

# Newswatch

summer 2011/12

*trivia, christmas cards, new app, art, tai chi, royalty, reincarnation, team building, theatresports, caves*

- **Trivia** - If there were a Nobel Prize for Trivia, the Venerable Geoffrey Ogden-Browne of Balmain would win hands down. He recently celebrated five years as Tuesday's Trivia Master with a difference at Blackheath's Ivanhoe Hotel. The TV quiz show veteran is also a professional entertainer of thirty years' standing and leads Sydney's Cafe Orchestra (as opposed to Shane MacGowan's). Somehow, he finds time to teach the Ukelele. "I've actually played it with the SSO and am writing a book for students, having once been fortunate to play George Formby's own Ukelele Banjo", he told Wonderland. Geoffrey's portrait, intended for the Archibald Prize, is being painted by a student. "The easiest thing in the world", he says, "is to write a hard quiz question. The hard thing is to write an easy one" (podcast).
- **Mountains App** - BMLot has launched a new app showcasing attractions and accommodation. It's available free from Apple's App Store at [itunes.apple.com/au/app/greater-blue-mountains-drive/id465588886?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/greater-blue-mountains-drive/id465588886?mt=8).
- **BM Cancer Help** - Looking for a good Christmas Card cause this year? Blue Mountains Cancer Help has a range of hand made cards by Tina Frost Clayton, whose new Gallery in Woodford supports this excellent organization, founded by Robyn Yates – buy at Metropole Hotel and 2/27 Whitton St, Katoomba; 148 Great Western Highway, Blaxland ([cancerhelp.net.au](http://cancerhelp.net.au)).
- **European Art** - Michael van Langenberg, Gallery Blackheath's recent featured artist, is traveling again. "I'm hoping to spend more time in France and Spain", he told Newswatch. "There's some interesting new work in Spain, driven by Latin American art. I want to see it in the smaller galleries there". He's also developed an interest in North African painting. "I got a sense of it in April, in France, and it represents a development we're not getting here at all, because we're so parochially obsessed with boat people and the like. Our art at the moment, in fact, reflects how politically inward looking Australia has become" (p16 & 55, podcast).
- **Conditions Apply** - His Eminence The Ninth Tulku Ogyen Rinpoche has recently visited the Blue Mountains from his home in Dharamsala, where he enjoys friendly relations with the Dalai Lama. Over lunch in Leura, the Tulku disclosed to Wonderland readers the secret of happiness and – surprise – it's not an extended credit card limit or MeTV. The Tulku (one who reincarnates solely for the benefit of other beings) said the world is the way it is because "... individuals are selfish, and this simply projects upwards into political parties and nations". He added that the Dalai Lama was perfectly serious when he announced he would decide on his next incarnation at age ninety, and that the Chinese government would have no say in the matter (podcast).
- **Royalty** - When the press release arrived saying 'Royal Welcome at Wolgan Valley', we thought perhaps Her Majesty and the Duke had stopped off for a short romantic escape on the way home. But it was the Romanov dynasty, not the Windsor one. Nicoletta Romanoff, a descendant of Tzar Nicholas 1<sup>st</sup>, with her mother Princess Natasha, dropped in by helicopter after the Melbourne Cup

- and were suitably impressed. “This is one of the world’s most beautiful places”, Ms Romanoff enthused.
- **Christmas Drinks** - It started over Christmas bevvies in the Slaters Arms in Corris in Wales where landlord, Michael Denton, was entertaining his friend Chris Hall, home from New Zealand. By closing time it had become Tracks ‘N Trails, the Mountains’ newest attraction offering ‘Segway’ personal transporters at Leura’s Fairmont Resort. “Chris had seen Segways in New Zealand but there were none in Australia. Since they’re also the transport of choice for Paris airport security guards, we thought we’d better have some here”. The Segway is reminiscent of a Dalek, but friendlier. Its ‘closed loop dynamic stability’ ensures intuitive riding, perfect for visitors and corporate team building – [bookings@tracksandtrails.com.au](mailto:bookings@tracksandtrails.com.au) (podcast).
  - **Expansion** - ‘Theatresports’ also generates good corporate teamwork, supporting executive development for thirty years. “A Canadian, Keith Johnson, invented it, based on the exercises actors warm up with. We’ve been going for eighteen months and we’ve just expanded on a one year contract to Leura’s Waldorf” Director, Bryan Cutts, told Wonderland – (p12, podcast)
  - **New Book** - ‘Sandstone Caves of Mt Victoria’, a new publication by Erik Halbert & Ross Ellis (see podcast ‘autumn 2009 – bushwalks’) uncovers local tracks, history and people, focusing on a sense of mystery of which there’s plenty in these here parts. The limited edition sells at \$27.50 delivered (BMs) – 4787 6089.
  - **New Classes** - Michael Lewchenko, principal of Bennetts Printing and another good Buddhist boy, has started Tai Chi classes at Yindi Day Spa. “I’ve been teaching for thirty-five years”, he told Wonderland. Essentially Tai Chi (‘Open Hand’) is physical meditation. “We can’t live forever, but Tai Chi ensures physical health until the day we drop” adds Michael. And who’d argue with that? – 4782 2514.

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