,*



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## COUNTRY Lamb Shanks

Warm up the autumn evenings with this hearty lamb shank recipe

### Ingredients

4-6 lamb shanks, trimmed of end knuckle  
 4 tbsp flour, seasoned with salt and pepper  
 1 tsp paprika  
 2 tbsp oil  
 2 onions, peeled and chopped  
 2 tsp minced garlic  
 2 cups beef stock  
 1 cup orange juice  
 227g packet pitted prunes  
 ½ cup barley  
 Grated rind 1 orange  
 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme

### Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 160°C.
2. Mix the seasoned flour and paprika in a plastic bag, add the lamb shanks and toss to coat. Reserve any remaining flour.



3. Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole dish and brown the lamb shanks a few at a time. Set aside. Stir in the onions and garlic and cook for two minutes. Add the remaining flour and cook for a further minute.
4. Stir in the beef stock and orange juice and once a sauce has formed, add the prunes, barley, orange rind and thyme. Return the lamb shanks to the casserole dish. Cover and bake for 2-2½ hours or until the meat is tender. Season with salt and pepper before serving.

*Recipe courtesy of Beef & Lamb New Zealand. Visit [www.beeflambnz.co.nz](http://www.beeflambnz.co.nz) for more delicious beef and lamb recipes. ■*



**FUNDING BRAIN RESEARCH  
 INCREASING AWARENESS**

### Who is the BRAIN FOUNDATION?

The Brain Foundation is an Australian registered charity which raises money to fund on-going, crucial research in Australia into brain diseases and all other known neurological disorders as well as brain and spinal injuries.

The Brain Foundation is self funding so 100% of your donation or bequest goes to the research fund. Tax deductions apply to donations.

*Someone you know will be touched by one of these brain disorders...*

**...YOUR DONATION COULD FUND THE BREAKTHROUGH!**

**[www.brainaustralia.org.au](http://www.brainaustralia.org.au) for more information on the  
 Brain Foundation or call 1300 886 660**

### What does the BRAIN FOUNDATION do?

Each year the Brain Foundation funds through its Research Grant Program, Australian researchers in their quest to find preventative measures, faster diagnosis and ultimately seeking cures into brain diseases, disorders and injuries as well as brain and spinal injuries. The Brain Foundation Research Grant Awards are funded through the generosity of individual and corporate donors and bequests.

Headache Australia seeks to raise awareness and educate the community on the incidence and impact of chronic headaches and migraines in the community. Chronic headaches and migraines impact upon millions of individuals, their families and employers through lost productivity. The cost of chronic headache and migraines to the community is high and often underrated.

# Summit funny about 2020

[Words] Max Crus



Why not give it a go and if they stuff it up, blokes will still blame someone else, but for a change, they'd be right.

Meanwhile, getting back to Einstein, there is one notable exception to his maxim – wine.

Same vines, same technique, etc, yet invariably you get a different result each year. For example:

Robert Oatley Wild Oats Shiraz Viognier  
2006 [\$25.00]

Same grapes, same price, but better than last year's. Reap what ye shall sow, so let's have another glass. **8.3/10**

Lillypilly Sauvignon Blanc 2007 [\$14.50]

Fair fare for a fair price and quite feminine to boot so you won't get as angry after a few glasses. **8/10**

Bremerton Sauvignon Blanc 2007  
(handcrafted by Rebecca Willson – with  
two 'L's) [\$18.00]

Is it Rebecca's silhouette on the label? Can Langhorne Creek do no wrong? Can Rebecca do no wrong? 2020 questions. **8.5/10**

Punt Road Airlie Bank Chardonnay Pinot  
Noir Pinot Meunier 2005 [\$10.00]

This is what you get when you put women in charge, – the true grapes of traditional bubbly, a crown seal and a cheap, cool package for your party pop. **8.3/10**

Rymill Connawarra Cabernet Sauvignon  
2005, [\$28.50]

Ten years after the first tasting, this has changed but is no less attractive. **8.7/10**

Steinborner Caroliene Semillon 2007  
[\$16.00]

'Tough old Barossan bird' could describe Caroliene, the ancestral matriarch of the Steinborner family. Thankfully the same cannot be said of her descendants' wines, but this semillon packs a punch anyway. **8/10** ■

**FANCY** having a summit this week at which one thousand of Australia's top brains will gather just to talk about cricket? Specially the much maligned, fastest version of the world's slowest game, Twenty20.

A Prime Minister with an approval rating higher than Kosciusko can do what he likes. However, the 2020 Summit – despite those brains doing their best to get out of the box, the circle, the envelope, or whatever is the cliché de jour for academic and business types to extricate themselves from – is just more of the same and the Summit is doomed because of it.

The steering committee who chose the thousand brainy buggers were mostly men – nine out of 11.

The ratio of nine good men to a couple of nice chicks is pretty much the way Australia has always been run and if we are to believe Einstein, is "Insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results".

Frankly, we could do better.

How would it be if we had selected the panel with the gender balance the other way around? Australia would become gentler, it would smell better, there'd be less scratching and more grooming, we'd be driving smaller cars, there would be a lot more shopping, everything would match and we'd have far fewer clichés – or at least we might get some better ones.

# Reinvent Yourself in Retirement

[Words] Eva Bennett, author of *So What Do We Do Now?*

**DURING** your working life, you were identified by your role – Bob the Builder, Tina the Teacher, David the Doctor, Mick the Mechanic. This title created a sense of identity and a feeling of self-worth. For men in particular, this loss of identity in retirement can be distressing. But by accepting the reality that this chapter of their lives is over, they have the freedom to choose what they really want to do in this third stage of life – something that will give meaning to the next 20 to 30 years of retirement.

It's interesting the number of people, mainly men, who come up after a seminar and tell me they are scared of retirement because they don't know what they'll do. It is an issue that needs thought, ideally before retirement starts.

One man I spoke with already had a new role in mind for his approaching retirement. He is an accountant and in his spare time upholsters furniture. He plans to develop this hobby into a small business when he retires. He spoke with excitement about the new opportunities that life in retirement could bring him.

A friend of ours retired a few years ago after running a busy motel for 15 years. He enjoyed the initial 'holiday' period, but after a couple of years was getting bored. He wanted to have some purpose in his life and now drives a country school bus a few hours each day. He



still has time to play golf a couple of times a week.

So start reinventing yourself. You are your own boss now. Do something you would really like to do. Use skills you already have, learn new ones, do volunteer work, the list is endless. Your local newspaper often holds ideas. Good luck with your reinvention!

*If you have a story you would like to share with me, send to [ebennett@ebec.com.au](mailto:ebennett@ebec.com.au) For more details on how to purchase 'So What Do We Do Now?' visit [www.ebec.com.au](http://www.ebec.com.au) ■*



**IN** your goal to be healthy as you get older, the most important thing is to remember that what you do today counts. Many people aim to radically overhaul their lifestyles with strict diets and punishing exercise regimes that are not sustainable. What they are doing is setting themselves up for failure. As my neighbour and international body building champion Paul Valentine says, 'if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail'.

So if you want to live a healthier life, you need to have goals and a plan and also to look at what are the things that sabotage your success. One common thing that stops us achieving health goals is the people around us. Sometimes your loved ones and family can unintentionally stop you sticking to your plans to get regular

exercise, to choose healthy, anti-oxidant rich foods and to limit alcohol. What is really important is to have a strategy in place to deal with those saboteurs. For example, if you visit family and they always have rich cakes and desserts, think about how you will say 'just a small slice for me'.

If your husband or wife doesn't follow the same healthy lifestyle, then you need to remember that you can set a good example, but ultimately it's up to all of us to take that personal responsibility for our own health.

Mark Stibich runs a great website called 'about longevity'. He says everything you do everyday adds up to whether or not you will be healthy as you get older. He urges people in their 50s, 60s and 70s to make sure they get the necessary screening tests. "Even in your 60s you can still reverse heart disease and improve your overall health greatly, even if you don't get started until your 60s."

As the weather starts to get cooler, think about how you will get regular exercise. In the United States, many shopping centres have 'mall walking clubs' for when it's too cold to exercise outside. So if it gets too cold in your area, pop your walking shoes on and start powerwalking around your local shopping centre (no stopping for doughnuts afterwards though)!

*You can read more tips and ideas on staying motivated to be healthy in my book, 'Live a Longer Life', available from ABC book shops and online. Check out my website [www.livealongerlife.com.au](http://www.livealongerlife.com.au) for more details. ■*

## The Burma Railway, Hellships & Coalmines

Tony Carter & Neil MacPherson  
Parker Pattinson Publishing  
RRP: \$35.00

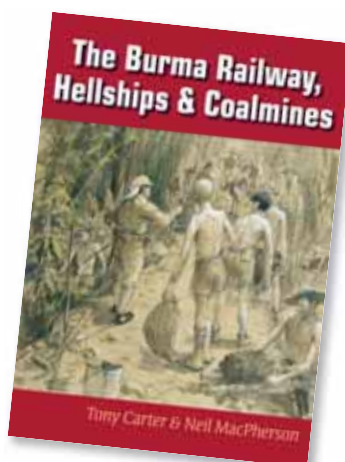
THE experiences as a POW of Mick McCarthy, Past President and Paul Harris Fellow of the Rotary Club of Quirindi in District 9650, have been recorded in a new book, *The Burma Railway, Hellships & Coalmines*, written by Club Past President Tony Carter and Mick's fellow POW, Neil MacPherson, from Western Australia.

The book was launched in Perth on the 16 March by the President of the RSL in WA, Bill Gaynor, OAM, RFD and the audience was addressed by the Japanese Consul for WA, Mr Hyosuke Yasui. Mr Yasui spoke of the positive change in Australia-Japan relations, the need for reconciliation and the increasing awareness by the Japanese people of aspects of the Second World War. These sentiments are re-enforced by Neil in a chapter of the book.

Tony says the book took time to evolve, starting with the 'Australia Remembers 1945-1995' program. A small team connected to Quirindi Rotary developed a series of articles from Mick McCarthy's notes and interviews which were published in the local newspaper. As team leader, I asked Mick what he thought about the articles. He replied, "They're alright, but there are some inaccuracies".

Mick's words played on my conscience and after he died, I still had all the source material. Much of Mick's original wartime diary had been destroyed by the Japanese and he had assiduously built his diary again with short notes on key dates in his bible. Among his papers happened to be a list of key dates on the back of a family letter he had kept separate to his original diary.

I set out to research his wartime diary and cross-referenced the work to produce as accurate an account as possible of Mick's diary in his words. The work took me over 10 years, but I was fortunate to have wonderful encouragement from Neil MacPherson, who had joined Mick on the Burma Railway and was with him until



the end of WWII. Finally, I published *Mick McCarthy's Diary* in 2005. Neil invited my wife and I to join him on a tour to Thailand celebrating ANZAC Day in 2006. During the tour we discussed reprinting *Mick's Diary*. Neil and Mick had both started on the railway in Burma, worked through to Thailand, sailed on the same hellship to Japan and been in the same room in the same Prison Camp in Japan. They returned to Australia on the same ships. I felt there was merit in combining their stories. The more I researched, the more I formed the opinion that these Prisoners of War, who spent three and a half years in close contact with the enemy, exhibited a sustained courage not required of others. In a way, it also brought understanding to the quietness surrounding most returned servicemen and women.

Neil lives in WA and I live in NSW. The logistics of writing a book together would appear daunting. But with a minimum of face to face meetings, thousands of emails, the odd phone call and letter, the book has been built with the help of Parker Pattinson Publishing in two years. Our intention is to assist in understanding part of World War II. We didn't set out to write the ultimate war history. The aim is for the readers to relate with the personalities and the issues that surrounded them. We hope it will act as a tool in framing questions of how, why and when. Some readers may find sufficient answers between the covers, while for others it may stimulate further research.

**For further information and purchasing details contact Tony Carter on 02 6746 18431 or email [cartertito@bigpond.com.au](mailto:cartertito@bigpond.com.au) ■**

## Arrive Alive

A survival bible on safer air travel for tourists & business travellers  
Captain Michael Furniss  
RRP: \$26.50 including P&H

*Review by Guy Clapshaw – Member of the Rotary Club of Pakuranga, Auckland writer and pilot*

NEW ZEALAND is a small nation a long way from anywhere. Australia is over a thousand miles away and the rest of the world even further, so Kiwis are a nation of long-haul travellers. In *Arrive Alive*, Mike Furniss brings us not only a lot of excellent advice acquired from a lifetime of travelling, both as a pilot and passenger, but also a wealth of anecdotes from his years aloft.

The book is an investment in air travel: the reader learns how to plan the trip, save on the cost of tickets, accrue Air Points, where to park the car while you're away, how to maximise your chances of getting up-graded and jump the queue when you're running late. He then describes some of the challenges of airline flying – a night harbour circuit at the old Hong Kong airport, getting locked in a valuable motor vehicle while in flight, where to put a dead passenger and getting hi-jacked in Nandi. Finally, he tells you how to land the aeroplane on autopilot when the crew have been incapacitated.

*Arrive Alive* is enormously entertaining, with many wonderful anecdotes from Mike Furniss' 40 years in aviation.

**Email [mfurniss@ihug.co.nz](mailto:mfurniss@ihug.co.nz) to have a copy with personal dedication delivered to your door ■**

