

Black Dragon

by Daniel Keszler

Let us elaborate on the Chinese Year of the Dragon for a start and then move into the recognition that all is interconnected and interdependent.

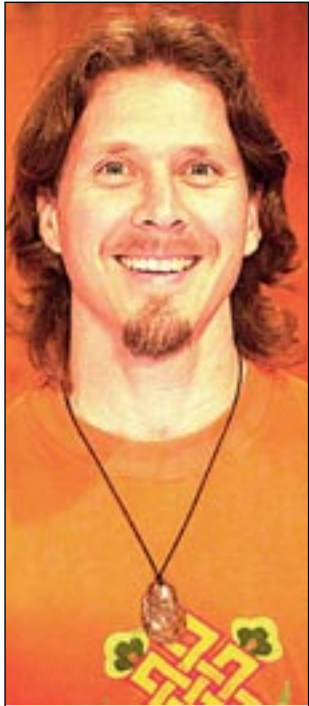
The Year of the Black (Water) Dragon has started with strong display of the water-element. Further qualities I like to mention for this water year are as follows: Musical correlation: "deep groove", Season: winter, Color: black, Taste: salty, External Agent: cold, Tissue: Bones, Marrow, Brain, Emotion: fear(shock), Organ system: kidneys.

The water dragon is correlating with our very base, the origin of life. The dragon quality is that of a highly intelligent, very powerful force, detecting weak elements easily, able to make a magnificent impression, charitable to their friends, larger than life, balanced between heaven and earth, very efficient, sign of the emperor, yang.

I dare say, I will not be surprised to see the original source of heaven and earth taking over the lead and balancing the "ten thousand" things in a direction which will strengthen the natural order of the universe. One could say, the pendulum is swinging the other way...

And as above so below, microcosm mirrors macrocosm, it may just as well happen right within you too. So, look after your kidneys, engage in practices which activate and strengthen the right direction of life energy, Qi Gong is highly recommended, and stay calm and collected in your mind. Since you're here, you may as well enjoy the ride, however, excess will most likely do you harm.

We humans here on earth seem to have this tendency to use our own resources in excess to the point that it results in our own demise. If an aspect of creation uses too much energy, it is more beneficial for the universe to destroy this certain aspect. This is not a bad thing, it is just the



natural economic balancing of forces of the whole. The word destroy comes from de-structuring. We forget, that what we see as resource is always also a part of the source of life itself. We forget that everything in the world has a two-fold meaning or purpose. There is the mundane or obvious purpose, and there is a deeper meaning or purpose. This deeper meaning is, that everything represents an intrinsic, irreplaceable aspect of the whole, a symbolic quality, some would call it: a sacred aspect. With the whole, I mean all of creation, inclusive of time/space. If we recognize this, and base our use of any resource on consideration, how this will impact on the whole, and if a proposed use is ethically correct regarding the whole, we may be able to live in harmony with the whole...

From the 3rd of February, I am intending to lead Qi gong classes every Tuesday and Friday from 9 am-10am at the Coffee Camp Hall. The Tuesday class will be followed by a Tai Ji Quan class (10.15-11.30am) and the Friday class will be followed by a Martial Art class(10.15-11.30am), after a short break from the Qi gong. Please call me on 6689-9249 if you want to join any or part of these classes, or just turn up.

Blessings, Daniel

Vegan Lovebites

by Nettie Lovejoy

On Boxing Day I went to visit my daughter Rachel at Agnes Waters. It's a really pretty place to live – the last surfing beach before the Barrier Reef. As she is a surfer, she's in her element and loving it. She works at the marina café.

While waiting for her after work, I watched people eating hamburgers wishing so much to enjoy a burger again. I'll be honest I do miss a good burger, most cafes use frozen tasteless vege patties and it doesn't inspire the palette at all. So one afternoon, in her kitchen I made up my own burger with all the tastes I like.

I just love experimenting with food it gives me so much joy. Mucking about with tastes, textures, colours all the time thinking of who is going be eating it and infusing love and happiness into the manna. I know for a fact, that your intent infused into the food is what can make it be divine or tasteless.

This holds true to all our actions. So I often think of that saying by Martin Luther King: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Where are we all standing collectively, watching our Mother Earth screaming for attention.

What can we do to help? I know one thing. Be vegan. It saves lives, food, land, water and air. This has been proven beyond question. Please do not doubt that you can be part of a healing force that could save this precious earth, our home. There are seven days in a week and one day isn't one of them. Sooner is always better than later. Please try for Earth's sake. Just try and start replacing some of your meat meals with something vegetarian or vegan. As you start to explore this change in diet you will be amazed by the array of tasty and different foods you never even looked at before. You will never be bored. Make it fun, try all the tastes you like but just omit the meat. There are many good books at the library, book stores. Google recipes on the net.

Here's my simple nutty burger recipe.



Ingredients

1 cup soft Gluten/Free breadcrumbs cut into ½ inch cubes,
2 cups cooked basmati rice,
1 ½ cups well cooked brown lentils.
1 cup crunchy peanut paste,
3 finely chopped shallots,
½ cup chopped parsley,
1 tspn cracked pepper,
½ tspn vege salt,
2 tspns vege stock powder,
2 tspns cumin powder,
1 tbsp taco seasoning,
2 tspns crushed garlic,
1 cup sesame seeds/
¼ cup Gluten/Free flour to coat burgers,
rice bran oil for cooking.



Method

Using clean hands mix all ingredients really thoroughly till it can form a nice textured burger. Wet hands and form into separate patties. Makes 6 large patties. Put sesame seeds in bowl and cover pattie with seeds, pushing them on firmly. Cook in frypan with oil 'til crunchy and brown.

I served this on toasted gluten free bread spread thickly with peanut butter (or tahini) lots of mixed salad, fried onion rings and gado gado sauce from last month's column in NGT.

Rachel and her boyfriend are not vegan yet but they are trying in their own way. Their response was 10 out of 10 mum. Now that is what puts the smile on my face and joy in the heart. The simple things. All life is made up of a wonderful web of simple things.

Be Veg, Go Green, Save The Planet – Oceans of Love, Nettie.



Flashback: Tony Bowers opens his medical cannabis tincture dispensary in Nimbin on World Aids Day, 2009.

Medical cannabis trial bill to go before parliament

Given both the growing body of evidence of its therapeutic and palliative benefits, and changing attitudes in the medical profession and research community, a trial of medically prescribed cannabis is well overdue, according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

Dr Kaye, who is the party's Health Services spokesperson, tabled a motion in the NSW Upper House calling on the Minister for Health to establish a tightly controlled, carefully monitored one year trial of medically prescribed cannabis.

The bill is scheduled to be debated in the first session of parliament this year, and could come before the Legislative Council later this month.

Dr Kaye said: "The Greens believe that NSW should explore a compassionate regime to provide relief for those suffering from a range of illnesses, without the risk of criminal sanctions.

The trial would be limited to cannabis in tincture form, with eligibility based on a GP's prescription.

"Decisions about the regulation of pharmacological drugs should be based purely on their medical effectiveness, regardless of their connections or otherwise to illegal substances.

"It is irrational and inhumane to deny many individuals the benefits of a medical cannabis treatment because of an unfounded fear that the palliative or therapeutic use of the product would promote or assist recreational drug use."

In November 2011, the Greens began a process to end 12 years of inaction that followed the 1999 NSW Drug Summit recommendation for a trial of medicinal cannabis.

"Despite the Drugs Summit recommendation of a medical cannabis trial for NSW, no progress has been made by the government towards its establishment," Dr Kaye said.

"It is time to end the fear-mongering and start a process that will provide relief to thousands of people in this state."

Supporters of the trial are advised to contact their favourite state Upper House MP.



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Bowen Therapy and Australia's favourite footwear

by **Tonia Haynes** Dip Bowen Therapy, Cert Remedial Massage, Advanced Pranik Healer, Advanced Cell Electrology Kinesiology

This may be an inappropriate time to remark on the subject of thongs.

After all, unless one is a true blue bushy who does not mind peeling the leeches from between ones toes at least twice a day, we are all wearing gumboots or something similar, whilst cursing the rain and its associated dilemmas of leaky roofs, blocked drains, flooded roads and general feelings of being boxed in.

It is truly amazing how many things we discover need doing when we can't.

In March 2009 I bravely thundered words of warning across the elite pages of the *GoodTimes* as to the multiple dangers to feet, limbs and spine, from wearing thongs.

I waited in trepidation for the lynch mob, but the response was tame to say the least. A few kindly, but obstinate souls said, "I read your article on the dangers of thongs and see, I'm still wearing mine."

I simpered philosophically. At least they had read the article and one can only take the horse to the dam. Slapping it over the noggin with a piece of rubber footwear will not necessarily make it drink.

Being that I am also a

tad contrary in personality, decided that perhaps a little reverse psychology might do the trick. The following poem, written by D.W. Lloyd from Pillar Valley, NSW, promotes the blessings of the sinfully seductive foot strap in a manner that possibly might be even acceptable to the poetry capital of Australia – the Northern Rivers.

Mind you, looking at where he lives on Google Earth (near Grafton), I bet he's been wearing gumboots for the past few weeks.

Thongs

*Well I don't know who he was
But he's worthy of salute
I mean the man who invented thongs
To replace our other boots*

*We had boots for everything
Of many shapes and sorts
We had desert boots for walking
And shoes for tennis courts.*

*There are fancy ones for dancing
And bluchers for the working man
Or old, scruffy ones without laces*

For the men who shift garbage cans

*Most farmers they had wellies
Which they parked against the wall*

And some of us were so darn poor

That we had no shoes at all.



*But that all changed with thongs
They put foot wear within our reach
There are black ones to be formal
And coloured ones for the beach.*

*Some come with woven straps
With impressions for your toes
But to me they are new fangled
I would never wear a pair of those.*

*No the ones I like are rubber
With no fancy names to go along
I buy them on special at Woolies
Just your basic working thongs.*

*Now I must admit they have a fault
And they can be most perverse
Because if one falls off your foot
You will find they have no reverse.*

*No you can't back up in thongs
You have to turn around in the street
And limp back through the people
To where it's waiting for your feet.*

Now you try to slip it on while

*standing
But it will only slide along
For although it fell off easily
There's no way it will slip back on.*

*So you sit down with your shopping
And get your fingers trodden on
For a crowd will always gather
If you are wrestling with a thong.*

*Another problem I should mention
Is the ends break off the straps
And it can be quite upsetting
When you hear that sudden snap.*

*So always carry a nail in your pocket
So you can quickly fix it there
And people will be so impressed
That you can do thong repairs.*

*I like to hear them going flip flop
As I walk down the street
Then people know I'm wearing thongs
And I think that's kind of neat.*

*But if they are going flip flop
Then you need to change them around
For you have them on the wrong feet silly
You can tell that by the sound.*

*Now you can wear them out line dancing
Or to church to say your prayers
In fact where ever you want to go
Your thongs will take you there.*

*So whether you are at a garden party
Or under a gum tree blowing bongos
You know your footwear is correct
If you always wear your thongs.*

I am sure many of you will read this with fond feelings in your Aussie heart, but remember this: Thongs are like the lover who done you wrong. You thought they were perfect and then...

I'll stick my head out even further to add that those broken-in thongs, you know, the ones you would be most irritated to lose, because then you have to break in

new ones? They are the worst of all.

According to The American College of Sports Medicine, also Auburn University in Alabama and others who have strange interests, the wearing of thongs causes weak ankles and feet, tendonitis, (crook tendons in the legs), knee, hip and back pain. Thongs also spread the arch of the foot, causing flat feet.

They maintain the following:

a. When wearing thongs, the feet on touching the ground roll further outward than they should, particularly when one is wearing broken in favourites, with spongy soles.

b. Curling the toes to keep thongs on our feet, stops the heel from touching the ground with a balanced force, which interferes with the normal absorption of shock to the rest of the body.

c. Curling the toes to keep the thongs on our feet also shortens the natural stride which hinders the spine from executing its normal undulation. A synchronised movement which begins at our sacrum (the v shaped bone at the top of the buttocks) and finishes at the top of our neck, as we move forward

d. So when wearing thongs we become a little like a snake with tight rubber bands wrapped around parts of its body. Like tight rubber bands around a snake, thongs hinder natural movement.

Added to these problems is the ever-present possibility of slipping or falling off them in inopportune terrain, such as the edge of a cliff, or even a footpath.

In 2006 St. Kilda AFL banned their players from



wearing thongs, due to injury concerns, and that was off the pitch! And in 2002 in Britain, 55,100 people sought medical treatment for problems arising from wearing thongs!

So once again, against all the odds, I plead my case as to the prosecution of thongs.

So where does this leave Bowen Therapy in the sad tale of a misguided and dysfunctional Aussie icon?

Bowen Therapy and the extras of spinal realignment, massage and pranik healing can do wonders when it comes to the removal of injury from backs, limbs, hips, feet and also shoulders and necks.

Plus a treatment from me will assist you to feel better emotionally as well as physically. Perhaps it will even remove your addiction to thongs because you might want to treat your body better in the future.

'Til next time. Love Light and Laughter

I am in clinic in Nimbin Tuesdays and Saturdays and would love to see you. Treatments take about 1 1/4 hours, and cost \$50. For appointments phone 02 6689-0240, mobile 0439-794-420.

Don Lloyd's four CDs of live recordings, with audio samples, are available online at <http://home.exetel.com.au/lizardgrip/donlloyd.html> – Ed.



Cook's corner with Carolyne

Green with Envy Cheesecake

Cheesecake is loved by all, and with this avocado filling, it will be even more popular.

Ingredients

2 cups fine biscuit crumbs
1/2 cup melted butter
3 tablespoons raw sugar
500g cream cheese
3 avocados
1 cup cream
3 eggs
1 cup of honey or raw sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup of brandy
Whipped cream and kiwifruit slices to garnish



Method

Mix biscuit crumbs with the melted butter and sugar, working it together with your fingers.

Press into well-greased 20cm spring form tin and, using a masher make a flat,

smooth crust.

Beat cream cheese with avocados, cream, eggs and honey or sugar until smooth. This can be done in a blender, electric mixer or food processor. Add cinnamon, vanilla and brandy.

Pour mixture into prepared spring form pan and bake at 160°C (310°F) for about 1 hour.

Cool, refrigerate and garnish with whipped cream and kiwifruit before serving. 'Til next month enjoy, Carolyne.

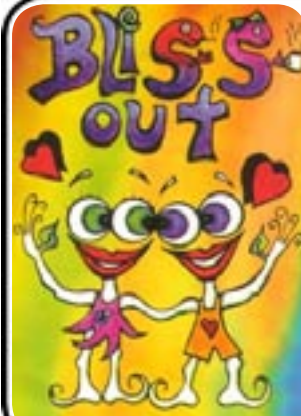


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by James Creagh

This summer the honey harvest had been going well until the rain started. When there is any rain around, the bees can get very feisty and more likely to sting. I have found it better if the hives are left alone 'til there is a break in the weather.

This year there has been a lot less swarming compared to last year. Last year was one of the worst summers for the honey bee given the long and wet summer we had; the small hive beetle did a lot of damage to many boxed and feral hives.

The small hive beetle, the biggest problem for the honeybee in our area, seems to be less active so far this year.

Nimbin Beekeepers Group

If you've had bees for a while, have just started out with hives or may be interested in doing so in the future, feel welcome to join the Nimbin/Lillian Rock and surrounding areas beekeepers group.

The group will meet to share information and support for beginners and those who have been doing it for a while. It will also foster alternative and natural ways of keeping bees.

The first meeting will be on 25th March at Lillian Rock.

Swarms

If you see any swarms about, please let us know promptly and we can arrange for a virgin beekeeper to pick it up and start a new beehive. Call me on 6689-7575 or email jamescreagh@hotmail.com

Imidacloprid

A new generation of insecticides called neonicotinoids have recently become available in Australia. They are called Imidacloprids. They work on the central nervous systems of insects. The insecticide is not known to have any effect on mammals including humans. It can be sprayed on plants to control aphids, beetles, moths and butterflies.

These insecticides are bad news for bees. They are available in Lismore from farming and gardening supply stores. I have heard reports of

bees affected in areas near macadamia plantations.

It is suggested never to use a neonicotinoid pesticide on a blooming crop or on blooming weeds if honeybees are present. Apply only when bees are not foraging, preferably late evening.

"Gaucho", a broad-spectrum insecticide made by the Germany-based chemical giant Bayer, was banned in France in 1999 due to its toxicity to bees and other forms of life – including humans – but its replacement, "Regent", from another German giant, BASF, is just as dangerous, say beekeepers and biologists.

Gaucho is available in Australia.

Bee keeping Equipment

As mentioned late last year, the Nimbin Food Security group has allocated funds to purchase an extractor, wax melter and other bee keeping equipment. These items are expensive and often put potential beekeepers off from going ahead.

The equipment is expected to arrive soon, and will be available to any local beekeepers who join the bee user group and pay the joining fee. The conditions of use will be arranged by the NFS group to ensure the gear is kept in circulation and is shared in a functional way.

Two locals have donated bee equipment to add to the pool of resources that can be shared, thanks! If anyone else has bee keeping equipment sitting around not being used and would like to donate it please contact Nat at nimbinnic@yahoo.com.au or me.

Workshop

On 11th March, I am planning a workshop on the basics of bee keeping. The workshop will explain how the bee kingdom works, how a beehive operates, how a to put together a hive and how to maintain it. We will also look at pests and diseases and OH&S issues.

The workshop will offer the many options for natural beekeeping. I am very interested in exploring other types of bee boxes including the top bar hive. I have finished building one and expect to show it in operation on the day of the workshop as well as a conventional hive.

If you are interested in attending the workshop please contact me at jamescreagh@hotmail.com

ASTRO FORECASTS BY TINA MEWS

YOUR MONTHLY REVIEW OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HEAVENS

February

At the moment, the Sun sends its cosmic rays through socially orientated Aquarius.

People born under this idealistic air sign can have a firm belief in a better future and are often ahead of their time with their scientific inventions. They feel destined to fight for a cause and are the networkers of the zodiac. Spending time with friends and groups of like-minded souls might be more appealing to them than living in conventional relationships.

Aquarius is associated with electricity and our ability to perceive the world intuitively as a coherent and interdependent field. Thoughts are creative energy and affect the world around and within us. Every thought is matched by an emotion vibrating at a certain frequency. If we have the same thought over and over again it will take on a creative life of its own – for good or ill! Therefore, as we enter the Age of Aquarius, it becomes increasingly important to be aware of the neural connections that we cultivate in our brains and the images that we imprint with our emotions.

On February 3, Neptune, the gaseous blue planet signifying dreams and illusions, enters the water sign of Pisces creating a highly fluid vibration. Neptune will remain in Pisces until 2025 and is associated with the collective unconscious, the ocean of dreams, visions and archetypal patterning. Positively expressed, Neptune relates to our highest aspiration, healing, unity consciousness, artistic abilities and the capacity to love unconditionally; on the downside Neptune's rays can be tricky and fuzzy leading to co-dependent behaviour, the subconscious need to merge with a certain group, movement, culture or religion at the expense of individual responsibility and independent critical thinking.

As mentioned in earlier columns, Uranus, the cosmic agent of free will and individual expression, has been felt strongly all through 2011 and remains a force to be reckoned with in years to come. On a personal level its influence is often felt as a sudden awakening, a completely new insight that may cause chaos and crisis at first while upsetting the familiar, and initiating an unexpected turn in events. Neptune and Uranus are archetypal forces that are very different in their energetic signature and need alignment. The union is not an easy one, because both require and support different ways of managing: the former is uniting, the latter singles out. We are asked to visualize a new, more inclusive reality while working through the smaller details with creativity, inventiveness and attention to detail.

On February 7, Saturn, the hard taskmaster of reality, turns stationary retrograde, giving us extra time (until end of June) to clean up our lives and sort out loose ends, especially with regard to relationships and financial arrangements. Contracts that we have made over the last two years will be tested. What cannot be sustained has to be transformed or needs to go, which then frees up energy and space for worthwhile projects. The Full Moon on 8 February falls in Leo, the sign that rules the heart centre. When in doubt, we can listen to the wisdom of our heart: Is it singing or sinking?



Aries

Chaos is a by-product of creativity, but does cause mental and physical strain. Therefore take good care of your health right now. Avoid foods that are high in fats or sugars. Pay particular attention to your dreams: they might hold the key to many of your life's questions. What is really driving your actions? Pause, reflect and try to focus on details.

Taurus

Your ideals have become really important to you and you feel attracted to others who share your feelings. The problem is that you might feel pulled between loyalty to the past and fear of losing control if you enter new territory. Review your beliefs and values honestly. Cut through old habits and make space for new creative projects.

Gemini

Right now you might feel unsure about your life's direction and find it difficult to make long-lasting decisions. If you find yourself changing your mind frequently, it might help to concentrate on your breathing. In this way you remain focused in the present. Things will fall into place around mid year. Learn to trust and lighten up.

Cancer

Neptune's entry into Pisces has kindled your interest in spiritual matters. Keep searching and allow the answers to emerge by maintaining an open mind. Your need for self-protection might be challenged in the process. Instead of being caught in a state of reminiscence, be brave and share your insights with the world.

Leo

The Full Moon is in your Sun sign on February 8. Important things in your life might have reached a point of culmination. Clarify your ideas and values especially in regards to business dealings. You may have a change of head and heart as things might not turn out as they promised. Trust your intuition and remain grounded in the here-and-now.

Virgo

Sometimes it is difficult to know the difference between fact and fiction, intuition and projection. The trick is to balance your own needs with those of others while remaining focused on methods that assist the practical work-out of your ideas. Use this time to be productive, and reflect on what you really need from life.

Libra

Right now you might feel tested with lessons of self-discipline and responsibility towards the greater whole. Deepen your sense of self and -if necessary- adjust your attitude.

At the end of this process you will feel more authentic and aligned with your true purpose.

Scorpio

You might feel as if your life is placed on hold right now and objectives are not working the way you planned them. This might not be a bad thing after all, just providing you with some extra time and space for working out your dreams and visions. The more you can give without expecting anything in return, the happier you will be.

Sagittarius

Right now it will be helpful to pay attention to detail and to work on methods and techniques that enable you to reach your objectives. However, first reflect on what is desirable and attainable. Your image of yourself is undergoing important changes and you might feel more sensitive than usual.

Capricorn

Are you feeling like running out of time or not having the time to do the things you wish to do? The task is to work out your true calling. Concentrate on the essentials and ask yourself what you like to be remembered for. Do not allow yourself to be weighed down by nitty-gritty stuff, instead broaden your perspective.

Aquarius

Use the energies of the moment to get in contact with your true purpose. Recharge your batteries now, because the months to come can be very crucial in reaching your life's aims and aspirations. In the process, old attachments to the past will dissolve. Imagine your dreams as being fulfilled and feel as if they have already happened!

Pisces

Neptune enters your Sun sign on February 2 (until 2025) sensitizing your emotional responses to the world. It is okay to dream into the future and re-vision your life, but be careful what you are wishing for: it may come true! Keep a sense of perspective of who you are and what you are doing. Leave space for beauty to arise and synchronicity to happen.

Personal readings for 2012 are available. For info contact me on 6689-7413, e-mail star-loom@hotmail.com or visit my web page: <http://nimbinstarloom.com.au> Medical Astrology Classes will start on 1 February, Wednesdays 10am 1pm at Lillifield Community Centre. Australian Bushflower Essences Course Part 1 will start on 3 February, Fridays 10am 12 pm, Lillifield. Astrology for Parents: starts 9 February (Thursday mornings 10-12), enrol with Nimbin Open Learning Centre: 6689-1477

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Reviewed by Stephen Wright

For once I had a choice of films in Lismore worthy of spending a couple of hours in an over-priced and uncomfortable Birch Carroll Coyle chair for, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and *Hugo* both were under consideration.

But a new Studio Ghibli film is always a cause for celebration, and the chance to see one in Lismore is rare. So thanks and kudos to the Star Court Theatre for putting on *Arriety*. The session I got to was packed with kids, and an extra session was apparently scheduled due to the film's popularity.

Studio Ghibli is the legendary Japanese animation studio founded and run by the even more legendary Hayao Miyazaki, a man now pushing seventy, who once said, "Disney lies to children" and who has written, drawn and directed a series of extraordinary films over three decades. These films include *Porco Rosso*, *Spirited Away*, the environmental epic *Princess Mononoke* and the amazing *Howl's Moving Castle*, a film Miyazaki was writing when the US invaded Iraq, an event that incensed him.

Miyazaki's involvement with *Arriety* was limited to some production and work on the script, but *Arriety* has Miyazaki's fingerprints all over it. It doesn't have the moral or narrative complexity of films like *Howl* or *Princess Mononoke*, but even a lesser Studio Ghibli film is still better than anything produced by Disney by a factor of about 50 gazillion.

Arriety is based on the *Borrowers* novels by the English writer Mary Norton. The *Borrowers* are a small species of human who inhabit our homes and 'borrow' items we have forgotten or have a plenitude of (paper, fabric, pins, sugar) and use them to construct their homes in ingenious ways. Your bong gone missing? A

borrower has probably taken it and turned it into a shower recess.

Arriety is the sole child of Pod and Homily, and she is about to become an active borrower herself, venturing forth with her father on hair-raising expeditions into the house the family lives beneath. She is independent and smart like all Ghibli heroines. Ghibli, as a workplace, is renowned in Japan for its employment of women. One of the distinguishing features of Ghibli films is both their insightful portrayal of children and their protagonists who are almost always intelligent, independent women and girls. A Ghibli film makes you realise how misogynistic Disney films really are. Giving your daughter a Disney film to watch is like hitting her over the head while repeating "You are a doormat."

Arriety looks amazing. The hand-drawn art is exquisite, bright as a jewel, and draws you right into the *Borrowers'* world, a world beneath the floorboards, drawn from the viewpoint of a child. If you were a child (not all of us were) you might remember how close you were to the ground, and how you noticed things adults couldn't be bothered looking at. It's very satisfying to watch a film made with such care – which is not the same as saying that a film has high 'production values' (take note, Pixar drones). An enormous amount of thought and consideration has gone into *Arriety* and it shows.

As I said earlier, *Arriety* doesn't quite have the complexity of other Ghibli films. I guess Miyazaki is starting to train up his successors. It's sobering to think that Miyazaki may not have many more films left in him. *Arriety* is a worthy addition to the Ghibli canon even if it doesn't quite match up to *Howl* (also based on a book by an English children's writer), or even a supposedly 'simple' film like Ghibli and Miyazaki's last effort *Ponyo*. But really, when you compare Ghibli with Pixar or Disney, what is un-nuanced in Ghibli looks superhumanly enlightened in the other two. Disney and Pixar are films you give to your kids when you want them to shut up so you can get back on Facebook. Ghibli films are films you watch with them and defer to their understanding, as you realise that Miyazaki and his crew are showing you how much the adult You doesn't know.

Reviews from the Crypt

The Transfiguration of Blind Joe Death (1959) John Fahey

For a long time John Fahey kept up the conceit that Blind Joe Death was a previously undiscovered blues guitarist. As it always is, the truth was both weirder and more prosaic. Fahey was reportedly difficult to get to know, an alcoholic, had an ascerbic humour, spent a lot of his adult life completely ill and broke (sometimes reduced to selling his guitars)

and wrote an autobiography that was mostly lies. He was also a mindbending finger-picking guitarist, self taught and unpolished and completely original. In the last years of his life, Fahey was suddenly rediscovered and his reputation surged to undreamed of heights. Fahey himself began to become more avant-garde in his playing and composition, regarding his earlier work with some contempt. When he died of heart failure in 2001 at the age of sixty-one he was regarded as

by Stephen Wright

one of the greatest American guitarists.

Blind Joe Death only works as a blues album if one follows Fahey's idea that Blind Joe actually existed. Once we know otherwise it becomes nearly unclassifiable, like a lot of Fahey's music. It's kind of like a blues-influenced... something. What the 'something' is, is whatever it is that's at the heart of Fahey's music: a kind of genius that valued folk-traditions and inhabited them in ways that were completely fresh and scorned any idea that music



was for making money. Fahey was like the reincarnation of Robert Johnson, the man who left town a middling blues-player and returned a year later playing like no-one had ever played before. Fahey, like Johnson, pulled something out of himself that couldn't be imitated.

Watership Down (1972) Richard Adams

Novels about talking animals are something of a risky affair. Either you have to give them clothes, and make them deliberate parodies of types of human beings (like the iconic *Wind in the Willows*) or you have to invent some kind of cultural practices that you have to make believable (like the execrable Duncton Wood series). Richard Adams took a kind of middle path with *Watership Down*, modelling the actions of his rabbit characters on actual rabbit behaviour and social structure, but giving them the ability to tell stories to each other as well.

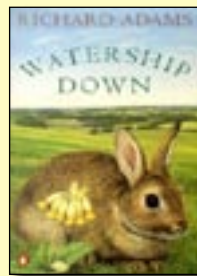
Watership Down concerns a group of buck rabbits who escape from a warren prior to its gruesome destruction by developers, warned by the runt of the

warren the rabbit seer, Fiver, not as absurd a character as he sounds. Travelling across the county of Hampshire, through an actual geography that Adams knew well and describes beautifully, the rabbits encounter various horrors and trials culminating with a struggle with a warren run like a society governed by the Department of Homeland Security. Along the way their adventures are governed by their need to start a new warren, acquire some does and begin to breed like...rabbits.

Watership Down is not as silly as it might sound or as sexist. Granted the rabbits tend to speak like rather decent members of the English middle-class, but Adams' prose style is always understated, occasionally quite elegant, and his narrative skills are

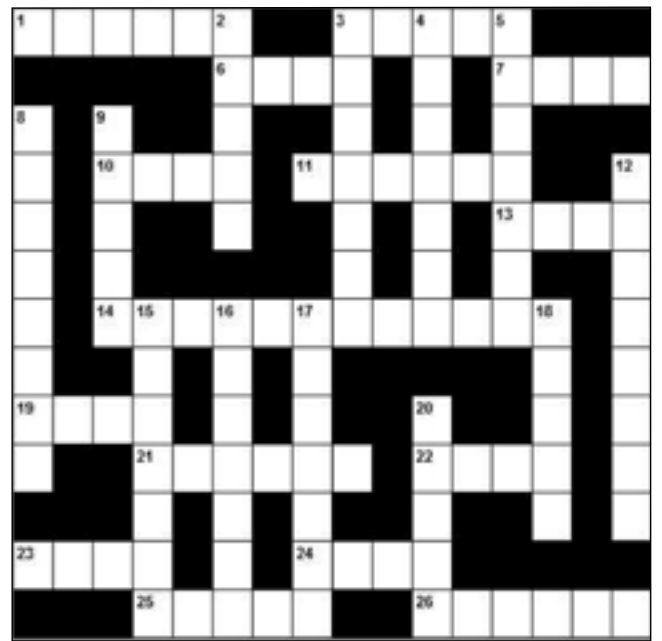
considerable. Flaubert once said that getting a character from downstairs to upstairs was a difficult thing to do in a novel, so Adams has done a not inconsiderable thing in moving a group of rabbits about the English countryside, without making them look like dissident refugees from Beatrix Potter.

On its publication *Watership Down* drew critical comparisons with the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* and so on, which just goes to show that critics take themselves much too seriously. If anything, *Watership Down* is a kind of hope that England will keep on being England, the England of rustic English pleasures and unassuming heroism, pleasures that would still persist somehow, underground. But that was before the ascent of Margaret Thatcher.



Nimbin Crossword

2012-2
by Synec



Across

1. Tool to cut 26 across
3. Problem? Come out of
6. Wind instrument?
7. (Give) medicine?
10. Arm bone
11. Hand in? Give in.
13. Writing fluid? Pacman's blue nemesis
14. Suitable for 8 down
19. One who takes a 7 across?
21. Breathe in (Obama style?)
22. Put one's weight on? Not fat
23. An instrument plays alone
24. Where you might find 8 down

25. (Give) one tenth
26. Conundrum

Down

2. Grain
3. Cold, merciless
4. Belly
5. Published copy
8. Cretan bullshit? Only half.
9. By ear
12. Traditional text of Indian medicine and health
15. Stonefruit
16. Cultured milk
17. Cause to catch desire? Cause to catch fire
18. Occasion? Show
20. Unconsciousness

Solution Page 27



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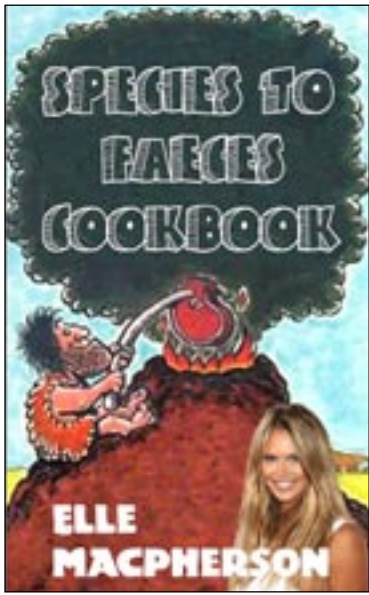
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Excerpts from



Elle Macpherson has sparked outrage among animal rights campaigners after she advocated the use of a banned Chinese medicine made from rhinoceros horn. The supermodel told Britain's *Sunday Times* that she ingests powdered rhinoceros horn for medicinal purposes. Asked why she takes powdered rhino horn, the

supermodel famously dubbed "The Body" replied: "Put it this way, [it] works for me."

There is a current global outrage at the hunting and killing of endangered species like rhinos and the subsequent hacking off of their much-prized and apparently falsely-fabled horns, not to mention the removal of shark fins for soup (and dumping of the rest of the shark back in the ocean), elephant tusk collecting, family fun-filled giraffe-killing safaris, tiger hunts etc. which is raging on, seemingly unchecked, to the brink of extinction for lots of our sentient, fellow Earth-dwelling creatures.

Despite this adverse publicity, Elle Macpherson's new top-selling recipe book "Species to Faeces" is expected to be the last word in gourmet circles and the last gasp for the few remaining fringes of species survival. Her famous Neanderthal ancestor Ug Macfurstone was celebrated for his original taste sensation rock carvings of recipes like "Dinosaur Retina Ragout" which called for the retinas of 200 dinosaurs per serve, the delectable "Pterodactyl Penis

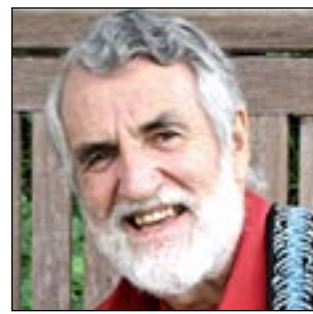
Porridge", "Tyrannosaurus Toenail Tart", "Dodo Doodle Dumplings" and of course who could forget "Unicorn Sphincter Salad" which was enormously popular for quite a while back there until ... er ...

Here's a juicy little excerpt from her book ... page 99:

"Sperm Whale Spleen Soup. Take the fresh spleens of 30 or 40 Sperm Whales and bake in a moderate oven until brown. Marinate the baked spleens in a stock made of reduced baby Harp Seal Synapses and Bald Eagle Beaks for two or three hours then lightly simmer for a couple of days in Tiger Toenail stock. Delicious with Numbat Nose Noodles and Devil Diced Tasmanian Devil Doo Dads. Serves 2."

Ah ... the gourmet in me applauds her exquisite creations like "Elephant Eyelash Goulash",

"Porpoise and Penguin Perineum Pie" and her absolute taste-tingling triumph "Giant Panda Paw Pate" ... which is a very efficient recipe, calling for only 20 or 30 Panda paws per serve. She's not just a supermodel ... she's a gastronomical genius!



Mookxamitosis

by Brendan (Mookx) Hanley

Personally speaking, my favourite feasts from the book are the smorgasbords of "Parboiled Polar Bear Balls" served with "Alaskan King Crab Caviar" (made from the eyeballs of just 2000 crabs per serve) and topped off with either a "Mountain Gorilla Gonads Glaze" or her much-applauded "Monarch Butterfly Belly Balsamic Baste". Go Elle!

Yes it's a winner ... whether you want to stick to her patriotic Australian lunches of "Barbecued Bilby Bums" with "Brandied Bandicoot Breasts", "Candied Cockatoo Crests" or "Numbat Nut Nasi Goreng" ... or go with

her spaced-out global gourmet glams like "Orang Utan Orifice a l'Orange", "Salted Southern Sloth Shoulder Sausage" or the incomparable "Baby Bees Backbone Bouillabaisse" which uses only 200,000 baby bees per delicious cupful. Yum yum ... what a wondrous bountiful world we live in. Talk about abundance!

So there you have it folks ... get famous and gobble up the last of everything in the world. Even do a Monsanto and take out patents on the few species that are left so that you can have a fat bank balance as well as a fat belly while you pig out on Elle's elegant Epicurean Extravaganzas.

As for me, I'm gonna settle back and have a nice Koala Coccyx Coffee and a piece of Parrot Prostate Pie while I watch Richard Attenborough and learn how to protect our wildlife. It's the least I can do.

Meanwhile all those Elle well-cooked species will end up being faeces. And then what's left for the gourmet? Homogenised Homo Sapiens Hair Follicle Hot Pot? Bon appetit!

It's a whole lot of Rot



Fruit of the vine by Terry Beltrane

Cripes! It must be summer in Nimbin. The table's got a healthy patina of blue/green mildew, the windows look like they've grown some sort of fog and I now select which clothes I'm going to wear by the smell of the cheese they emit. Mould, mould and more mould and we've months of damp to go.

Ironically there's a specific strain of mould that's essential in making a particular type of luscious sweet white table wine (stickies) despite its devastating impact on grapes destined for other wine styles. *Botrytis cinerea*, sometimes referred to as 'Noble Rot', is the creature responsible for the great 'stickies' of the world. These include Sauternes and Barsac from France, Tokaj from Hungary and more recently the plethora of these styles made in Australia, probably most notably, DeBortoli's Noble One, though it's not the only good one. Semillon, Sauvignon

Blanc and Riesling are the principle varieties positively affected by *Botrytis cinerea* and are usually labelled as such eg *Botrytis Riesling*. Red grapes are devastated by the mould which turns them rotten very quickly once infected and even small outbreaks of *botrytis* makes for very mediocre red wine that 'browns' in colour with damaged aroma and flavour.

Botrytis requires very cool and moist conditions during the evening and early morning for the spores to germinate and grow. The spores pierce the skin of the berry and begin growing on the inside of the grape skin, the mycelium spreading out hyphae feeding off the grape sugars and nutrients. However, warm dry weather is required during the day to continue the ripening process as well as to allow dehydration of the berry and to prevent the growth of other moulds which are detrimental to the fruit. Depending how long these alternating weather conditions prevail will determine the increase in concentration of sugar. As the mould continues to grow, subtle changes begin to occur in the flavour profile of the fruit and sugar composition. There is an increase in glycerol, which contributes to the finished wine's unctuousness, that 'slippery/oily' texture

so desirable in these wines. Flavours are usually described as being of ripe pears, honey, apricot and cream type cheese, not too dissimilar to ripe Camembert which, incidentally, is an excellent accompaniment to the wine.

Affected grapes are a bloody pain to harvest as they're decomposed, the skins are 'squishy' and easily damaged allowing the nectar inside to escape and once its in the winery it's still a bloody pain. The destalked and crushed fruit looks like this ugly grey putrefaction and you'd swear that this will never make great wine. The juice is difficult to separate from the skins, seeds and stalks and once separated it easily blocks filters used to separate the extracted pulp of the fruit. However, once it's come this far, we begin to see the golden hues that will become part of one of mother nature's creations – it really is a magical transformation.

Not restricted to, but generally the case, the better examples are made where the fruit is grown in cooler climates – in Australia the Eden and Yarra Valleys and Tasmania excel. These wines are quite expensive because of the reduced yields in juice, and therefore the wine, and the time involved in actually making the stuff in the winery as it's very labour intensive. But it's worth every cent for that taste of heaven.

Wine info: terryb88@tpg.com.au

Nimbin Bushwalkers Club Inc.

Walks Program for February

Wednesday 8th February Pholis Gap Mt Nardi

Leader Len Martin (6689-0254)
Grade 2, 4km, 1.5-2hr return shaded walk on formed track through top quality World Heritage rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest, returning up old forestry road; no steep grades.
Meet 10am Nimbin car park/ 10.15am Mt Nardi. **Bring** water and snacks.

Sunday 19th February Broadwater Headland to Salty Lagoon

Leader Michael Smith (6689-9291)
Grade 2, 11 km, 4 hr return. Firetrail, heathland, and beach walking, wildflowers and birds, swimming a possibility.
Meet 9am Nimbin car park, or 10.30am Broadwater Look-out, Broadwater Beach Rd, off Evans Head-Broadwater Rd, Broadwater. **Bring** kite, water, lunch, hat and sunglasses.

Saturday 25th February Mt Nardi to Dirangah Rocks (part of historic Nightcap Track)

Leader Michael Smith (6689-9291)
Grade 4, 14 km, 6 hr return moderately difficult, 300 metres of elevation change up and down. Features many forest types on the edge of Mt Warning caldera, 810 metres



above current sea level.
Meet 8am Nimbin car park or 8.20am Mt Nardi. **Bring** lunch, water and leech repellent.

Forthcoming Event:
**Friday 16th-19th March
Broughton Island, near Newcastle** (club members only)

Leader Michael Smith (6689-9291)
A 3-day camp on a deserted island, brimming with wildlife and the best fishing spot in NSW, only one place left. For a prospectus email: koonorigan@gmail.com

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Nimbin's Flying-foxes

by Dr Len Martin
Photos by Dr Len Martin
and Lib Ruytenberg

Flying-foxes (FFs or FF) have visited us in Nimbin for the 12 years we've lived here, feeding on nearby figs and our Grevillea blossom. To my knowledge, there were no FF camps closer than Lismore until 2010 when two formed near Nimbin – one near Jarlanbah, one off Gungas Road. Both emptied in the 2011 winter, as is common for FF camps. The southern one did not reform but the other did, and has increased in size.

Where FFs roost close to humans, as here, the bats' presence can raise concerns – though people's responses can vary enormously – as when a camp formed in a Woodend valley in Ipswich, Qld. On one side were two elderly sisters whose garden was a wildlife sanctuary; they had no problem with FFs roosting over their house, the noise and smell didn't bother them. In contrast, an elderly lady on the other side couldn't stand FFs - eventually Qld National parks bought her property to serve as a field station/ observation platform.

Camps are crucial to FFs. The bats fly out to feed each night, returning to roost during daylight hours - but not to sleep all day - there is always some activity - territorial squabbles plus, during the mating season, noisy sexual encounters and, if the camp is disturbed, additional hubbub with many animals taking flight. Camps are essential for rearing young. For the first weeks of life, the bub is carried by mum when she goes to feed. Later, before they can fly any distance, infants are left behind, to be suckled by mum on return; often young are left in communal creches while mums are away. It is some months before juveniles can fly out to feed themselves. FFs are protected species and it is illegal to kill or harm them. Whether camps are on public or private land, it is illegal to disturb or damage them. However, if problems arise, application may be made to the Office of Environment and Heritage regarding measures that can be taken.

I've worked with FFs since the eighties, researching their reproductive biology at the University of Queensland (UQ). There I met Nimbin old boy and leading bat expert, Dr Les Hall, plus numerous carers who for years had rehabilitated injured adult FFs and raised orphans for release to the wild. I learnt much from the carers and became involved in FF conservation, (with Kay, Les Hall, and carers) running 45 or so



Birthmother
A Grey-headed flying-fox giving birth just hours after being rescued from netting entanglement. The bub's head is visible. It is common in flying-foxes for the bub's head to protrude like this, for periods up to five hours before the birth is completed, mum relaxed, bub happy, sometimes looking around. Final expulsion of the bub, wings, claws and all often quite rapid. Mum usually eats the placenta.

educational Wildlife Batty Boat Cruises on the Brisbane River to view evening fly-outs from the Indooroopilly Island camp.

Unfortunately, FFs are among the most hated animals in Australia, with tens of hundreds of thousands slaughtered since European settlement and many camps purposely destroyed. Most rural Australians see FFs as noisy, dirty, smelly vermin which attack fruit crops. Many people close to camps hate them because of noise, smell and poop on cars. Bob Katter wants them exterminated because of diseases they carry. I make no apologies, I'm a FF Fan. FFs are highly intelligent, inquisitive animals, capable of accurate navigation over great distances, who adapt well to captivity. Most people who actually meet them close up will go away with a very favourable impression.

FFs (also called fruit-bats) are mammals, breast-feeding their young. They are "true bats", members of the Chiroptera (meaning hand winged) placed in a separate sub-group, Megachiroptera (meaning big bats) from the Microchiroptera (little bats). Australia has some 70 species of "micros" and 9 "megs". All Australian micros are predators with small eyes and poor eyesight, using sonar (echolocation) to find prey. Megs, worldwide, are vegetarians,

do not use sonar and have large eyes. Professor Jack Pettigrew, a UQ neurobiologist, discovered that visual nerve pathways in the FF brain were like those otherwise unique to primates (monkeys and humans). He theorised that megas evolved from a primate ancestor separately from micros which evolved from a shrew-like ancestor. Jack amassed much data to support his "flying primate" theory but later DNA evidence does not and it is now accepted that megas evolved from micros.

FF populations do not increase rapidly as females have only one young per year after a 6 month pregnancy, and do not mature sexually until 3 years old. Local species mate in March-May and give birth in October-December. Adults can fly 30-50km each night to feed – mostly on blossom, not fruit – they are important pollinators of native timber trees. Over time they may fly much greater distances. Radio-tracking shows individuals moving interstate from Queensland to Victoria. If food is scarce in one area but plentiful in another, FFs can arrive suddenly, in large numbers, appearing as "a plague" – but this is not a population explosion. Of the 2 species found locally, the Grey-headed is classed as endangered with its total population in decline. Over recent decades, the Black (found in Qld, NT and WA) has extended its range into NSW, slowly supplanting the Grey-headed. Our Nimbin camp comprises largely Grey-headed, many with young – it is a maternity camp.

Until 1996, people could enjoy close contact with FFs. On Wildlife Batty Boat Cruises, carers brought infant orphans and tame adults to be touched and petted. Children could join me in a cage to interact with tame adult FFs from my captive breeding colonies. This ended following the death of a Qld racehorse trainer and 14 racehorses from a horrendous disease caused by an unknown virus (now called Hendra Virus). Qld Department of Primary Industry (QDPI) virologists postulated that the virus had "crossed over" from a wild animal and surveyed local species for antibodies that recognised the virus. Only FFs had such antibodies.

Now, the many of us who had worked with FFs for years had been bitten, scratched, licked, peed upon, shat upon, exposed to birth fluids and so on - but none of us had ever developed a disease like that which had killed the trainer and horses. As President of the newly formed Australasian Bat Society I was publicly and critically sceptical of QDPI's idea that the killer virus came from FFs (as were many carers) much to QDPI's displeasure. But they were correct. Virus isolated from a FF foetus I had dissected was shown to be the same as the killer virus. Virus was

isolated from one of my captives, many of which showed antibodies, indicating previous infection. FF blood samples collected by us in the early eighties showed antibodies to the virus, indicating that Hendra had long been in FFs - in which it does not produce serious disease.

Subsequently over 100 bat researchers and carers were blood-sampled and none of us showed antibodies to Hendra, that is, none of us had ever been infected, despite many hundreds of intense bat-contact hours. Since 1996 other horses and people associated with them have died from Hendra. There is as yet no vaccine, but FF carers and researchers have continued to work with FFs, much as they have always done, and none have caught Hendra. So there are two puzzles. Why do humans catch Hendra from horses but not from FFs? How do horses get infected? It was once thought that as virus is expressed in the bat foetus and stressed FFs abort, a horse might become infected via an aborted foetus. However, a spate of recent horse deaths from Hendra does not fit with FFs' reproductive seasonality, so other theories are needed. The take home message for Nimbin is humans do not catch Hendra from FFs.

But there is more. While surveying FFs for Hendra, QDPI discovered another life-threatening virus - Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV). Lyssaviruses are responsible for rabies and rabies-like diseases. ABLV was found to be very closely related to classic rabies virus, but sufficiently distinct to be given a different name (and so not compromise Australia's "rabies free status"). A short time later a Rockhampton bat carer died from ABLV. Initially it was thought she had been infected by the bite of a FF. However, as characterisation of ABLV advanced it was proved that she had been infected by a bite from a micro-bat (a Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail). Subsequently a Mackay woman died, and this was from a FF bite. Two strains of ABLV are now recognised, one in FFs and one in micros, with several microbat species known to be carriers, although this has not been adequately publicised.



Again we have the puzzle of decades of intimate FF-human contacts with no people dying of rabies-like disease. Then the virus is discovered and bingo - 2 cases. Clearly ABLV has been around for a long time in bats, but perhaps has only recently spread into Australia.

The close relationship of ABLV to classic rabies is fortunate in that rabies vaccine protects against ABLV and all bat researchers and carers are now vaccinated. ABLV cannot be caught from bat faeces or urine – for infection the virus must be "injected" into body tissues by a bite or scratch. Thus a FF camp is not a danger. What is important is that members of the public do not attempt to help or handle any injured FF or one caught on barbed wire or in netting. If you do find such an animal (or an injured microbat) contact our local WIRES (Wildlife Rescue Service) on 6628-1898 and they will send someone trained in helping **who has been vaccinated**. If by any chance you are bitten or scratched by a FF or microbat seek medical advice at once and insist on vaccination.

Meanwhile, take the opportunity to watch our local fantastic flying mammals travelling out each night to feed – one of nature's great wildlife spectacles. Who knows what their future holds, or ours for that matter.

My thanks to Lib Ruytenberg, Bat Co-ordinator WIRES Northern Rivers, for the FF closeup pictures. WIRES needs more wildlife volunteers in the Nimbin area. The next training weekend will be held February 18th & 19th at SCU, Lismore. For further information, call the WIRES hotline 6628-1898.



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