

# The SUN

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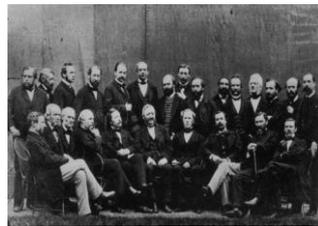
Sydney Unitarian News

Editor: M.R. McPhee

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**December 2015/January 2016**

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## **CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

This year marks the sesquicentenary of the International Telegraph Union, precursor of the International Telecommunication Union, which was founded by a conference held in Paris in 1865. The importance of rapid communications, regardless of the distances involved, can hardly be underestimated in our modern world – even though the telegraph was only the first of many ingenious media for that purpose. Indeed, as we come to the end of the International Year of Light and Light-Related Technologies, we can reflect on the impact that optical fibres have made in our own lifetimes.

Of course, we know about such earlier approaches as smoke signals and carrier pigeons, but the ancient Greeks had a device known as a ‘hydraulic telegraph’ (pictured at left). This was a container of water with a spigot to drain it and a staff inside with simple codes inscribed along its length. These devices were standard-ised to drain at the same rate, so the sender and receiver would open their spigots for the time the former held a torch up. The code at the final level of the water would indicate which of a set of basic messages was intended, much like the signal flags that were used in Sydney and elsewhere in colonial times.

By the time of the French Revolution, various mechanical devices were in use, such as heliographs and semaphore towers. The latter were placed within telescopic sight of one another, so detailed messages could be relayed across whole countries. However, they were expensive and could only be used in daylight and in clear weather. Once electricity was discovered, some electrostatic and even electrochemical telegraphs were devised, but they needed one wire for each letter of the alphabet and had very limited ranges. It was only when the versatility of electromagnetism was recognised that true telegraphs could be developed.

The first commercial telegraphs were invented independently in the UK and the US in 1837. The Cooke and Wheatstone design used compass needles that turned to point to letters on a dial, and its first use was along a 21 km stretch of the Great Western Railway. Some 15,000 sets of this design were still in use in the UK at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Samuel Morse designed a tapping key which, combined with the simple code developed by his assistant, Alfred Vail, became the standard outside of the British Empire. By 1861, a telegraph line built by Western Union connected the US from coast to coast.

Amidst all this incredibly rapid progress, David Edward Hughes designed a typewriter in 1855 that could decode signals from both the British and American systems. This immediately led to the sending of tele-grams, which in Europe required standardisation of equipment, coding and charges. To achieve these ends, a series of bilateral and regional agreements were established among the states of Western Europe between 1849 and 1865.

By then, the need for a comprehensive multilateral convention was clear and the French government called an International Telegraph Conference in Paris, which ran from 01 March to 17 May 1865. On the last day, 20 countries signed the Convention, which standardised the Morse Code, mandated periodic meetings to deal with technical and administrative progress, and provided for other countries to join the ITU. This foresight was vindicated the next year, when the first successful transatlantic cable went into operation. (There had been two failed attempts in 1857/58.)

Experiments in transmitting sound electrically had been going on since 1860 but a proper telephone was not patented until 1876. Local telephone exchanges were quickly set up on both sides of the Atlantic and, by 1904, there were over a million telephones in the US alone. Interestingly, it was Edison who developed a carbon microphone that enabled transmission over 200 km and nearly put the Bell Telephone Company out of business. Not to be outdone, Alexander Graham Bell devised a means of transmitting voice messages via modulated light in 1880, an idea well before its time.

Ironically, when radio waves were discovered by Heinrich Hertz in 1888, the general belief was that they would have limited use in ‘wireless telegraphy’ because they travel in straight lines. Undeterred, Guglielmo Marconi devised radio transmitters and receivers in the 1890s, some of which were portable. He obtained viable ranges by elevating his antennas, but his crucial discovery was that the shorter wavelengths were reflected by the ionosphere. In 1902, he sent Morse Code signals between Nova Scotia and Cornwall, after which he built high-power stations on both coasts to communicate with ships at sea.

By this time, a Brazilian named Roberto Landell de Moura had used amplitude modulation to impose voice messages on radio waves, which he patented in the US in 1904. New developments in electronics led to commercial radio stations and mass-produced radio sets after 1920. While the transmission of crude fixed images had been experimented with since 1909, the first real television system was built by William Logie Baird and demonstrated in London in 1925. Many advances were made all over the world in succeeding years, to the point that public broadcasting was a reality in the early 1940s.

In 1947, the ITU became a United Nations agency called the International Telecommunications Union, with its headquarters in Geneva. Its first Secretary-General was Franz von Ernst, who had headed the ITU since 1935. As of 1992, it has three sectors: Radiocommunications, Standardisation and Development, the first two of which were initially international consultative committees formed respectively in 1927 and 1956.

Needless to say, much has happened in telecommunications since that time – colour television, long distance telephone calls, satellites, the Internet, optical fibres and cell phones. We truly live in an era of global inter-connection and, as was the case in the last two centuries, the more recent inventions are the accumulative work of researchers and visionaries from all over the world.

## SERVICE DIARY

Meetings every Sunday from 10.30 – 11.30 a.m.  
(followed by coffee, tea and food)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Topic</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> December	Kelvin Auld	Metropolitan Planning for Sydney (Part 2)*
13 <sup>th</sup> December	Nadia Repin	Sri Lanka: Serendipity*
20 <sup>th</sup> December	Peter Crawford	Still More Christmas Capers
NO SERVICES FOR NEXT SIX WEEKS		
31 <sup>st</sup> January	Peter Crawford	Why Coleridge Left Unitarianism
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Mike McPhee	Unitarianism in Europe (Part 2)*
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Peter Crawford	Tom Payne and Common Sense
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Kaine Hayward	Music Service
27 <sup>th</sup> February	Peter Crawford	Goethe: <i>Sturm und Drang</i>

\* These will be video presentations.

[Please check the church website ([www.sydneynunitarianchurch.org](http://www.sydneynunitarianchurch.org)) for updates. The program for March will be available from the beginning of February.]



*Lad denne lille flamme symbolisere den  
guddommelige livsgnist,  
som findes i alle levende væsener.  
Må dets flamme lede os til større viden og  
tolerance.  
Må dets varme lede os til dybere kærlighed og  
omsorg.  
Og må dets lys lede os mod større visdom og  
forståelse.  
Ja, hver for sig er vi kun en lillebitte flamme.  
Men tilsammen kan vi oplyse verden!*

Let this flame symbolize the divine spark of light  
embedded in all living beings.  
May its flame lead us to greater knowledge and  
tolerance.  
May its warmth lead us to deeper love and  
compassion.  
And may its light lead us toward greater wisdom  
and understanding.  
Yes, each of us is but a tiny flame.  
But together we can enlighten the world!

Submitted by the Danish Unitarian Church; Danish and English words written by Lene Lund Shoemaker.

May the light of this chalice  
Bless the work that we do,  
And the silence that falls upon us,  
And the joy that stirs within us.  
May hope be strengthened inside us,  
And may praise for life rise to our lips  
Out of the fullness of our hearts.

Submitted by the UK General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches; words written by Sheila Crosskey, President of the GA in 1986/7.

You are welcome here visitor, friend or long time  
member.  
You are welcome here.  
With your family or partner  
Or lover or alone  
We joyfully welcome you here.  
You are welcome here as believer  
Or doubter, as joiner or loner.  
You are welcome here feeling a part of us or not,  
Full of energy or plain tired, seeking a vision or a  
rest.  
You are welcome to join us as you are.

*Vous êtes les bienvenus ici que vous soyez visiteurs,  
amis ou membres de longue date.  
Vous êtes les bienvenus ici.  
Avec votre famille ou un compagnon  
Avec un amant ou tout seul  
Nous vous accueillons avec joie ici.  
Vous êtes les bienvenus ici comme croyants,  
Avec votre doute, comme artisan de relations  
sociales ou bien solitaires.  
Vous êtes les bienvenus ici, que vous vous sentiez  
ou non faire partie de notre communauté,  
Pleins d'énergie ou simplement fatigués, en quête  
d'une vision ou d'un simple repos.  
Vous êtes invités à vous joindre à nous tels que  
vous êtes.*

Submitted by the Canadian Unitarian Council; English words (at least) written by Rev. Ray Drennan, former minister of the Unitarian Church of Montreal (1996–2005).

[These are the Chalice Lightings from the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists for the months of October, November and December.]

The Unitarian Church of Denmark (*Unitarisk Kirkesamfund*) was founded in 1900, making it the oldest Continental church after the historic Transylvanian and Hungarian churches. Its only congregation is in Copenhagen, consisting of 50 member families and 40 supporters, and operates as a lay-led fellowship. However, they have a beautiful meeting house which was erected in 1927, partly funded by a donation from Nina Grieg, widow of the Norwegian Unitarian composer, Edvard Grieg.

The Danish church had liberal Christian origins but, today, most members prefer a more abstract theology. For its size, it has a lively program of services, a fortnightly 'Debate Café' and various evening activities. They also have a website ([www.unitarisme.dk](http://www.unitarisme.dk)) but it is only in Danish.

## AUSTRALIA UNDER THREAT

By Peter Crawford

Australian civilization, is under as much threat from our own folly as from radical Islam. Our liberties and traditions, our freedom of speech, our sense of national identity are all menaced by politically correct policies. Governments like those of Western Europe, Canada and Australia, continue to encourage immigration from areas where terrorism is rife and Islam is the dominant and, sometimes the compulsory, religion. As the relatives of Curtis Cheng discovered, young anti-western youth establish terrorist cells around mosques and even in some schools. At present, this threat is small-scale and slowly escalating, but a new ambiance is everywhere evident.

Governments like those of Victoria and Queensland have passed laws fettering freedom of speech in regard to religion under the guise of 'Religious Vilification' laws. Publicly financed media like the ABC and collective giants like Fairfax have become propaganda instruments for one side of politics, rejecting main-stream conservatism on immigration as 'fringe politics' or 'far-right extremism'. They have become enemies of freedom of speech, as demonstrated by their essential defence of the hated 18c provisions in the Federal Race Discrimination Act. The great Voltaire famously said: "I completely disagree with what you say but I will fight to the death to allow you to say it." The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the ABC have a new mantra: "I completely disagree with what you say and I will fight to the death to stop you from saying it."

Meanwhile, a host of non-government or government established organizations bully the legal and public life of our nation. They dominate the public media and the air-time of programs like *Q&A* or *Media Watch*. The Human Rights Commission promotes a one-sided and perverse type of 'human rights' which is, in fact, an insult to one's intelligence. It represents anything but a meaningful human rights agenda, instead persecuting honest comment. The immigration lobby continues to pressure sleepwalking politicians into receiving more immigrants from terrorist centres like Syria and Iraq. 2012 was the first year when immigrants from Iraq outnumbered immigrants from Britain and the process has continued unabated ever since. Yet, despite this increase, there are shrill demands for yet more intake. Meanwhile, millions more languish in refugee camps in Jordan.

Refugees, in recent years, have been received in neighboring countries like Lebanon and Jordan, where they have languished in poverty. While the poor survive in poverty in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, the more able venture to Europe. This system, invented by European political elites, demonstrates indifference to those most in need and appeasement for those most able and aggressive. This system is as outrageously unfair as it is preposterously unbalanced.

Already, this open border policy has been exploited to bring terrorism to Paris –130 killed and another 770 injured, many of them seriously. This is the continuing consequence of Europe's out of control appeasement of the refugee and immigrant lobbies. This frightful act of terrorism comes on top of the constant social dysfunction which is now a feature of French public life and, more specifically, the wicked Charlie Hebdo massacre of just eleven months ago. The late and great John Fitzgerald Kennedy once composed a book titled *While England Slept*. Certainly, Europe sleeps today.

Certainly, Australia should assist the abandoned people of the Middle East. We should do so with great generosity. However, we should extend that support not by receiving refugees here but by assisting them in places of first refuge. In the case of Syrians, this would mean assisting refugees – all two million of them – who are living in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. According to its own spokespersons, Australia is to spend, \$700 million on receiving 12,000 refugees here!

How much better spent would this money be in meaningfully assisting these people in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan? (Meaningfully assisted until they would be ready to return to a reformed Syria, hopefully sometime over the next several years.) The exception to this assistance policy should be restricted to Christians, Yazidis and other obscure minorities who really are facing genocide in their countries of origin over the next few years in that terribly troubled part of the world.

But we should revise downwards our current refugee intake and face down its outspoken lobby. We particularly should not agree with acceptance of any people introduced to Australia by people smugglers. If we accept such impostors, then Australia will be set up for the extremes of jihad and the possibility of Sharia law. Terrorists serving time in Australia's jails invariably hail from refugee families or are, in fact, refugees.

Refugee advocates are the unwitting pawns of this process. Unless people smugglers are put firmly out of business, Australia will be targeted by literally millions of self-proclaimed refugees. They will create a huge culture in Australia which, as it has in France, become a cover for an out-of-control culture of religious supremacy and jihad law.

Seventy percent of the Australian population believe that our country is being set up for a terrorist attack (*The Australian*, 23/11/15). Any person who does not accept this strong possibility is living in the world of delusion and denial. To try to prevent this growing threat, we should not be receiving immigrants from countries in which governments sponsor terrorism or where terrorism is a regular part of national life.

I do not advocate this position with any sense of joy. Although we should be fully aware that many people from these countries are as admirable and peace-loving as people from anywhere, nevertheless we ought to be equally cognisant that many are not! A chain is only as strong as its weakest link and this chain has many weak links.

There are solutions to this problem, all of which are difficult. First, we should dissociate from the UNHCR. This body has already demonstrated its indifference to Australia's cultural needs and political requests. It has already purveyed lies throughout the news media about Australia not fulfilling its international obligations. In fact, Australia is one of the world's most generous countries in receiving refugees.

As experience has demonstrated, many potential terrorists have passed the UN tests for refugee status to Australia and there has been no recognition by the UNHCR of any culpability. They have been imposed on Australia at the behest of the said UNHCR, which then washes its hands of their subsequent behaviour. At the same time, the UNHCR has failed to give any meaningful preference to Christian groups in Africa and the Middle East who are literally facing genocide at the hands of Islamicists.

Just recently, we have witnessed the cynicism of the UNHCR with its failure to give Christians and Yazidis (both groups facing real genocide) any preference in the placement of 12,000 Syrian refugees intake to Australia. This despite a request from the Australian Government that they do so. The Australian Government has been forced to fall back on a separate humanitarian intake to secure a reasonable percentage of Christians and Yazidis in the intake.

To conclude, Australia has a great responsibility in regards to international charity. This responsibility can best be effectuated by overseas assistance, not the reception of a never-ending influx of self-styled asylum seekers. They should have no preference over other people facing need and poverty as recipients of Australia's beneficence. By far, the best way to assist is to adopt the latest European measure of financing a reasonable living standard for all people facing displacement in the camps in countries neighbouring Syria and Iraq.



**CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**SUNDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2015**  
**EVERYBODY, COME!**



As is our custom, there will be a party after the service on Sunday, 20 December, to which members and guests are cordially invited. That service will feature our Music Director, Kaine Hayward, and his colleagues from the Conservatorium, who will also entertain us after the lunch with an impressive repertoire of Christmas carols.

There will be the usual sumptuous range of food and drinks provided by our versatile catering team. To assist with our catering, please confirm your attendance and any guests you are bringing either to the Committee at the church or ring Michael Spicer on 0423 393 364.

We look forward to a good roll-up on this important day, so please don't miss out. And, of course, you're all invited back next year for more fun and excitement.

## SIZZLING SYDNEY



Once a jolly jogger, running by the River Clyde,  
Through wind and weather so valiantly,  
And he sighed as splashed his trainers through the sopping rain,  
“I’m off to ‘Sizzling Sydney’”, said he.

*(Chorus)*

Sizzling Sydney, Sizzling Sydney,  
I’m off to Sizzling Sydney, said he,  
And he sighed as splashed his trainers through the sopping rain,  
I’m off to Sizzling Sydney, said he.

So he packed his running shoes and set off for his holiday,  
“Toodle-oo, Glasgow and Scotland”, said he,  
And he sipped a few snifters sitting in the aeroplane,  
“I’m off to ‘Sizzling Sydney’”, said he.



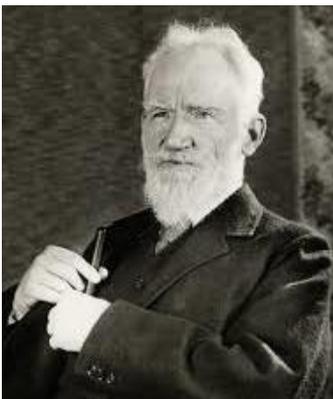
Ozieland was hot and so was New Zealand,  
“Phew”, said our jogger, sweaty as could be,  
But he thought about Glasgow shiv’ring in the soaking rain,  
“I’ll stay in Sizzling Sydney”, said he.

So if you see ever him bouncing with the kangaroos,  
Give him a wink and a nod from me,  
Tell him that we miss him jogging by the River Clyde,  
Hope he’ll be happy in Sizzling Sydney.

Lyanne Mitchell (1991)

[This was written by Lyanne Mitchell of the Glasgow Unitarian Church as a tribute to Rev. Douglas Webster. As with the original ‘Waltzing Matilda’, the last two lines of the chorus change with each verse. And now here is a sobering thought for our Christmas dinners.]

## LIVING GRAVES



We are the living graves of murdered beasts,  
Slaughtered to satisfy our appetites.  
We never pause to wonder at our feasts,  
If animals, like men, can possibly have rights.  
We pray on Sundays that we may have light,  
To guide our footsteps on the path we tread.  
We’re sick of War, we do not want to fight –  
The thought of it now fills our hearts with dread,  
And yet – we gorge ourselves upon the dead.  
Like carrion crows, we live and feed on meat,  
Regardless of the suffering and pain  
We cause by doing so, if thus we treat  
Defenseless animals for sport or gain,  
How can we hope in this world to attain  
The PEACE we say we are so anxious for.  
We pray for it, o’er hecatombs of slain,  
To God, while outraging the moral law.  
Thus cruelty begets its offspring – WAR.

George Bernard Shaw

## SANTA NEVER MADE IT INTO DARWIN

On Christmas Eve of seventy-four  
The warning sounded out  
For all the broadcast stations  
A great storm was near about

The girls and boys asleep in bed  
Tomorrow was the day  
Their mums and dads all prayed  
The mighty storm would turn away

*(Chorus)*  
Santa never made it into Darwin  
Disaster struck at dawn on Christmas Day  
Santa never made it into Darwin  
A big wind came and blew the town away

Christmas morning was a nightmare  
As Cyclone Tracy struck  
It ripped apart the buildings  
Like an atom bomb had struck

It twisted iron girders  
And it flattened all the trees  
The might of such a cyclone  
Must be seen to be believed

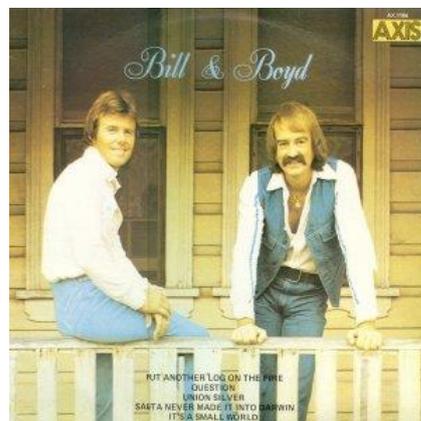
*(Chorus)*

Many boats put out to sea  
Very few returned  
Most were foundered on the rocks  
Or in deep seas overturned

Australia was shocked and saddened  
As the news came through  
The devastated city  
Must be built anew

That suffering and heartbreak  
Could happen in this way  
A natural disaster  
Could come on Christmas Day

*(Chorus twice)*



Bill Cate (1975)

How many of our readers remember this song by 'Bill & Boyd' from forty years ago? We may have missed the anniversary of Cyclone Tracy but, at least, this year is the anniversary of the song. It was produced as a charity single to support the reconstruction of Darwin and won the APRA Song of the Year award in 1976. You can hear it on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) by searching the title.

William ("Bill") Cate and William ("Boyd") Robinson were originally from Wellington, New Zealand, and began performing there in 1960. By 1964, they had relocated to Sydney, where they produced a number of hit singles and performed on the club circuit until 1989.

Cyclone Tracy killed 71 people and destroyed more than 70% of Darwin's buildings. Over 30,000 people, out of a population of 47,000, had to be evacuated.

## TATYANA (Part 3)

By Patrick Bernard

At about the same time (1944<sup>1</sup>) Olga had become the ‘companion’ of a wealthy industrialist from Marseilles, a Monsieur André Fiocca, a ‘fêrailleur’<sup>2</sup> of humble origins who surrounded himself with all the accoutrements and pretensions of the ‘Grand Bourgeois’ he aspired to be. In other words, he bought what he lacked in style. Until the 1950s, it was fashionable for a ‘nouveau riche’ like Monsieur Fiocca to have a former Russian prince as a chauffeur and a distinguished Russian lady, preferably with some aristocratic credentials, as a mistress. Since Monsieur Fiocca was already a widower, that relationship did not need to be a secret and could be proudly flaunted in his social circles. Olga was now officially his ‘companion’ and not his mistress, which is the sort of semantic distinction that meant so much in those bygone days.

Whether Olga was of noble descent or not did not matter to Monsieur Fiocca, as she certainly projected the required image. She was tall, blonde, and her eyes had the deep green colour of those malachite columns that decorate the Imperial palaces and cathedrals of Saint Petersburg. Olga’s face was perfectly symmetrical, with a small child-like nose, thick sensuous lips and those seductive Slavic high cheek bones that added a hint of oriental beauty to her already considerable charm. She had distinguished manners and never departed from her upright, dignified posture regardless of the circumstances. For a wealthy widower like Monsieur Fiocca, a man of unrefined behavior, keen to occult his rugged background, obsessed with status symbols and aching to be accepted in high society, a lady like Olga brought him the refinement he was lacking.

Well aware of his own failings, Monsieur Fiocca would have done anything and spared no expense to obtain and retain the company of such a desirable adornment by his side and, most importantly, this would make him the envy of colleagues and competitors in the macho circles of the metallurgical industry. Needless to say that Olga had no objections to this arrangement and extracted everything she could out of it, including securing home and board for herself and for Tatyana, Alexander and Nikolai who were offered their own private quarters in Monsieur Fiocca’s residence, which was so vast that there were many parts he had not even had time to explore, himself. Although Tatyana was reluctant to accept this tainted hospitality, she did not have much choice in the matter and, considering her own precarious circumstances, she went along with this situation for a while. It was not so bad, after all, and all that was asked of her was grace and aristocratic demeanor to gild Monsieur Fiocca’s many dinner parties, whilst Olga had to do all the hard work afterwards.

Monsieur André Fiocca had a daughter and a son called Henri, who was as much a gentleman as his father was not. Henri had married an extraordinary young Australian woman called Nancy Wake, who later became a heroine of the French Résistance and the most decorated woman of the Second World War. Tragically, whilst Nancy was leading a now legendary ‘maquis’ in the Auvergne region, Henri was arrested in 1943 by the Gestapo, tortured and executed, having never betrayed anyone or revealed anything on the whereabouts of his wife, who had achieved the status of ‘most wanted person in Vichy France’ and was by then nick-named ‘the White Mouse’ by the Nazis in recognition of her elusiveness.

Ours is a small world where destinies often cross paths in the most unexpected ways and unexpected places. Seventy years later, on the other side of the world, in Australia, browsing in a second-hand bookshop in a small deserted arcade in the village of Glenbrook in the Blue Mountains, the younger son of Tatyana, Maurice, would come upon a copy of Nancy Wake’s biography by Peter Fitzsimons. Maurice had never heard of Nancy Wake before but as he flipped through the pages the name ‘Fiocca’ came reappearing and ringing a distant bell somewhere in the mist of his childhood memories. He vaguely remembered having heard that name somewhere and wasted no time in ringing his mother, Tatyana, who was still alive and in possession of all her faculties, to extract more information about yet another enigma.

Begrudgingly Tatyana disclosed Olga’s story and her involvement with the Fioccas. Seventy years later, Maurice learnt that, among other things, Monsieur Henri Fiocca was in fact Nikolai’s godfather. These revelations, like many others in Maurice’s life, came too late, as Nancy had passed away in 2011 somewhere in London. Previously she had lived for a few years in Port Macquarie (New South Wales, Australia) and Maurice, who lived in Sydney by then, would have been thrilled to drive up the North Coast to meet her and hopefully unveil more details on this tumultuous period in his mother’s life. It is probable that the gregarious

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<sup>1</sup> Described in Part 2 of this story, which appeared in the October/November 2015 issue.

<sup>2</sup> Someone who makes money chiefly from dismantling ships for scrap metal which he then resells to various industries.

Nancy would have herself been delighted to meet someone connected to this most celebrated part of her life. For Maurice it was just another missed opportunity inflicted by the neurosis of secrecy, a pathological condition which severely afflicted his mother for her entire life.

Apparently Tatyana had briefly befriended Nancy, who was about eight years her senior. Tatyana was mystified by the free spirited Aussie girl who smoked and drank like a man when few women did so in those days and, even more unconventionally, Nancy lived with Henri in what we would now call an open marriage which would have been a scandalous but somewhat titillating detail for the traditionalist Russian émigrée.

Meanwhile Stéphane had indeed been arrested on well-founded suspicion of being connected to the Résistance. Since there was no hard evidence to incriminate him, he was spared from torture and the firing squad but was nevertheless sent to a prison camp in Sachsenhausen, somewhere in Saxony. There he was relatively well treated and, in fact, he befriended a Wehrmacht officer called Wilhelm Schmidt, who helped him to abscond in the last days of the war. With Herr Schmidt's assistance, Stéphane escaped dressed as a German soldier with false papers and enough cash to get him back to France via Switzerland. Stéphane, who was tall, blond and blue-eyed, fitted well into the ideal ethnic Aryan profile and therefore had no great difficulties in conning his way home.

By the time he arrived back in France, it was a traumatised and divided country with thousands of skeletons in its collective cupboards. He soon found out with great sorrow that his family's ancestral home, a small Eighteenth Century château idyllically nestled in the green hills of Normandy, had been razed to the ground by *friendly* American bombs on D-Day, the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944. Whatever remained had been burnt or pilfered. There was nothing left apart from the well maintained meadows, a meandering brook, a few barns, a functioning dairy and a small forest, where he used to play as a child. The sense of bereavement that he experienced then would bring him even closer to his young wife, who had truly lost everything including family, country and even her own identity. At first, they were brought together by the magnetic fields of love and, from then on, their union would be strengthened by their shared sorrows for a lost Arcadia. But, for now, Stéphane's immediate challenge was to find the whereabouts of his young wife and the newborn son he had not yet seen.

Through the war years, people moved around regularly and suddenly due to unpredictable circumstances, without leaving addresses and, as a result, communication between loved ones often broke down. One of Stéphane's two sisters, Céline, had kept a record of Tatyana's last known address but, since that building had been destroyed in one of those 'friendly' bombings over Marseilles, it was assumed that if her life had been spared she would have had to move somewhere else with Alexander and baby Nikolai in tow. At that stage, Stéphane was not yet aware that Olga was back in the picture, playing a significant role in this tale of survival. Tormented by all these awful uncertainties, Stéphane traversed the devastated landscape of liberated France to search for his bride and child among the ruins of Marseilles, where he hoped they had most likely remained. To make this desperate quest more poignant neither of them knew if the other was still breathing.

After a long, uncomfortable train journey interrupted by multiple checkpoints and several bomb raids from Normandy to the Riviera, Stéphane finally arrived at the Gare Saint Charles<sup>3</sup> in Marseilles early on a radiant summer morning. Stéphane was convinced that only good news could come from such a glorious sunshine. He went straight to Tatyana's last known address on Rue George Clémenceau, which was by then no more than a pile of rubble. He found out with great relief that most of the occupants had survived in the building's cellar during the bomb raid that destroyed everything above ground level. Stéphane kept inquiring with various neighbours, asking if they had any ideas on the whereabouts of Tatyana and Nikolai. Although he did not receive any satisfactory answers, someone recommended that he should talk to the local epicerie<sup>4</sup> owner, who knew everything about everyone in his catchment area. This shopkeeper, a Monsieur Carlier, told a thrilled Stéphane that two Russian ladies, a young gentleman and a baby boy had moved into the mansion of a Monsieur André Fiocca on Rue Daumier, which was located in a prestigious residential area of Marseille.

Stéphane guessed immediately that Olga, '*the great survivor*' as he nicknamed her, had used her ample charms to ease her way into Monsieur Fiocca's heart and henceforth into his luxurious residence. Stéphane wasted no time in following that lead and, within less than an hour, he was ringing the bell of the foreboding gateway to a manicured large property with a blossoming Mediterranean garden with winding pathways, discreetly decorated with soothing water features and neo-classical sculptures. An elderly Spanish butler came to the gate

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<sup>3</sup> Saint Charles is Marseilles central railway station

<sup>4</sup> corner shop

and, after briefly inquiring on Stéphane's identity, he unlocked the gate to this private paradise and welcomed Stéphane with a heartfelt smile. Stéphane rushed up the long gravel driveway and was invited by the amicable butler to enter the lavish Beaux-Arts style mansion of one of the richest men in Marseilles. The two storeys high lobby itself was larger than most people's houses and displayed all the garish excesses particular to nouveaux riches, such as an enormous crystal chandelier, monumental antique furniture, Persian carpets and gold plated door handles.

There was immediately some running about upstairs, followed by rapid shuffling and cries of indescribable joy echoing along the corridors. Tatyana, in a floral yellow summer dress, appeared on the first floor landing. Unable to breathe and choking with ecstatic disbelief, she repeated in halted Russian: "*Bozhe moy! Bozhe moy!*"<sup>5</sup> He was alive! They were alive! She then rushed down the marble staircase to embrace him and, in her haste, she fell down and sprained an ankle. At first she did not feel any pain or she just ignored it, and they both laughed at this theatrical entrance which reminded them of their first accidental encounter three years previously, when she had stumbled off that tram (or trolley bus) in Algiers to fall into the safety of Stéphane's arms. This time, he was not close enough or quick enough to save Tatyana from injury, but on that blissful day nothing else, not even physical pain, mattered. Overwhelmed with emotions, unable to string two words together, they held each other tenderly shedding silent tears.

After a few days of celebrations, Stéphane declared that, although he was of course very grateful for Monsieur Fiocca's hospitality, it was not appropriate for his young family to go on relying on the generosity of Olga's lover for their living arrangements. As he would repeat quite often over the years: "*It is better to live in a small home of your own than in someone else's castle.*" To make matters worse, at the time of Stéphane's return a renown French film director, who had been a regular guest at the Fioccas, had offered Tatyana a leading role in one of his forthcoming films, although she had no acting training whatsoever.

Whether he was simply courting the Eastern beauty or not was never clarified but, upon his return, Stéphane put an end to any ambiguity or misgivings in regards to this issue. In a rare moment of controlled anger, he put it bluntly to Tatyana: "Either you pursue an uncertain movie career or you choose the comfortable certainty of a life with me! Sorry my dear but you can't have both. It's one or the other! That's simple." This ultimatum was unnecessary, as Tatyana had no hesitation in choosing the latter and reassured Stéphane that she had no intention whatsoever of being an actress, which was still considered a dishonorable profession in those distant days and, in any case, she was just too introverted.

Soon afterwards they left the Fioccas' mansion, leaving Olga to fend for herself there, and Stéphane found a suitable temporary accommodation in the centre of town before moving soon afterwards to Paris, where Stéphane had inherited a Haussmanian apartment in the Trocadéro district. Hence, their married life finally settled into the orderly and respectable routine of a good Parisian bourgeois family, which is where Maurice was conceived some time in April 1949.

Following a timeless tradition, eventually Monsieur Fiocca died, bequeathing nearly everything he owned to his surviving daughter and very little to Olga, whose former beauty had faded and who once again reverted to being a destitute émigrée. Tatyana may have been unjust in her utter contempt for Olga but she did ask Stéphane to remit this "sinful woman" with a generous monthly pension that she received until she died in 1977. Stéphane, who found it unseemly to argue about money, indulged his wife's wishes without concerns for his own family's finances.

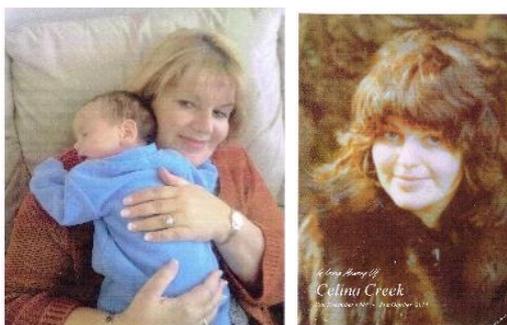
From Tatyana's point of view, this was no doubt an expression of gratitude, albeit expressed from a frosty distance, via the impersonal channel of a monthly bank deposit credited to the woman who had saved her and Alexander's lives on more than one occasion. Olga, who had been a striking and flamboyant Slavic beauty, dripping with jewelry, real and fake, continued to live in a grand style way beyond her means even in old age and, without Stéphane's ongoing munificent financial support, would have almost certainly died in abject poverty as so many Russian émigrés did.

[This is the third part of Chapter 5 in what will one day be a book called *Perennity*. Part 2 was printed in the last edition and Part 1 was in the December 2013/January 2014 issue. Chapter 4 appeared in two parts in the April/May and June/July issues of 2013, while the earlier chapters were published in 2012.]

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<sup>5</sup> "My God! My God!"

## VALE CELINA CREEK



Celina Creek (19<sup>th</sup> December 1949- 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015)

Celina was a valued member of the Sydney Unitarians for over ten years. She could not attend very often for the Sunday services, but when she came she always lifted our spirits with her intelligence, her good humour and her perceptive comments. She was a regular attendee at our Christmas luncheons and was a star performer at many functions, such as the Russian Easter party where she came dressed as the Tsarina.

Celina's life was very eventful from her arrival in Australia from war-torn Poland at the age of eleven. She was a high achiever academically and, after her secondary schooling at North Sydney Girls' High School, she went on to study Medicine at Sydney University. This for someone who only learned English after her arrival in Australia. Having decided that Medicine was not for her, she completed a Science degree and went on to teach at Randwick Girl's High School. Later, she would study Law and work in this area for a number of years.

Even before coming to Australia, Celina's life was very dramatic. Her father fought against the Germans in the Russian Air Force. Her mother only survived as a teenager when she was thrown from a train by her own parents as the train was heading for Auschwitz concentration camp. Most of Celina's extended family died at the hands of the Nazis. Her uncle is still honoured as a member of the Polish underground resistance.

Celina was very happily married to Peter for well over thirty years. They were an inspiring couple who raised two wonderful children, Davina and Joshua. Members will recall that Joshua held a series of excellent piano concerts at our church. Joshua often says that his mother, Celina, also a talented musician, was his mentor and his inspiration.

Celina's life was an affirmation of the Unitarian creed. She always thought truly, spoke bravely and acted justly. She will be missed by all.

## REPORT TO THE 2015 ANZUUA CONFERENCE

Firstly, I would like to thank all the other participants for their inspirational ideas and for their dedicated and different ways of approaching social justice issues.

The Sydney Unitarian Church, which was founded in 1850, is a welcoming, non-judgmental spiritual community without dogma, doctrine or creeds; that is, a 'free church' based on the principles of reason, freedom and tolerance.

Currently, we have 45 financial members and attendances at our Sunday services range from about fifteen to thirty. While this may seem small by comparison with the Church's heyday in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (when it was not uncommon to have hundreds present), our services offer high-quality talks on a great variety of topics, excellent music and an enjoyable social time at the conclusion of the service.

Our excellent website, set up and maintained by Curt Fraser, ([www.sydneyunitarianchurch.org](http://www.sydneyunitarianchurch.org)) allows us to make contact with a much wider audience, as does our journal, *The SUN*. The readership continues to grow and copies are sent to members throughout the state who are unable to attend church activities. You all know our outstanding editor, Michael McPhee, through his excellent work on *Quest*.

On regular occasions, we hold musical services and concerts in both our hall and in the chapel, which are very well attended. They are organised by our wonderful Music Director, Kaine Hayward, who works part-time for Opera Australia and is an excellent tenor and pianist. For concerts, he organises a team of other great performers. Our most recent concerts have been selections from Verdi, pieces from Rachmaninoff, the works of Mozart and a concert of American popular music from the 1920s to 1940s.

We are also a wider church in that we host a plethora of smaller church groups who would otherwise be unable to continue, such as the Sufis, the Builders of the Atrium and the Gnostics. We have also hosted the Sydney Atheists and have connections with the Humanists. Various community groups also use our hall and chapel, including: Alcoholics Anonymous; Narcotics Anonymous; Tai Chi and meditation groups; the Lumina association (our body corporate); and the Electoral Commission.

Finally, I know a lot of planning and organisation went into this conference. The hard work certainly shows in the efficiency of the registration, the delicious food, the excellent workshops, the inspiring opening speeches and the overall management. We would like to thank the ANZUUA Executive and our hosts, the Melbourne Unitarians, for this excellent conference.

[This report was delivered by our Treasurer, Nadia Repin, at the ANZUUA Conference in Melbourne.]

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It is with great relief that I complete the last issue of the *The SUN* for this year, not least because I had to produce an edition of the ANZUUA *Quest* for release in December, as well. According to my records, this is the sixtieth *SUN* I have brought out, which means I have been in this job for ten years.

Compliments of the Season to all our members, friends, out-of-town subscribers and overseas readers at this joyous time of year and may the New Year bring us all – if not health, wealth and happiness – at least the resolve and resources to get through it.

**Membership renewals for 2016 should be paid before the end of the year. Those wishing to join our church can use this form by way of application but should not send payment until their membership is accepted.**

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### MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (other) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I apply to join/renew membership in (delete one) the Sydney Unitarian Church and agree to abide by the rules as set down by the Constitution and management of the church.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Fee enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_\*

Cheques should be made payable to: Treasurer, Sydney Unitarian Church. Membership will be valid for the calendar year 2016.

\* Annual membership is \$20 and includes the *SUN* journal; subscription to the *SUN* only is \$15.