

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING Approval sought for Stage One extensions

A SPECIAL general meeting of members will take place at the club on Monday 27 November at 1pm.

Those attending will be asked to approve expenditure on Stage 1 of the planned three-stage redevelopment of the club.

Cost of the work is estimated to be \$250,000.

For any decision taken at the meeting to be acted upon it would be necessary for a quorum of members to attend - that is, 40 members.

Stage 1 involves the addition to the front of the building of a new lounge/sunroom which would also provide a mid-sized meeting room. It would incorporate a kitchenette. Importantly, it would also provide access to existing toilets without causing disruption to activities in the main hall - an ongoing problem that has caused considerable disquiet.

Before members are asked to vote Stage 1 will be explained in detail, and questions will be invited.

If members' approve, work could be completed by the end of 2007.

Two banks have indicated that they would be prepared to accept an application for a loan to partially fund the development. The information provided to the banks indicates that the club could repay the loan from its expected surplus operating income.

A valuation of the clubhouse has already been undertaken.

This would be required by a creditor as security on the loan.

If Stage 1 wins approval at the special meeting, various steps would follow, such as finalising design, development application, tender documentation, building application, tenders and construction.

As members know, the Master Plan, developed by Small Quinton Coleman Architects in 2005,

provides for a staged approach.

Stage 1 would be followed by two more stages, dependent on the club being able to attract ACT Government or business support.

Stage 2 would involve internal rearrangement of the office and administrative area and an opening divider in the second hall.

Stage 3 is the most ambitious, involving a new large hall at the rear of the building with a stage, an enlarged kitchen, and various other improvements.

The club has already applied for additional land for the proposed large hall, and is confident that it will be able to secure it.

Melbourne Cup lunch planned

The club will again hold a Melbourne Cup lunch, on Tuesday November 7, commencing at 1pm.

Catering will be undertaken by volunteer club members.

The number of people attending will be restricted to sixty.

Sweepstakes will be conducted by Barry Hogan and his enthusiastic helpers, as they were last year.

There will be a "best hat" competition, and a trivia quiz will be conducted.

Cost will be \$10, and this will cover drinks.

The race, and preliminaries and presentations will be shown on

a large television screen.

Bookings are being accepted by Club Administration Assistant David Temple.

Members who have attended previous Melbourne Cup lunches will appreciate that they have been great successes and extremely popular.

Lending library

Do you have club library books languishing on your shelves?

Members are reminded that the library operates on an "honour system" - one makes a choice, and borrows the books without reference to anyone. And returns them within a reasonable period of time.

Please ensure the system works.

In your Meridian

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President Anne Murray says . . .

ACT Government slow to get the message

THE ACT Government does not seem to realise it's five minutes to midnight in providing for an explosion in the numbers of retired people in the Territory in the next seven to ten years.

While it was heart-warming to hear the Minister for Community Services, Katy Gallagher, speak today in the Legislative Assembly about the importance of Seniors Clubs in the ACT, her response to the recommendations of her own Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, of which I am a member, failed to acknowledge that Canberra now has the largest proportion of its population in the 50-plus age group in Australia and has the fastest growing projections.

The membership of Canberra's three Seniors Clubs - in Woden, Belconnen and Turner - is tipped to grow by 50% in the next seven years without actively recruiting new members. All clubs will have facilities problems during this period. However, with active recruiting, this number could be 300% if the facilities were there.

Unless the need is met to expand facilities for healthy and meaningful ageing for this population through provision of social and recreational activities, people will suffer isolation and poor mental and physical health, putting enormous pressure on already-stressed medical services and aged-care establishments. The economic argument for supporting us is clear.

Our seniors range in age from 50 to 90-plus and keep fit, entertained and intellectually challenged through the wide range of activities provided. However, we need greater recognition (translated into funding) of the job our volunteers do, so that we can keep on helping people to live independent lives. At the moment, we receive no recurrent funding.

One obvious solution would be for the ACT Government to allow a more flexible land use policy whereby we can enter into partnerships with business - and government - and in this way generate income to support club expansion.

19 October 2006

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Experienced, talented committee

Anne Murray, may well have paraphrased Mark Twain's much-quoted comment, "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated" as she took up the reins as President for an eighth year following her re-election at this year's annual general meeting.

As late as three days before the meeting Anne was hopeful -

enough - will in any way impair her continued efficiency, and commitment to the role of President. The club is fortunate indeed.

Barry Hogan becomes vice-president. Like Anne, Barry is a long-time servant of the club, and his "corporate memory" and sound judgment will continue to

President: Anne Murray

Secretary: Gail Guilliano

Members: Peter Brady, Robin Brinton, Barrie Clarke, Grahame Hellyer, Aleata Johnston, Ruth Butters, Maureen Hickman, Sylvie Keachin, Raphaela Stukoff.

Vice President: Barry Hogan

Treasurer: Ian Cleaver

"optimistic" would be suggesting altogether too much - that someone would step forward but, when it became apparent that that was not going to happen, she agreed to serve again.

Anyone who knows Anne will have no doubt that her initial reluctance to serve again - she had thought seven years quite

prove invaluable. Gail Giuliano continues as secretary. Again, her experience in this role, and others on behalf of the club, make her an ideal choice. Ian Cleaver continues as treasurer. Ian took over from Barry Hogan last year, and quickly demonstrated his command of what is an onerous and time-consuming job.

Thumbnails of some committee members

Aleata Johnston: I was born in New Zealand and came to Australia with a young family in the early '70s. A primary school and swimming teacher for many years, I took advantage of living in Canberra to have a career change and joined the public service where I enjoyed many years managing programs and scholarships in the transport and health portfolios. I still work part time and in between work commitments I like to garden and visit with friends and family including seven grandchildren living in Canberra. One day, when my partner is ready to retire, we will move to Milton in NSW where we have a cottage, but until then . . .

Sylvie Keachin: A university graduate, I have worked in retailing, State and Commonwealth public services and the Royal Government of Cambodia. I have worked as a consultant and contractor, diplomat, interpreter/ translator and volunteer. I have been Founder President/President, Vice President, Delegate, Executive Committee member and committee

member in various organisations in Canberra and Queensland. I have served with the Cambodian Association of Qld and Canberra (Inc), Indo-China Refugee Association Qld, Australian Asian Action Committee (Griffith University), Migrant Resource Centre Qld, and Ethnic Community Council of the ACT. My aim is to promote community harmony, social justice and multiculturalism in a cohesive Australian community. I welcome suggestions, inputs and constructive criticism from club members to promote and improve club activities, and I encourage your participation. Robin Brinton: I joined Woden Seniors in 1999, and served as Vice President until this year. I have also been a very active member of the Woden Senior Singers Choir since that time, also being happy to help with transport to rehearsals and performances. I sing acapella with a barbershop harmony group The Canberra Chordsmen and I am a member of The Heartbeats, which has

Meet the Administration Assistant, David Temple

Hi, I'm David Temple. I was born in Canberra in November 1981. I have lived on the north side of Canberra most of my life. However I have lived in Queensland periodically.

I went to Florey Primary and Kaleen High. I worked in a church from 16 till 19 as a Pastor's Personal Assistant, then I moved into hospitality, at Telstra Tower, pretty much doing every thing (waiter, receptionist, customer service, and a little cooking). However I was working close to 80 hours a week, so I left.

I worked at a small restaurant in Campbell until I was offered work in petrol stations which was good because I transferred to Queensland. After two years of petrol station work I left to work in a grog shop. The pay was terrible, and I lasted a month.

I came back to Canberra where my family is and have done multiple jobs, the highlights being Santa Claus and a spell in the Public Service. I had concerns about working with seniors but since I have come here I have felt really welcome. And I love the job. - David Temple

been presenting music hall-style entertainment in nursing homes for many years. For this I was invited to Parliament House this year to receive a Recognition Award on the National Day for Older Australians. Since 1988 I have been a volunteer at the National Museum, on the 1878 paddle steamer Enterprise. Last year, 2005, I considered it a great honour when the Museum recognised my public service with an Australia Day Achievement medal. This year I am serving on the Woden Seniors Facilities sub-committee.

Grahame Hellyer: My hobbies are music and languages which I have pursued off and on during a 39 year career as an Army Engineer. I served in New Guinea and Vietnam and then dragged my long-suffering family around Indonesia, England and Germany through a number of postings. I have taught a U3A French course, and currently teach a course in Modern Technology. I can be seen (and, some may think, unfortunately

Continued page 4



Making the most of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

If you need a lot of medicine in a calendar year, the PBS Safety Net helps you with the cost of medicine. Once you reach a Safety Net threshold, you can apply for a PBS Safety Net card. Your PBS, medicine will be less expensive (or free) for the rest of the calendar year. The PBS Safety Net threshold for January 2006 is \$960.10 or 56 prescriptions for concession and veteran card holders. This year the maximum patient contribution is \$29.50 for general patients and \$4.70 for concession.

When writing a prescription your doctor may suggest a brand that could cost more than the usual patient contribution. When this happens your pharmacy can often change the brand of your medication to improve the price without compromising on quality. Just ask your pharmacy.

Keep a record of your PBS medicine on a prescription record form which you can get from your pharmacy. Each time you have a PBS medicine supplied, hand your prescription record form to the pharmacist so the supply can be recorded. Your pharmacy will also be able to keep an electronic record for you on their computer.

When you are close to reaching the Safety Net threshold, talk to your pharmacist about how you can apply for a Safety Net card. When your pharmacist has issued your Safety Net card, medicines will be cheaper or free for the rest of the calendar year.

Your doctor might give your prescription for a medicine that is not available on the PBS sometimes called a private prescription. Your doctor will indicate this on your prescription and you will need to pay the full price for the medicine at the pharmacy. The cost of these prescriptions does not count towards your PBS Safety Net.

If you buy a PBS medicine within 20 days of a previous supply of the same medicine the cost may not count towards your PBS Safety Net threshold. Even if you have already reached the Safety Net you may have to pay your pre-Safety Net amount.

PHARMACIES

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Thumbnails

From page 3

heard) in the U3A Recorder Orchestra on Wednesdays. I co-ordinate the Club's computer training and lunch-time lecture series. I may be more recognisable to club members as a member of team which produced the Strategic Plan.

Raphaella Stukoff: I grew up in East Germany, defecting with my family to West Germany in 1951. I came to Australia on a paid passage in 1966, a move I never regretted! Trained as a kindergarten teacher, I had to pursue a different career in Australia and became, after learning office skills, an enquiry officer with the State Government in Sydney, for seven years. I came to Canberra in 1997 and worked for the agency Dial-an-Angel as a short-term carer for children and later as an aged carer. My love for singing brought me to the Woden Senior Club and it did not take long - thanks to Anne Murray's persuasion! - to become involved in committee work. My hobbies are gardening, singing, playing music and reading. I have a great love for the arts and go to painting classes.

Barry Hogan: I was born , brought up, educated and spent thirty years working in Sydney. I used to be a golfer and was a club committee member for a six year period (two years, house committee chairman, and three years club captain). That experience on the golf club committee, was a real education when it came to understanding human nature. We moved to Canberra in '79 and I've been here ever since. I joined the Senior Citizens six years ago and became a member of the choir. I'm proud to be a member of the choir which is, in my opinion, a truly fine choir and a credit to the club. I have been on the committee for the past five years, except for a six month health break. The club is on the move forward and I hope that everyone will pitch in, making it the best of its kind in Canberra.

RECOGNISING THE OBVIOUS

I'm no actor, and I've got 64 pictures to prove it. - Victor Mature.

HOUSEKEEPER

I am a marvellous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man I keep his house. - Zsa Zsa Gabor.

AGM - club in strong position

LONG-SERVING President Anne Murray "seriously but unsuccessfully" canvassed other members to stand for the presidency in 2006-7, right up until the day applications closed, but in the end agreed to serve for an eighth year.

Speaking at this year's annual general meeting, Anne said she had harboured ambitions to improve her playing the piano, learn to play a pipe organ, and learn to waltz and dance the quickstep. But those indulgencies would be put on hold for another year.

"I will be very content and privileged to be your President", she told the meeting.

Anne paid tribute to those who had worked with her throughout 2005-6. "I am grateful to members of the Management Committee, the club's sub-committees, activity group leaders and all the other members who contributed to the well-being of the club", she said.

"I believe we have a strong, robust organisation".

Anne thanked George Heron for returning to the club in July as temporary manager. "George ensured

Delightful prelude by talented singers

In a delightful prelude to this year's annual general meeting baritone Michael Politi and soprano Denis Stephenson, accompanied by pianist Shirley Cramp, regaled members to a selection of well-known favourites.

Michael and Denise began with "People will say we're in love" (Oklahoma), before Denise gave us Michel Legrand's "If it takes for ever" and "He is wonderful" (King and I) and Michael sang Rogers and Hart's "Isn't it romantic?" and "C'est Moi" (Camelot).

The talented pair saved "Music of the Night" (Phantom of the Opera) until the end. It was a stirring finale that left their audience regretting that it was necessary to get on with the business of the annual general meeting.

Michael and Denise have delighted us before. It is to be hoped that they may be prevailed upon to do so again so again. - DB.

that all grant funds were expended in an effective, timely manner, and that comprehensive acquittal grants were presented to the ACT Government".

She emphasised that all grants for all items were expended only after Government approval.

She said the only controversial furniture item was new chairs to replace the orange ones, with some members opposing any change. However, she reminded members that a number of chairs had been made available for members - and visitors and the Chief Minister! - to try, and the model chosen was the one that had won the most support.

"In last year's report I noted that the matter of seniors' clubs was being raised on the Ministerial Council on Ageing, as an initiative of the Chief Minister. A fine report was prepared, under the skilful leadership of Alan

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Helping members 'get with it'

DID you take advantage of the excellent series of four lunch-time lectures conducted on Mondays by the club's Information Technology Committee?

When it was formed about two years ago the committee set about helping club members who feared they were being left behind by all the technological changes in our society to "catch up".

Committee chair Training Co-ordinator Graeme Hellyer puts it this way: "It seems that there are new expressions coming into the English language every week and, even if we do not want to use all this technology, it would be nice to know what the words mean.

"Even ABC listeners now can be stumped by announcers saying routinely, 'More information on this on our website', or 'This program can be downloaded as a pod cast', or 'If you missed one of Margaret's interviews you can hear it as streaming audio'."

The committee realised that while many young people have a wide circle of acquaintances to whom they can turn to explain new technology and terminology, many seniors do not.

Hodges, and the report will be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly by the Minister in October", Anne said.

"There is much work to be done here, by clubs and government".

Unfortunately, the club had been unsuccessful in acquiring funding in the recent ACT Government budget to proceed with the Master Plan redevelopment of the club. "However, the Committee of Management believes we are in a strong position to plan and support work on Stage 1 [see "Club expansion by end of 2007", p 1].

"Once again I say thank you, and stress that my approach will not waver in the future, in that I will endeavour to provide leadership which has vision, and is supportive. I am committed to working for the 'greater good', not only the 'here and now'. I trust there is understanding and co-operation, and that we realise positive outcomes for our club, a truly important organisation".

Hence the four recent lectures. (It may not be too late to catch the lectures scheduled for 30 October and 6 November.)

The series began, on 16 October, with Digital music - mp3 players. Grahame Hellyer provided answers to the questions, What is everyone listening to in their headphones?; and Where does the music come from?

On 23 October Grahame moved on to Televisions and home theatre, explaining new types of TVs, plasma and LCD, and terms such as digital TV, rear projection, surround sound and set top box.

On 30 October we have Free stuff on the internet - examining listening to programs through pod casts, and what can be accessed via blogs.

The series ends on 6 November, when Mike Dinn explains what digital cameras are, and what jargon such as megapixels means.

If members show sufficient interest the talks will continue through November.

All this in addition to the structured series of gentle computer courses designed specifically for the over 50s that the IT Committee and volunteer club members continue to provide free at the club.

Australian Pharmacy Group lectures

At the Woden Seniors AGM pharmacists from the Australian Pharmacy Group spoke on Secret Women's business : Menopause, and secret Men's business: Erectile Dysfunction.

Here are some of the main points discussed.

Erectile Dysfunction

What causes Erectile Dysfunction (ED)?

It was once believed that erectile dysfunction was a problem of the mind.

Instead we now know that most cases of erectile dysfunction occur as a result of vascular disorders which restrict the circulation of blood to the penis. These disorders are linked to hardening of arteries, high blood pressure, abnormally high cholesterol and diabetes. For example, erectile dysfunction affects 52% of men with high blood pressure, 61% of men with heart disease, 64% of men with diabetes and 40% of men with blood vessel problems caused by high cholesterol.

ED is estimated to affect approximately 150 million men worldwide, including more than 1 million Australian men. ED is currently under-diagnosed and under-treated.

Your lifestyle may also have an impact - if you smoke, drink alcohol excessively or abuse drugs you may develop ED.

The emotional impact

Left untreated, ED can cause significant distress for both men and their partners. For a man, ED can lead to feelings of guilt, lowered self-confidence and greatly reduced enjoyment of life. ED can also be the first symptom of an underlying condition such as diabetes or heart disease. So it is important that you don't ignore the problem.

Erection problems can also have a significant impact on your partner – in less obvious ways than we may think. ED can make a partner feel confused and upset. They can experience guilt and loss of self-confidence if they feel they are the cause of your ED. You can help with this by discussing ED with them.

How do we treat ED?

Before starting any medication or other treatment for ED, your doctor or healthcare provider may make recommendations for lifestyle modifications where needed.

These may include:

Exercising

Dieting to reduce blood lipids (fats, cholesterol)

Stopping smoking

Reducing alcohol consumption

Managing stress and fatigue

Potentially reversible causes of ED, such as hormonal (testosterone) deficiency and medications that can cause ED as a side effect, can also be addressed with your doctor.

It's impossible to find a solution if you don't know there's a problem. Once you and your partner have clearly discussed the challenges that ED has brought to your relationship, as a couple, you are well on the way to a solution.

Seeing a doctor, being courageous enough to explain openly and honestly what's been going on, is a must for a man to be prescribed an effective treatment.

You may have been prescribed a treatment, but keep in mind you have to want sex for many of the treatments to work. If ED has reduced your sexual desire and passion, here are some tips you and your partner might like to try:

Set aside time just for intimacy.

Decide together when would be a good time to take the medication.

Try something new.

Talk to a professional.

Make some lifestyle changes.

Avoid heavy drinking

Get treatment for depression.

Smell good.

Make an impression.

ED treatment options

Oral medication: There are a number of tablets available in this class, known as PDE5 inhibitors. Your doctor can explain the differences between these tablets.

Sex counselling/Sex therapy: Consultations with a trained counsellor or psychologist may help you identify, understand, and cope with sexual concerns.

Penile injection therapy: Medication that increases blood flow in the penis is injected by the patient into the side of the penis shortly before sexual activity.

Vacuum therapy: This procedure holds blood in the penis using a ring at the base of the penis.

Penile implant surgery: An option for men with ED for whom other treatments have been unsuccessful. This is a device that is surgically inserted into the penis. The device is inflated when there is a desire for sexual intercourse.

Menopause

Menopause is the permanent end of menses (periods). This happens when a woman's ovaries have run out of eggs, which then triggers the decreased production of estrogen. This lowered amount of oestrogen triggers the symptoms of menopause. Symptoms include hot flushes, sweats, mood swings, insomnia, lowered libido, and vaginal dryness. Some less common symptoms are headache, hair loss, muscular pains, and weight gain. How do we treat menopause?

There are a number of options available include replacing the lost hormone – either via synthetic hormones, or natural products that mimic hormones- and lifestyle options to help cope with the transition. These depend on the severity of symptoms, unique to each woman.

Therapies include:

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) : Estrogen alone or Estrogen and progesterone,

Natural Therapies : soy, red clover, flaxseed, black cohosh, dong Quai, panax ginseng, evening primrose oil, etc.

Some lifestyle measures that can help include : regular exercise, healthy/varied diet, relaxation, losing weight (if overweight), and ceasing smoking.

Where do I get more information?

The following web sites give you more information:
www.menopause.org.au (Australian Menopause Society)
www.MenopauseInstitute.com.au

Cruising on the QM 2

By Dennis Blewett

C RUIRING had not previously appealed to us, but our holiday on Queen Mary 2 this (northern) summer changed all that.

Embarking at Southampton we visited Vigo, Barcelona, Cannes, Nice, Florence, Rome, Gibraltar and Lisbon, and enjoyed every port of call. Equally, we enjoyed life on board ship. We chose QM 2 for our Mediterranean holiday because of the emphasis on formality and because the ship features the biggest dance floor afloat. Dressing for dinner, and the superb food and wines served by proficient, courteous waiters, proved an ideal entrée to the evening's dancing to music provided by a first-class dance band.

There is a wide choice of restaurants, formal and informal, on QM 2, and 10,000 meals are prepared each day. For many passengers, the day began with breakfast, and segued into "elevenses", a leisurely (that is, extended) luncheon, afternoon tea, pre-dinner drinks, dinner, and perhaps a little supper before turning in!

There was a wide variety of theatrical choices. One afternoon we saw a Shakespearean selection by members of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (and late one night we saw those same august thespians competing with passengers at a karaoke night in the on-board Red Lion pub), and singers, dancers, comedians and illusionists entertained large audiences nightly in the impressive Theatre Royal.

Each morning, on days when one was not going on a shore excursion, passengers chose from activities detailed on close-circuit TV and the ship's daily newspaper. Bridge, cinema, World Cup soccer matches, cooking demonstrations, lectures on diverse subjects, art auctions, daily ballroom dance lessons provided by a talented young couple, the splendid gymnasium, the swimming pools, tennis courts and even a golf driving range by no means exhausted the attractions.

The service was exemplary, typified by the replacement of towels

and bathrobes each time one returned from the pool. An entertainer told his audience that he had gone to the bathroom during the night, and returned to find his bed remade. We were unsure whether or not to believe him!

The shore excursions were well-organised. For us, Gibraltar was - perhaps surprisingly, because we had thought to find little more than a splendid view from the top of the Rock - a highlight. When we went to the Vatican we thought it incongruous that we should be warned, "Watch out for pickpockets - this is the worst place in Rome". Seemed equally incongruous that a young man should stop a priest and ask him to pose for a photograph with his girlfriend. The priest obliged, very graciously. Clearly, in Rome, as everywhere else, tourism is God.

One meets many interesting people. None more so than Roy and Constance. Roy was born in Salford, Lancashire, but years on stage had expunged all traces of a George Formby accent; Constance, a singer, was born in Australia (she sang at the Albert Hall in the '50s, she told us). They met when playing the same theatre, divorced their then partners, married each other and, inspired by the Piddingtons (remember them?), formed a similar illusionist act.

They entertained on cruise ships and became entertainment directors. Predictably they found fault with the QM 2's cruise director, and they also found wanting the illusionist who had mystified us the previous evening, assuring us that his tricks held no mystery for them. They were in their eighties, and unfailingly immaculately dressed, Roy in blazer and cravat. Alec Guinness would have played him perfectly. The last time we saw them, as we approached Southampton, Roy said he had just completed packing. I suggested that he would have had no problem packing all their possessions into a very small suitcase. Having been in the business, as it were.

There was a preponderance of Britons and Americans on board. Australians came in a distant third. At no time were we aware of motion, as the QM 2 cleaved through the Bay of Biscay at 50 km/h. As we disembarked we envied passengers who were staying on board, bound for the United States.

Our Mickey Mouse dollar

Now, let's get this straight. I love Australia. Wouldn't live anywhere else. I'm the sort of guy who wants Australia to win everything. If I tape an international, and learn that Australia has lost before I have opportunity to watch the tape, I "wipe" it. When Ricky gets out cheaply I sulk for a week.

But, visiting Britain, after our QM 2 cruise, I could not help but again make comparisons. In our own wonderful country, we live the good life - none better - but the sad fact is that our Mickey Mouse dollar simply doesn't stack up against the pound. Or the Euro or the \$US for that matter.

One is fortunate to be happy in Australia, because moving to Britain

AIR-CONDITIONING

It was hot when we visited Britain. And humid. "You should be used to it", we were told.

"Well, yes. But in Australia we leave our air-conditioned houses in our air-conditioned cars to go to air-conditioned shops and other public buildings", we said.

Air-conditioning in Britain is non-existent, or totally inadequate. Lovely headline in the Evening Standard: "52° on buses; 47° on tube". The story went on to point out that it is illegal to transport cattle at temperatures above 27°.

is simply not an option. Sell your \$500,000 Canberra house, and see what £200,000 buys you in Britain. A young nephew of mine is seeking to enter the bottom end of the Harrogate housing market, at £350,000. Twice that wouldn't put him anywhere near the top end.

In Britain everyone appears to drive a late model car, often a BMW, Renault, or Peugeot. One reason may be that cars deteriorate quickly, as most people leave them on the streets because they haven't got a garage, and squeeze into the unlikeliest of parking spots, with inevitable mishaps.

Everyone we visited had a plasma TV set and subscribed to Sky.

No-one was impressed by visitors from Australia, because it appeared that everyone had been there. "Yes, we went last year. And the year after next we're doing the Northern Territory and New Zealand. Next year we'll be going to the West Indies and Canada".

Nostalgic look at Captain Blood

RECENTLY I watched Captain Blood on Turner Classic Movies. Made in 1935, the film was adapted from a book by Rafael Sabatini and set Errol Flynn on the road to stardom. Captain Blood tells the story of a seventeenth-century doctor, Peter Blood, wrongfully convicted of treason and sentenced to slavery in the West Indies. Blood escapes and takes to piracy; falls in love with Arabella, played by Olivia de Havilland (he renames his ship Arabella); and saves Port Royal from marauding Spaniards, for which he wins a pardon, the governorship of Jamaica, and the lovely Arabella.

I watched the film on television because it was the first film I saw unaccompanied, when I was nine. In the '40s films were classified X, A or U. One had to be no younger than sixteen to see an X; accompanied by an adult to see an A; and could see a U by oneself.

All Leeds suburbs had at least one cinema. There were eight cinemas within walking distance of my home, and no-one "went to the pictures" any other way. Value for money, too. There was always a "second picture", very often featuring the Saint (Louis Hayward), or the Falcon (George Sanders), or Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd), although on the downside there was The March of Time (groan) or a "short" featuring an American swing band (seemed to last an hour but probably lasted no more than ten minutes).

The suburban cinemas were quite distinct from the city centre cinemas, which were altogether grander, much more expensive, and a tram ride away. New releases went to the city centre first, and it was many weeks before they made it to the suburbs. In the city there were always queues outside the cinemas, largely made up of servicemen and their girlfriends. Films were rarely seen "from the beginning"; rather did people go in "halfway through", as seats became available.

To return to Captain Blood. It was not a new film. I had already thrilled to Flynn in The Adventures of Robin Hood and The Sea

Hawk, both made after Captain Blood. Errol was my favourite actor, much imitated with wooden sword and makeshift cloak. I would do anything to see him. Even venture alone through streets subject to the "blackout", watching carefully for trams before crossing the one major road between home and the cinema (cars were scarcely a consideration: one was more likely to be knocked down by a bicyclist), and tender my sixpence at the box office.

When I watched the film a second time, on television, I did so all the way through, because it was/is a good film. So impressed had I been back in the '40s, I was now able to anticipate the dialogue. I reluctantly concede now, although I would not have done so sixty years ago, that Flynn is no Olivier, but I am convinced that he was in an altogether higher league than the Cruises and

DiCaprios of today. He was utterly convincing, as was the lovely Olivia and the dastardly Basil Rathbone (the definitive Sherlock Holmes, I believe).

By no means for the first time I found myself thinking, they don't make films today like they used to. Were Captain Blood to be made today all ethnicities would be represented, all sexual proclivities would be given equal weight, the villains would do pratfalls for laughs, and Arabella would give Blood a lesson in swordplay and utter through silicone-plumped lips lines such as "get real" and "in your dreams". Nor would I be able to hear much that was said. Or care to.

Ingenuous times, the '40s? Well, perhaps. And yet, even U audiences were respected, given some credit for discernment. And Errol was handsome, and so brave. As my wife concurred, "They don't make them like him anymore".

Dennis Blewett

Regular activities

Group leaders should inform Meridian of changes to their programs

Monday	Solo	10-11.45am
	Mahjong	10-12 noon
	Line dancing	10-2pm
	Choir practice (Woden Senior Singers)	10.30-12 noon
	Table tennis	2-4pm
Tuesday	Gentle exercise (YMCA instructor)	10-11am
	Australian history (WSCC/U3A)	10-12 noon
	Duplicate bridge	10-12.45pm
	New Vogue dancing	1-4pm
	New Vogue and modern sequence dancing	7.30-10.30pm
Wednesday	Tai chi and gentle exercise	7.30-8.30am
	Water colour painting group (WSCC/U3A)	9-12.30pm
	Table tennis	9.30-12.45pm
	Carpet bowls	12-1.30pm
	Recorder classes (WSCC/U3A)	12.30-1pm
Thursday	Recorder orchestra (WSCC/U3A)	1.30-4pm
	Sequence dancing	7.15-9.45pm
	Play reading group (WSCC/U3A)	9.30-11.30am
	Craft group	10-12.30pm
	YMCA gentle exercise	10-11am
Friday	International folk dancing	12.30-2pm
	Tai chi and gentle exercise	2-3.30pm
	Table tennis	9.30-12.45pm
	Carpet bowls	12-1.30pm
	Painting and drawing (WSCC/U3A)	1.30-4pm
Saturday	Round dancing*	5.30-10pm
	Hydrotherapy (Canberra Hospital pool)	10-11am
	Clarinet ensemble	12.30-2.30pm
	Duplicate bridge	1-4.30pm
	Round dancing (beginners)*	1-7pm
Sunday		

(*most Fridays & Sundays, but ring Santo Giuliano 6288 1911)