

Heurigen Wolff survives Australia Day celebrations

Despite almost setting fire to Heurigen Wolff, our celebration of Australia Day was enjoyed by the 60 or so people who attended on Saturday 26th January.

Perhaps the one person who did not enjoy the evening as much as others was Sharyn Rieger. Her jacket, which was hanging on a stand, caught fire when it came into contact with a hot light bulb. It was not noticed until fumes began spreading in a corner of the room. Small flames which burnt a hole in the jacket were extinguished by a bottle of mineral water.



Proof of the fire, Sharyn & Michael Rieger

Members of OzCon and the Austrian-Australian Society and staff of the Australian Embassy braved blustery winds to get to the heurigen in the 19th District. It was particularly pleasing to have present Ambassador Peter Shannon and wife Reina, who has finished her posting in Geneva and moved to Vienna.

In his remarks Peter said they would be travelling to Australia shortly for five weeks of what is described in the foreign service jargon as mid-term leave and consultations. For Peter there is much to talk about with the new Labor Government.

There were some new OzCon members attending their first function, including Heidi Rossiter and the Shrestha family, Sanjaya, wife Shreela, son Shreman and daughter Shreva. Also present after a long absence was Pamela Meisel, who has recovered from knee surgery, and Nancy Schupelius, who, as husband Leon explains, is rarely able to attend our functions due to her demanding duties as head of Secondary at VIS.

-- Brett Bayly



*New Members
 Sanjaya with wife Shreela, son Shreman and daughter Shreva Shrestha*



Peter and Reina Shannon with Kurt Lewandowsky, Vice President of the Austrian-Australian Society

From the President

What a month it has been! No, I am not talking about OzCon, about Vienna's ball season, Heath Ledger's death, the death of the 128-year-old news magazine The Bulletin or about the weather. I'm talking about the economy, in particular the plunging world stock markets and the confusion and in some cases panic this has caused.

It is probably of no interest to those who are not directly affected. But to others whose income partly derives from dividends, buying and selling shares, superannuation and other investments, it has been the focus of close attention for much of the month. For one who *is* interested, it has meant getting up at midnight as the Australian market opens and sitting in front of the computer screen. What to do, sell, buy or do nothing? There are many bargains out there with the market so low, but is it too early to buy or will the market go down even further?

At the time of writing there has been a recovery of sorts and perhaps the worst is over, although many of the experts are predicting another rocky six months. But there is one interesting factor in all of this that has struck me. In the US it was the housing crisis – the subprime mortgage mess – that started the fear that the biggest economy in the world is going into recession with flow-on effects around the globe. House prices have plunged and there are thousands of houses across the country with 'for sale' signs planted in the front lawn. Despite cuts in interest rates, there are few buyers.

In Australia, where the impact on the markets has been severe, just as it has in Asia and Europe, house prices are soaring and buying a house is fast becoming a dream rather than a reality for the young, especially with rising interest rates.

According to a US-based survey of 227 cities, Australian and New Zealand homes are the least affordable in the world. The 2008 demographic study of international housing affordability listed 18 Australian cities in its top 50 of severely unaffordable markets.

The study rates housing affordability in the English-speaking nations of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, US, UK and Ireland. In Sydney houses cost 8.6 times a household's average annual income, in Perth 7.6 times and in Melbourne 7.3. On average, Australian families are forced to spend 6.1 times their entire household income to buy a typical home compared with 3.1 times in Canada and 3.6 times in the US.

There are many crazy things that impact on our daily lives. Add one more, the world economy.

The survey can be found at www.demographia.com

Briefly, back to OzCon. I have reported elsewhere that our Australia Day celebration last month was a 'roaring' success. And now we can get back into our routine with a lunch and bar night (details on page 3).

Finally, I kindly ask all members to renew their membership as soon as possible if you haven't done so already. This will ensure that you remain on our email and membership lists.

Cheers for now,

Brett

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase... 'Goodnight, sleep tight'



First it was wine from the colonies. Now it's from the New World (to the Old)?

OzCon Income and Expenditure Statement 2007

Opening Balance 1.1.2007 €1.302,76

Income

Membership Fees 1.000,00

Other Income 0,00

Interest 2,06

TOTAL €1.002,06

Expenditure

Newsletter and postage 102,94

Account costs 57,66

KEST 0,53

Other * 497,64

TOTAL €658,77

Closing balance 31.12.2007 €1.646,05

* Other costs include:

Expenditure of Australia Day

OzCon Barbecue in June

UN Bazaar in December

-- Susanna Martin, Treasurer

January OzCon Lunch at the Palmenhaus



Brett Bayly, Susanna Martin and Meredith Park



David Watson and George Park beneath the palms

Coming Events

February lunch

The February OzCon lunch will take place on Thursday 14th February at the Palmenhaus Café at 12:00. The café is behind the Hofburg in the Burggarten.



February Bar Night

Come along and join us on Friday 22nd February at Flanagan's, Schwarzenbergstr. 1-3, 1010 Vienna from 5pm.



*Australia Day at Heurigen Wolff
Lynda Sarelius, Nancy and Leon Schupelius with
(behind) Noel Boyd and Jayne Anderson*

Ever wanted to be in a Fairytale?

Last week I had my very first ski vacation. To say it was difficult would be an understatement but regardless of my pitiful efforts we had a great week in Bad Gastein.

The highlight of the week was without doubt the ride on a horse drawn sleigh to a Hansel and Gretel-type restaurant in the middle of nowhere! I felt like I was in a fairytale.

We arrived at the Hotel Gruner Baum at 5pm as per the instructions from our hotel. We were met by a very helpful man in charge of the sleigh and horses, Fritz and Bruli. They were what looked like draft horses, big, strong and beautiful. The man covered us with blankets and off we went. We proceeded along a snow covered trail. It was so still, all you could hear were the bells around the horses necks. The man had a whip as Fritz was not really a happy camper as he seemed to be thinking "why the hell are you here making me work," at least that's the impression I got. The valley was breathtaking. The ride to the restaurant took a good hour and by the time you arrive you are rather very cold and more than ready for dinner. The food was simple but delicious and we dined on Venison then decided we needed a snaps or two for the cold ride home. The way back was much quicker as it's mostly downhill. It was an evening I will never forget. It felt magical and I would highly recommend it to anyone heading to Bad Gastein or the surrounding area.

Contact: Pferdeschlittenfahrten, Fiaker Reiterbauer
Ph: 06434 5100

-- Liz Crawford



Bad Hofgastein



Wolfgang and I on top of the world!

True or not, who knows? But interesting "facts"

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts... So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them 'Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down.'

It's where we get the phrase 'mind your P's and Q's'

Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. 'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.

Best "Out of Office replies"

- I am currently out at a job interview and will reply to you if I fail to get the position. Be prepared for my mood.

- You are receiving this automatic notification because I am out of the office. If I was in, chances are you wouldn't have received anything at all.

- I will be unable to delete all the unread, worthless emails you send me until I return from holiday on 4 April. Please be patient and your mail will be deleted in the order it was received.

- Thank you for your message, which has been added to a queuing system. You are currently in 352nd place, and can expect to receive a reply on 23 July, 2008.

- I've run away to join a different circus.

AND, FINALLY, THIS ONE TAKES THE CAKE:

- I will be out of the office for the next 2 weeks for medical reasons. When I return, please refer to me as 'Margaret' instead of 'Steve'.

Monthly Recipe

The Aussie Meat Pie

Called the “National Dish” by many including former NSW Premier Bob Carr, the Australian meat pie has been around since the middle of the 19th century. Pastry dates from Greece about the 2nd century BC, but the modern “pye” probably did not approach its current format until 17th or 18th century England. By the Victorian era the main British meal was a roast of lamb or beef. The leftovers were then chopped or ground up, gravy added and topped with potatoes resulting in a shepherds pie (lamb) or cottage pie (beef). The British undoubtedly brought these culinary “skills” with them when they colonised Australia.

The first recorded mention of the ‘pie’ appeared in 1850 in the Melbourne Argus, which reported that the Councillors preferred a meat pie from the pub opposite rather than the food provided in the chambers. In 1947 one L.T. McLure started baking his now famous “Four’n’twenty” pies in Bendigo. Their fame spread and eventually he moved his production to Melbourne. Production grew from 50 pies a day to over 50,000 an hour to make it the largest pie factory in the world.

Australians eat their way through 260 million meat pies per year, mostly it seems at football games. That adds up to about 13 for every man woman and child. This does not include sausage rolls and other pastries, which along with lamb and beef make up the coronary plaque producing Australian diet.

The following is the recipe for a savoury meat pie

3 pounds beef chuck, diced 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup flour
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 onion, diced
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon celery seed
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup soy sauce
4 cups beef or chicken stock
4 sheets puff pastry
1 egg, beaten, to glaze crust
Black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Dredge beef in flour and sear in oil in a hot pan. Add the garlic and onion and sauté for 4 more minutes. Add the spices, Worcestershire and soy sauce and cook until the liquid is almost dissolved. Add the stock and cook until the meat is coated in thick gravy. Transfer to a container and cool.

Roll 2 sheets of pastry to 1/2-inch thickness. Line 8-inch tart molds with the rolled pastry. Line the pastry with tin foil and prebake for about 8 minutes. Let cool.

Roll out the remaining pastry sheets and cut lids for the pies. Fill baked shells with the meat mixture and cover with the cut pastry lids. Attach lids with egg wash. Brush the tops with the remaining egg wash and sprinkle with black pepper.

Bake for 8 minutes or until golden brown.

---By David Watson

THE BEST HEADLINES OF 2007!

(Yes, they were really printed as seen here.)

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
No! Really?

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
Now that's taking things a bit far!

Miners Refuse to Work after Death
No-good-for- nothin', lazy so-and-so's!

Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
See if that works any better than a fair trial!

War Dims Hope for Peace
I can see where it might have that effect!

If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile
Ya think?

Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
Who would have thought!

Enfield (London) Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide
They may be on to something!

Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
You mean there's something stronger than duct tape?

Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
That's what he gets for eating those beans!

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
Chainsaw Massacre all over again!

Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors
Boy, are they tall!

And the winner is....
Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead

Aussie News Briefs

29 Jan - **A QUESTION about Sir Donald Bradman** is expected to be dumped from the citizenship test under an overhaul by the Rudd Government to make the test fairer and more relevant to migrants of all backgrounds. The question is one of several Labor believes was written by the former prime minister, John Howard. Another, which expects budding citizens to know that 1788 was the first year of white settlement, is also likely to be jettisoned, sources say. The test was introduced by the Howard government. It involves a sample of multiple choice and true-or-false questions selected from a pool of 200 questions. (Sydney Morning Herald)

26 Jan - **AUSTRALIAN wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist** tonight announced his retirement from all forms of cricket in order to spend more time with his family. Gilchrist, 36, said he would retire at the conclusion of the fourth and final Test against India at Adelaide Oval. Gilchrist yesterday became the world record holder for most Test dismissals by a wicketkeeper when he effected his 414th career dismissal to move past South Africa's Mark Boucher. (Herald Sun)

25 Jan - **COUNTRY music star Lee Kernaghan has been named Australian of the Year for 2008.** A proud Kernaghan, 43, admitted tonight that he was surprised at the honour but said he would use his new role to help farmers battling the drought. The Victorian-born singer and songwriter was anointed successor to climate change crusader Tim Flannery at a ceremony outside Parliament House in Canberra tonight. (Australian)

24 Jan - **AN autopsy is expected to reveal that Heath Ledger's death was due to an accidental overdose** of sleeping pills and drugs prescribed to treat anxiety. The 28-year-old Academy Award-nominated actor was yesterday found dead in a New York apartment just weeks after holidaying in his home town of Perth. Tributes poured in for Ledger, who was viewed within the Australian film and TV industry as a charismatic, inquiring and thoughtful actor whose private demeanour was at odds with his erratic media image. (Australian)

24 Jan - **CHRISTCHURCH International Airport has gone carbon neutral**, making it the second airport company in the world to do so, after Sweden's LFV. Chief executive Rene Bakx today announced that after much measuring, managing, mitigating and reducing, the airport had received its carbonZero certificate from Landcare Research. To get certified a business must measure its emissions, develop a plan to reduce them and purchase carbon credits to offset any remaining emissions. (NZ Herald)

22 Jan - **AUSTRALIA has flown its first whaling surveillance mission** as forces opposing the Japanese fleet in the Antarctic are stepped up. The flight by an extended range Airbus, along with the sighting of a Japanese fishing boat said to be shadowing Sea Shepherd, raise spying over the "scientific" whaling program to a new level. There are also signs that international attention on the program is creating unrest in Tokyo. The Airbus A319, fitted with surveillance and imaging equipment, is being used by the Rudd Government, with the Customs patrol ship Oceanic Viking, to gather evidence for potential international legal action against the whaling. (Sydney Morning Herald)

18 Jan - **A \$2.2 billion project to buy four giant heavy-lifting Boeing aircraft** has been completed on time and on budget, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement Greg Combet says. The fourth C-17A Globemaster III aircraft will be handed over to the Royal Australian Air Force at a ceremony at Boeing's plant in Long Beach, California on Saturday. (AAP)

17 Jan - **AUSTRALIAN shares lost \$40 billion in value** yesterday as global financial markets reeled from substantial writedowns by two of the world's biggest banks and fears the US economy was headed towards recession. The main Australian stock market indexes lost 2.5 per cent, with the most pain being felt by shareholders of the major banks, particularly the Commonwealth, with a share price slump of 4 per cent. In the past week, the Australian market has fallen more sharply than its US counterpart. Local shares are off 7.8 per cent while US stocks are down 2.5 per cent. (Australian)

16 Jan - **QUEENSLAND'S big wet continues**, with widespread rain in the central west cutting roads and marooning several small towns and thousands of graziers on their properties. Falls up to 100mm overnight in the Diamantina, Thomson, Barcoo and Cooper Creek systems are tipped to flood hundreds of thousands of hectares of southwest Channel Country and possibly reach Lake Eyre. (Courier Mail)

15 Jan - **FOREIGN Minister Stephen Smith** is confident holiday-makers won't be affected by budget cuts which will result in fewer Australian diplomats around the globe. Over the next three and a half years, the Rudd government will shave \$57 million from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) budget. It will result in 20 overseas positions being cut - 19 from DFAT's 89 overseas posts and one Beijing-based employee working on the China-Australia free trade agreement negotiations - saving the government nearly \$18 million. (AAP)

Aussie News Briefs cont'd

12 Jan - **IT is seven weeks since the federal** election but it was only two days ago that the final results clicked into place. We now know that the swing to Labor after distributing preferences was 5.45 per cent, according to the official count of the Australian Electoral Commission. Though less than the election-night figure of 6 per cent, that is small consolation for the Coalition parties. Now that Malcolm Mackerras has done the calculations for the two-party-preferred vote back to 1940 we learn that, in the 27 elections from then until now, there have been only three occasions where there has been a bigger swing. (Australian)

10 Jan - **HALF of all Australians** lack the minimum reading, writing and problem-solving skills to cope with life in the modern world. A new survey on life skills by the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals 46 per cent of the population, or seven million people, would struggle to understand the meaning of newspaper and magazine articles or documentation such as maps and payslips. And 53 per cent reached just the second of five levels in a practical numeracy test. In the survey of almost 9000 people, Switzerland and Norway came out well ahead of Australia, while the US ranked much lower across all age ranges. Italy was the poorest-performing country of those participating. (Australian)

8 Jan - **AN independent scientific assessment** questioning the ecological sustainability of kangaroo harvesting was rewritten because it conflicted with government policy. The assessment was prepared for the Howard Government's 2006 State of the Environment report, a benchmark document intended to shape government environment policy for the next five years. It suggested there was no data to back claims that kangaroo harvesting was sustainable and no reliable data on kangaroo populations or distribution. The report was later changed to state specifically that kangaroo harvesting was sustainable and based on "robust data". (Farm Weekly)

7 Jan - **THE Coalition outpolled Labor in the Senate election** after preferences. Final figures released by the Australian Electoral Commission show that the result will give the Coalition 37 of the 76 seats when the new Senate takes effect from July 1, a loss of just two seats from the 39 it holds now. Labor won 18 seats, a gain of four, taking its tally to 32. The Greens won three seats, edging their Senate numbers up from four to five. The election wiped out the Democrats, who will disappear from Parliament after June 30. The result means the Coalition will be able to block any Labor legislation it opposes if it has the support of Mr Xenophon or Family First senator Steve Fielding. (Age)

5 Jan - **DRIVERS seem to be getting the message about road safety**, as the nation recorded its second-lowest festive season road toll in a decade. With just hours left in the official two-week holiday road toll period last night, the number of deaths stood at 44. There were 62 deaths in Australia during the Christmas-New Year period last year and 78 in the 2005-06 season. (Australian)

2 Jan - **PUBLIC servants will be ordered to pay for their own massages** after running-up a \$200,000 taxpayer funded bill. Australia Post spent \$55,000 worth of rub downs, the Australian Bureau of Statistics spent \$10,120 and the Treasury \$17,000 as part of senior staff perks. Massages were popular during the Howard government and his department chalked up \$6,000 worth of back rubs. (Australian)



*Australia Day at Heurigen Wolff
Some of the children after dancing*



Frozen Alte Donau



Performances with Australian Artists

From the Australian Events Calendar as at 31 January 2008, Australian Embassy Vienna

<p>1 February 8:00 pm Gala Evening 2 & 3 February 8:00 pm Performance and wine tasting</p>	<p>“The Lovers The Outcasts”</p>	<p>Schlosstheater Schoenbrunn Schloss Schoenbrunn 1130 Wien Ph: 01 – 58885 www.wien-ticket.at</p>	<p>World premiere of former Ambassador Dr James Cumes’ drama “The Lovers The Outcasts” at the Schlosstheater Schoenbrunn. For more information on the play, please refer to the article on page 5 of the newsletter.</p>
<p>5 February 8:00 pm</p>	<p>Lantana</p>	<p>Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz Am Schwarzenbergplatz 1 1030 Wien Ph: 01 - 51444-4830 www.burgtheater.at</p>	<p>Australian author Andrew Bovell's acclaimed drama in a new adaption for the Austrian stage at the Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz.</p>
<p>8 February 6:00 pm</p>	<p>Haydn and Mozart at the Heiligenkreuzer Hof</p>	<p>Universität für Angewandte Kunst Wien Ausstellungszentrum Hof between Schönlaterngasse 5 and Grashofgasse 3 1010 Vienna Ph: 01 - 5136236 Email: cynthiaobrien@chello.at</p>	<p>Australian musicians Cynthia O'Brien and Susan Blake will be performing works by Haydn and Mozart at the Refektorium of the Heiligenkreuzer Hof. According to Cynthia, the rooms of the former Jesuit Monastery have the ideal acoustics for “original” instruments and playing style, which results in a more transparent sound and one that is believed to be closer to the sound in Mozart and Haydn’s time.</p>
<p>9 February 10am to 2pm</p>	<p>Art Breakfast at the Galerie Pacific Art & Crafts</p>	<p>Galerie PAC – Pacific Art & Crafts St. Ulrichsplatz 6/Neustiffgasse 31 1070 Vienna Ph: 01 9143421 Email: Martin.Zwieger@PacificArtAndCrafts.com www.PacificArtAndCrafts.com</p>	<p>Join PAC owners Martin Zwieger and Irmi Novak for breakfast midst art from Australia and New Zealand in Vienna’s 7th district.</p>

Unless otherwise specified, all telephone numbers are in Vienna

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

If you have not already done so please renew your OzCon membership for 2008. We are happy to inform you that the fee has remained the same, €20 per family.

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Membership Fee: €20

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Useful Websites:

www.ethermagazine.at

www.nucolorvue.com.au

www.australien-lifestyle.de

www.virtualvienna.net

www.australian-embassy.at

www.ninemsn.com.au

www.kids-days.com/Wien/index_wien.html

www.expats-consulting.com

www.homesick.com.au

www.viennababiesclub.com

<http://www.abc.net.au/vod/news/>

www.australianaonline.com.au

www.news.com.au

www.expatriates.com

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