

Christmases

by Tessa Lim

The Christmas season has different meanings for me as I journey through the various stages of my life.

At 10, Christmas meant a new dress. Mum started planning and sewing in early December and it was then that my Christmas excitement began. We could not afford a Christmas tree nor individually wrapped presents. A new dress was my present. Our family attended midnight mass on Christmas Eve. It was hard to stay awake until midnight. To occupy myself I started dressing up in my new dress hours before and proudly paraded around the house, to the annoyance of my brothers. Mum would be busy in the kitchen preparing Christmas supper for when we returned from church. It was one of the few times in the year when we had lots to eat. I loved Christmas.

Christmas for my 7-year-old daughter, Lynne, was about the many shopping trips to the brightly decorated large department stores and picking out her mysterious gift. Most of the stores had a big barrel filled with gift wrapped parcels of various sizes. For \$5, a child was able to pick out one parcel... I can vividly remember watching Lynne and her cousin, Jess, standing over the barrel, agonising over which one to pick. Lynne picked one. She smelled it, shook it and then put it back. Jess was doing the same ritual. Finally, they decided on what they wanted. There were giggles, anticipation, and laughter all the way to the café in the store. As soon as we were seated, they opened their "lucky dip" presents. The squeals and excitement, with Christmas music, filled me with so much joy and love. I was feeling what the girls were feeling. It was fun for all of us.

Christmas for me now, in my twilight years, is a time of reflection. Thinking of the many loved ones who have left makes me sad. But when I recall the wonderful experiences and things we shared I feel blessed to have had them in my life. Although I may not have grandchildren of my own, I have many young friends with children, and they always bring me joy and love, especially at Christmas.



Cooking

by Vivienne Harkness

Announcing a Cooking Group for 2019.

The recipes below will be included!

For a delicious snack try this ancient simple recipe for: -

CHEESE BISCUITS

2 parts grated tasty cheese
2 parts plain flour
2 parts soft butter
Sprinkle of salt and cayenne pepper

Mix by hand and roll into balls.
Place on greased tray and cook for 10 minutes in moderate oven.

Flatten with back of fork after 5-10 minutes.

ALL BRAN LOAF

1 cup of All Bran™
1 cup self raising flour
1 small cup of milk
1 tablespoon of golden syrup
1 cup of sultanas
1/2 cup sugar
Pinch salt

Grease loaf tin. Combine all ingredients well and bake for approximately 1 hour at 180° Celsius.

As mentioned above these delicious recipes will be used in our new Cooking Group which will commence next year. This exciting new activity will follow the BSSG regular meetings on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month, commencing in March. The Group will be held from 12.30 - 1.30pm in the kitchen at the Kew Seniors Centre.

The best part - you can enjoy eating your produce together and even get to take the leftovers home!

So please do come along and share a fun time together cooking up a storm.

Boroondara Stroke Support Group

NEWSLETTER



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President's Report

by Vivienne Harkness

I am very pleased and gratified to report that Boroondara Stroke Support Group continues to grow and strengthen in both its membership and its activities.

The Hub continues to provide a welcoming, warm and friendly place, where members can find support and enjoy the company of others who are also living with stroke.

The atmosphere of the Hub is also greatly enhanced by the invaluable contribution made by our band of volunteers who generously share their expertise with others in many ways by supporting our activities:

- Art and craft
- Greeting and Christmas card making and packaging
- Sing for Recovery choir
- Enable X and M machines, providing therapy
- Young Stroke Survivors Group
- Blokes with Strokes
- The Chatterbox Aphasia Group
- Carers Group
- The bi-monthly lunches
- Community service, education and awareness about stroke to school students who visit the Hub and assist us with tasks.

Our other activity, which continues to give great enjoyment and excellent physical activity to many stroke survivors and their carers, is weekly Bowls on Monday. Brian O'Meara continues to facilitate this much appreciated program with great determination, with the help of another enthusiastic band of volunteers.

We continue to be grateful for the partnership of the Stroke Association of Victoria and their support in funding several facets of the Hub, including the salary of the Hub Coordinator and our insurance and for providing us with the invaluable services of Neville Taylor to audit the BSSG books. To SAV and Neville, we extend our deep thanks for your ongoing support.

Sadly our first coordinator - Juley Thai retired from her position with us in September to take up her professional role as a speech therapist at St.

Vincent's Hospital. We thank Juley for her time spent with us, her pioneering spirit and the warmth and gentleness she showed to all of us at the Hub. We wish her well in her chosen profession.

Fortunately, Maria Thommyppillai, a neuro engineer from the UK had been volunteering at the Hub for several months and was able to fill the vacancy on a temporary basis before she needs to return to the UK in February. The position for Coordinator will be advertised shortly.

I am happy to report that the membership of BSSG continues to increase. However, our aim is to continue to build our numbers, showing we are reaching out as far as we can to even more people travelling their difficult journey with stroke.

During the past year we are saddened to have lost several of our members and we express our sincere condolences to their families and friends.

Sing for Recovery continues to take comfort, some joy and hope to stroke survivors and carers in several Melbourne hospitals and Rehabilitation Centres. We are also pleased to report that several new members have been attracted to BSSG, the Hub and the choir, following our appearances.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Simson Cards for generously donating thousands of "Thinking of You" and Christmas cards for Sing for Recovery to give to new stroke survivors in hospitals - the cards are really appreciated, and patients are moved by the care the card expresses.

Others who deserve our thanks and acknowledgement are the Kew cafes and bakeries

Thanks to our sponsors



which supply delicious food for the suppers shared by the *Sing for Recovery* choir rehearsals and the Young Stroke Survivors Group. They are Via Verona, Woodfrog Bakery and the Viennese Patisserie.

We continue to be deeply grateful for the support, encouragement and interest we receive from the past Mayor Cr Jim Parke, councillors and staff of the City of Boroondara and to them for providing us with the Hub for peppercorn rent. We were again successful with a grant application, which will enable us to provide much needed support and pleasure for our carers, giving them an opportunity to relax, encouraging them to exercise and also to be pampered.

Further acknowledgement is also due to the City of Boroondara for providing us with the Hub, as it is there that the Committee and Brainstormers of the new exciting awareness and fundraising campaign STRIKE OUT STROKE Inc, meet on a regular basis. STRIKE OUT STROKE, of which Parke Lawyers, through Cr Jim Parke, is a major sponsor, was recently launched at Kew Primary School by the Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP. Watch this space!

We are also extremely grateful for the ongoing support of our local members - in particular, the Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Federal Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who despite his very demanding schedule, is always there for stroke and BSSG.

During the year BSSG has enjoyed marking special occasions important to our members - Stroke and Carers Week and Christmas.

I must include in this report recognition and heartfelt gratitude to the members of the BSSG Committee, who unselfishly and generously give so much time to do the best for all our BSSG members. They are our Vice President - Brian O'Meara, Secretary - Liz Berryman, Treasurer - John Pocock, Membership Officer - Michael Shallard and general members - Tessa Lim, Lloyd Knight, Arif Ghalib and Michael Radulovic.

Others who deserve our sincerest thanks are our wonderful band of volunteers, too many to mention, who support us at the Hub, at bowls and with *Sing for Recovery* and in particular to Anita Paxton who participates in all of the above.

All those mentioned, have contributed so much to improving the lives of our stroke survivors and their carers and families.

Finally, I was extremely honoured to be awarded the Boroondara Citizen of the Year for 2018, in recognition for my work with stroke. However, as our founder Jenny Cheng, who won the same award in a previous year would say - "the award does not belong to one single person - we could not have achieved anything on our own - it belongs to all the

wonderful, generous people, aforementioned who have given their time to help people travel along their often difficult journey living with stroke. It is to them that Jenny and I dedicate our award.

We look forward to your continued involvement and support.

Wines -The French Connection by Peter Hocking continued from last edition

For dry white wine lovers, Chardonnay fans should look to wines from the Burgundy region. An area of greater Burgundy called Chablis produces stunning and unique Chardonnay wines, though don't expect them to taste like most of our Aussie Chardonnays. Think Chardonnay on steroids.

Chardonnay, of course, is one of the grapes used by the French to produce perhaps their most iconic wine type; the bubbly that comes from the Champagne region; the other grape used being Pinot Noir (and sometimes Pinot Meunier). Yes, Yes! I know they're red grapes, but, like I said, the French don't do "simple". They strain off the grape skins (where all the colour is) early in the fermentation before the alcohol builds up enough to dissolve out much red pigment thus giving a "white" wine.

If you want a change from Aussie bubbly, but don't want to pay a large premium just to have the magic word "Champagne" on the label try some of the excellent bubbly from the Loire Valley. Semillon fans should look to Bordeaux, especially the Graves sub region, and Sauvignon Blanc aficionados, to Bordeaux and Loire Valley.

A sub region of Bordeaux, Sauternes, is well known for its superb long living sweet white dessert wines, made largely from Semillon. The most famous, Chateau d'Yquem, is one of the most expensive wines in the world and has been known to be successfully cellared for over a century. Rather more affordable, and something of a well kept secret in Australia, is a dessert wine from the Southern Rhone Valley called Muscat de Beames de Venise (Beames-de-Venise being a wine village of that region). A glorious, grapey nectar, less sweet and more subtle than Aussie "stickies", with interesting floral flavours. Brilliant with lemon tart or a berry fruit dessert.

And finally, for the more adventurous red drinker: **The Loire Valley**

This region is not noted for great wines; and whites predominate; but the reds are worth a look because they largely or entirely use the **Cabernet Franc** grape. This is unusual in France because Cabernet Sauvignon's poor relation, normally features only as a bit player in blends with its prestigious cousin, plus Merlot. This is typical in areas like the Bordeaux.

Although it does not have the flavour complexity or aging potential of Cabernet Sauvignon, I have rarely been disappointed with straight Cabernet Franc wines.

You are unlikely to find mention of the Loire Valley on a label though; you need to look for the sub region or village. Names to look for are Anjou-Villages, Saumur-Champigny and Chinon. Australian makers, such as Redbank and Bests sometimes, (though frustratingly not all the time) produce a straight Cabernet Franc and I've always enjoyed them.

Cahors

Inland and upriver from the Bordeaux, but proudly and chauvinistically separate, is the small wine region and town of Cahors. Wines bearing this appellation are typically made from the **Malbec** grape with some Merlot and are characteristically rustic, gutsy, intense coloured wines; so much so, they are referred to as "Black Wine" Not for the faint hearted but great drinking if you like this "no prisoners" style.

Beaujolais

This is geographically an extension of the greater Burgundy region, but instead of Pinot Noir, the **Gamay** grape rules. Which makes the wines interesting for Australians as we have rather limited plantings of this grape here. They are lighter, summer-friendly reds and often served chilled. The entry level appellation, Beaujolais, or even the higher standard Beaujolais-Villages is a bit too light for my taste. I look for the higher quality producing villages such as Fleurie or Moulin-a-Vent. These have more fruit and some aging capacity

Assuming you are suitably inspired, your next step is to look for a retailer with a good range of quality imported wines and have a chat to their usually knowledgeable staff about a bottle or two to get you started. The liquor chains run by the two retail giants under the Dan Murphy and Vintage Cellars banners, both have a good range of affordable French wines from the more popular regions. To find examples of the above three however you will probably have to seek out an independent retailer specialising to some degree in imported wines generally, or even specifically in French wines. Pleasant drinking!

Peter Hocking is a wine lover and Francophile, with a preference for reds (hence the rather superficial treatment of whites for which he apologises to white lovers). His views are entirely personal opinions.

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Man's Best Friend by Michael Radulovic

The former captain of Cameroon's soccer national team, Rigobert Song (at the age of 40), while alone in his apartment, suffered a stroke, lost his consciousness and fell to the floor. Luckily, he fell to the side and didn't swallow his tongue. But, what actually saved his life, was his dog, who started barking so persistently that the concierge was alarmed. The concierge went to see what was going on, opened the door with his spare key and saw Rigobert lying on the floor, he performed CPR, called the ambulance and saved Rigobert's life - or was it thanks to Rigobert's dog? You be the judge!



Members and friends of the BSSG,
You are invited to lunch
to celebrate Christmas with us.

- **What:** Christmas lunch, bring your Christmas cheer along, there will be festive wine tasting, hosted by our BSSG member wine connoisseur Peter Hocking.
- **When:** Thursday 13th of December from 1pm til 2.30
- **Where:** Kew Seniors Centre Hall (533 High St Kew)

**PLEASE RSVP by
Friday 7th December**

By email, bcstrokehub@outlook.com
or call Vivienne on 0417 054 511