

January 2009

December a month of

Christmas Cheers for OzCon

First there was the very successful Aussie stall at the annual UN charity bazaar.....



Happy band of early helpers



Chief pav decorator Jeanette Hannaforde and daughter Portia with Bethany Oran-Miles behind

And then the OzCon dinner.....

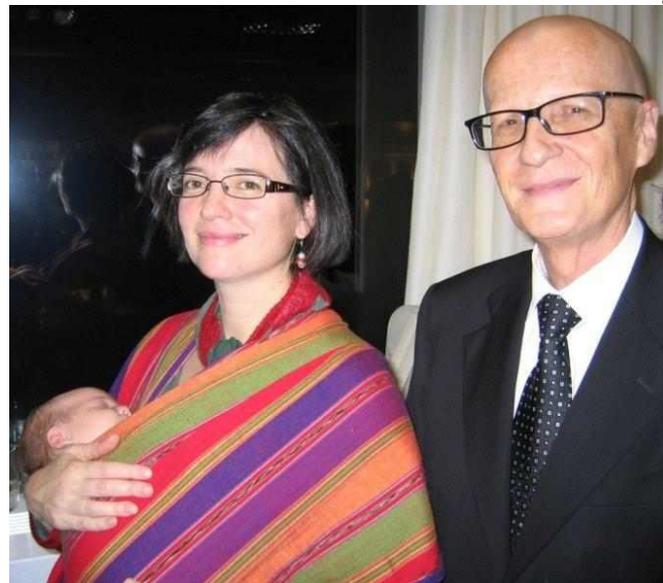


Gabrielle Costigan and Rod Ritchie



Simon Hannaford and Suzanne Prissmann

..and Christmas drinks at the Australian Embassy



Newest OzCon member Mariella Rose Toomey with mother Rosalie and host Peter Shannon

All three events were well attended by members and friends. There are articles and more photos on the following pages.

From the President

There was so much happening in December that I thought it best to give you a run-down on our events leading up to Christmas.

But first let me say that I hope you all had a great Christmas wherever you were, and did not do too much damage on New Year's Eve. I am confident that 2009 is going to be another successful year for OzCon.

The Bazaar

SOLD OUT was the message at the Australian stall before the day was over. More than 450 pavlovas (200 from the Embassy and a brilliant 100 made by Bindi Mamouney) plus 600 lamingtons, mostly made by Liz Crawford, lots of Fosters beer and almost every bottle of our sponsored wine disappeared off the table to the delight of all the volunteers.



We're ready so open the doors

At first we were a bit worried about a change of location in the Austria Centre, but it turned out to be a blessing. The biggest national flag seen in the entire bazaar pointed folks to our stand as they came down the escalators into the hall.

The only down side for some was the noise from the various bands that played at our end of the hall, especially the wild Cuban steel band. Personally, I loved it.

To our surprise, we sold every can of Fosters we could put out hands on. We later realised that the Czech stand that was next to us last year was not there this year and so the beer drinkers had to look elsewhere. The Germans also sold out.

There is no space to list all the volunteers who came and went or stayed the whole day. But some special thanks is a must. Our Coordinator this year was Jenny Hanna, from the Embassy. Amid all her other duties, Jenny put the whole thing together drawing on the experience of others. It was a great job and everything ran like clockwork. And thanks to Ambassador Peter Shannon for the Embassy's help. It provided two 'fridges, a coffee machine, the coffee, 200 pavlovas and staff to help set up the stand on the Friday.



Emily Bugden serves up the pavlovas

This year the wine was sponsored by our friends at the Salomon Estate at Stein a. d. Donau, in particular by Dr Bertold Salomon, who gave us 48 bottles of great red wine produced at his winery at Finnis River in South Australia. OzCon will be arranging another visit to the Stein (Krems) winery in the new year.



Leon Schupelius and David Smith were kept busy serving wine and beer.

Finally, thanks to every volunteer and friend, including the children, who put in time behind the counter, and to those who donated fruit and the pavlovas. Final figures are not yet available, but we handed in €2435 with some expenses to be deducted.

Jenny asked me to include her thanks:

*I would like to say a big **THANK YOU** to those of you who helped to make this year's bazaar a success. Without the willing support and assistance of OzCon members my job as coordinator would have been impossible.*

*I know that there were some first time pav makers as well as experienced hands who contributed and your efforts were appreciated. All of the pavlovas were sold and I'm sure were enjoyed by the people who purchased them. The contribution made by those of you who donated lamingtons, fruit, time and moral support either before the bazaar or on the day was also invaluable. **THANK YOU.** – Jenny*

The Christmas Dinner

Roasted joint of lamb with blue potatoes and curd cheese, or trout with tomato-risotto, or quinoa in pumpkin seed oil with fried pumpkins. These were the choices for the main course at this year's Christmas dinner at Wiener Kochsalon in the 1st District.

About 20 members and friends attended in a room behind the front eating area of the restaurant, including our guests Peter and Reina Shannon.



Eliza Larratt and members Rosie Maughan and Chris Cubitt

It was cold outside and there was the chance to warm up with a glass of sekt on arrival.

Once again, our thanks go to VP Gabrielle Costigan for finding the venue and negotiating a nice price.



Peter Shannon, Amanda Grant and Michael Altenberger



Gabrielle Costigan and Georg Rappold



Liz Crawford and husband Wolfgang Zimmer

Christmas Drinks at Embassy

Once again Peter Shannon, this time with wife Reina, hosted OzCon and the Austrian-Australian Society for Christmas drinks at the Embassy.

The venue this year was the Embassy's new entertainment/exhibition area which overlooks Karlsplatz. And at this time of the year the view is of the busy Advent market.

Guests were entertained with music by the more than 40-strong Kambala Girls School Choir from Sydney.



Michael Leroy and Anna Muszynska with members of the choir



This year's Bazaar Coordinator Jenny Hanna and Amanda Grant



Brett Bayly welcomes new OzCon members Richard and Gabriella O'Brien



Outside was the Karlsplatz Advent market



Anne Sparks and Margaret Dey

OzCon Membership Renewal Reminder

As 2009 is here we kindly ask you all to renew your membership to OzCon. We ask members to renew via online banking as this will save us all time and effort. Bank details are as follows.

Bank Account Details:

Susanna Martin-Murtinger

OZCON Account

Raiffeisenlandesbank Niederösterreich – Wien

BLZ 32000

Kontonummer (Account Number): 12.097.176

Membership Fee: €20

Please be sure to mark your name in full so we know who has paid. We are proud to inform you that the fee has remained the same, €20 per family.



ANNOUNCEMENT: OzCon has a website

It has been a long time coming, true. But now we have a site. It is still in the early stages of construction so don't expect too much to start with. But the domain name is registered and work has begun. So keep an eye on it and spread the word to anyone who may be interested in our group.

We will put up back issues of the newsletter so friends and potential new members can see what we are up to.

www.ozcon.at

OzCon Events

Australia Day

Once again OzCon and the Austrian-Australian Society will jointly host the celebration of Australia Day 2009. With the support of the Australian Embassy, we will hold the celebration at Weingut Wolff heurigen in the 19th District on Saturday 24 January, starting at 16:00. We have booked a room and so there is no need to make a reservation. Children are welcome. The address is Rathstrasse 44-46, 1190 Wien.



Australia as it really is

Bar Night



For those who can't wait until the 24th to share a drink with OzCon colleagues, we will meet at the Crossfield Australian Pub at Maysedergasse 5 in the 1st District (near the Albertina) from 17:30 on Friday 16 January. If you come and at first don't see anyone, go down the stairs to the cellar where there is more room. www.crossfield.at

A Bit of Fun

What pets write in their diaries

Excerpts from a Dog's Diary.....



8:00 am - Dog food! My favourite thing!
9:30 am - A car ride! My favourite thing!
9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favourite thing!
10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favourite thing!
12:00 pm - Lunch! My favourite thing!
1:00 pm - Played in the yard! My favourite thing!
3:00 pm - Wagged my tail! My favourite thing!
5:00 pm - Bones! My favourite thing!
7:00 pm - Got to play ball! My favourite thing!
8:00 pm - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favourite thing!
11:00 pm - Sleeping on the bed! My favourite thing!

Excerpts from a Cat's Daily Diary...

Day 983 of my captivity...

My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects. They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets.

Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I nevertheless must eat something in order to keep up my strength.

The only thing that keeps me going is my dream of escape. In an attempt to disgust them, I once again vomit on the carpet.

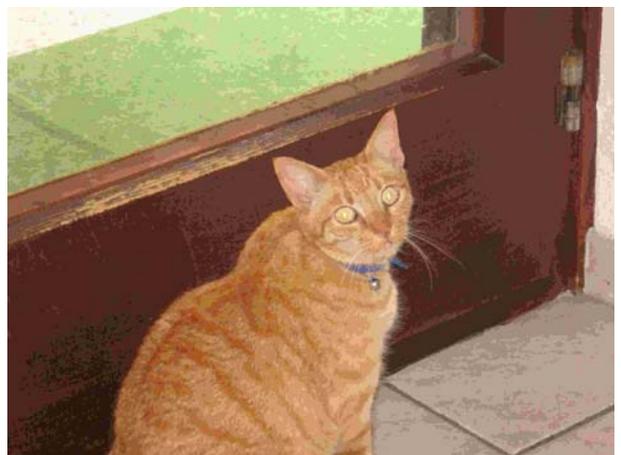
Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a 'good little hunter' I am. Bastards.

There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight. I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I could hear the noises and smell the food. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies.' I must learn what this means and how to use it to my advantage.

Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet as he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow -- but at the top of the stairs.

I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges. He is regularly released - and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded.

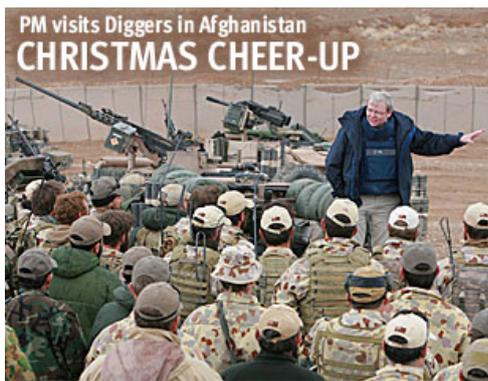
The bird has got to be an informant. I observe him communicating with the guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my every move. My captors have arranged protective custody for him in an elevated cell, so he is safe. For now ...



Aussie News Briefs

27 Dec. - **POLICE have scaled down the search** for missing Port Kennedy man Brian Guest, believed to have been taken by a shark this morning. The search was scaled down as police admitted they had recovered fragments of a wetsuit believed to belong to Mr Guest. Meanwhile authorities say there are no plans to kill the shark thought responsible for attacking the missing swimmer. It is believed to be a four-metre long white pointer. (West Australian)

24 Dec. - **QANTAS stands accused of price-gouging** on its fuel surcharges for lucrative routes to the UK and Europe after it refused to pass on the full reduction from the falling cost of jet fuel. Research by CommSec shows that passengers on long-haul flights are being overcharged on the fuel duty by about \$80. "While jet fuel prices have more than halved over the past five months, ticket prices to Europe, the US and Asia are only down by 20-25 per cent," Craig James, of CommSec, said. The international surcharge still stood at \$160 compared to a "fair" level of about \$80, he said. (Advertiser)



18 Dec. - **KEVIN Rudd** has made a surprise visit to an Afghanistan "hell hole" to wish Australian troops a merry Christmas. "We haven't forgotten, we know what's going on here," he told a gathering of troops at the Tarin Kowt base, in the volatile Oruzgan province. The mission was kept secret for security reasons until the Prime Minister had left Afghanistan. (Advertiser)

16 Dec. - **SOME low- and middle-income households will make money** from the Federal Government's \$9.9 billion compensation package to offset rises in the cost of living that occur because of the emissions trading scheme. The Government estimates 89 per cent of low-income earners will receive more assistance than they will need to help them cope with higher prices. Nearly all middle-income households will receive some assistance and 60 per cent will recoup all of the price rises through government payments. (Sydney Morning Herald)

15 Dec. - **RECORD number of Australians are falling prey to ruthless scam merchants** who are exploiting the economic meltdown to target the poor and elderly. An alarming 37 per cent rise in scams has been reported in 2008 compared with last year. More than 17,000 people have lost at least \$33million to rip-off merchants this year. Incredibly, one of the oldest remains the most common: The "Nigerian bank" letter scam which has netted \$10.5million from Australian victims. (Herald Sun)



11 Dec. - **THE killer of this massive croc**, shot in the Albert River near Burketown, remains on the loose. Despite extensive inquiries by police, the person responsible for shooting the 4.7m crocodile, suspected to be 70-90 years old, has managed to dodge detection. Crocodiles are a protected species and killing one can attract a \$16,000 fine. (Cairns Post)

9 Dec. - **A DIVIDED Coalition** has crashed at the end of the Rudd Government's first year in office to where it was under the leadership of Brendan Nelson, as the team of Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop fail on the economy. Kevin Rudd and Labor have shot back to record levels of voter support - with the biggest single rise in the ALP's primary vote since the election, and with the Prime Minister's satisfaction rating back up to 70 per cent. Labor leads the Opposition by 59per cent to 41 per cent on a two-party preferred basis - the Coalition's worst performance since June, and its second-lowest support since the election. (Australian)

8 Dec. - **SPEND spend spend.** That's the urgent advice Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is delivering to 2 million families and 4 million pensioners who will from today receive the largesse from the Government's \$10 billion stimulus package. Single pensioners will get \$1400 and married couples \$2100, while families eligible for Family Tax Benefit A will get \$1000 per child. (Age)

Aussie News Briefs cont'd

4 Dec. - **WATER prices will double** within five years as the State (SA) Government moves to a user-pays system. Treasurer Kevin Foley has admitted for the first time that "clearly over time we have to get full user-pays for water" and that "we will see a rough doubling of water prices over a five-year period". His comments came as the Government announced households would pay an average \$387.50 next year on their water bills – an increase of \$50 a year – based on average yearly use of 190 kilolitres. (Advertiser)

2 Dec. - **MORE than 130,000 inflatable breasts** have been lost at sea en route to Australia. Men's magazine Ralph was planning to include the boobs as a free gift with its January issue. The cargo is worth about \$200,000, which is another blow for publisher ACP's parent company PBL, which is already in \$4.3 billion of debt. (AAP)



Malta is a fascinating ancient island with historic sites as old as the pyramids. Its public transport is not that old, but some of its buses date back many years as Brett Bayly and Suzanne Prissmann discovered on a Christmas visit. Brett writes: The door stays open and people jump on wherever they can, for example if the bus stops at traffic lights. There are newer buses, but there are many of these 'classics'. Today I saw a very old Ford Thames bus. It had a Ford badge on the front and a Jaguar badge on the back....there is a sense of humour.

Australian Humour

- The bigger the hat, the smaller the farm.
- The shorter the nickname, the more they like you.
- Whether it's the opening of Parliament or the launch of a new art gallery there is no Australian event that cannot be improved by a sausage sizzle.
- If the guy next to you is swearing like a wharfie he's probably a media billionaire. Or on the other hand, he may be a wharfie.
- There is no food that cannot be improved by the application of tomato sauce.
- On the beach, all Australians hide their keys and wallets by placing them inside their sandshoes. No thief has ever worked this out.
- Industrial design knows of no article more useful than the plastic milk crate.
- The alpha male in any group is he who takes the BBQ thongs from the hands of the host and blithely begins turning the snags.
- A thong is not a piece of scanty underwear, as in America, but a fine example of Australian footwear. A group of sheilas wearing black rubber thongs may not be as exciting as you had hoped.
- It is proper to refer to your best friend as "a total bastard". By contrast, your worst enemy is "a bit of a bastard".
- If it can't be fixed with pantyhose and fencing wire, it's not worth fixing.
- The most popular and widely praised family in any street is the one that has the swimming pool.
- It is considered better to be down on your luck than up yourself.
- The phrase "we've got a great lifestyle" means everyone in the family drinks too much.
- If there's any sort of free event or party within a hundred kilometers, you'd be a mug not to go.
- On picnics the Esky is always too small, creating a food versus grog battle that can only ever be solved by leaving the food behind.
- The wise man chooses a partner who is attractive not only to himself, but to the mosquitoes.
- It's not summer until the steering wheel of the car is too hot to hold.
- If invited to a party you should take cheap red wine and then spend all night drinking the host's beer. (Don't worry, he'll have catered for it)

Unless otherwise specified, all telephone numbers are in Vienna

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

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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

www.australia.gov.au

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More information visit: www.veinnawalks.at

The Old City of Vienna

The Third Man

More information visit: www.wienguide.at

Other Associations

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Gelbe Seiten (Yellow Pages) – with an English index at the back.