EUREKA STREET

A MAGAZINE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
THE ARTS AND THEOLOGY
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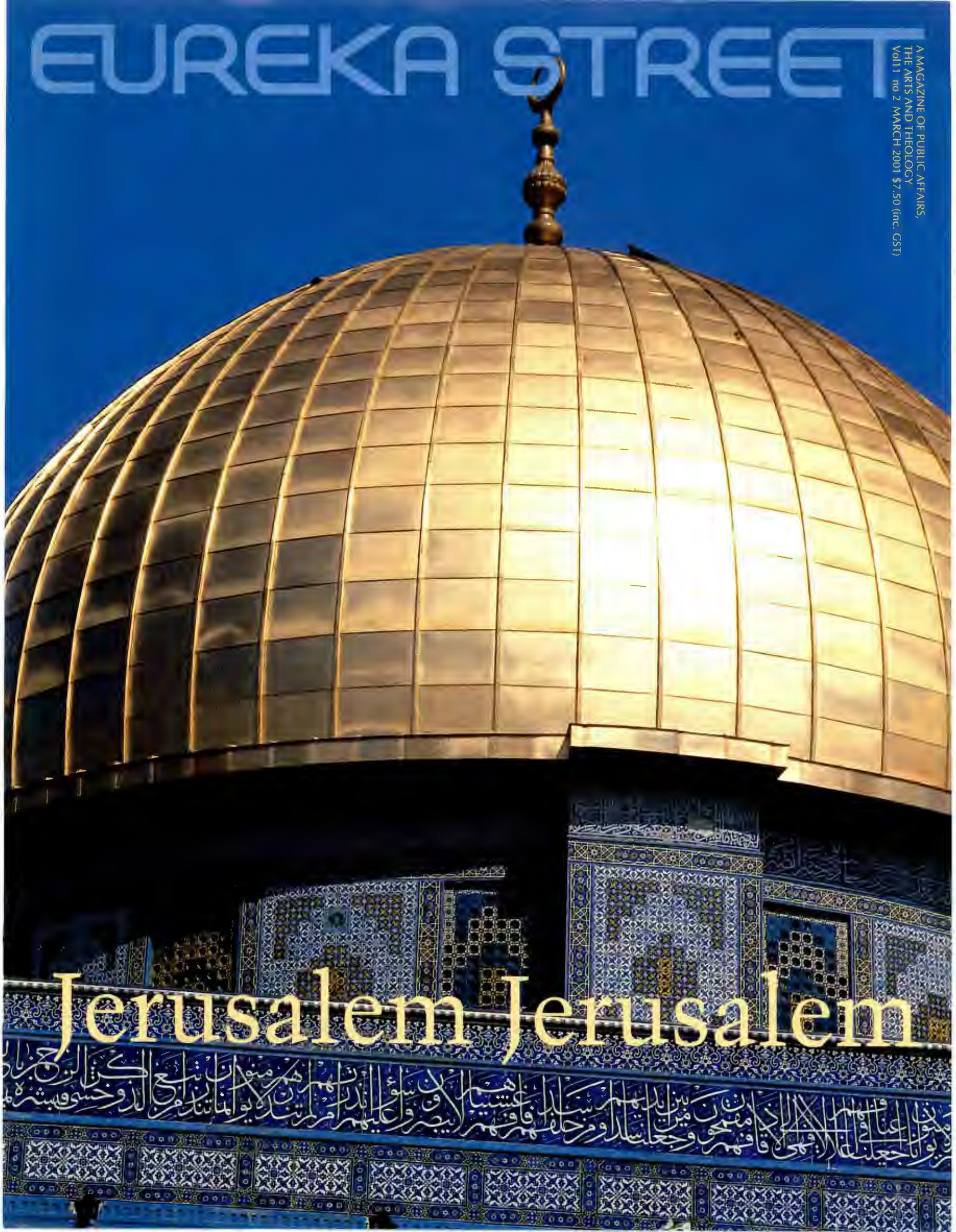
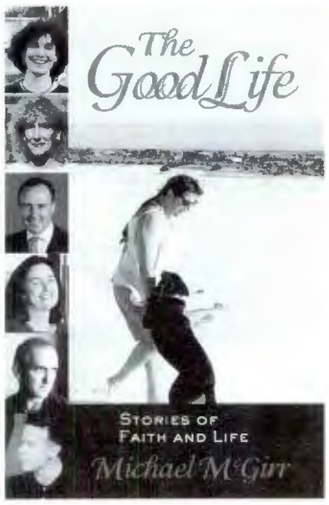


Jerusalem Jerusalem

Special Book Offer



EUREKA STREET

AURORA BOOKS
DAVID LOVELL

THE GOOD LIFE
Edited by Michael McGirr

'This is a book of stories. Most of the stories are about people who are well known, even famous ... But these are not conventional celebrity exposés. They reveal a side of people which is of deeper and more lasting interest to the majority of Australians than gossip. We seldom admit it, but we are interested in the sacred, in God, in that friendly but sometimes unco-operative neighbour known in old Australian slang as Hughie.' —Michael McGirr

Thanks to Aurora Books/David Lovell, *Eureka Street* has 15 copies of *The Good Life* to give away, each worth $21.95. Just put your name and address on the back of an envelope and send it to: *Eureka Street* 'Good Life March Book Offer', PO Box 553, Richmond, VIC, 3121. (*See page 9 for winners of the December 2000 Book Offer.*)

Special Book Offer

summer quiz answers

1. They are all Christian rock bands. **2.** a) *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*; b) *Under Milkwood*; c) *Waiting for Godot*; d) *The Importance of Being Earnest*; e) *As You Like It*. **3.** Both groups practise polyandry. **4.** César Cui; Mily Balakirev; Alexander Borodin; Modeste Mussorgsky; Nicolas Rimsky-Korsakov. **5.** The contrabassoon, sometimes called the double bassoon. **6.** The energetic walker was J.S. Bach. The other composer was Dietrich Buxtehude. **7.** They don't have a pair of carnassial teeth, powerful scissorlike things. **8.** J.S. Bach; George Frederick Handel; Domenico Scarlatti. **9.** Auguste Rodin; Claude Monet; Pierre Auguste Renoir; Odilon Redon. **10.** 1. Catherine of Aragon; divorced and lived in seclusion until her death in 1536, a hollow victory for her rival, as it turned out. This was so he could wed: 2. Anne Boleyn, mother of Elizabeth I, beheaded in 1536 on trumped-up adultery charges when she failed to produce a male heir. Henry immediately married her lady in waiting: 3. Jane Seymour, who died less than a year later producing the male heir. This made him disconsolate for five minutes so he chose: 4. Anne of Cleves. The lucky one. He disliked her looks and pensioned her off after six months, declaring the marriage void. Died comfortably off, outliving almost everyone else in the drama, in 1557. He then turned his beady eyes on: 5. Catherine Howard; the really unlucky one. Beheaded at 22 in 1542 after two years married to the old hog. 6. Catherine Parr; she had buried two husbands and presumably felt one more corpse wouldn't matter. She survived him, but not her next husband, Lord Sudeley, only lasting a year of that marriage. **11.** Annie Jump Cannon (1863–1941). **12.** a) Amerigo Vespucci (1451–1512); b) In 1507, German cartographer Martin Waldeseemüller (c.1470–1521) first used the name, referring to South America. (In 1538, Gerhardus Mercator (Gerhard Kremer, 1512–1594) used the term to refer to both continents.) **13.** a) Apparatus for tracking ionised particles; b) a civil and criminal court at the Palace of Westminster, so-called because of its star-shaped ceiling decoration. Created in 1487 by Henry VII, it became notorious under Charles I for the partiality of its judgments; c) the official definition is 'a board organised to protect the interests of commerce', but entrant Howard Abbott's was far better: 'A gathering of Sheriffs of Nottingham who by a process akin to confession and absolution present themselves as latter-day Robin Hoods.' **14.** a) The glutinous mass of albumen supporting the yolk of birds' eggs; b) a stye on the eyelid. **15.** Choose from: a) carnelian; b) agate; c) tiger's eye; d) onyx; e) chrysoprase; f) sardonyx; g) jasper. **16.** a) Aruba; b) Mayotte; c) Palau. **17.** John McDouall Stuart (1862). **18.** Mt Townsend (2209m). **19.** Bottled beer, or the Anglican Catechism; either will do, depending on your dependencies. **20.** All Canadian-born. (PS: our apologies for a typo: it's Marshall McLuhan, not McCluhan.) **21.** a) The monetary unit of the European Union (or a small wallaby); b) a bond underwritten by an international syndicate and sold in countries other than the country in which the issue is denominated; c) US currency deposited outside the USA, not necessarily in Europe. It is a means of avoiding credit controls. **22.** a) Litotes, but if you said meiosis you'll get half a point; b) hyperbole; c) aposiopesis. Pope is quoted in the Oxford Dictionary as saying '... an excellent figure for the ignorant, as "What shall I say?" when one has nothing to say.' **23.** Jeffrey Immelt. **24.** Aaron Baddeley. **25.** From English pugilist Abednego Thompson. **26.** The one-handed lift (abolished 1928) and the press (abolished after 1972). **27.** a) Marie Corelli; b) Joseph Conrad; c) George Eliot; d) Mark Twain. **28.** Jim Laker. **29.** 1910. **30.** The British Parliament passed the *Constitution of Australia Act* in 1900. **31.** Corowa. **32.** 3.788 million. **33.** Nine: the six states, the two territories and Federal Parliament. **34.** South Australia in 1894. **35.** At the Melbourne Exhibition Buildings. **36.** He was made a Judge of the High Court. **37.** Sir John Forrest (1847–1918) who clashed with a certain Sir Malcolm Fraser. **38.** Andrew Inglis Clark. **39.** Rose Scott, founding president in 1903 of the post-suffrage Women's Political and Education League. **40.** E.W. O'Sullivan (1846–1910).

Thank you to the many witty and ingenious readers who sent in entries for the January–February 2001 Summer Quiz. **Congratulations** to winner Tyler Sexton who will receive *Big John Forrest 1847–1918* by Frank Crowley (University of Western Australia Press), *Edmund Barton: The One Man for the Job* by Geoffrey Bolton (Allen & Unwin), *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* by John Hirst (Oxford University Press) and *Makers of Miracles: The Cast of the Federation Story* by David Headon and John Williams (Melbourne University Press).

Australia Council for the Arts

Kerryn Goldsworthy's essay and Jon Greenaway's Burma reportage has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

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EUREKA STREET

A MAGAZINE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, THE ARTS AND THEOLOGY
VOLUME 11 NUMBER 2 MARCH 2001

MORAG FRASER

New decade

IN THE DECEMBER 1997 issue of *Eureka Street* there is a photograph which catches one of the highlights of our first ten years of existence.

You can look it up on pp26–27 (if you have the requisite orderly magazine shelves). Three men, Paul Lane, Frank Brennan and Patrick Dodson, sit together at a kitchen table. The afternoon light reflects the animation of their conversation. It's the day that the Native Title Amendment Bill passed through the Upper house. It is also the day on which Nugget Coombs died. That evening, Pat Dodson and Frank Brennan spoke about reconciliation to a full church meeting at St Ignatius, Richmond.

It was a good night, not without its ironies and abrasions. Neither speaker is a man to fudge facts or skirt difficulties—and there are plenty.

But I remember the evening as much for its preparation as for its completion. There is another figure in the photograph, a man in a striped T-shirt, his back to the camera. He's cooking spaghetti for all of us. His name is Brother John Stamp.

'Stampy'—which is how I knew him—was one of *Eureka Street*'s custodians. From the wings he supervised its course and kept a weather eye on its editor. We both like the engine rooms of a business, and Stampy talked my language.

He died in January. Andrew Hamilton, in this month's Summa Theologiae, pays him tribute. *Eureka Street* will remember Stampy with something more than gratitude every time we begin a new venture.

And the first venture to celebrate this tenth year will be a *Eureka Street* Monday at Newman College, Melbourne. Details below and on our website. See you there.

—Morag Fraser

Two architectural wonders, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (top) and the minarets of Mahabat Moqbara in Gujarat (left) stand while politics and nature convulse around them. See John Levi's cover story, p16, and Anthony Ham's 'Gujarat in mind', p10.

***Eureka Street* Mondays at Newman College**

'When Was Our Nation Born?'

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ANDREW HAMILTON

Holding fast

IN THE BEGINNING, Lent was about fasting: first for a few days before Easter, then a rigorous period of 40 days in which, as in Ramadan, you were allowed only one meal at evening, and without meat or dairy products.

Later Lent became less onerous, and now in the West, it is less a time of fasting than of reflection and of generosity, especially to the needy. While the change is good, the tradition of fasting is often seen as an embarrassment. Understandably so, given the contemporary cult of dieting and its pathologies (anorexia, for instance) prevalent in the wider culture. Many scholars of comparative religion, too, explain fasting unflatteringly as an attempt to gain the attention of the gods by showing that we are serious. The Reformation reacted against fasting and against Lent for similar reasons, believing that they encouraged the belief that God is open to manipulation.

Yet when heavy guns are so brought to bear, the target often contains treasure that makes it worth preserving. There is something more to be said about fasting. In Lent, as in Ramadan, the value of fasting must be seen in its connection with the feasting which follows it. Lent is followed by Easter, a time of colour and of feasting, and you misunderstand the fasting unless you attend to what is to come. In folk Catholicism, children knew this instinctively. When they gave up lollies for Lent, and instead put them into a jar to await Easter, the jar was certainly a symbol of self-denial, but it also symbolised their eager expectation of a pig-out come noon on Holy Saturday.

I suspect that those who see in fasting no more than an attempt to manipulate or please God neglect its connection with feasting. It is widespread because it is a way of keeping alive and of giving structure to a stubborn, delicate sense of the lightness of being. This sense is embodied in feasting, but usually only when the feasting is distilled in the heaviness of a discipline.

If this is true, it suggests that in Lent and in its symbol of fasting something important is at stake. It has to do with the shaping of the imagination and the way in which we see the world. The origins of Lent in the preparation for Easter emphasises for those who take part in it the transition from the suffering of Jesus to the joy of his rising. It indicates that this rhythm is significant for the way in which Christians live their lives.

But the period of fasting before the feasting of Easter also shapes the imagination in less tangible ways. It moulds the connections we make between this life and the next life, between work and play, between discipline and fulfilment. An imagination shaped by the rhythms of Lent has to take time and history seriously, because it encourages us to understand happiness and fulfilment only in the light of a period of struggle, and vice versa. It suggests a tension between what is fought for and what is achieved, between the harshness of bodily disciplines, whether imposed or symbolically chosen, and the lightness of being which attracts us. It also suggests that, like the Sundays that interrupt the Lenten fast, minor victories are only intimations of a larger hope.

WHILE THIS IMAGINATION is crucial within Christian living, it may also be more generally important within our society. Without an imagination in which journey and destination, structure and vision, struggle and fulfilment, are always seen in relationship to one another, we are condemned either to the expectation that major goals can be achieved without considerable cost and pain, or to a politics that avoids speaking of goals, dealing only in the discipline of structures, administration and balance sheets. Such a politics breeds cynicism, because at election time it always promises feasting, while between elections, it offers only fasting, with no relationship between them. Reconciliation, for example, is either defined in terms of lightness of being, a state of affairs which can be arranged as easily as holding a party and a march, or in terms of a series of minor practical measures that forget larger hopes.

So, if fasting in Lent has disappeared in favour of something more practical, its passing may not be wholly comforting. But Lent continues to invite us to ask ourselves how we attend to the discipline of the imagination, and how we keep alive, through the way in which we use our bodies, the tension between fast and feast, between large hopes and the simple disciplines and predicaments of our lives. ■

Andrew Hamilton SJ is *Eureka Street*'s publisher.

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Capital Letter

Jack Waterford

Spoils of One Nation

If Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party were to serve only two useful purposes, it would be nice to record that it (a) did a good job of reminding politicians about how deeply they are mistrusted and (b) forced them to remember how basic to political survival is the maintenance of government goods and services.

Among the crowd with whom Peter Costello and John Howard walk, indeed down the same corridors that Jeff Kennett and Richard Court have walked, the idea seems to be that being in government is primarily about creating the right conditions for business to flourish. But that's only part of the equation. People may be increasingly agnostic about how goods and services are delivered but they have not changed their minds about expecting them to be delivered, or, indeed, about expecting that their quality should increase at the general rate of government growth.

One of the frustrating things for John Howard is that the goods and services by which people judge the quality of government come primarily through the State government level. Yet, even after the post-GST boost to state revenue, all the signs suggest that, when people are focused on the quality of their local health or educational services, they are thinking of Canberra as much as of Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane.

An added irony might be that whenever John Howard galvanises himself about particular service issues which he knows are hurting his government, he only underlines the shared responsibilities. Extra money poured, with great fanfare, into roads or regional services, for example, sometimes creates the impression that the Commonwealth assumes responsibility for the state of the roads—even more dangerous if one does not program for an Auditor-General's report which indicates that one is in any event careless about spending the money which is available.

Pauline Hanson's other tactic—of trading off the public fear and loathing of politicians by telling her supporters to put sitting politicians last—has its own agenda of forcing other political parties to deal with her. Sooner or later, the parties will; indeed Queensland Nationals have been doing it on an individual basis for some time. The idea, however, that feeding her titbits might mean that she will eat them last is probably displaced. Pauline Hanson's constituency is essentially a conservative one. But fundamentally it is not loyal to the conservative side, and is beyond the capacity of anyone, even Pauline Hanson, to discipline. Hanson wins most support by attacking John Howard—an ungrateful act given what he did to create the circumstances in which she operates. Even more dangerously, every concession made to her in the hope of getting her second-preference votes, annoys some conservatives who will then withhold, particularly from the Liberal Party, their first-preference votes.

Slowly, but seemingly inevitably, the luck is shifting Kim Beazley's way. John Howard has given himself enormous latitude to fight an end-of-year election, but seems increasingly up against it. His frustration is much the same as Paul Keating's was with him in 1995 and early 1996: the government is unpopular, as much a matter of mood as for specific sins, and Labor so far is being reasonably disciplined in preventing its own policies and ideas becoming the issue.

The Labor Party States in power when John Howard was elected are still in power—because they are better organised and project purpose more effectively than their Coalition rivals. And one by one, States which were under Coalition government when Howard arrived have fallen. There have been ample local factors—One Nation, arrogant leaders, corruption, mismanagement, and local economic malaise—but all have also been affected by the personality and policies of John Howard. And Labor in power at the state level gives federal Labor a handy base from which to organise—almost as handy as using public funds for partisan tax advertising has been for the Coalition.

There is not much comfort to be found from the polls either. At the last election, Labor got 51 per cent of the popular vote, but failed to win government because of its performance in a few key seats, particularly in Victoria and NSW. For the past year, two-party preferred voting has suggested that Labor is three or four points ahead of its performance then. That's a lot of ground to peg back, even if one has the resources of the federal Treasury.

And even there, events are moving against Howard. The US economy is slowing down and Australia will inevitably be affected. The confidence that John Howard and Peter Costello are exhibiting that they will be able to manoeuvre a soft landing is eerily similar to that manifested by Paul Keating a decade ago. Some local factors suggest that the situation will be somewhat more manageable here: our stock market never reached the absurd levels of the US, GST tax cuts and increased spending have hit here earlier, and our very competitive dollar is propping up our export performance. But even lower interest rates are unlikely to offset rising unemployment towards the end of the year. Howard and Costello are already testing acknowledgment that things are getting worse, in the hope that voters will rate the Coalition better economic managers in hard times. They probably will, but it may not matter. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of the *Canberra Times*.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARSHIP

For the fourth time, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference is sponsoring a scholarship for a lay person resident in Australia to study social justice at an approved institute. The scholarship will be available for the academic year commencing in 2001 or 2002. The Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace administers the project.

The successful candidate will be a person committed to the Church's mission in the social justice area and will already have completed an appropriate course at tertiary level.

The current value of the scholarship is $24,000 per annum. It can be taken out either within Australia at an institute offering an appropriate course or at an overseas institute such as: The Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome; the Institut Catholique, Paris; Regis College, Toronto; Heythrop College, London; Catholic University, Louvain, Belgium; St Patrick's College, Maynooth; the Alfonsianum, Rome; Boston College, Boston; Berkeley College, San Francisco; Georgetown University, Washington; and (in Australia) the Yarra Theological Union.

For further information, application forms and inquiries, contact the Secretariat of the Bishops' Committee at the following address:

Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace
Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Tel: (02) 9956 5800, Fax: (02) 9956 5782
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CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

Welfare update

From Patrick McClure, CEO, Mission Australia (Chair of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform)

Frank Castles' account of welfare history (*Eureka Street*, January–February 2001) was unfortunately more accurate and detailed than his analysis of the Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform (2000).

Professor Castles' suggestion that the Reference Group effectively reintroduced the stigma of the Poor Law by the back door fails to reflect the content of the Final Report.

Nostalgia for the welfare state with a universal unconditional benefits regime ignores the long-term conditionality of unemployment benefits (as opposed to age pensions) and the massive changes in the social and economic context of income support over the past 20 years. This includes changes to the industrial relations landscape, as sketched by Castles, but also, of course, the pervasive impact of globalisation on our regional economy.

There has been a significant increase in job rich (double income) households as well as job poor families over the past 20 years. There has also been a dramatic decline in traditional single income (male breadwinner) families. The telling statistic of 860,000 children growing up in jobless families illustrates the magnitude of the problem. Globalisation and competition policy have also led to unemployment in certain locations (regional and rural) as well as unskilled workers unable to take advantage of jobs in information, service and retail industries.

The 'one size fits all' welfare approach is no longer relevant to many people most in need, and radical changes are required. The choice is not as Castles and others have suggested, between entirely arbitrary decision-making, resurrecting the spectre of the Poor Law, or a minimum income with relaxation of all conditionality.

Instead, as a recent report published by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia acutely observed, the welfare reform recommendations combine a common participation supplement with individualised service delivery. It is hoped the twin goals of an adequate income and services (sensitive to individual strengths and circumstances) can be achieved.

Robust debate of welfare reform is essential if only to ensure that the government gives full weight to the whole Report in its implementation of all the recommendations.

It is worth noting here that Castles' article ignored the key features of the Final Report's reforms which relate to Individualised Service Delivery, Simple and Responsive Income Support Structure, Incentives and Financial Assistance, Mutual Obligations (of government, business, the community and individuals) and Social Partnerships–Building Community Capacity.

Reliance on social security and labour market programs alone will not be enough if long-term jobless people are not supported and included in the social and economic life of the community.

Proper consideration of the welfare reform will, I suggest, require all of us to consider and embrace a bolder mix of social and economic policy to enable the most disadvantaged among us to enjoy the benefits of full citizenship.

Patrick McClure
Sydney, NSW

Eureka Street welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited. Letters must be signed, and should include a contact phone number and the writer's name and address. If submitting by email, a contact phone number is essential. Address: eureka@jespub.jesuit.org.au

Rorts talk

From David Davies

Jack Waterford has accurately put his finger on a number of issues associated with 'vote rorts' in the ALP (*Eureka Street*, January–February 2001).

December 2000 Book Offer Winners

D. Bradshaw, St Kilda, VIC; D. Crawer, Clovelly West, NSW; L. Crocker, Armidale, NSW; G. Forrest, Garlingford, NSW; B. Gayler, Port Fairy, VIC; M. Gill, Lane Cove, NSW; B. Grenier, South Brisbane, QLD; M. Kerby, Lakes Entrance, VIC; J. Maher, Mount Waverley, VIC; M. Mosch, Annandale, QLD; R. Nicholls, Kew, VIC; G. Peesse, Burrawang, NSW; C. Phillips, North Carlton, VIC; V. Pinder, Bendigo, VIC; C.A. Poussard, Doncaster, VIC.

It is hard to estimate what effect the rorting and stacking has on the Labour–Liberal voting pattern. However, they certainly have a negative effect on the political process, further discouraging people with ideas and ideals from joining parties, and deepening public cynicism about politics.

Waterford is correct in writing that branch-stacking (which I define as recruitment solely for the purpose of internal party preselections and ballots) has been made a little more difficult in the ALP by rule changes. But rules are not always enforced. The major factions have an interest in hushing up major breaches, sometimes extracting concessions from a rival faction as the price for silence.

Also lacking is a culture within the party which regards branch-stacking as unacceptable and rorters as pariahs. A good example is the South Australian branch where 2000 stacks were 'recruited' in one day. Those who blew the whistle suffered in preselections, while those who were involved (and lost an expensive court case on the issue) are evidently still in their positions. Party leaders and publications have maintained a deep silence on this and other examples of rorting.

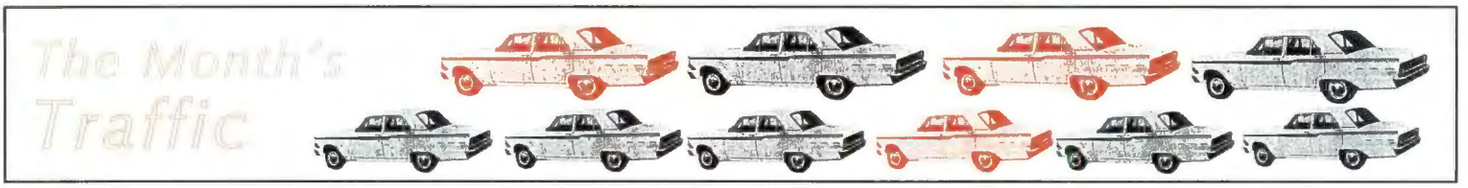
Ordinary members often feel reluctant to raise their voices, because they fear providing ammunition to political opponents. Some are affected by a kind of football-fan mentality which rejects any thought that there are dirty players in 'our team'.

Another factor which inhibits members from speaking out more strongly is the fact that branch-stacking often involves the manipulation of migrant communities. On one hand, this heightens the sense of outrage, being a prostitution of multiculturalism and sometimes leading to bizarre situations. (In one preselection, the issue of amnesty for the Kurdish leader Ocalan was cleverly used to sway a very large Turkish branch against one candidate.) On the other hand, the involvement of ethnic communities inhibits many people who fear being branded as racists if they speak out.

Ordinary members meet a wall of silence when they complain about stacking. There were plenty of warnings from the rank-and-file regarding Queensland. Kim Beazley and Steve Bracks, who I believe are people of integrity, do not reply to my letters detailing rorts which have a corrosive and potentially explosive effect on the Labour Party.

At least they don't tell me that I am wrong.

David Davies
Newport, VIC



Gujarat in mind

In January, Anthony Ham wrote for Eureka Street *about the state of Gujarat. Then came the earthquake.*

THE CITY OF BHUJ and the salt deserts of the Rann of Kachch in Gujarat have always been set apart from the rest of India. Inhabitants of this desolate, isolated land in the country's far west have preserved a culture inextricably tied to the land, a way of life rapidly dying out throughout this rapidly modernising country. Theirs is a life of harsh realities, of existence won through back-breaking toil and of a strong sense of community identity and solidarity.

In a physical sense, too, Kachch frequently becomes an island, separated from the rest of India by monsoonal rains—if they arrive. It is one of the bleakest landscapes on earth.

Ahmedabad, the principal city of Gujarat and home to between four and five million people, lies almost 400km to the west of Kachch. A congested, impossibly polluted city, it contains within it all of the clamour and contradiction of modern India. It is India's industrial heartland, a place of high-tech internet cafés and universities, of a burgeoning middle class and of sprawling shanty towns on the fringe. Along the riverbank the Holiday Inn's best rooms cost over A$450 a night. Directly underneath the inn's balconies, India's urban poor shelter in their thousands in fragile, corrugated shacks.

Kachch and Ahmedabad are worlds apart. One is a surviving bastion of rural India, with a deeply spiritual relationship to the land. The other is a microcosm of a country careering into the 21st century, with all of the attendant dislocation. On the surface, the inhabitants of these two worlds have little in common.

At 8.46am on 26 January they discovered a connection, far beneath the surface of the earth. In less than a minute, both worlds were destroyed. A shared faultline and the gradual northward shift of the Indian subcontinent suddenly combined with catastrophic force. All distinctions between Kachch and Ahmedabad became meaningless, these two juxtaposed faces of modern India forever united by tragedy.

The myths of Kachch are tales of destruction.

One story speaks of Dharmanath, a 12th-century spiritual warrior who settled under a tree near the town of Raipur, expecting the townsfolk to provide for his material needs. Dharmanath became enraged when his requests were refused and cursed the town, forcing its inhabitants to move away. Racked by guilt, Dharmanath climbed a hill backwards and proceeded to stand on his head for 12 years as an act of penance. Finally he relented when the gods pleaded with him to cease. He did so, but only when granted the promise—one last act of vengeance—that any land upon which his gaze fell would become barren. When he looked out over the countryside, the seas receded, leaving a barren, withering wasteland—the Great Rann of Kachch.

According to another legend, the 1819 earthquake was so vast that it diverted the path of the Indus River; it now passes through modern Pakistan, leaving behind it the great salt desert of Kachch.

Early reports from Bhuj told a story as desolate as any of these legends. At the very least, ten per cent of the population killed. Ninety per cent of the buildings in Bhuj destroyed. No buildings in the old city still standing. A *Times of India* reporter described walking past the Hamirsar Tank, just outside the old city walls to the south-west, but being unable to enter because the buildings lining the narrow lanes had imploded and access was impossible. Bhuj is no more.

Four months ago, I walked the streets of Bhuj, then home to over 150,000 people. I knew its faces. I can picture its streets, its enticing alleys winding through the enchanting old city with its crowded bazaars. I can picture the smile of welcome from an old woman close to the bus station. I remember Mr Jethi, the avuncular head of the tourist office, so desperate to convince visitors that Kachch was a special place. I remember the man in the City Guest House, right in the heart of the Old City, who spoke to me as if possessed of all the time in the world. I think of Pankaj Shah and the women of the Kachch Mahila Vikas Sangathan Co-operative whose stories he told me so compellingly. The man who served me breakfast. Raju, the owner of a new guest house in the Old City who took the time to tell me his dreams for the future. The two old caretakers who joked with me atop a tower which formed the centrepiece of the old town.

When I left Bhuj, I passed through the town of Anjar and enjoyed its ramshackle charm. At the time of the earthquake, close to 500 students were marching there in a Republic Day parade and they were killed, along with around 50 teachers. I passed through Gandhidham, home to refugees from across the border in Sind, Pakistan, and visited the hotel opposite the bus station, climbing to the third floor to look at a room. The stairs on which I climbed, and the room itself, no longer exist; I do not know if the friendly man at reception survived. We passed through Morvi, a bustling town of colonnaded archways and the exquisite Mala Mandir. There is reportedly nothing left. Ahmedabad too. Faces. People with names.

As I was preparing to leave Bhuj, Pankaj Shah asked when I would return. I told him that it would be soon. I no longer know if he will be there when I do. I also understand that I can now never leave Bhuj. Every time I hear news of a disaster, natural or otherwise, I will think of my friends in Bhuj, reminded that these are the deaths of real people, not just strangers in a far-off land.

—Anthony Ham

Still Standing: Mahabat Maqbara, the mausoleum of a nawab (local maharaja) of Junagadh, in Gujarat, with obligatory livestock. Photograph by Anthony Ham.

The East Ender

ONE OF THE SLIPPERIEST and most volatile theological words is 'experience'. Volatile, because we all treat it as an authority in our understanding of faith, but then confront its fit or lack of fit with other authorities, like scripture and church teaching.

The appeal to experience is ambiguous. On the one hand, theology is empty if it does not reflect the generous instincts of ordinary Catholics as they live their lives. On the other hand, our experience is not shaped simply by Christian faith but also by our Australian culture with all its limitations. And that is true of teachers as well as those who are taught.

To pin the slippery down, some theologians, particularly those who suspect common Christian experience, appeal to the experience of the saints, extraordinary Christians whose experience can be trusted. But that leads to further debate about which saints are to be trusted. A trifecta of Oscar Romero, John XXIII and Dorothy Day, for example, will pay in a different currency than will Pius IX, Escriva de Balaguer and Pius XII.

And so the debate continues. But if we ask precisely how the experience of inspiring Christians shapes our theology, the discussion becomes interesting. Take, for example, the life of Brother John Stamp, a great Australian Jesuit, who died in January. Stampy to all who knew him, he was greatly loved, and a legend in Melbourne's Richmond.

He came from the London East End, cooked for the army during the war, worked as a plasterer and, once in Australia, with the YCW (Young Christian Workers). Stampy was street-smart. When he bought mushrooms at the market, the caps found their way to the scales, while the stalks were left behind in the box. He was passionate about people. When he visited your home, he would always come through the kitchen door, check out the drains, taps and the refrigerator, would tick you off for whatever, and leave with a few well-chosen words of wisdom and encouragement. If anything needed fixing, he would return later with trowel and toolbox. Since *Eureka Street*'s home is in Richmond, he would also offer his succinct judgments of each edition: this bit was good, that was bullshit, this could be done better. He read well, was well read, and his judgments were to be taken seriously.

Stampy's favourite term of abuse was boofhead: boofheads were people who by way of policy or by way of temporary clumsiness got in the way of people being helped and encouraged—got in the way of the Gospel, in fact. The world and the church were full of boofheads, including people of intellectual eminence and high dignity. But for Stampy, boofheadedness was an episodic and not a permanent condition.

What can theology build on Stampy's experience? Not, certainly, on a collection of infallible opinions! He was more like a roughly carved musical instrument that played sweetly and truly. Theologians' words and theories, like trumpets, are usually polished and smooth. When set against his life, they prove themselves resonant or thin, full-bodied or squawking. That is how experience works in theology. ■

Andrew Hamilton SJ is *Eureka Street*'s publisher.

Swedish model

Why can't we turn asylum seeking into an asset rather than a liability? Sweden does.

NOT A WEEK has gone by in the last few months without some new revelation or allegation of injustice emerging from one of Australia's immigration detention centres. Woomera and Port Hedland have become regular headlines, with rioting and hunger strikes commonplace news.

The impact of these protests has been divided. On one level, the Howard government has been consistent in stating that they emphasise the need to increase security measures and justify plans to implement laws allowing increased power to Australasian Correctional Management guards.

And on the other level, community and welfare groups have been outraged, claiming it is the treatment of asylum seekers while in detention that is causing these riots. This concern had initially been for women and children held in detention, but has become a general voice of concern at the government's hardening attitudes towards asylum seekers. The call by the Opposition and many major welfare and church groups for a full judicial inquiry into the management of detention centres seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

Detention should never be used as a deterrent, both because it is ineffective and because it retraumatises the already traumatised. Detention, however, may be necessary in certain circumstances, such as in the initial period after entry to determine the identity of those who have sought asylum without identification. This detention, however, must be sensitive and must not infringe civil rights beyond restricting freedom of movement.

The Swedish approach to detention has been increasingly presented as a viable alternative, with Canada and some European countries looking to introduce the model. The Swedish government has stated that detainees are not criminals and shall not be treated as such, and although they are unauthorised arrivals, as soon as they lodge an application for protection they are no longer 'illegal'. In principle, detention

shall only be used when supervision is deemed inadequate, and then used only for a minimal period.

The Swedish government has stipulated that, during their time in the detention centre, detainees shall be treated with respect and humanity. Detainees shall have freedom of information, have contact with the outside world, including NGOs, and the option to speak to the media. They shall have the right to appeal their stay in detention. Children are never held in detention for more than six days, and in all but the most extreme cases, families are immediately released into the community. All detainees have one caseworker for the duration of their stay to ensure they are aware of their rights, are kept informed of their case and feel that they have had a fair and expeditious hearing.

So while Australia strives to deter asylum seekers and attract skilled migrants, Sweden has chosen to turn a difficult situation into a positive, by providing education and opportunities to their refugees. And the figures suggest this is working. Recent Swedish research has shown that resettled refugees have contributed enormously to the Swedish economy, with no indication of increased crime or welfare dependency. Sweden also has the lowest levels of illegal immigrants in the community in Europe and the highest level of voluntary repatriation on negative decisions in Europe, with no need for coercive measures or increased security.

Major incidents of violence, riots and mass hunger strikes have not occurred since the Swedish Immigration Department took over in 1997 from private contractors in managing the detention centres and implemented the above changes. The incidence of suicide attempts has also decreased and there has been little animosity between staff and detainees. There has proven to be a high level of compliance on decisions, with very few asylum seekers absconding under supervision. A system of release into the community, after initial health and security checks, has brought significant reduction in the use of taxpayers' money and in public outcry.

A balanced, humane approach to detention and refugee reception is vital in providing future citizens with a fair and equitable start in their new country. The long-term benefits are self-evident both for those who have already suffered persecution in their home countries and for Australia by preserving its international reputation.

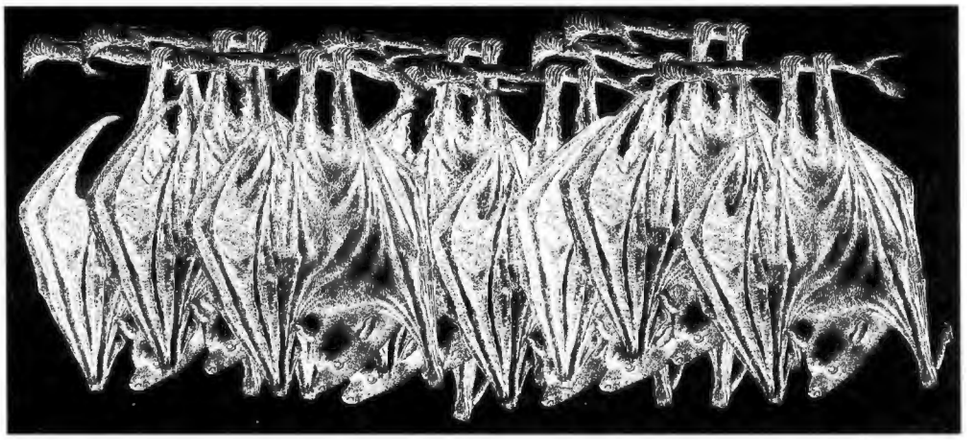
—Grant Mitchell

Out-foxed

A FRIEND WHO moved to Melbourne from New Zealand 12 years ago remembers seeing her first bat (*Pteropus poliocephalus*—the grey-headed flying fox) in the Royal Botanic Gardens. She was thrilled by its rodent-like body enveloped in shiny wings. It seemed a mystical creature, curled up tightly and hanging upside down during the day, hiding its night-time adventures from onlookers.

She would wander the gardens in the summer evenings and bat-spot.

Now, as she joins the throng of joggers around the tan, she can feel the black weight of the creatures in the trees above. Without the need for concentrated bat-spotting she can watch their mass exodus along the river at dusk to find fruit, nectar and pollen.



From a small migrating colony of 150 in the early '80s, the bats are now a permanent colony numbering more than 8000. And they are creating enormous problems in their adopted Botanic Gardens home of Fern Gully. They smell. Their roosting habits, their urine and faeces are killing off the plants. Over this short time they have made the transition from curiosity to pest.

These 'pests' have generated a passionate media and public debate. The Botanic Gardens web page has a 'bat crisis' link, detailing fears about the destruction of Fern Gully, which is home to botanically significant plants and some rare and threatened species (the Cabbage Tree palm, Victoria's only indigenous palm, for example). In the newspapers, terms like 'invasion' and 'menace' convey an atmosphere of threat. People are angry.

They are angry at the spoiling of that precious commodity—a garden within a city. One writer to *The Age* suggested that nothing short of 'absolute elimination' would suffice. Even my friend the one-time bat-spotter sniffs the smelly air and hopes they will be 'got rid of'.

Why did the bats wait until the 1980s to come to the gardens?

Fern Gully was established in the late 19th century. According to P.W. Menkhorst, in his *Mammals of Victoria*, the grey-headed flying fox has been a conservation concern in recent years because of dramatic loss of prime feeding habitat and secluded camp sites in South Queensland and coastal NSW. To house their large colonies and provide protection from daytime predators (large birds particularly) they need large areas of dense forest. Land clearing and deforestation has minimised their options. So they came south. In a way, our pests are refugees.

There are other factors contributing to the movement south, including climate change and drought (in the 1998 drought the Gardens' bat population soared from 3000 to 8000 over a few months).

But it's our progressive destruction of the bats' environment which has had the most significant impact and explains their despoiling of one of ours.

Culling or euthanasing has been suggested. This would entail amending the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic), under which bats are protected. The suggestion has generated outrage—killing off a native animal!

A forum of bat experts has recommended against culling or euthanasing. The Gardens authorities have decided instead to test a process of relocation. Director, Dr Philip Moors, has described this as the 'least offensive of the options considered' but also admitted that the effectiveness of this plan is 'still a serious doubt'.

No wonder. The Botanic Gardens suit the bats down to the ground (so to speak).

Fern Gully provides them with a quiet area of relatively dense vegetation where they can roost during the day. It affords them relative safety from birds of prey. And for night feeding they are close to reliable food sources—fruit trees and eucalypts in suburban parks and back gardens. And the location of the colony—close to the Yarra River and the South Eastern Arterial—provides a visual aid, a perfect dusk flightpath.

Of course there are also logistical problems of trapping and moving large numbers of bats to the suggested site of Mallacoota Inlet (the only other large grey-headed flying fox colony in Victoria), especially with around 500 new arrivals every week. If relocation does not work, culling may be back on the agenda with all its ethical and legal dilemmas.

And while we research and consult and plan, more bats come to roost and fight and drop their toxic waste. Our dusk-time river blanket is getting thicker. A dark reminder of our impact on the earth.

—Kathryn O'Connor

The difference between man and man

In October 1999, when Abdurrahman Wahid was elected by parliament as Indonesia's fourth president since independence, many commentators breathed a sigh of relief. Not because he was the answer to the problems faced by the world's fourth most populous nation, but because he was the best of the alternatives.

Now that Wahid has been put on notice following corruption allegations, it is possible that what brought him to power could also forestall his early removal from it. It won't be the violence of his East Java supporters so much as the lack of someone better to do the job.

It was not primarily an outraged sense of probity that prompted legislators to act on the findings of a report, tabled in parliament, into the removal of US$4 million from the government food agency by Wahid's masseur, allegedly with the president's knowledge. There was also the non-declaration by Wahid of a US$2 million gift from the Sultan of Brunei. What has goaded parliament has been Wahid's erratic behaviour in the top job and his administration's inability to provide solutions to the least of Indonesia's woes. Given the Everest-like pile of cash allegedly shipped out of the country by Suharto, Wahid might have been given more opportunity to explain. Instead he was given official warning last month, thus beginning a three-month period, designated by the Constitution, during which he must account for his actions.

Wahid came to be president through the support of a broad coalition and accordingly chose Cabinet ministers from a range of parties other than his own. Almost immediately, problems emerged. Ministers, particularly those in portfolios created to handle the problems of corruption and regional strife, got no strong lead from their president and were demonstrably idle. Wahid began to dismiss them, in some cases offering the public no reason other than that their behaviour was childish. Separatist and sectarian violence is Wahid's biggest hurdle. The situation has deteriorated during his tenure—rapidly in Aceh and West Papua—and this is shaking loose his coalition.

But therein lies the tale of why Wahid might live on.

Early last year, Wahid's deputy, Megawati Sukarnoputri, who is also the leader of the biggest party in the coalition, was given responsibility for finding solutions to the strife. Here was an opportunity for Megawati, so spectacularly outmanoeuvred in the run for the presidency, to show sceptical legislators that a woman was able to lead. The lack of any initiatives from the vice-president has added weight to the widely held opinion that the political savvy with which her father was so often credited has skipped a generation.

The situation in Indonesia has interesting parallels in the Philippines. There, a woman vice-president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, also the daughter of a former leader, was sworn in as her country's leader at the Edsa shrine, the rallying point for the revolt that ousted Marcos, while president Joseph Estrada sailed away on the river that runs behind the presidential palace. Arroyo was someone the Filipino elite could put up as a credible replacement for the disgraced former actor, whose short, corrupt tenure was symbolised by the spoils left scattered throughout the residence after his rushed departure. If Wahid is forced from office, it won't be because someone like Arroyo is waiting in the wings. Arroyo has campaigned long and hard for Estrada to be brought to account.

The presidential situations in the two countries are unstable, but distinct. Wahid

might be near-sighted and at times politically inept, but he is no Estrada. Included in the allegations against Estrada were details of money siphoned off for mansions throughout Manila in which his various mistresses were stowed. Stories of his lavish late-night 'cabinet' sessions had become legendary. Also, Estrada was removed from power by a middle-class coup.

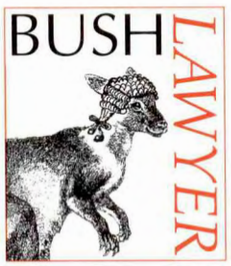
Indonesia is dealing with its problems in a manner prescribed by the Constitution.

A vote in the Philippines senate (where the case against Estrada was being heard) not to review evidence of funds acquired from gambling sources was an act of corrupt politics, but it was not against the law. The Filipino military's public withdrawal of support—the action that finally forced Estrada's hand—was a clear contravention of the spirit of democratic government. The manner in which Gloria Macapagal Arroyo came to power may come back to haunt her and future administrations in the Philippines.

So, Abdurrahman Wahid has three months before the parliament decides whether to proceed with measures to remove him from office. Perhaps in that three months he might crack fewer jokes and work to repair some badly damaged bridges. But whether he stays or goes, Indonesia will be better served if his future is decided by the rule of law.

—Jon Greenaway

This month's contributors: **Anthony Ham** is a *Eureka Street* correspondent; **Grant Mitchell** spent two years working at the Swedish Immigration Department and the Carslund detention centre. He now co-ordinates the Asylum Seeker Project at Hotham Mission in Melbourne; **Kathryn O'Connor** is a freelance writer; **Jon Greenaway** is *Eureka Street*'s South East Asian correspondent.



Jail break

'PLEASE, YOUR WORSHIP, PLEASE. Please your Worship, please, I beg you, don't send me back.' I was having trouble hearing Hamish McDougall's (name changed) legal aid lawyer over his client's wailing entreaties. Hamish had been caught in a shopping centre with $300 worth of shirts he had purloined while on bail for his last shoplifting charge. Since he had a recent history of drug abuse and theft, he had, unsurprisingly, been refused bail over the weekend.

'Look at my fingers, your Worship.' He held up four bandaged fingers. 'They broke them.' He didn't say why. I guessed it might be that he hadn't paid for drugs he'd been given in jail, or that he wouldn't oblige with sexual favours. 'Oh please don't send me back. I'll do anything you say, only please don't send me back there.'

The prison officers were looking at me expectantly, waiting for a peremptory order to take him away, bail refused. I felt like telling him to go to his room and that I would not be reading him *Harry Potter* until his behaviour improved.

The lawyer asked for bail and told me that Mr McDougall would report immediately to his probation officer if released, would take his medication and would be happy to report up to three times a day to the local police station if only he were granted bail.

The prosecutor handed up a summary of the facts and Mr McDougall's criminal history. 'The prosecution opposes bail, your Worship,' he said wearily. Mr McDougall's wailing started again.

Reading the facts and record I was reminded of a nasty old beak who had sat in that court some years before. After he retired I ran into him and he told me about a homeless man who used to shoplift from a local supermarket on a regular basis—a few bread rolls and cartons of milk was the standard fare. He was well-known by the shop and was often caught. He'd get a month in jail from time to time, just to give the store some relief. 'Finally,' smiled the magistrate, 'when I was 12 months off retirement, I slotted him for 18 months, just so that I would never have to see his horrible face again.' Once they disappear down the stairwell from the dock into the cells, they are out of mind.

'You *can't* send me back there,' McDougall began again. He was right. I couldn't, not that day, not with his broken fingers. Knowing that if he went back, whoever had done that to him would still be there and might do something worse. Knowing that about 25 per cent of young men in jail claim to have been sexually assaulted and more than 50 per cent claim to have been threatened with physical violence or to have been actually assaulted. (Presumably the other 50 per cent are the ones dishing it out.)

Mr McDougall may have staged a wonderful performance. Maybe his fingers were perfectly fine. Maybe he was just hanging out for his drugs and duped me. I will find out in a couple of weeks when he comes back for sentence. But he's had a chance now, for a time, to show he can stop using and stop thieving.

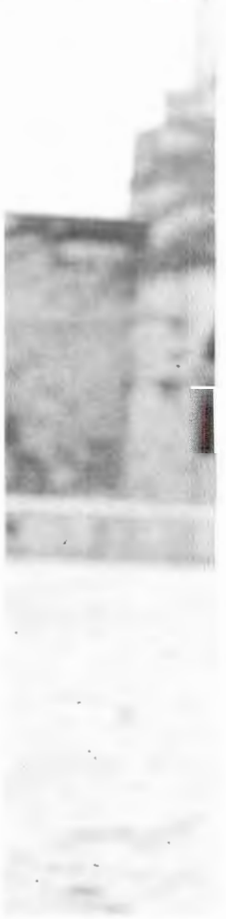
If he gets a good probation report, he'll stay out of jail. If he does not, it'll be a hard day for both of us. ■

Séamus O'Shaughnessy is a NSW magistrate.

JOHN LEVI

The peace of Jeru

Elections come and go, as do peace negotiations,
but Jerusalem endures,
an inspiration and a site of conflict.



COMMON SENSE ALWAYS seems to be in short supply in the Middle East. A notable exception to this rule occurred in 1967, at the end of the Six Day War, when Israel's Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, wisely ordered that the blue-and-white Israeli flag that had been triumphantly hoisted over the Dome of the Rock be removed. Dayan ordered that physical control of the Temple Mount or 'Har Habayit' in Hebrew and the Noble Sanctuary or 'Haram al-Sharif' in Arabic be handed back to its traditional administrators—the Muslim religious council. This sensitive political decision was assisted by the orthodox Jewish religious authorities who decreed that no Jew should set foot on the surface of the Mount, for by doing so it would be possible to walk over the ruins of the Holy of Holies. In this strange way, a *modus vivendi* emerged between Jews and Muslims which persisted until a few months ago when, to the surprise of most Jews and Israelis, the Oslo Peace Process died.

In retrospect, the blood-stained Al Aqsa Intifada Version Two began in July 2000 at Camp David on the seventh day of Clinton's Peace Summit. At the end of an exhausting day of shuttle diplomacy, Yasser Arafat wrote a brief memorandum to President Clinton in which he explained:

> I shall not accept any reduced sovereignty over Jerusalem, even if we have to wait 50 or 100 years to liberate it and raise the flag of Palestine. I am a religious man and I shall never permit it to be said that I sold the Haram. Even if the State of Palestine was to be established on 100 per cent of the Land of Palestine we shall never admit that the Temple lies under the Haram.

With this brief note the national and political conflict between Israel and the Palestinians was transformed into a religious conflict between Judaism and Islam.

The claim that the ruins of the ancient Temple do not lie directly beneath the Dome of the Rock and the mosque of Al Aqsa is alarming.

We know that the first Jerusalem Temple was built by King Solomon on the hill above the Jebusite city captured by King David. The Babylonians conquered and burnt Jerusalem in 586BCE and those ruins that stand on a slope above the Kidron Valley can now be visited. Seventy years later, the Jewish exiles began to return and a second Temple was built on the ruins of the first. Part of the Second Temple's retaining wall is clearly visible on the eastern side of the Temple Mount.

In the year 17BCE the half-Jewish King Herod rebuilt the second Temple, doubled the size of the Temple Mount and built a grandiose structure that attracted huge numbers of Jewish pilgrims to Jerusalem. Echoes of the importance of that building can be found in the narratives of the New Testament. Jesus calls it 'my Father's house' (John 2:16). His brother James is said to have worshipped there daily. Paul was arrested for ignoring the Temple's ritual restrictions. For almost 1000 years the Jerusalem Temple was the only place in the ancient world where the one invisible God of the Universe was worshipped. Arafat's belief that the Temple did not actually exist is a serious challenge to the three monotheistic faiths, because we all share that magical city called 'Jerusalem'.

ACCORDING TO THE ancient Hebrew biblical narrative, Abraham takes Isaac on a fateful journey to a mountain called 'Moriah'. Tradition tells Jews that Mt Moriah became the Temple Mount. The destruction of the Temple in the year 70 by the Roman General Titus, who would become the emperor of the Roman Empire, was celebrated as a great victory. Thousands of coins were minted celebrating 'Judaea Capta' and Titus returned to Rome to build his noble triumphal arch that dominates the ruins of the Forum in Rome to this day.

Following a second Jewish rebellion against Rome in the years 130–135, the Emperor Hadrian renamed Jerusalem 'The Capital City of the Gods' and banned Jews from its boundaries. A shrine to Jupiter was built

salem

on top of the Temple Mount among the ruins on the site. In the year 324 the Roman Emperor Constantine won control of the Byzantine Empire and, as a result, Jerusalem passed into Christian hands. The city once again became a place of pilgrimage and a huge church was built within the walls to commemorate the site of the resurrection of Jesus (now called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). The Temple Mount was purposely kept in ruins as tangible evidence of the triumphant truth of Christianity. After all, had not Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple? Sadly, as part of Christianity's struggle with Judaism for supremacy in the Holy Land, it even became a popular religious duty for local Christians to dispose of their refuse by spreading it on the site of the Temple. So it is that to this day, the pilgrim walks through the Dung Gate in order to approach the Temple Mount. As Byzantine Jerusalem grew more prosperous, work was begun on the construction of a second massive Christian sanctuary and the ruins of the Herodian Temple Mount were used as a quarry. Many of the ornamental pediments and massive colourful columns of the Temple were pillaged by the builders of the New (*Nea* in Greek) Church and this destruction sent a wave of despair throughout the Jewish Diaspora.

It is therefore not surprising to find that among the Persian Army that conquered Christian Jerusalem in 614 were many Jewish volunteers who were eager to fight against Byzantium. In a furious act of vengeance, the Nea Church was completely destroyed and its stones hauled away to build a series of large buildings beneath the Temple Mount. Within a generation the armies of Islam had conquered Jerusalem and the military commander of Syria and Palestine embarked upon a plan to give the city a Muslim character; the Mount was cleared and, even though there would be no rebuilding of the Temple, the Jews were content to be permitted to return and settle in the city.

And so the Temple Mount entered Islamic history. Every story in the Holy Qur'an about the prophet Mohammed is attached to a distinct place.

Above: Arab resting in front of the Dome of the Rock. Photographs this page and page 18 by Michael Coyne.

The sole exception concerns Mohammed's dream of a Night Journey made on the back of a mysterious animal—half horse, half man—named al Burak ('Lightning'). Mohammed is ordered to ride to the 'outer' mosque where the angel Gabriel raises him up to heaven to meet Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Whether the 'outer mosque' was in Medina or in Jerusalem is a matter of conjecture; however, the Caliph of Damascus was anxious to become the custodian of a sacred site associated with Abraham the patriarch. The walls of the Temple compound were repaired. An octagonal Dome of the Rock was designed to be a place of pilgrimage with room for pious visitors to walk around the large rock that may have been the foundation of the altar in the Herodian Temple. The Al Aqsa (the 'outer') mosque faces toward Mecca and is built on the southern edge of the Temple Mount. Beneath Al Aqsa are water cisterns and ancient columns and the corridors through which pilgrims once walked into the Temple. So beautiful was the Dome of the Rock that later Christian and Jewish visitors to Jerusalem would assume that they were looking at the Temple of King Solomon.

Above: The Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount. The new 24-carat gold dome was commissioned in 1993 by King Hussein of Jordan in his role as official custodian of Jerusalem's Islamic holy sites.

LAYERS OF LEGEND, intrigue and myth surround every inch of the land of Israel. Nothing is ever as it appears to be. So let us therefore visit the physical heart of the present Arab–Israeli conflict by walking around the massive physical remains of the Temple.

Thirty recent years of ongoing archaeological work now permit us to visit one of the wonders of the ancient world. The platform on which the Temple once stood is a slightly skewed rectangle measuring 600 metres by 300 metres. It is oriented towards the rising sun and an ancient Ezekiel (8:16) recalled that once his ancestors had worshipped the sun looking out across to the east. The view from the top of the Temple Mount across the Judaean desert towards the not-so-distant hills of Moab is still awe-inspiring. Between the desert and those hills is the oasis of Jericho and the Jordan Valley. On a clear day the northern corner of the Dead Sea, close to Qumran, sparkles in the sunlight. While the Roman Legions marched on Jerusalem in the year 68, it is now thought scholars took dozens of scrolls from the Temple library and hid them in the caves at Qumran and in the limestone cliffs alongside the Dead Sea.

The southern end of the Temple Mount lies below the great mosque of Al Aqsa. Beneath the rubble and former wasteland a broad archaeological park has been revealed. It is now possible to walk up the 30 broad stone steps that allowed the crowds to enter the Jerusalem Temple. The steps, which extend for 70 metres, are alternately broad and narrow so that pilgrims would be obliged to walk up to the Temple gates slowly and with deliberate dignity.

Modern pilgrims are a strange lot. Those steps should be the most revered stones in the Jewish–Christian world, but very few visitors bother to climb them. Jewish tradition speaks frequently about the pilgrims as they walked into the courts of the Temple. It is recalled that famous Jewish teachers taught their disciples in the shadow of the Temple. In the whole of the Land of Israel those steps are the only stones on which Christians can be absolutely certain that Jesus and the disciples walked. And yet, because archaeology, and not legend, has revealed these mute witnesses, there isn't so much as a beggar or a votive candle-seller to be seen. It is a pristine and fascinating area.

At the top of the stairs, on your left and to the west, stands a massive crusader structure built hard up against the wall to block easy access to the Temple's ancient Double Gate. A decorated arch of an original lintel can be seen protruding from that square stone fortress. Behind the stones and directly beneath the Al Aqsa mosque are the corridors that gave access to the internal courts of the Temple. Deep beneath the surface, floral and geometric decorations from the Temple built by King Herod have survived 20 centuries.

By facing eastward, and walking along the broad pavement, one can see the outline of the Temple's Triple Gate, where the priests would take the flour, oil and wine needed for the service. One upper window that gave ventilation to the inner storerooms has survived on the high south-eastern corner sometimes identified as the 'pinnacle of the Temple' where Jesus is said to have been tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:5, Luke 4:9).

Walk around that corner and we stand on the eastern side of the Temple Mount facing the Mount of Olives. Thirty metres from the corner there is a clearly visible seam running down the stones from top to bottom. Herod doubled the size of the Temple Mount, and the stone dividing line separates his masonry from the wall that may well date back to the days of the eighth century BCE. On the left of

that seam are traces of more windows, an upper gateway and the remains of an arch. The arch began a stairway that is now thought to have been the 'tradesman's entrance' through which the wood and the animals would be brought in for the sacrifices and where, on the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat would be chased out into the Judaean desert.

Tourists are far more familiar with the western side of the Temple Mount. A portion of the Western Wall has been a place of Jewish pilgrimage for the past three or four hundred years and the Israelis have cleared a great stone plaza in front of 'The Wall'. I must admit it is not my favourite place. But then, I readily confess, I am a heretic and I dislike being importuned by professional beggars and fanatics when I should be allowed to share a sense of awe with fellow worshippers. Nevertheless in March 2000 I was moved by the sight of the Pope standing at the Wall and reverently placing a prayer for peace in between its stones. With that simple gesture Pope John Paul turned 2000 years of Jewish–Christian relations upside down.

At the southern end of the Western Wall, archaeologists have dug down about 30 metres and uncovered the stones and debris which tumbled down as the Temple was destroyed by the Romans. The great stones now lie where they fell, crushing beneath them a 2000-year-old pavement. Remains of shops that served pilgrims are now visible. Two notable inscriptions have been found. One is a sign to 'the place of the blowing of the Ram's Horn' (Shofar). The ram's horn was sounded each morning as the Temple Gates were opened. The second is far more modest. It is a clay tablet on which is incised a picture of a dove and the Hebrew word 'Korban'—sacrifice. The dove was the offering brought to the Temple by the poor.

In September 1966 the Israeli government authorised the opening of a tunnel that stretches along the bedrock of the entire western side of the Temple Mount. As you walk along the tunnel you see the monumental stone blocks on which the Temple stood and you pass by the hidden gateway through which the High Priest entered the Temple and made his way up to the inner Court of the Priests and the Holy of Holies. At the end of the tunnel is the Via Dolorosa and the Convent of Ecce Homo built on the ruins of the Roman Antonia Fortress where malefactors were brought for trial and taken to their execution.

Competing claims about this most extraordinary sacred place make a mockery of us all. Civilisation is not served by the denial of history or by the belittlement of hope. As Psalm 122 tells us, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and may all those who love you prosper. Let there be peace in your homes and safety within your borders.' ■

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ROYCE MILLAR & TIM COSTELLO

Raw deal

State governments, both Labor and Coalition, are facing community pressure to put the brakes on gambling. In Victoria, Treasurer John Brumby has declared that the Bracks government is not a 'wowser' administration. Brumby is not the first politician to play the 'wowser' card to ensure the gambling goldstream continues to flow.

THE 1994 OPENING of Melbourne's Crown Casino triggered a bitter row in Victoria over the burgeoning gaming industry and what came to be known as the state's 'casino culture'. Similar community concern was developing in other states and territories as the poker machine industry, in particular, cut a swathe through suburbs and towns.

Church leaders and others criticised the Kennett government for its blatant promotion of Crown and commercial gambling. Premier Jeff Kennett had hailed the massive new casino as a 'beacon of light' and the 'new spirit of Victoria' and rounded angrily on the casino's critics. In 1995 Kennett dismissed the critics as 'wowsers', resurrecting an Australian–New Zealand term of abuse used to ridicule evangelical Protestant clergy a hundred years before.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Protestant and Catholic clergy, feminist groups, bohemian intellectuals, political parties, unions and gamblers fought a complex political battle over morality and social behaviour. Nowhere was the debate more heated than in Melbourne, where the streets, church halls and newspapers were full of the struggle between John Wren—the working-class, Irish Catholic gambling baron and founder of the infamous Collingwood 'Tote'—and W.H. Judkins—the middle-class and relentlessly evangelical Methodist Reverend, the archetypal wowser.

By invoking the wowser as a counterpoint to the new gambling culture, Kennett was aligning himself with Wren. He was not alone in summoning the whinging wowser as a foil for commercial gambling. The gambling industry has consciously painted itself as a liberating force in Australia, helping to free the Australian gambling instinct by casting off an oppressive wet blanket of morality. 'Australians love to gamble' declared Tattersall's in 1999. 'Australians want to gamble' insisted Sydney's Star City casino the same year.

But what are the real continuities between two debates separated by a century? Is the controversy at the beginning of the 21st century simply a resumption of hostilities by age-old sectarian rivals? Is Kerry Packer with his Crown Casino a latter-day John Wren and Tote? Are the modern gambling critics simply contemporary reincarnations of Rev. W. H. Judkins?

John Wren grew up in the late 19th century in industrial Collingwood, where he worked in the local boot factories for meagre wages. He was a keen punter but soon learned there was more money in selling, rather than buying, betting slips.

He cannily used the £180 he won backing Carbine in the 1890 Melbourne Cup to establish the illegal Tote, the foundation for a gambling, sport and entertainment empire. But for all his wealth and influence, Wren was never part of the establishment. Labor historian Ross McMullin says that, outside the working class, Wren was viewed as a 'grubby upstart'.

The Tote provided the poor locals with their own gambling Mecca at a time when off-course punting was outlawed and the cost of a day at the races was prohibitive. It also offered an escape from the drab reality of industrial Melbourne and the depression of the 1890s, although for many women and children it probably made life even more depressing.

So organised was Wren, with his secret escape routes, pay-offs to the police and MPs, a brilliant legal defence and local community support that, despite regular police raids and an avalanche of anti-gambling legislation around the turn of the century, the Tote operated almost unhindered for 13 years. It went on to acquire a legendary status unparalleled in Australian gambling history.

The gambling debate simmered through the 20th century and then subsided in the 1960s with the introduction of strictly regulated TABs (no advertising, no seats, no drinks, no toilets, no same-day pay-outs). Gambling took its place as a marginal leisure activity run by government TABs and non-profit clubs. But not for long.

Economic upheaval and restructuring from the 1970s saw a shift of focus from manufacturing and agriculture to service industries including leisure and gambling. Australian gambling was swept up in the global explosion of a once-pariah industry embraced by respectable business. Governments loosened controls on advertising and on the operation of TABs, which were eventually corporatised or privatised. Smooth-talking casino hucksters lobbied hard for opportunities in Australia, and pokies spread out from New South Wales like canetoads from Queensland.

IN THE FINAL DECADES of the 20th century, the States, battered by recession and economic rationalism in Canberra, squabbled and competed for scraps of investment and revenue, and fell like dominoes into the arms of an industry promising great riches.

The wet blanket of gambling regulation was cast off, but what lurked underneath was a very different animal to the one suppressed decades before. Gone were the back-lane totes, two-up schools and uneducated SP (starting price) bookies. In their place was a high-powered world of international finance and technology, and gambling executives with PhDs.

It soon became clear that the new gambling culture was vastly more dangerous than that of a century earlier.

Where the odd back-lane belting was dished out to punters who welshed on their debts to SP bookies, the damage done was incomparable to the suffering of families and communities in the modern era of legal, heavily advertised and highly accessible, hi-tech gambling.

The modern industry spends $573 million a year promoting the falsehood that we can all be winners. Australians now lose $12.4 billion a year gambling and 42.3 per cent of pokie losses are from problem gamblers. Low-income Australians are the big losers. The residents of Maribyrnong in Melbourne's west, one of the poorest municipalities in Australia, lose seven times more on poker machines per capita than their counterparts in Boroondara in Melbourne's leafy east, one of the wealthiest municipalities. The Productivity Commission conservatively estimates that the social costs of problem gambling may be as much as $5.6 billion a year. Such devastation was unimaginable in the days of SP bookmaking.

The social and economic impacts of commercial gambling have sparked widespread concern and anger. And it is not Judkins-like, Protestant wowserism. Certainly, there have been Protestant clergy among modern gambling's leading critics, but they have not been alone.

In 1983 the Catholic Church joined with the Victorian Council of Churches in formally opposing poker machines and casinos. A survey of Catholic laity in Victoria at the time found that 80 per cent did not want poker machines. The Catholic Church is now an active member of the Inter-Church Gambling Taskforce and in 1995 unambiguously opposed 'pressure gambling', including casinos and pokie venues.

Now the gambling critics are a broad cross-section of Australians including Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, agnostics, blue-blood conservatives and hard-line leftists. Local government, business groups, academics, and countless community groups have joined the churches in campaigning around modern commercial gambling. It is less a moral crusade against gambling by working-class Australians than it is a campaign against their cynical exploitation.

Is there really a fundamental difference between Wren and his Tote and Kerry Packer and his Crown Casino? Not in as much as both men profited at the expense of gamblers. But in most other respects they could scarcely be more different.

The Tote was an illegal gambling den in grimy, industrial inner Melbourne. It was a rallying point for the poor and a symbol of resistance against a system that cared little for the downtrodden. The wealthy had the members' enclosures at Flemington and Caulfield. The workers had 'the Tote'. Wren's Tote was an organically developed local institution, a statement of a worker's right to have a bet. It was disguised and hidden in the backstreets of Collingwood. There was no advertising, no gala opening, no high-roller rooms, no VIP cards and certainly no taxpayer-funded police security. Although many women suffered for it, the Tote was, and continues to be a century later, a cultural icon.

Crown Casino was imposed on Victoria; it did not grow out of it. Victorians never demanded a casino or a monolithic gambling house on the Yarra River in the heart of their city. They never got a chance to vote on it, or debate it. Crown is not only legal, it has been heavily supported and promoted by the State and advertised to the point of saturation. In 1900, the police raided Wren's Tote. In 2001, police guard Crown Casino. Crown is a blatantly US-style casino-entertainment complex with one of its main features being the Planet Hollywood restaurant. It is devoid of local cultural input. Even the two-up ring operates in restricted hours.

If Packer really were a John Wren-like battlers' hero and liberator, we could expect him to be in tune with the views of ordinary Australians. In a 1998–99 national survey, the Productivity Commission found that 92 per cent of Australians wanted no more poker machines and the majority wanted fewer. Seventy per cent said gambling did more harm than good. A South Australian survey by retailers in November 2000 found that 80 per cent of respondents opposed legalisation of online gambling. What a bunch of bloody wowsers! ■

Royce Millar and **Revd Tim Costello** are the authors of the book *Wanna Bet? Winners and Losers in Gambling's Luck Myth*, (Allen&Unwin). This is an edited extract from the chapter *Micks and Wowsers*.

in a word

Innovation

Now that we have become the clever society, we offer prizes for innovation. Webster, the Elizabethan playwright, would not have approved. He spoke of:

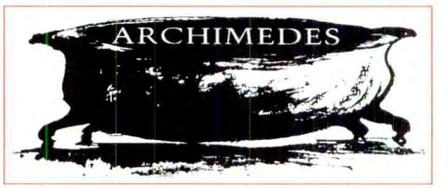
> The hydra-headed multitude
> That only gape for innovation.

Webster was not alone. Through the ancient world up until the 19th century, innovation was something you were charged with, not complimented for. It meant overturning established beliefs and structures, the sorts of things that heretics and revolutionaries did.

The church, of course, frowned on innovation with a more furrowed brow than most. And so innovation began to get a good press when the revolt against church authority in the name of modernity became fashionable.

But it is interesting that, through the church, innovation was even early on given one good meaning. It enshrined the belief that the world would be made new, would be innovated. But the expansiveness of this view of innovation perhaps suggests that innovation is so airy a creature that it is unlikely to be trapped by the innovating nets of commercial grants.

—Andrew Hamilton sj



R&D gets a bit of TLC

CARTOONISTS AND COMMENTATORS have likened the Prime Minister's Innovation Statement on science and technology to the revelation on the Road to Damascus, which turned Saul, persecutor of Christians, into Paul, their champion. While it's hard to look a $3 billion gifthorse in the mouth, Archimedes suspects John Howard's conversion to science is neither so wholehearted nor so altruistic.

There is no doubt that the statement, *Backing Australia's Ability*, contains many useful measures to strengthen the nation's science and innovation. But it also appears curiously incomplete and shows a lack of understanding of the way modern science works. And while Archimedes believes that science now holds genuine interest for the Prime Minister, there are some who view the statement simply as a somewhat cynical attempt to take the wind out of the sails of Labor's Knowledge Nation in the lead-up to this year's election.

When the Coalition came to power in 1996, it clearly believed that 'the market' would weave its spell in the areas of science and innovation as elsewhere—if industry had a need for Australian R&D, it would pay; if it did not, government support amounted to a business subsidy, except in some useful areas of 'public good', like health, defence and the environment.

So the government slashed and burned science. It reduced the tax incentive for private investment in R&D, doubled the tuition fees for science students at universities, and put the screws on the CSIRO and all other publicly funded institutions to scrabble for money wherever they could. All in all, about $5 billion was taken out of science and innovation over five years. The results were disastrous. By August last year, when almost all other OECD countries had announced increased spending on innovation to prepare themselves for the highly competitive world trade of the 21st century, Australia had drifted to the bottom of the table in terms of the proportion of GDP it spent on R&D.

But by this time, the government had begun to see the error of its ways. It is said that influential in this process was a speech by US Federal Treasury head Alan Greenspan, in which he attributed the buoyancy of the American economy through the '90s to the money the US government had invested in R&D in previous decades. Greenspan went further. He quoted a study which showed that 73 per cent of the scientific papers cited in patent applications reported government-funded research, and 52 per cent came from universities. Clearly, 'the market' didn't take care of everything, even in the US—especially in the area of research which led to long-term results.

To hear the Coalition tell it, pruning science and education was necessary. When the Howard government came to power, it had to spend the first few years righting the economy, turning Labor's 'Black Hole' deficit into a surplus—only then could money be spent on science again. But isn't this putting the cart before the horse? If science and innovation are so important to producing a booming economy now, why weren't they before? At least that's the way countries like Singapore, Finland and Ireland saw it, as they poured money into R&D to underpin their prosperity.

But the government clearly finds it hard to get away from the idea that any help to business is a subsidy, and an interference with the market. Many of the government's ideas in the Innovation Statement came from two reports—Chief Scientist Robin Batterham's capability review, *The Chance to Change*, and the report of the National Innovation Summit Implementation Group, *Unlocking the Future* (see Archimedes, October 2000). The former dealt with research—education, universities, and national research infrastructure; the latter with development—business, entrepreneurship, innovation. While most of Batterham's proposals have been accepted, at least partially, the Implementation Group's plans for supporting an 'innovation culture' in Australia have mostly been ignored—most particularly the across-the-board reinstatement of the 150 per cent tax incentive for private R&D.

If we boost our capacity to educate science graduates, and produce more university research, what is there to attract students to take advantage of these opportunities? Where are the jobs in industry or elsewhere? The government has provided little to industry.

GOVERNMENT HAS deliberately flagged two areas for special treatment—biotechnology and information technology. (They just happen to be the very two areas which most of the rest of the world staked out just at the time when the Howard government was removing money from research—but no matter.) Biotechnology makes sense, says Howard, because it is an area in which Australia has a lot of natural advantages. He's right, but his view is limited. When pressed, it seems clear that by biotechnology, he actually means health and medicine. What about our unique resources in biotechnology, our environment, our biodiversity, and our ecological research? We didn't hear a great deal about them.

So while Archimedes congratulates the members of Cabinet on a fine start—and the Opposition for helping to goad them into it—he thinks there may be room for a more holistic understanding of the links between science, innovation and society. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.

ESSAY

KERRYN GOLDSWORTHY

Nameless library

THE LITTLE BOTTLES ON THE SHELF are made of pewter-like, silvery metal, now dull and dented. That they were once well cared for and well used is clear, as is their quality. They have endured thus far, 60 years longer than their owner. They match the clothes-brush, battered and splay-bristled, its figured backing made of the same metal, with the same design. The card is in German, mostly words I don't recognise, but it's clear what these objects are: they are part of a set from a gentleman's dressing-case.

This, anyway, is what memory tells me. I didn't take notes. I didn't think about it till later, that I might want to take notes, and by then it was too late. Perhaps I have some details wrong, and have changed one here and another there. I don't know. The brush, the bottles, they stood out, because really there are very few objects left in that apartment at 19 Berggasse; it's mostly photographs. Nearly all of Freud's stuff is in the Freud Museum in London. This is the other Freud Museum, the one in Vienna, the place from which he fled to London in the summer of 1938, before *Kristallnacht* but after the Anschluss, after Vienna had already become something other than what it was when, by degrees, he became famous in it; became 'Freud', by degrees.

I know people who claim not to 'believe in' Freud, rather as though he were the Easter Bunny. I look at his possessions, the little bottles. The word *quiddity* presents itself to me, as does the word *essence*. My training rejects the word essence, as applied to a human being. There *is* no essence of personality, my training harps and whines; Freud has taught us that there is no such thing. I gaze at the little dents in Freud's belongings and my instincts tell me that my training is wrong. They tell me that Freud was wrong. Sometimes when the forces of Id and Superego clash like this you can both hear and feel the impact, like a car crash. The word *percussive* joins quiddity and essence on the list in my head. I realise that I think Freud was wrong but am using his vocabulary to say why. I hear another crash.

When the SS raided this flat in the spring of 1938, Mrs Freud, Martha, invited them to leave their rifles in the umbrella stand and have a seat in the parlour. They confiscated passports and money. Freud and his family had considerable help getting out of Vienna a few months later. They knew what was coming and they planned their flight. If they had left it much later they would not have got away; as it was, four of his sisters were not allowed to join him, and died in the Holocaust. Freud himself, as he well knew, was already

dying of cancer when he escaped from here to London on June 3, 1938.

Did he use the contents of these bottles to care for the thinning hair, the little beard? Do the metallic surfaces retain anything of him—prints, traces, etheric vibrations, DNA? He touched them, he used them, they speak of him compellingly. This is why clairvoyants ask for an object, some daily, intimate, often-touched thing, to locate the missing and the lost, to communicate with the dead.

Vienna is full of the dead.

I watch the home movie from 1939 of Freud in the London garden of his exile, surreally showing on half-a-dozen screens at once. Visitors to this museum do not want to socialise, to watch a screen together. We each watch our own screen, all watching the same thing. Freud is ethereal and eaten up by cancer but still immaculate in waistcoat and tie. Unidentifiable women come and go, walking in striped silk skirts between him and the camera.

What would he have said, if he'd known that 60 years later a random group of strangers from all over the world would be sitting in his abandoned home, watching these images of his dying body? Would it have been good for a whole new book on some aspect of the nature of the self, or memory, or memorialisation, which is not the same thing? He leans over in an exhausted way from his garden chair to caress the head of a small dog, and that is where I leave him; over and over, gently and forever, Freud will stroke the ears of the silky little spaniel, flickering in faded sepia on the row of high-tech screens.

IT'S COLD TODAY in Vienna; it's late September 1997, and the season, after an Indian summer of blazing red leaves and daily skies of homesick Australian blue, has finally turned. The day is grey and the wind in the street is sharply cold, with moisture in it. What I have always liked about Freud, about whom I don't actually know all that much, is that irrespective of 'believing' or 'not believing' (I am not much interested in belief), his work offers or appears to offer a framework for interpretation of almost everything that happens, and in Vienna I am more grateful for this than usual. I am a tourist, and therefore I understand only small scraps of what happens. Tourism is generally theorised as a way of making money out of cultural specificity and cultural difference; countries not the tourist's own are constructed as foreign and exotic. If you understood what was going on, you would not, by definition, be a tourist.

For an Australian in Europe, though, this is not so clear-cut. Stopping over for three days in Bangkok, I knew, so to speak, exactly where I was: I understood nothing at all, and the alienation, while complete, was in its own way liberating. But here in Vienna, armed with a small amount of German and a small amount of knowledge, born in the wake of World War II and educated to think of Europe as the cradle of the world, I engage in a sometimes appalling struggle to make sense of what I'm seeing. And for some of what I'm seeing, Freud comes in very handy. It certainly enhances my understanding of Vienna to meditate on the fact that two of its main tourist attractions, the Lipizzaner Stallions and the Vienna Boys' Choir, have the same basic criterion for becoming a performer: testosterone levels. Hitler's sometime home is a city where masculinity matters. The little person on Vienna's pedestrian crossing lights is not the usual androgynous stick figure: he's wearing the sort of snappy hat one associates with pictures of the young

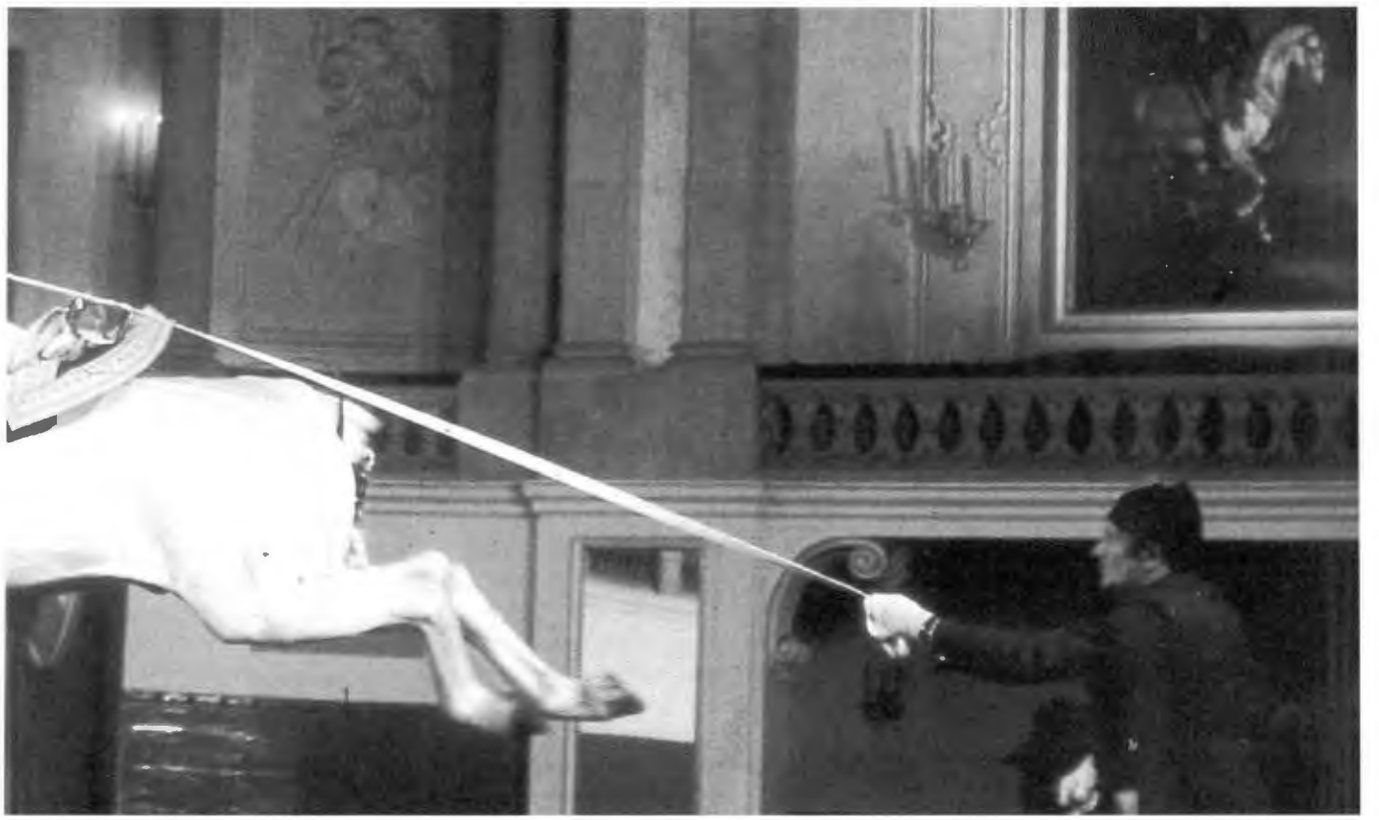
Frank Sinatra. Women, one assumes, are not expected to cross the road.

(Freud asked 'What do women want?' I could have told him; we want to cross the road.)

I go to hear the boys and see the stallions. In both cases it is not a performance but rather the regular exercise. I go to Sunday Mass at the Hofburg, where the Vienna Boys' Choir sings for the tourists every Sunday from September to June. There is a crush no claustrophobe would survive. I get glimpses of the inside of the Burgkapelle and its baroque ornamentation but do not see the boys at all, except on the screen over my head. They are making a lot of mistakes today and for some reason I find this reassuring. Celestial human voices are frightening;

you need to see them earthed and flawed by the disorder of the body.

The horses also make mistakes, but that's because what I go to see is a training session. The indoor arena is in another part of the Hofburg; the boys and the stallions both belong to the palace. They are young half-trained stallions who still haven't quite learned that 'total obedience' is what is required of them. What they seem really to want is to throw and then maybe trample, just for good measure, the men on their backs, some of whom are also barely more than boys. Within the controlled, unnatural movements of powerhouse hoof and haunch and the erect and rigid composure of the riders, there's a violent



struggle going on in the arena for control: sweat, saliva, whips and white-faced riders. By training and breeding over centuries they are war horses, after all. I'm watching the essence of masculinity, bringing itself under the control of ritual performance. These beautiful, unnatural movements were originally designed to smash skulls and win wars.

FREUD WOULD HAVE HAD a lot to say about the horses. But he is less useful in helping me sort out the chaos of what I see classified and preserved: in the Jewish Museum, the Teddy Bear Museum, the Mozart Museum, the Clock Museum, the Museum of Pathological Anatomy. I am in a city whose *raison d'être* is memorialisation, and could not, in the light of its history, be otherwise. And this is brought home to me on the day that the 1997 edition of *Vienna: The Rough Guide* leads me to the Judenplatz, the site of the city's first Jewish ghetto. On the 16th-century plaque at No. 2, the oldest house in the square, there's a bas-relief of Christ's baptism with a Latin inscription that my *Rough Guide* translates: 'By baptism in the River Jordan bodies are cleansed from disease and evil, so all secret sinfulness takes flight. Thus the flame rising furiously through the whole city in 1421 purged the terrible crimes of the Hebrew dogs. As the world was once purged by the flood, so this time it was purged by fire.'

The plaque was put up to commemorate the pogrom of 1421. Of the 300 Viennese Jews who did not escape to Hungary, 80 were killed by the rabbi, who then killed himself, to avoid the fate of the rest, who were burned at the stake. The book calls this a 'pretty little square', but at the moment it is full of rubble, excavation paraphernalia, roped-off areas, dug-out pits and information boards, and this is why I'm here. Vienna's city council has decided to erect a memorial, the first, to the Austrian Jews killed in the Holocaust. British sculptor Rachel Whiteread has designed the memorial, a huge white concrete cast of a library turned inside-out, books turned backwards with their spines to the shelves so no titles can be read. The monument is called Nameless Library. Its

base is engraved with the names of the camps where Austrian Jews were killed.

But recently, excavating in the square in order to lay the foundations for the memorial, workmen found the smoke-stained remains of a 13th-century synagogue that was sacked and burned in the pogrom of 1421. And now, my guidebook tells me, the whole memorial project is stalled, as one faction of the Jewish community argues that the archaeological site should be preserved and the memorial moved elsewhere, and the other, led by Simon Wiesenthal, maintains that the synagogue can be preserved under the memorial and that the significance of the site will now be doubly charged.

All over the site there are diagrams and photographs, mostly of the ruins but also some drawings and information about Whiteread's proposed memorial. So far there is no sign of anything like foundations, only the excavations. The memorial was originally due to be unveiled, says my book, on the 58th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*: November 9, 1996, almost a year ago now. I stand on the catwalk peering into the medieval pit under a grey autumn sky, looking at the remains of smoky walls. The dead are very close.

When I go the next day to the Jewish Museum I don't know there's a special exhibition on until I get inside. A young woman has put together a four-room installation based on the Nazis' 'medical experiments' in two of the camps in the early 1940s. The first room is a small white empty cube in which one stands up against the wall and looks at about 200 slides projected onto the opposite wall. They are 'official' photographs of the 'experiments'. Some of the subjects are still alive in these images. They have been infected with things like anthrax. There are shots of men lying on hospital trolleys, naked and conscious, their testicles swollen to the size of rockmelons. There are close-ups of living female shoulders covered in the infected lesions of diseases I didn't know still existed.

But most of the people in these pictures are dead. One shot that might be a deliberate parody of pornography shows a pile of women's bodies all of which have been neatly cut in half at the waist, eviscerated, stacked in a pile and photographed at such an angle, with the bodies pointed towards the camera, that I am staring straight up the tunnels of their ribs at the places where their hearts used to be.

In the next room there is a rather oddly displayed row of white plaster death-masks taken from the people who died in the camps. While I'm looking at these, I hear a faint clicking and whirring, which I put down to the air-conditioning or the slide projector in the next room.

In the third room there are framed enlargements on the wall of single pages from various Nazi documents and correspondence relating to the experiments. One details the official policy for procreation and describes the research being done into the technology of human fertilisation, the aim being to make sure 'every German mother' gets pregnant not only as quickly as possible, but with twins, so the master race can reproduce itself more efficiently. Another outlines problems with experiments testing conditions for fighter pilots; the phrase I remember is 'the subjects tend to scream when they freeze'.

In the fourth and last room there's a bank of video monitors disconcertingly similar to the ones in the Freud Museum. A sign at the entrance to this room has warned me that hidden cameras and microphones in the death-mask room have recorded my reactions to the masks, and now I am obliged to watch and listen to myself looking, from ten or 12 different angles, before I can get out. The fight against denial and forgetting is going well. Simon Wiesenthal would be pleased.

The exhibition records experiments done in the camps during 1941–42. A couple of years earlier, Stefan Zweig had spoken the oration at Freud's funeral, just after the outbreak of the war. 'Each of us,' he said, 'people of the 20th century, would have been different in our manner of thinking and understanding without him; each of us would think, judge and feel more narrowly and less freely.'

Rachel Whiteread's Nameless Library was finally unveiled, in the Judenplatz where it had been designed to go, on October 25, 2000. Sites of friction multiplied. The right-wing Austrian coalition government was asked to stay away from the ceremony, the organisers not wanting it associated in any way with Jörg Haider's Freedom Party. Some of the Jewish community are unhappy because of the synagogue site, even though that has been preserved underneath as a museum. Residents are unhappy because they fear the memorial will make the square a target for neo-Nazi activity. All sorts of people are unhappy because the memorial is 'not beautiful' and 'ruins one of the most attractive areas of the city'.

Simon Wiesenthal, now 91, spoke at the unveiling ceremony. 'It is important that the art is not beautiful, that it hurts us in some way.'

Mary Braid, in her report for *The Independent*, concludes that 'many Austrians just want to ignore or forget'. The photograph of the ceremony that accompanies her article has been taken from an upstairs window at the corner of the square. You can see how cold it is, from the light, and the way that people are huddled into their clothes. It's only a small square and the memorial takes up a good bit of it, but it's half-empty all the same. Most of the people there, says Braid, are journalists. The Viennese stayed at home. ■

Kerryn Goldsworthy is a South Australian writer.

Last disrespects

One of the most powerful images of love is the pietà, the mother grieving over her dead child. Yet, I am disturbed by the response of the bereaved mothers of Liverpool when they found that their children, who had died at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, had been buried without their internal organs.

The report of the inquiry into Alder Hey's pathological practices was so savage that it was tabled in parliament and read into Hansard before it was released. Dutch pathology professor Dick van Velzen had stockpiled thousands of body parts between 1988 and 1995, stripping the bodies of dead children without consent or regard for their parents' wishes. He is said to have done it for 'research', research that was never attempted and histology that was never completed. The little corpses were cavalierly treated: gutted, then catalogued: 'Inflated monster: Humpty Dumpty' for one foetus; 'Neck deeply lacerated. Pull it to pieces sometime and reject' of another.

As the inquiry progressed, the hospital identified and returned more and more body parts. One mother got first her baby's missing heart, then his kidneys and, finally, his testicles. Many held further funerals, sometimes years after the first. One mother held four 'funerals'. The hospital offended the rest by volunteering advice on how to bury body parts in their gardens.

In the wake of the inquiry report published in January, organ donation throughout the UK virtually ceased overnight.

Obtaining informed consent to organ donation from relatives at the bedside is a very different process from the euphemistic scribbles that permitted the secret plundering of cadavers in the morgue. In Alder Hey, parents' 'consent' to post-mortem examination was manipulated. One couple explicitly refused permission for a post mortem three times. They were lied to. Dr van Velzen routinely 'stripped the organs from every dead child he touched', including theirs. But no-one is making distinctions any more.

We instinctively respect our human dead. We are appalled by video clips of mobs tearing at the bodies of 'enemies' in Somalia, Northern Ireland and East Timor. Murderers who dismember their victims' bodies are the greater 'monsters'. Cutting up a body somehow severs the murderer from us, and our normal sensibilities. An affront to the dignity of a person in death seems, somehow, such a taboo act that the defiler is always cut off from us.

It is one of our fundamental laws that no-one may even touch me, while I am alive, without my consent. On death, the only person entitled to deal with my body is my executor or next of kin, whose only right and duty is to dispose of it decently. Anyone who defies that law outrages a fundamental community precept.

We have accepted that modern medicine justifies the removal and transplanting of organs for good cause and with due reverence. In some cases—heart transplants for instance—knowing that a life has been saved means that no-one is bereft when the dead child lies in her coffin without her heart. The Alder Hey parents have no such source of comfort. Their 'funerals', for body parts, seem a bad and bitter joke. A funeral should be a farewell to the whole person—body, soul, personality—and a commendation to an afterlife or eternal rest. You cannot have a 'funeral' twice.

Once, we trusted the medical profession's good intentions and professional judgment. We didn't ask for the details of an autopsy if our doctor wanted one: we played along with doctors' views that such details would add to the pain of our bereavement. Now, we need and expect to know. This change has come, largely, with the growth of consumerism: we have rights, and remedies for botched service provision. It has also come because some doctors have been arrogant and stupid.

Doctors must now justify what they do in different ways. Collecting pathological specimens has always been one of the foundations of modern medicine. Doctors need stored tissue to track the history and incidence of diseases with long incubation periods and to carry out research for 'cures'. Surgeons need stored organs to check their surgical procedures: the death rate in cardiac surgery, for example, has dropped from 20 per cent, 30 years ago, to barely three per cent today because of it. At Alder Hey, 1600 children are alive today because of the improvements in surgical techniques and care pioneered there. Some of the bereaved parents said they would have donated organs, if they had been asked. Not now. As Stephen Parker, a member of the Bristol Heart Children's Action Group told the inquiry, 'When a child dies that child is still the parents' child—not a specimen, not a cause, not an unfortunate casualty of a failed procedure.' The profession must act on this.

We have lost our faith in heroes, in scientists, sometimes in religion too. The focus beyond ourselves has been displaced by a focus on looking for good—and god—within. Our sense of being human has shifted, too, to the purely physical: our bodies, our selves. What we have left is the feeling that when we die something of what we were is still attached to our remains.

This is one tragedy of the parents of Alder Hey, with their grotesque 'funerals'. The other is the defilement of their memories. One mother took final possession of 36 bottles, jars and slides of her 11-month-old son, and now cannot remember her baby. Her rage is vast, not only, I think, against the disgraceful behaviour of the hospital staff she trusted, but against death itself. ■

Moira Rayner is Director of the London Children's Rights Commissioner's Office.

Survival tactics

The Karen people have, for more than half a century, been casualties of the post-colonial settlement in Burma. Yet they fight still for their independence. **Jon Greenaway** spent time marching with a Karen army battalion on the Thai–Burma border.

THE NIGHT HAS not begun well. During the late afternoon we are told that government forces have not attacked the post in ten years. Almost as those words are uttered, a Burmese plane is spotted overhead, on the first of two flyovers. Then at dusk there is an explosion in the hills to the north-west. More worrying than the booming echo and the alarmed screeching of birds is the reaction it causes.

A group of fighters, some in full battle fatigues, others in T-shirts, cotton *longyis* and flip-flops, gather near the command hut talking rapidly. In the middle stands Captain Kyaw Kyaw (pronounced Jo Jo), who had leapt up from the table where we had been sipping green tea, taking with him a walkie-talkie into which he is now shouting instructions. A patrol from a forward position is dispatched.

Quarter of an hour later the tension has eased. A static-filled report tells us that a falling branch has set off one of the landmines laid to protect the camp. We are in a Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) camp, perched on the Thai–Burma border.

A few hours later we are shaken awake as we lie under blankets on the bamboo slat floor.

'Stand by, enemy is near,' in staccato English.

Candles throw a circle of light on the faces surrounding Captain Kyaw Kyaw and his walkie-talkie. Kyaw Kyaw is the battalion adjutant, a title copied from the British army many years ago. The small flames are reflected in his spectacles and pick up only the peaks in his contoured face, making him look even more harrowed than he does during the day. A

deep gouge on his right cheek, relic of a pitched battle with the Burmese army in 1977, can't be plumbed by the light.

Scouts have spotted flashlights coming in the direction of the camp and the fear is that they belong to a column of government troops, moving into position for an early-morning assault.

Three weeks before, a group of 30 guerrillas had successfully raided a government position on a mountain top two and a half miles away, forcing their troops to flee after a heavy bombardment of mortar and small weapons fire.

In the last decade the dry season has coincided with what Burma's State Peace and Development Council annually describes as the last push to overwhelm the Karen rebellion. Whether successful or not, these small victories are a statement by the Karen that their fight for a homeland is not over yet. But the wait for the Burmese army response is a nervous one.

> The most noticeable result of the war in the East has been that all Asiatic peoples, winners, losers and spectators alike, have become more nationalistic, more politically conscious. The Karens have not escaped the epidemic.

Such was the brisk treatment given in 1947 to the subject of self-determination for the Karen people, the largest ethnic group in Burma after the Burmans. These two sentences (contained in the epilogue to an account of the heroic feats of a British soldier behind Japanese lines) were more prophetic than their writer, an officer in General William Slim's 14th army that retook Burma at war's end, could have known. Fifty-two years after their fight began, guerrillas in the KNLA, the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU) formed in 1947, continue to resist the military junta in Rangoon. It is quite possibly the world's longest-running insurgency.

WHEN THE KAREN joined Burma's civil war in January 1949, the other military threats to Rangoon came from the Communist Party of Burma and pockets of Kuomintang exiled by Mao Zedong's Red Army. The fortunes of these two ideologically opposed entities peaked and then fell during the Karen's long fight. Most of Burma's other ethnic groups, such as the Kachin, Mon and Shan, picked up arms in earnest when General Ne Win overthrew U Nu's civilian government in 1962, only to put them down again in the last decade, agreeing to ceasefires. The KNU made alliances with the former prime minister U Nu in the early '70s, and with the students fleeing the 1988 crackdown, and then watched these alliances fizzle. Nearly half a dozen peace agreements have been attempted and all have failed. Still the Karen fight on.

Emboldened by wartime promises from Britain, a forerunner of the KNU made representations to Westminster and the nascent United Nations in 1945, to have a Karen State recognised, watched over by Britain until the Karen were ready for self-rule. A 1947 agreement between Prime Minister Attlee and Burmese independence leader Aung San—Aung San Suu Kyi's father—disregarded this request. Attlee shared the view that an independent Karen State would be a troublesome anomaly in the decolonisation process. One year after independence and 18 months after Aung San's assassination, the Karen rebellion started with the defection of a regiment of Karen rifles.

The KNU's army once boasted 25,000 in its ranks and at times during the 1960s and '70s had the strength to threaten Rangoon itself. It also controlled large tracts of their disputed territory, a stretch of jungle hills and hidden valleys that runs from just east of Rangoon, along the isthmus separating the Andaman Sea from the Gulf of Thailand. From this position they could fund themselves through taxation, a flat five per cent charge on cross-border trade with Thailand. In 1978, this put a staggering A$125 million into their coffers.

Even though the KNU is not the force it once was, now outnumbered by Burma's drug-smuggling kings, by the United Wa State Army (with 20,000 in its ranks) and the recently reformed Shan State Army, there remains a palpable sense of destiny among KNLA troops. 'My grandfather was a major when our rebellion began but he was killed in the battle for Dai-ut and then my uncles joined,' says Sergeant Ne Wah in crisp, correct English. 'I grew up in a refugee camp in Thailand and could make 10,000 baht a month (A$400) working with NGOs, but if I did there would be nobody from my generation in the family fighting.'

THE FEW THATCH huts scattered along the banks of a stream marking a small stretch of the 2000km-long border between Thailand and Burma form the

Above left: young KNLA soldier preparing to shoot
Right: Veteran KNLA soldier
Photographs pp28–31 by Justin Brierty

headquarters of the 201st battalion of the KNLA's 6th Brigade. The place is called 'Worlaykee', which means river's head. The bedraggled appearance of the few soldiers who watch our arrival as they squat around fires inhaling long cigar-like Burmese cheroots suggests it is unlikely there are as many as 200 battalions before it. The second-in-command, inside the command hut placed next to a parade ground—the only piece of flat earth for miles— is too busy describing last week's raid to look up as a group of six soldiers emerge from the jungle carrying a variety of weapons and ammunition. One or two look to have barely reached their teens, but like the elder members of their patrol they carry their rifles over the shoulder with an air of practised nonchalance.

'We attacked the post two or three times before the Burmese fled,' Major Saw Wee announces, consulting a notebook for a list of the enemy soldiers wounded and the calibre of weapons seized. 'We torched the huts and laid some landmines around the area and seized a lot of weapons,' the veteran of this jungle war says. He and Captain Kyaw Kyaw boast of capturing a Burmese soldier in the raid as well. We ask to see him. He had since died because he refused food, we are told. The subject is quickly changed.

One of Major Saw Wee's particular talents is making landmines from scratch. He has designed the KNU landmine, a length of PVC piping packed with gunpowder, wrapped in a plastic bag and connected to a battery-operated trigger. Without these devices—a necessity in guerrilla warfare—the 450,000-strong Burmese army would swamp them, they argue.

Major Nerdah Mya, commander of the 201st battalion, who also hands out business cards with 'KNU Secretary for Foreign Affairs' printed under his name, believes these early dry-season raids are the beginning of a rebound in their fortunes.

'I am very confident that before the start of the next wet season we will bring the Generals to the negotiating table.'

The Major's confidence is assisted by rumours that the leader of the Burmese junta, General Than Shwe, is in poor health and has moved to open dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi.

'We are better fed, better equipped, in better health than the Burman soldier and we are fighting for our homeland. We hear of an upcoming split in the junta and you have to think that something will happen as there is so much pressure on Burma from outside and they owe so much money,' says this charismatic son of Bo Mya, the strongman in the Karen resistance for most of the last 30 years. Before patrolling jungle paths, he studied liberal arts at a Seventh Day Adventist College in California and obtained a commercial pilot's licence. His strange double life is such that two weeks before we met, at his base in the hills, he was in England as a guest of sympathisers, reminding those who would listen of the close connection forged between Britain and the Karen during World War II.

'We are planning a big protest in London next summer,' he says.

The many who predicted the end of the Karen struggle perhaps should have read Ian Morrison's post-war account of Major Hugh Seagrim's campaign in the Karen hills.

Inspired by the Karen's determination and often fighting in traditional Karen dress, Seagrim ran a harassment campaign so successful that word was put out that villagers would bear the brunt of Japanese wrath as long as he remained at large.

In 1985 Hugh Seagrim's home village of Whissonsett in Norfolk unveiled a statue to his memory and to that of his brother Derek, a hero in the Greek and Western Desert campaigns. A delegation of Karen travelled from the Thai–Burma border to dedicate a plaque that read:

'We remembered, so we came to thank you.'

Factionalism has plagued the Karen's independence cause. Bo Mya's rise in the 1970s caused bitter internal disputes at a time when the Karen were in a position to force back the junta's troops. The fall of their jungle capital in 1995 came after the defection of 1000 troops to the government side in December of 1994, all Buddhists dissatisfied with the control of the Christian hierarchy and wooed by Rangoon's promises of wealth. The defectors formed the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army. They continue to side with the government, burning refugee camps in Thailand which they claim the KNU uses as bases, and playing scout for Burmese troops.

Frustration with the KNU also saw the rise of another armed group, known as 'God's Army'. Headed by a couple of teenage twins, it has 250 armed followers who believe the boys have mystical powers. (Their leaders, Johnny and Luther Htoo, were captured in January by Thai troops after members of the group shot some Thai villagers in a vendetta killing.)

In the early 18th century when missionaries first encountered the Karen they discovered a belief in one God and a creation myth similar to Genesis. Many excitedly scribbled accounts describing the Karen as the lost tribe of Israel. Anthropologists now reckon that in their migration from the areas between Tibet and Yunnan province in southern China, the Karen came across Christian and Hebrew traders who shared the stories that have since been incorporated into Karen traditional beliefs. Their theology, so amenable to Christian beliefs, fired the missionaries' zeal and many Karen were converted.

When Britain fought to subdue the Burmese Kings in the 19th century, the work of the missionaries helped ensure the loyalty of Karen fighters. Yet stories of conflict between the Burmese Kings and the Karen go back before the days of empire and Karen suspicion of the Burman remains, even when he appears to be an ally.

The KNU, along with 13 other ethnic groups, agreed in 1997 to work with Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy to establish a democratic federal union. Yet when asked what they think of her, the KNLA fighters react with guarded support.

'We like what Aung San Suu Kyi is saying, but sometimes the Burmese say one thing and then do the other so we will have to wait and see.' Nerdah Mya then adds a politically-minded qualification that their problem is not with the Burmese people but with their army.

Lieutenant Colonel Stevenson, the man who recruited Hugh Seagrim for his mission with the Karen, became Director of the Frontier Areas Administration after World War II, responsible for the Burmese hill country and its peoples. Knowing that traditional enmities between the Karen and Burmans had been roiled by massacres during the war, he urged that Karen demands be heard.

'I have come to the regrettable conclusion that the present Karen quiescence means simply that they refuse to quarrel with us. But when we go, if go we do, the war for Karen State will start,' Stevenson wrote to his superiors in 1946. Commenting on the British decision to leave the question of Karen State for an independent Burma to resolve, Nerdah Mya drops his diplomatic guard: 'The British knew at the time of the Mountbatten conference in 1947 [Mountbatten was the last Viceroy of India and Burma] that the Karen and the Burmans did not get along and they should have given a state to each. Instead they sold us out.'

Major Saw Wee and a junior officer discuss attack positions while looking over a valley occupied by Burmese soldiers three or four kilometres away.

The fighting in their hills has cost the Karen people dearly. The Karen Human Rights Group, the only organisation to have visited the rugged and sealed-off stretches of Karen State regularly in the last decade, estimates that roughly 100,000 Karen have been killed by government troops during the rebellion.

Canadian Kevin Heppner, the group's founder, says the effect on villagers (most Karen are farmers and villagers) has been devastating. Their crops are destroyed or surrounded with landmines. Torture and rape are used to extract information. The persecution intensified in the late 1980s and sent an exodus into Thailand. There are now 100,000 Karen refugees in Thai camps.

'The Karen are tough people and they can put up with a hell of a lot but if there is no change in the current situation then they are close to the point of being unable to survive,' Heppner believes. As a volunteer teacher at a school run by the KNU, he witnessed the razing of a village by Burmese troops in 1991. He adds that the persecution of minority groups is so systemic in the Burmese military, primarily through the officer class who do it for profit and promotion rather than strategic reasons, that it would likely continue if the KNLA were to give up their arms and surrender. There are no signs that the KNLA soldiers are ready to surrender the fight.

AT FIRST LIGHT and at dusk, the raising and lowering of the flag of an independent Karen State is conducted with prompt ceremony. Even though the fighters in this camp are resting they still volunteer to go on patrol near Burmese army positions.

On one of these sorties I walk behind Major Saw Wee. I watch him negotiate the jungle path with an economy of effort, gliding up the side of a mountain silently and without raising a sweat, despite the heat, steep track and mud left over from the recently finished wet. I struggle and slip in T-shirt, tracksuit pants and boots. Of his 49 years, 31 have been spent as a soldier with the KNLA—so long he says he can't remember what he did before nor imagine what he might do if peace is won. His orders to the 15 fighters under his command are listened to carefully and carried out directly.

We move towards a ridge, looking up to the position they sacked a few weeks before, to see if government troops have reoccupied the position. At various points along the trail we are warned not to turn on to dummy paths that have been planted with landmines. Our eyes are locked on our feet. The banter of the base camp has gone.

After leaving at first light we arrive mid morning. Through binoculars, Burmese troops can be seen on the mountain a few hundred metres away, moving around plastic fly tents set up in and around the charred remains of their huts. Despite being in full view of the enemy, Major Saw Wee's men sit down for a chat and a smoke. We are told that for the Burmese to fire on us would be a waste of precious ammunition—the Karen would melt back into the forest and out of sight in an instant. In what seems like a show of bravado, the patrol gathers arm-in-arm for a photo.

I sit on my haunches and yawn, still tired from the night before. I'd fallen asleep again after we were roused. When I finally woke, dawn was breaking up a light mist over the parade ground and everyone was moving around noiselessly but with purpose, shifting rounds of ammunition from one place to another, loading weapons or cooking breakfast. Captain Kyaw Kyaw was still where he had been during the night, sitting at the table, his walkie-talkie in front of him but now with a couple of blankets draped over his head and shoulders to ward off the early morning chill. He looked over, smiled, and then barked something into the walkie-talkie. In a few minutes three or four fighters returned and the leader, who had woken us, said everything was okay.

'The lights were just villagers ... no bang-bang today.' ■

Jon Greenaway is *Eureka Street*'s South East Asia correspondent.

News days

***John Coleman** remembers the Beaverbrook press and the days when editors believed that you couldn't beat news in a newspaper.*

When I married my Australian sweetheart in London back in the 1960s, the entire editorial staff of Lord Beaverbrook's *Sunday Express* came to the Nuptial Mass in fashionable St Mary's Church, Chelsea.

Among them were some of Fleet Street's famous names, including the editor John Junor, later knighted by Margaret Thatcher, and Brendan Mulholland, who went to jail for refusing to divulge his sources in the wake of the Profumo affair.

I had scored the fashionable church since, with a bachelor bedsitter around the corner, it was my parish. Few of the journalists had previously seen the inside of any church and the parish priest, who spoke like an old Etonian, explained the Mass as we went along. Junor, impressed, suggested we give him a run in Ephraim Hardcastle, *The Sunday Express* column devoted to the doings of the royals and the aristocracy.

The Mass also deeply impressed my colleagues and it became a kind of benchmark in Fleet Street: '... it was the year after John's wedding.'

The Fleet Street memories—in the golden age before the advent of Rupert Murdoch and the Isle of Dogs—came flooding back with the news that the former Beaverbrook newspapers, which have changed hands a number of times, have been sold again—this time, ironically, to pornographer Richard Desmond.

Labour peer Lord Hollick disposed of *The Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Daily Star* to Mr Desmond for almost A$331million. Mr Desmond's publishing firm, Northern & Shell, owns the British edition of *Penthouse* and publishes other titles like *Women on Top* and *Asian Babes*.

Other bidders for the three declining titles reportedly included Mohammed Al Fayed (owner of Harrods), *Punch* magazine, *The Daily Mail*, newspaper magnate Tony O'Reilly and the Barclay brothers, proprietors of London's Ritz and the *Scotsman*.

When I joined *The Sunday Express* in 1964, Lord Beaverbrook by then had died, but his son Sir Max Aitken was still beating the drum for the Empire. *The Sunday Express* was three floors above *The Daily Express*, and while the Beaverbrook policy was the same for the two papers, they operated separately.

The Sunday Express, with a circulation of 4.25 million, was a broadsheet like its sister daily. If the Beaverbrook policies were all-pervasive on the two papers, so, too, was the benchmark of quality set by the legendary Arthur Christiansen, editor of *The Daily Express* in the 1950s.

For me, having spent formative years on an Australian metropolitan daily and earlier a regional daily, there were refreshing changes. I quickly learnt that *The Sunday Express* was a writer's paper—where the merit of the story relied almost entirely on the quality of the reporter's writing rather than any massaging by the subeditor. If the unsubbed story didn't get past the executive backbench, it was dead.

Christiansen summed it up in his stylebook, *The Express Way*: 'Good stories flow like honey. Bad stories stick in the craw. What is a bad story? It is a story that cannot be absorbed on the first time of reading. It is a story that leaves questions unanswered. It is a story that has to be read two or three times before it can be comprehended ...'

News stories, too, had to be exclusive to make page one and prime inside pages—'Is it new, is it true?' was the test. As Christiansen put it: 'Ban the word "exclusive" in the *Express*. Our aim is to make everything exclusive ...'

As the push was on to join the European Economic Community, *The Sunday Express* and *The Daily Express* were pretty much lone voices promoting the cause of the Commonwealth.

The drum-beating for the Empire was as strident as ever, but there were informed stories seeking to protect Australian and New Zealand exports and criticising the Home Office's harsh treatment of young Australian holidaymakers who overstayed in Britain.

The dispatch of Australian conscripts to Vietnam in 1966 received scant mention in Fleet Street, but *The Sunday Express* ran in full an editorial I wrote on the eve of Anzac Day about the first conscripts who left the previous week. There was a genuine regard for Australians, much of it stemming from Sir Max Aitken's association with them as a fighter pilot during the Battle of Britain.

Like the daily, the Sunday paper had its foibles. Among them was the pursuit of eccentric vicars. I recall hurtling down to Somerset on a false trail and feeling a sense of unreality over bone-china tea cups in the vicarage. Yet there were hard-hitting, controversial stories. We pursued politicians after the Profumo affair, relentlessly exposed their perks, and worried that we were getting too close for comfort to the criminal Kray brothers.

The human element and stories about people were important to both *The Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*. As Christiansen expressed it: '1. Never set the police on anybody. 2. Never cry down the pleasures of the people. 3. Remember our own habits and frailties when disposed to be critical of others. Always, always tell the news through people.' Yet: 'News, news, news—that is what we want. You can describe things with the pen of Shakespeare, but you cannot beat news in a newspaper.'

While journalists laboured to meet the Christiansen formula for 'flow like honey' intros, subs laboured to make headings 'sing'. Christiansen spelt it out in the stylebook: 'Most of the papers had good headlines on the enticement case, but top of the class goes to *The Daily Graphic* man who writes: THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER STOLE THE COOK.'

Conditions for staff on *The Sunday Express*—pay and holidays—in those halcyon days of great newspapers and crazy economics were excellent.

When my annual holidays were due, there was the chance to return to Australia on a Qantas inaugural flight. 'Take as many weeks as you like,' the news editor told me. My conscience allowed eight weeks on full pay.

Every journalist joined *The Sunday Express* board at the Savoy in 1969 for the paper's 50th birthday, sampling French champagne and haggis, piped in by the Royal House Guards and escorted by Canadian Indian Johnny Two Rivers with the toast to the paper by Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

It was certainly another era on *The Sunday Express*—one I look back on with warmth and affection. And I find most of the advice given by Christiansen still holds good in the pursuit of quality journalism.

With exceptions, as in this 31 March 1953 staff memo: 'Whenever possible print a woman's age.' ■

John Coleman is a freelance journalist.

Dah-dum

WHEN YOU SAY you're going to New Caledonia the first thing people ask is, 'Are you going snorkelling?'

It's hard to visit a Pacific island, particularly one with the second-largest barrier reef in the world (after Australia's) and not remember that childhood dream of becoming a marine biologist. I was determined to don a snorkel, mask and flippers. Except, well ... *Jaws* came along at just the wrong time for me. I was impressionable. And this scene was just too familiar: beautiful blue water, but a creature lurking beneath with big fin and razor teeth ready to remove my vital parts.

I've tried to convince myself the fear is irrational—I mean, it's more dangerous to cross the street. But irrational fears are, well, irrational. My case wasn't helped when, a few days after I arrived, the hostel owner read me a newspaper story about a shark attack on the north-west coast of the island. 'They found nothing but his spear and a flipper.' He should have been in the tabloid, not the tourist business.

A week later I'm lying on the idyllic Plage de Poe, about two hours north of Noumea. The equipment is free, the water crystal. My companions, Christine and Michel, are cocky. How do I tell them I'm scared rigid? We're in a lagoon, I tell myself. It's 500m to the outer reef and no self-respecting shark would be seen dead here. There must be shark cool, must be stuff sharks wouldn't want other sharks to know they'd done, like gobbling an easy target like me.

We make our way to the edge of the first reef—a 300m walk in ankle-deep water. The reef then drops six feet, forming a lagoon stretching 200m to the outer reef. It's a perfect pool—creamy white sand on the bottom and hardly a ripple on the surface. But I know better. My companions are already darting and diving, beckoning me to hurry. I pause, check for fins, and dive in.

Immediately a school of over a hundred brilliant blue fish the size of my hand dart from behind a reef. They move in perfect unison, like one large pulsating creature. As they disappear a larger school, of angelfish, swim casually from behind another outcrop of coral. I'm so transfixed by the colour pulsing beneath the surface that I forget to breathe. I splutter to the surface, mask, snorkel, nose and mouth filled with brine.

For the hour it takes us to swim to the outer reef, I trail well behind Christine and Michel, pretending to take my time—the marine biologist. In fact I have to stop every five minutes to adjust my mask. The fish ignore me. The small ones dart away, the middle-sized ones keep their distance and the larger ones stare back as I clumsily take their photo.

Suddenly, my flipper is wrenched. I roll and flounder, swallow more salt water. The last thing I see before I go under is a fin, grazing my foot.

Panic! I swim as hard as I can, arms flailing wildly, my one flipper ineffectual. I figure I can't outswim a shark, but what else is there to do? I give it a go. A dozen strokes in and the peals of laughter reach me. I turn to see my 'friends' barely able to float for mirth, Christine brandishing a single flipper.

I decline their invitation to go spear-fishing later that night. But I greedily consume their catch nevertheless. And no, it's not flake. ■

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Paradoxes of the papacy

Witness to Hope: the Biography of Pope John Paul II, George Weigel, Cliff Street Books (HarperCollins), 1999. ISBN 0 06 018793 X, RRP $54. **The Reform of the Papacy: the Costly Call to Christian Unity**, John R. Quinn, Crossroad (Herder and Herder), 1999. ISBN 0 8245 1826 8, RRP $42.95. **Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit**, Garry Wills, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000. ISBN 0 2325 2389 4, RRP $45

ONE HOT SUMMER afternoon in 1979 I was making my way around the colonnades of the Piazza of St Peter's in Rome on my daily trek to the archives where I was working. Owing to the popularity of the new Polish pope, his weekly allocutions had been shifted outdoors into the Piazza. Over the loudspeakers boomed the familiar voice of John Paul II in heavily accented Italian. I caught the words *l'essenza metafisica di matrimonio*. Ever since, this experience has served to sum up for me the paradoxes of this papacy, in fact of the modern papacy as a whole.

John Paul II with Mikhail Gorbachev in Rome, December 1989.
Photograph from *Lives of the Popes*
by Richard P. McBrien (HarperCollins, 2000)

Here was a pope concerned with the realities of living. For some three years, to the dismay of many of his advisers, he pursued the theme of marriage in his audience addresses (they have been nicely analysed by Mary Durkin in *Feast of Love*, Loyola University Press, 1983). It was, however, the style that worried me. My wife and I were struggling with the daily problems of living in a foreign country with two children under five. It was nice to know that the pope cared, but an authoritative philosophical analysis of 'the metaphysical essence' of our relationship was not really what we needed. There was an apparent lack of congruity between style and substance.

There has probably been no pope in history who has had such a wide-ranging impact on the world, has so widely travelled, has used the resources of modern technology so effectively; 'the most visible pope in history' as George Weigel nicely puts it. Certainly he is the most prolific writer as pope, at least the best published. But is his model of the church as a one-man show the only, the appropriate model? Does our one world in which a Vatican decree or opinion can land electronically on the desk of a bishop, a parish priest, a Catholic lay man or woman instantaneously, require that it should? Might not the opposite be true: that globalisation of religion as of all aspects of life allows with safety a greater pluralism within the church? And how does such a centralised and centralising agenda for the Catholic Church help it engage with its sister Christian churches and, even more, the diverse religions of mankind?

THESE ARE THE issues raised by three recent important works on the current papacy. George Weigel's massive, semi-authorised biography exhaustively covers the career of Karol Wojtyla up to the just-concluded Year of Jubilee. John R. Quinn contrasts a model of church government evolved at Vatican II and in Pope John Paul II's writings with the reality he experienced as Archbishop of San Francisco and president of the American National Conference of Bishops. Garry Wills' somewhat ill-tempered *Papal Sin* uncovers what he calls the 'structures of deceit' in the contemporary church.

It is tempting to present these books in political terms as right (Weigel), centre (Quinn) and left (Wills) viewpoints on the contemporary Catholic Church. All three, however, reject the political viewing lens, and insist that, while power plays are inevitably important in the conduct of such a large and complex institution as the Catholic Church, they can only be understood in a wider historical and theological context. It is what that context is that strikingly divides the academic theorist, the retired archbishop and the religious journalist.

Weigel was given unprecedented access not only to Vatican records but to Pope John Paul II himself. He insists that from the beginning of the project his editorial independence was guaranteed, but one may suspect that there was a certain pre-established harmony of mind between this Fellow of a Washington conservative think-tank and the pope's minders. It is essentially the curial insider's view of events that is presented, which leads to some curious gaps between the reader's memory of events of the last 20 years and their presentation in the biography.

I checked two incidents that had embedded themselves deeply in my memory from their repetition in print and on the screen. One was the famous encounter between Pope John Paul and Sister Teresa Kane in Washington in 1979. Weigel gives a fair account of what happened, apart from an unnecessary crack at Sr Teresa's dress—'a business suit', apparently to be contrasted with the non-business suits of the clergy and the pope himself—and a tendentious description of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as 'known for its assertive feminism'. However, Weigel tells

us that the pope responded to her plea for the involvement of women 'in all the ministries of the Church' by raising the occasion 'to a wholly different level', with his plea for religious women's 'complete availability to the Church'. The question of what was the appropriate level of response is neatly fudged.

The other incident, even better known to Australians from its use in a famous documentary on Nicaragua by an Australian film-maker, was John Paul's shouted 'Silencio!' to the women demanding some comfort for the death of their sons at the hands of the Contras. We are given several pages of elaborate explanation of the perfidy of the Sandinistas and their control of the public address system and crowd management. Weigel is satisfied that this incident ended in a public relations triumph for the pope through international reaction to 'the vulgarity of the Sandinista misbehaviour'. I think he must have seen different footage from the rest of us.

It may seem to many readers of this nearly 1000-page tome perverse in the extreme to complain of shortness of treatment of some issues, but there are some conspicuous and significant silences. Many pages are devoted to John Paul's interventions in the internal affairs of the Society of Jesus, always presented as benign and fully justified in view of 'the Jesuit temptation [to become] a self-authenticating elite'. On the other hand, the Opus Dei gets just an anodyne page and a half, with a comment on the pope's 'commitment to fostering the universal vocation to holiness'; and on the highly controversial beatification of its founder, a short and bland footnote.

Undoubtedly, the most interesting part of this biography is the first section on Wojtyla's Polish background. The hyperbole regarding the papal period, for example that 'he is arguably the most well-informed man in the world' (page 17), can hardly be applied to the schoolboy, the poet and actor, the seminarian. A very human and convincing portrait is carefully built up. Here, though, it is the significance of Poland in the world that is exaggerated. How many of us have appreciated that if it was not for the Battle of the Vistula in August 1920 the Red Army would have been 'camped along the English Channel'? And Weigel's persistent denial of anti-Semitism in the pope's immediate background rings hollow after a time. Again, however, we are undoubtedly given an insight into what it means to see the world through Polish glasses. Many themes relevant as influences, even if subliminal, on the future pope, from distrust of American-style democracy to the identification of nation with religion, are carefully traced back to Karol Wojtyla's reading and experiences in inter-war, wartime and post-war Poland.

Pope John Paul II is undoubtedly an intellectual, a man of ideas. But is George Weigel correct in seeing his behaviour as dominated by ideas, by 'the conviction that the crisis of the modern world was first of all a crisis of *ideas*' (emphasis in the original), and that all the horrors of the 20th century 'are the products of defective *concepts* of the human person' (my emphasis)? Perhaps so, and perhaps that explains our reaction to much of his rhetoric. But perhaps, also, there is a gap between concepts and the exercise of power.

It is, I think, significant that several leading churchmen in the last few years have cautiously but firmly alleged that there is a crisis in the contemporary Catholic Church, but not one of concepts; rather one of structures and practice. It is also interesting that all of them have used the pope's own words as the basis of their critique. Cardinal König, the former Archbishop of Vienna and a pioneer in inter-religious dialogue, has presented a 'vision for the church of the future' (*The Tablet*, 27 March 1999) based on 'subsidiarity', decentralisation which allows for the dignity of people in the church and outside it.

Cardinal Martini of Milan, in a speech at the 1999 European synod, proclaimed his 'three dreams', the last of which was clearly a plea for a new council to deal with the structural and moral problems that have been left unresolved, or prematurely closed.

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, on his retirement from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, made a powerful plea in November 1999 for a rethinking of the exercise of the papacy. He based his arguments on Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* ('That they may be One').

This, too, is the starting point of Archbishop Quinn's case for reform of the papacy. He takes up John Paul's invitation to help him rethink the function of the papacy so that it may be a help, not an obstacle, to religious unity. He gives a formidable, if familiar, list of the problems: an ever more powerful Vatican bureaucracy; cardinals and bishops who 'commit adultery' with their titular churches; the campaign against national episcopal conferences; undermining of the traditional patriarchates; erosion of local input in the appointment of bishops. This is, of course, itself a 'view from the top', a bishop's, and more specifically an American bishop's list. But he shows how reform in this area of church government, in what a Communist bureaucrat would call 'workstyle', would open the way to general reform in the church.

Garry Wills' approach is explicitly from below. Wills is a journalist and political commentator who has specialised in reporting on the Catholic Church in the United States and on US politics. He is also no mean theologian, as demonstrated by his brilliant recent biography of St Augustine. However, in *Papal Sin* the political analysis rather swamps the theology.

Wills writes with verve and the case he makes for systemic 'deceit', dishonesty and double talk at the centre of the church is a powerful one. His use of his theological reading, however, may strike the reader as excessively polemical, even casuistic.

This is especially the case in regard to his central case study, the Catholic Church's reaction to the Holocaust. It is a sorry story and the debate about motivation of the chief protagonists, Pope Pius XII in particular, will continue until the full documentation is released as promised. Wills has put his finger on the sore spot in his rejection of the facile distinction between 'anti-Judaism' and 'real anti-Semitism' that pervades the papal commission's *We Remember* document of 1998. And that brings us back to Weigel's claim that Karol Wojtyla was somehow immune from the prevalent anti-Semitism and proto-Fascism of his childhood. How else do we explain the decision to receive the Austrian Jörg Haider as representative of the donor of the Vatican Christmas tree?

The right questions are asked, then, but is the problem 'structural' or rather historical? Wills says that the root of structural deceit in the church is a refusal to admit past mistakes as threatening the integrity of the institution itself (shades of the Australian 'stolen generation' debate). I would argue that he is right but that the Holocaust issue is a bad example to take. On this, as on other issues of relations with other religions, John Paul II has explicitly repudiated the past.

Curiously, Wills fails to apply political analysis to the complexities of Vatican politics. He too readily accepts that all that comes out of Rome emanates immediately from the top. It is part of the rhetoric of all bureaucracies, including that of the church, to hide behind the mystique of the institution.

MICHAEL McGIRR

More interesting and convincing is Wills' discussion of the refusals, since Vatican II, to admit discussion of a variety of issues that vex the local churches. There are successive chapters on birth control, ordination of women, married clergy, marriage regulations, sexual abuse, the gay priesthood, Marian politics and abortion. It is a very American and promiscuous list and suffers, to some extent, from the very refusal to discriminate of which he accuses the Vatican.

Wills attempts to link all of these issues as symptoms of a common disease—dishonesty. His discussion of 'the honesty issue' is illuminated by historical examples: Newman and Acton differing over infallibility and the consequences of the First Vatican Council; and above all, incidents from the life of Augustine. This is entertaining, sometimes revelatory. Nevertheless he seems to have missed the point. It is moralising rather than getting to the heart of the issue.

It is very curious that the author of *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government* avoids the 'structural' issues in papal government to which Quinn, along with König, Martini and Etchegaray, have pointed. Honesty and truth are not disembodied virtues but need to be institutionalised.

Quinn *et al.* have rightly emphasised the challenge of John Paul II's invitation to rethink the structures of the church. It is now too late for such drastic action from Karol Wojtyla, but it will remain a challenge for his successor. ■

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Interrupted by play

As the Story Goes, Brian Matthews, Text Publishing, 2001. ISBN 1 8764 8562 0, RRP $27.40. **A Fine and Private Place**, Brian Matthews, Picador, 2000, ISBN 0 3303 6225 9, RRP $27.40

You won't get far into the personal writings of Brian Matthews before you discover that he supports the St Kilda Football Club. And that he believes cricket isn't bad for filling the gaps between seasons. Browsing through *As the Story Goes*, a collection of occasional pieces and newspaper columns, you find Matthews stuck in an airport but coping serenely with frustrating delays because he happens to be returning from Sydney where he has just seen St Kilda defeat the Sydney Swans for the first time in 20 home games.

Matthews is one of those travel writers whose best wit is provoked by getting stuck someplace and not being able to travel at all. In this, he's a bit like an older generation of cricket commentators who appreciated that they were, after all, the chorus in a theatre of the absurd. They relished the prospect of two or three hours of inane, and often hilarious, conversation while the rain tumbled down. I recall one saying, rather sourly, that his conversation was about to be interrupted by play.

Such folk were a far cry from the dreary earnestness of the likes of Keith Stackpole and Geoff Lawson, neither of whom, in their banal enthusiasm for Victoria and New South Wales respectively, seem to have accepted the idea of federation even if, after 100 years, that piece of foreign legislation might now be harder to roll back than the covers at Bellerive. Worse than that, Stackpole and Lawson belong to a school of commentary which blames dull cricket for a dull broadcast. This year's was, admittedly, a particularly boring season of cricket. But it doesn't make an audience less bored to be constantly reminded of that fact. Even a visit by John Howard to the commentary box at the Sydney Test while he was on holidays seemed to raise the level of conversation. Howard said he had been sitting with Michael Slater's parents when Slater was dismissed, yet again, in the 90s. The image of Howard as either a trauma counsellor or such a determined advocate of the GST that he tried convincing the Slaters that an extra ten per cent would have lifted Michael over the hundred, does help to while away a warm afternoon.

Somebody should put Brian Matthews behind the ABC Grandstand microphone. He can make something out of nothing, not unlike the oyster which he praises: 'in devoting their monastic lives to the unlikely appearance of a pearl, most oysters are enslaved to an *absence*'. His travel yarns include getting stuck with a luggage inspector at Charles de Gaulle airport, getting stuck at Spencer Street railway station, having a zip get stuck on a Qantas flight, and getting stuck at Lord's with a St Kilda club tie but no ticket. Matthews brings a rich appreciation of language to such non-events. He can turn a phrase. He describes, for example, the gaming area at Melbourne's Crown casino as 'a Nullarbor of emptying pay packets.' He watches words as though they are players in a game: 'the word "queue" is itself a queue. The quaintest, least biddable letter in the alphabet is railroaded into line by a string of bullying, repetitious vowels.'

More significantly, Matthews satirises lazy and mindless use of language. Orwell is his mentor. He reduces clichés, like 'sending a message to Canberra' and 'at the end of the day', to absurdity. He plays with the possibilities suggested by a tram passing him with the word 'sorry' as its destination. He develops, tongue in cheek, a new system of names for Australian locations in which clarity and efficiency replace history and colour. He has an ear for the small talk of lawyers and politicians, journalists and supermarket shoppers, call centres and ATMs. Indeed, reading *As the Story Goes*, you don't just appreciate Matthews' ability to conjure something from nothing; you notice how the stripping of language to clichés, acronyms and PR buzz-words makes nothing out of something.

The same mind is recognisably at work in *A Fine and Private Place*. Matthews' reminiscences of a childhood in the post-depression, war and baby-boom years in St Kilda and East Brighton is, at times, wry, laconic, gently mocking and observant. But this writing shows more sweat. Many of the stories in this memoir have cost something to tell. Matthews' grandfather, Private Alexander Murray, a Scot, was killed in Europe in World War I. His widow, Annie, emigrated to Australia. Over 70 years later, Matthews locates his grave: 'my mother, curiously, showed only a spare and withholding interest in the photographs of her father's grave and the story of our "find". Perhaps she did not want the distress of re-opening those imaginary doors ...'

This incident typifies a good deal of Matthews' experience. He tells many painful stories of occasions on which he and people close to him fail to cue emotionally, of times when reality refuses to play out the script he has laboured over in his head. His father spent many years building a house in East Brighton so he and his family could have a little space of their own, away from close communal living with extended family in St Kilda. No sooner is the project completed than Ma Matthews, the grandmother, decides to join them. This move brings the family to the brink of destruction.

Many years later, Matthews' daughter, Genevieve, died of septicaemia and meningitis, aged 21 days. Matthews and his wife only learn of Genevieve's death when a nurse thrusts the baby's shawl at its mother and says, simply, 'Well, I'll leave it with you.' It is a heart-rending story.

A Fine and Private Place is certainly a lot more than a catalogue of disappointments. The book is often funny, but it is its sadness which lingers. Through many seasons, almost like a comic chorus of its own, staggers the St Kilda Football Club. Of course, it is common to use football as a kind of garnish, to talk about the loss of traditional suburban footie as typifying the breakdown of local communities, as though that complex phenomenon required no further thought. But Matthews is not trading clichés or generalisations. He remembers specific matches, specific kicks. His local club has had a rich capacity to disappoint. But once, only once, it made something out of nothing and won a premiership. Matthews remembers every detail of that as well. ■

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BOOKS:3

MATTHEW RICKETSON

The art of the matter

Sir Frank Packer: The Young Master, Bridget Griffen-Foley, HarperCollins, 2000,
ISBN 0 7322 6422 7, RRP $45

BIOGRAPHY, Virginia Woolf once wrote, is 'a bastard, an impure art'. It draws on history and literature without quite being either.

Contemporary English biographer Richard Holmes has put it with characteristic elegance: 'The problematic, delightful and disputed nature of biography derives from its original forebears, who one secret, sultry morning formed an Unholy Alliance. Fiction married fact, without benefit of clergy. Or as I prefer to say, Invention formed a love-match with Truth.' (From an essay he wrote for John Batchelor's *The Art of Literary Biography*.)

Gretel and Frank Packer with Clyde and Kerry, c.1939

Virginia Woolf was deeply ambivalent about biographies; she loved reading them but lamented how often biographers gathered mountains of facts but failed to reveal the soul of their subject. When she herself tried writing a biography of Roger Fry, she began with grand ideas of subverting the traditional form. She thought of writing it backwards, she played with the idea of 'specimen days' of Fry's life and of asking different people to write it so as to illustrate different stages of his life. Alas, she found biography a grind to write. 'How can one cut loose from facts, when there they are, contradicting my theories?'

It is cautionary to recall these reflections of two writers, one an eminent novelist, the other an eminent biographer, about the difficulties both of method and status of biography, because a stroll through a bookshop suggests otherwise. Biography is such a popular literary genre nowadays that you could be forgiven for thinking that any sod could toss one off.

Any sod can't. Bridget Griffen-Foley's biography of media tycoon Frank Packer, Kerry's father, is a case in point. There is much to commend in her work; the book is thoroughly researched, carefully documented, brave and often incisive in its assessment of Packer's life and work.

These are admirable qualities in a historical biography and Griffen-Foley is a historian by training. Story is part of the word history, though, and storytelling is not her forte. It is as if Packer's life and work is covered in a blanket of snow; all the essential features are there, but the edges are softened and not much can be seen clearly. With some subjects, this might not matter too much, but Packer is such a

legendary figure in Australian media history that, if anything, this shortcoming is magnified.

The Packer dynasty has had an immense influence in shaping today's media. Frank's father, Clyde, was an energetic, ambitious and gifted journalist. He came from humble origins, fought his way into the ferociously competitive Sydney newspaper world early in the 20th century, became an editor and eventually a media proprietor in the 1930s.

His son was never as talented a journalist; in fact he performed dismally at school and even during the Second World War when he was a lieutenant, Packer failed several engineering exams. For years he lived in his father's shadow, acutely conscious that he was seen by others in the newsroom as a playboy.

Frank Packer often wistfully referred to himself in official documents as a journalist, but it was as a proprietor that he made his mark. He had prodigious energy, business acumen, cunning and an ability to galvanise those around him.

Frank's son, Kerry, has continued to expand the Packer empire. Murdoch's News Limited and Packer's Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd (PBL) are the most powerful media companies in Australia. And, of course, PBL continues with Kerry's son, James.

The Packers own the nation's premier commercial television network and a stable of popular magazines, including *Women's Weekly*, which began in 1933 under the editorship of R.C. Packer's close colleague, George Warnecke. Kerry is Australia's richest citizen.

If Kerry Packer's reputation is fearsome, it is put in the shade by that of his father, whose actions rendered the term 'interventionist proprietor' a tautology. Stories abound of his volcanic temper, firing employees at will, of bitter feuds with other proprietors—like Ezra Norton of *Truth*—and of his rabid anti-communism.

He once notoriously threatened to pull the *Daily Telegraph* off the street if printers did not put out a banner greeting the death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin with the words: STALIN DEAD HOORAY.

It is possible that all this mythologising preyed on the biographer's mind and that by studiously sifting legend from verifiable fact she has lost sight of the pungency of the original stories.

It *is* possible, but the book's narrative weakness aggravates this issue. The biography is divided into 15 chapters that seem to start and end at random rather than build to any internal climax. There is far too much detail about minor events.

For instance, Frank's father, Clyde, travelled overseas in 1926 to promote his paper, the *Daily Guardian*, and also Beryl Mills, who had just been crowned Miss Australia in a competition run by the paper. Miss Mills' itinerary is given, along with a rundown of her duties, including theatre parties, swimming exhibitions and wreath-laying ceremonies at war graves. A later minor business trip by Frank to central Australia is similarly bogged down in a listing of food supplies taken.

Conversely, some events that cry out for attention are baldly summarised. As a child Kerry Packer spent nine months in an iron lung; as an 18-year-old he was behind the wheel in a head-on collision in which three passengers in the other car were killed. What impact did these events have on him, and his family?

It is a pity, because when Griffen-Foley steps in to summarise events or assess her subject's actions, her writing is pithy and sharp. At one point she describes how Frank Packer's business partner, E.G. Theodore, would invite him to stay at his holiday lodge on the edge of Kosciusko National Park, but Packer rarely did:

> Fishing was too sedentary, too contemplative, the contest too subtle and the rewards too modest to satisfy Packer. His preferred sports were those that allowed him to skylark, to compete with gusto and to order other people around.

Perhaps also Packer has been a victim of journalists' love of a good yarn. One contemporary observer at a polo match described 'the vulgar lurking figure of the Packer Animal' and that has certainly been the image of Frank Packer handed down from bar to bar, but Griffen-Foley also shows glimpses of other aspects of Packer's character.

It is common wisdom that Packer blatantly used his newspapers to pummel the ALP and cheer on the Liberal government under Sir Robert Menzies, and that one of Packer's rewards was a knighthood. These events are usually recounted as evidence of how media proprietors can abuse their positions of power.

This is true, but Griffen-Foley's diligently unearthed correspondence between the two men reveals more: Menzies played Packer like a violin for years, praising him to keep him onside, yet resisting his gauche attempts at mateship. ■

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EXHIBITION

MORAG FRASER

Federation on the road

Alex Poignant's 1953–54 photograph of an Australian swagman (right) is as paradoxical as the *Federation: Australian Art and Society 1901–2001* exhibition of which it is part.

Poignant, who emigrated from England in 1926, was much affected by the people, by the nature and scale of the Australian outback. He was also an urban photographer of extraordinary technical skill and interpretative elan.

The swagman faces the open road. His gear, while modest, is organised and emphatic—from the neatly bound bedrolls to the perky mask guarding the back of the bike like a household god. His bike has neither pedals nor chain, yet the man himself seems unbent. There's a twang to his braces as he stands poised before the road ahead.

The date is intriguing—not Depression era but 1953–54. Robert Menzies' Australia.

The Federation exhibition, on view initially at the National Gallery in Canberra, is curated by John McDonald. McDonald, who left the Gallery in 2000 after a controversial year as curator of Australian art, has put his mark firmly on the selection of works. This is no Federation fanfare. The Prime Minister might write a preface: 'Secure in the great achievements of the past and immensely confident in our prospects for the future ...' but the exhibition itself explores complexity, not security. It is rich but disconcerting—no bad thing in a show that surveys 100 turbulent years of a nation in the making.

The exhibition itself goes on the road this month. Don't miss it.

—Morag Fraser

Federation opens at Heide in Melbourne in March and in Townsville's Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in June. Then Newcastle, WA, Darwin and Tasmania.

GEOFFREY MILNE

In the good ol' summa time

THEATRE ADDICTS in Melbourne generally know when summer is upon them. A more reliable harbinger than the weather is the annual Botanic Gardens productions of Glenn Elston's Shakespeare Under the Stars by night and the perennial *Wind in the Willows* by day.

But over the past five years especially, another event has quietly grown to be one of the more eagerly awaited summer arts attractions. This is the Midsumma Festival, which offers a wide range of visual and performing arts productions over a concentrated three-week period in the second half of January.

In the beginning, performing arts in Midsumma were mainly seen in Software—a short-running series of new short works of drama, dance and comedy at the old Universal Theatre—which tenuously clung to a position on the fringes of Melbourne theatre generally and also of Midsumma itself. Many of the performance pieces in those early years tended to fall into a rather simplistic 'coming out' category. Not surprisingly, the mainstream press largely ignored the event.

By the mid-1990s, Software was complemented by full-length seasons of stand-alone plays and other works in fringe and alternative venues (some new and locally written, others local productions of overseas plays). Later still, Software disappeared (along with the Universal Theatre) and the Midsumma theatre program has developed into a sophisticated, diverse and sizeable adjunct to the Melbourne summer season. This year's festival is easily the biggest and most prominent in terms of theatre production, boasting upwards of 24 theatre and/or cabaret events spread over 11 different venues in and around the inner city.

As in recent years, the theatre program this year featured many new or newish locally written pieces, together

with revivals of older Australian works and the Australian première of a major American play. This was Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* (presented by Polemic Productions at the upstairs Athenaeum Theatre 2 in the city) and the mainstream media feasted on it. There were letters to the editors of both papers, some condemning the portrayal of Christ as a homosexual as blasphemous and some defending it. There was one editorial decrying the idea but defending the theatre company's right to produce the play on the grounds of freedom of expression. There were nightly picket-lines of protesters from various religious denominations (including a bus-load of Islamic fundamentalists) trying to stop patrons from getting into the theatre. There was even a bomb-threat. All of this was gleefully reported in the media in those seasonally slack newsdays—and lapped up by the producers whose box-office returns boomed in the wake of the free publicity.

McNally is moderately well-known in Sydney, where a number of his works about gay life, AIDS and the broader human condition have met with a very mixed critical reception in Mardi Gras and mainstream productions, but I have seen nothing of him previously in Melbourne. *Corpus Christi* turns out to be a pretty good play about the power of faith (as well as that of charismatic leadership in faithless times) and the ways in which many minority groups have suffered at the hands of bigots and hypocrites for their beliefs and practices.

It begins with the simplest of theatrical rituals in which 12 of the 13 male actors are baptised, blessed *as human beings* and given the names of Jesus' 12 disciples. Their leader is not called Jesus but Joshua—even Josh at times—but to all intents and purposes what follows is a modern-day, metaphoric re-enactment of Christ's birth, but set in Corpus Christi, Texas. Josh grows up as a literature-loving non-footballer in a red-necked, homophobic, sport-mad high school. There follows a mysterious spell in the desert and then Josh's triumphant development of a new brotherhood of man devoted to him and to mankind by virtue of simple faith. This is all portrayed somewhat in the style of medieval morality plays. The actors take a multitude of roles—the disciples, schoolboys and girls, teachers, roman legions, Pontius Pilate, Barabbas and even The Word Of God itself, using basic props and furniture and clever changes of body language and vocal accent.

I found the play, and Catherine Hill's very effective and simple production, quite confronting: not because of its 'blasphemy' but because of the obvious strength of its powerful Christian conviction. I've seen innumerable well-intentioned and religiously correct Christian theatre-in-education productions and TV shows, but none ever got to the heart of what it is to have faith in the face of genuine adversity the way this 'subversive' play does—or with such a light, unsentimental touch. My only complaint is the slightly too-

obvious way in which (in its final frenzied chapters and verses) the play equates Joshua as 'king of the Jews' to Josh 'king of the queers'; McNally's analogy about persecuted minorities is well-enough made by then.

Elsewhere, Midsumma offered a lot of sound Australian gay writing. It was good, for example, to see a revival at Chapel off Chapel of Alex Harding's late-1980s 'musical love story', *Only Heaven Knows*, about life in King's Cross in the 1940s and '50s. This portrays a sort of pilgrim's progress, in which naif Tim moves from Melbourne to Sydney in 1944 in search of a theatrical career, becomes seduced by the gay scene and ends up testing his loving male relationship to the limit. I also liked much of Nik Willmott's evening of sketch comedy at La Mama, *My Life as a Dyke*, revived after successful seasons last year in various venues. I was the only male in a full house and in a sketch in which a University lecture in Lesbianism 101 was delivered (on the topic of what to do when you encounter A Straight Woman) I was utilised to maximum ironic effect.

The major production at the Victorian Arts Centre's Black Box was Lachlan Philpott's *Bison*, a piece in yet another form. Philpott peoples his claustrophobic Sydney world of public lavatories, gay bars and dangerous parks with a remarkably diverse range of almost entirely non-stereotypical gay men—of all shapes and sizes and walks of life. The central idea of the bison—proud and strong herd animal, but endangered species nonetheless—achieves strong resonances but, rather than embodying them in naturalistic drama, Philpott opts for a loose, poetic kind of contemporary performance style that owes as much to visual and physical theatre as it does to the orthodox spoken word.

Mark Fletcher's double-bill, *Dating Joe* and *Sunset Barbecue* at Chapel off Chapel was clearly the work of a playwright of considerable dramaturgical skill, verbal dexterity and control of mood and character. I liked the monodrama *Dating Joe*, in particular, in which a 50-something bank manager makes repeated versions of a video-recording of himself for a dating agency—and then deals with what happens when people respond, rather unexpectedly, to his ambivalent pitch. The performance by Perth actor Robert van Mackelenberg was outstanding.

Another new arts festival that shows real promise for the future will take place in Tasmania from 30 March to 8 April. This is the inaugural '10 Days on the Island', whose artistic director is the ubiquitous Robyn Archer. Archer curated some marvellous, small-scale National Festivals of Australian Theatre in Canberra in the mid 1990s and went on to achieve rave notices for her two larger-scale Adelaide Festivals in 1998 and 2000.

For her latest venture, she's chosen performing arts pieces of all kinds from a variety of island cultures worldwide—including Ireland, New Zealand, Stradbroke Island, Réunion, Singapore and Tassie itself—and programmed them all over Tasmania, not just in Hobart, with her usual flair for unusual juxtaposition and sheer entertainment value. I will report on the outcome in May. ■

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Classifieds

FLASH IN THE PAN

Hammibal

Hannibal, dir. Ridley Scott. After seeing this long (130-minute) film and being puzzled by one plot link, I got the book out of the library. It's about a four-hour read, and makes you wonder about the mysterious pull of sequels: the urge to turn closure, tragic or comic, into soap opera. Sequels can work—*Aliens*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Godfather II*. But then think, briefly, of *Highlander II*, winner of the all-time Direful Dull Doltishness award. Think, too, of the nauseous written attempts by publishers' hirelings to follow *Gone With The Wind*, *Pride and Prejudice*, even *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. *Hannibal*'s author, Thomas Harris, needed no hacks to desecrate the qualities of *Silence of the Lambs*: he has done a very discreditable job himself, removing the subtle moral framework that characterised *Silence*. He has done this by turning Lecter from a clever but grotty sociopath into Mr Rochester; Clarice Starling's strength of character and moral percipience dwindles into an erotic challenge to a newly macho epicurean anti-hero. No inelegant lip-smacking about human liver served up 'with fava beans and a nice Chianti' for the sequel's Lecter. No childishly obscene teasing of a bereaved mother—he is all style: his killings are poetic injustices. Hannibal Lecter the alpha-male buys his Jane Eyre expensive clothes, and this Jane finally puts them on. But there's something being put on over all of us here, the urge to ingratiate oneself with a bully, perhaps. The seductive flattery of being a monster's favourite finally reduces Starling's moral stature to that of a romance heroine. Ah, we can all change him if we're just *worthy* enough ...

Given this, what the film does well is to tone down some of *Hannibal* the book's mawkish (strange *mot* in such context but nevertheless *juste*, I'm afraid) dealings between Lecter (hammed again with relish by Anthony Hopkins) and Starling (played by Julianne Moore, as like Jodie Foster as possible, but paid a tenth of what Foster would have commanded had she lent her name to this).

But in order to rationalise the sick fascination with a heartless cannibal, book and film fall into that solipsistic trap set by minds diseased: not I, but the world and its systems, and God who created them, must be to blame for my violent compulsions, which can be used as a visitation of karmic vengeance upon those whom I judge deserving of punishment. I am therefore quasi-divine, or interestingly demonic, and demand your worship. My victims are never as fascinating as me. The faulty reasoning used in *Monsieur Verdoux*, Charles Chaplin's Bluebeard fable, bore similarities to this ('arms dealers prosper while virtuous men die paupers, so I am justified in my murderings for money because I can never kill as many as the war makers'), but had clear, if problematic, connections with real moral outrage about arms-dealing and warmongering.

Hannibal is so far from this kind of questioning that you end up light years from questioning anything except the price of Gucci pumps, because Lecter is so *tasteful*, and only kills *rude* people (he calls them 'free-range rude'—what a card) or *silly* people who try to catch him, and anyway he's got *such* a dry wit ... How the audience laughed when he sliced the top off mean old Mr Krendler's head and served him with his own frontal lobes ... And this grisly stuff merits an MA15+ rating instead of an R (now under review), perhaps because no-one swears much—it's too dishonest for that.

Oh, and this time they used Glenn Gould playing the *Goldberg Variations*. Much more epicurean than re-using Jerry Zimmerman. But to have Hannibal finger-syncing to Gould's magic was doing it way too brown. **—Juliette Hughes**

Just wild about—

Harry: He is Here to Help, dir. Dominik Moll. This French film (with subtitles), together with *Cast Away*, was the finest I saw over the holidays. Although it is at its best during the threatening first half in which the Hitchcock-like plot could go anywhere, the film is polished and full of flair. Menace is always just beneath the surface of apparently benign relationships—or is it?

Michel and Claire are taking their children on holidays to the country house they have been renovating for years. Taking a break at a service station after a long hot car trip, Michel is approached in the washroom by a stranger. Confused at first, he realises that the stranger is Harry, a former schoolmate, who is clearly one of Michel's greatest admirers—dangerously so.

Disturbingly, Harry can recite from memory every word of a poem Michel wrote for his school magazine 20 years before.

Harry's generosity is endless. Soon he has inveigled himself and his girlfriend into the lives of the couple and the relationship threatens to get out of hand. Sergi Lopez (impressive in *Une Liaison Pornographique*) gives a bravura performance as a man out of control for the best possible motives and with the worst possible result.

While the film hints at *The Vanishing* and Hitchcock's *Strangers On a Train*,

comparisons are unnecessary; ultimately *Harry* is a splendid film in its own right. It deserves its European Film Awards nominations, particularly Lopez' nomination for best actor. **—Gordon Lewis**

Sword play

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, dir. Ang Lee. Chow Yun Fat and Michelle Yeoh are so fantastically beautiful to watch in this highly decorative kung-fu fable that you miss them when they are not on the screen. The story, of the theft of a sword with great powers, has the kind of themes that will be familiar to anyone who has loved *Monkey*, *The Samurai*, or any of the Bruce Lee stuff. There is a satisfying, if non-chronological feminism in the story—no bound feet in this world, and a healthy respect for equality in male–female encounters, martial and other. Female warriors (thank you, Xena) rule OK, but the blokes are allowed to be strong and very blokey too. This is a China of the imagination (as Logres is to Britain) where the clothing is comfortable and gorgeous and the scenery uncomfortable and gorgeous.

The plot balances, very sweetly, two love stories with a fight against evil, and of course the evil is as much within as without. The maturity of the older couple, and their greater altruism, is contrasted with that of the younger ones, with the wilfulness and egotism of the young girl, Jen (Zhang Ziyi), providing the tension and the tragedy. The last 30 seconds worried me because a lot of youngsters will be watching this, but it's well worth a visit.

—Juliette Hughes

Fangs a lot

Shadow of the Vampire, dir. E. Elias Merhige. It's slightly unusual for a contemporary American film to demand that its audience be familiar with anything as outré as film history (or history full stop), but that's exactly what *Shadow of the Vampire* does. The film itself is a fantasy on the making of F.W. Murnau's classic 1922 vampire film *Nosferatu*, working from the conceit that Max Schreck, the actor who played Murnau's eponymous lead, actually was a *real* vampire. Some of the best moments in the film come when it recreates the shooting of scenes from the original, fading from lush, warm colour, to cold, flickering, grainy black-and-white before our eyes—but unless you've seen the original, you lose half the fun. The same goes for Willem Dafoe's performance as Schreck—he's unnervingly close to the image we see in the original *Nosferatu*, but you'd never know unless ...

In a lot of ways, however, the film is as much about the film-making process in general as it is about *Nosferatu* in particular. It's full of jokes about writers, actors, producers, much as was the case in *Shakespeare in Love*. For instance, Schreck's odd behaviour (from eating live bats to eating the crew) is explained away as part of a new approach to performance called 'method' acting. Most of all, however, the film is about the director, F.W. Murnau. (John Malkovich, as Murnau, puts in pretty much the same performance as he has in every other film he's been in over the last ten years. In fact, the only film I've seen recently where he hasn't just 'done a Malkovich' is *Being John Malkovich*.)

Murnau is depicted as an obsessional megalomaniac, willing to risk and to expend the lives of his crew to fulfil his artistic vision, happy to accede to the demonic demands of his lead actor to get that perfectly 'authentic' performance. If this seems a little harsh on directors in general, have a look at Werner Herzog's documentary *My Best Fiend* (about his personal and professional relationship with actor Klaus Kinski). As the documentary shows, both Herzog and Kinski are willing to go to extraordinary (to some, extraordinarily reprehensible) extremes for their craft. *Shadow of the Vampire* presents monomania, violence and insanity to us as a set of metaphors for the film-making process; in *My Best Fiend* Herzog and Kinski play these pathologies out for us as document. And I'm telling you right now—I'd much rather meet Schreck the vampire in a dark alley one night than I would Kinski the actor.

—Allan James Thomas

Volley bawl

Cast Away, dir. Robert Zemeckis. Film reviewers can become blasé. Before I saw this film, Tom Hanks had won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor. Pre-publicity suggested a cross between *Gilligan's Island* and *Robinson Crusoe*. During the film my reaction was that this was Tom Hanks playing Tom Hanks, both fat and thin. When, however, I found myself weeping because of his relationship with a volleyball called 'Wilson', I had to acknowledge that no ordinary actor could achieve that result.

Hanks plays the express courier administrator to whom saving time is everything. His plane crashes and he is the sole survivor, washed up on the beach of a tiny volcanic island in the Pacific. Suddenly the efficiency expert has all the time in the world.

Director Robert Zemeckis shows extraordinary courage with this release for the commercial market. He is untroubled either by silence or lack of action, as the civilised, inept, efficiency expert tries to cope with the exigencies of primitive man. Under the spell of Zemeckis' direction and Hanks' superb performance, awareness fades of a film crew standing by, crowding a lonely beach, and the sense of isolation dominates.

Written to avoid a cute ending, the film consistently resists traps which have brought many a Hollywood epic to its knees. His performance in *Cast Away* may not bring Tom Hanks an Academy Award for best actor if Ralph Fiennes is nominated for his performance in *Sunshine*, but director Zemeckis has really created something special. **—Gordon Lewis**

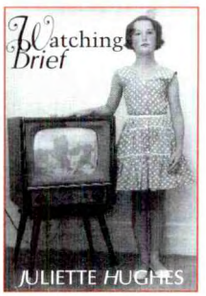
Dry cleaned

Almost Famous, dir. Cameron Crowe. Films can be like houses: some are too tidy to be believed. Strange, though, that this should be the case with Cameron Crowe's (of *Jerry Maguire* fame) new film, *Almost Famous*, given that it's a young-man-coming-of-age-rock-'n'-roll-road movie. If Crowe can't get his picture a bit dirty with that kind of material, I'm afraid he may be forever stuck in the 'I love you guys' rut.

Boy genius, William (Patrick Fugit) is picked up by *Rolling Stone* and sent on tour with the up-and-coming rock outfit Stillwater. On the road he finds beautiful sad girls, misunderstood balladeers, oversexed rockers and—you guessed it—himself. While his films are in turns humorous and charming, Crowe makes the mistake of wanting us to like all his characters.

Two performances make this film worth a look. Philip Seymour Hoffman plays rock journo Lester Bangs with the perfect dose of sweaty cynicism, and Frances McDormand does over-protective mothering with wonderful insanity. Her mad catch-cry, 'Don't take Drugs', would have made a much better title.

—Siobhan Jackson



Play stationary

How many of us will be sprawled tonight in front of a glowing screen of images? How long will we stay, seduced by the Sirens, Lotos-eating in front of the Gorgon who turns us, not to stone, but to blubber, our muscles atrophying as we lock gazes with her?

A dietitian I went to three years ago told me that the reason we're all getting so fat is that we are avoiding the equivalent of an eight-kilometre walk per day compared with what we did in 1980. Chocolate and chips are not the whole story, whoopee. No wonder there are so few fat people in your old sepia family photographs—they were all rushing around, lacing up bodices, boiling the carpets, making their own pianos, slaughtering things and going to church.

When I watched *The 1900 House*'s first episode (7.30pm Fridays, SBS), I remember thinking that although the older members of the family might thrive on the regime of 19th-century technology, the nine-year-old boy might have some problems. Watching him sitting on the floor with some tin soldiers made me wonder what he would do after half an hour was up. Would he go out to play on the street as children did in 1900? Would the other children laugh at his clothes and his lack of inline skates, micro-scooter or skateboard? No computer games, no telly, not even radio—what would he do? No modern books, even. Lacking the looseness of those days when kids would go trooping around the fields that were never far away, would he become a shut-in with nothing to do except help his mother with the housework?

The kind of games that kept 1900s kids thin needed the infrastructures of yesteryear. Poohsticks requires a small footbridge over a brook with clear, gently flowing water. Swallows and Amazons require endless summery holidays on little islands with boats to sail. Famous Five and Secret Seven and William, they all took off to play house and catch crooks and make mild mischief in little woods and meadows that today are probably housing estates dotted with crack dealers.

Imagine letting your nine-year-old go out to play a mile or more away, with no mobile phone in case of accidents or paedophiles. Your own back garden is barely safe enough. Was it less dangerous then? We're told as the copper is loaded with sheets to boil, that 2000 children a year were scalded to death in British homes in 1900. The figure quoted for 1999: 11. So we've learned to make the laundry safer, but the outside of the house is still a jungle and it has ways into your place as surely as we put the logging tracks into its hidden darknesses throughout the 20th century.

So we cocoon, as the futurists put it, and we think our houses are safe against the Bladerunner world outside, but our doors are made of gossamer, our windows only tulle.* Into the soul through the ear and the eye creep the sounds and the sights of the dream-sellers. Paradoxically, we're becoming less of a community even as our attitudes are being shaped into homogeneous media-target profiles for the marketers. It doesn't matter what you are—a wombat polisher of indeterminate gender living in a strawbale condominium will have a marketing profile, and the marketers will find a TV program to deliver the advertising of your wombat-polishing mitts to your very heart's core.

It's not just television—the CDs bought by your kids are full of horrors, notably desensitising sexual violence (just listen to your 15-year-olds' copies of Eminem's latest and then for heaven's sake at least discuss it with them). In the meantime the pointy heads of the far religious right with its deep pockets and shallow comprehension have decided to make a big fuss and ban Harry Potter books from the libraries of the kind of school to which they send their kids, schools which teach creation myth as scientific fact. All of which makes one's legitimate concerns about the kind of matter that reaches young minds get lumped with those of sanctimonious prurience and prejudice.

Keep your kids reading, I say, keep them playing cards and cricket and sailing and walking the dog and playing the piano and bushwalking, because otherwise the telly and the record companies and the computer-game makers don't even get an argument, let alone a rival. And while we're on about reading, it may or may not dispel your fears to hear this soothing HarperCollins announcement: 'HarperCollins Publishers today announced that it has acquired exclusive world publishing rights for the adult market tie-in books to New Line Cinema's movie trilogy adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.'

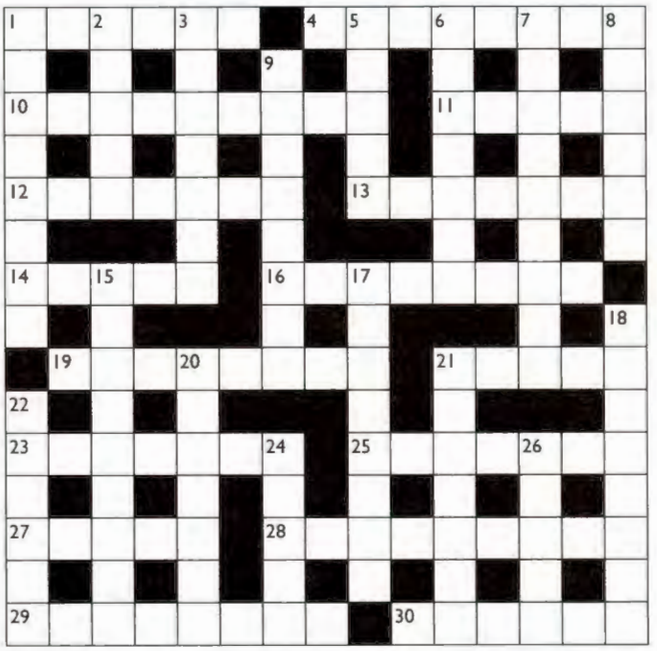
Such layers of qualification, nay, redaction, must give us pause. The world is safe for you if that's what you want. But do you? ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance reviewer.

*Apologies to Emily Dickinson, if you were thinking that sounded familiar.

Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 91, March 2001

Devised by
Joan Nowotny IBVM



ACROSS

1. Victories gained through unlawful ticket sales? (6)
4. Publicity for a skating performance, possibly; it requires application. (8)
10. Country in Europe contains nearly all one could expect in the southern hemisphere. (9)
11. Greek space below the rafters. (5)
12. Sales pitch on new model. (7)
13. Could be rash to follow with German thought on Persian god. (7)
14. Give up gambling—put cube in gold box and say farewell. (5)
16. Does he give meaning to a form of market enterprise? (8)
19. Holy man called queen, but was treated as an alien. (8)
21. Infuse the teabag? The price is over the top! (5)
23. Kind of canons, established in the past? (7)
25. Lament the fact that you and Lou, it is reported, are departed. (7)
27. Very small property, rented by the auditor. (5)
28. What 10-across did on a certain date—freed from alien control—last century? (9)
29. How Ted's bear somehow swam through the waves. (8)
30. Loved to make a fuss over colour. (6)

DOWN

1. Means of recording date, for example, as well as postage and writing paper. (5,3)
2. It's a boon when fixed. (5)
3. Recently arrived, perhaps, but normal location cut short for one not socially acceptable. (7)
5. Many a tragic king rises to claim the kingdom. (5)
6. Tea leaves teach more suitable group of monks. (7)
7. I, more decent, but confused, plead on your behalf, perhaps. (9)
8. Box the French bag between bearings—the other way round. (6)
9. Tribal leader, rattling the chains? (8)
15. Incorporate the heartless within the ungrateful in society! (9)
17. Super idea, rephrased, I regretfully omitted in order to convince the doubters? (8)
18. Dips back to accommodate loan? Excellent! (8)
20. Takes away, unfortunately, a stable environment. (7)
21. Settled the accounts—which had increased exponentially. (7)
22. In favour of feminist political party, perhaps? (3,3)
24. What a relief 'e left the loot—in a mess. (5)
26. Perfume present to salt—or roses? (5)

Solution to Crossword no. 90, January–February 2001

D	U	M	P	L	I	N	G	■	S	C	A	R	C	E
I	■	I	■	A	■	E	■	B	■	O	■	A	■	I
S	U	N	U	P	■	G	R	O	U	N	D	I	N	G
P	■	C	■	S	■	A	■	N	■	S	■	S	■	H
O	V	E	R	E	A	T	E	N	■	T	R	E	A	T
S	■	M	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	R	■	■	■	H
A	V	E	N	G	E	D	■	T	A	U	G	H	T	■
L	■	A	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	C	■	I	■	P
■	S	T	A	B	L	E	■	R	O	T	A	T	O	R
R	■	■	■	E	■	N	■	E	■	■	■	O	■	O
U	P	S	E	T	■	M	I	L	L	I	G	R	A	M
M	■	A	■	W	■	I	■	A	■	N	■	M	■	I
P	R	U	D	E	N	T	L	Y	■	A	M	I	S	S
U	■	C	■	E	■	Y	■	E	■	P	■	S	■	E
S	I	E	N	N	A	■	P	R	O	T	E	S	T	S

'Competing claims about this most extraordinary sacred place make a mockery of us all. Civilisation is not served by the denial of history or by the belittlement of hope.'

John Levi—*The peace of Jerusalem*

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