



NOTICE

Tuesday 19th April 2022 : Notice of meeting #1337

Founded 1894

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Committee 2022/2023

President: Mike Bruton
Senior Vice-President: Geoffrey Ashmead
Junior Vice-President: Ron Duff
Secretary: Hugh Amoore
Treasurer: Richard Morris
Imm. Past President: Richard Morris
Additional Members: Bill Coetzee,
Geoff Everingham, John Green,
Nigel Gwynne-Evans, Mike James,
David Little & Paul Murray

Honorary Auditor: Verwey Wiese

Dinner bookings

Email: secretary@owls.capetown
Telephone: 021 671 3121
Cellphone: 082 440 8204

Treasurer

Email: treasurer@owls.capetown
Telephone: 02 1 531 0435
Cellphone: 083 272 0500
Postal: 2 Park Lane, University Drive,
7405 Pinelands

Bank details

The Owl Club
Standard Bank of South Africa
A/c No. 071 818 006

This month's edition:

Editor: Ron Duff
Contributors: Hugh Amoore,
Mike Bruton, Glenn Babb &
Geoff Everingham
Photographs: Ron Duff &
Maciej Soltynski

Dear Fellow Owls

THE 1337th MEETING OF THE OWL CLUB, PRECEDED BY DINNER, WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 19th APRIL 2022, 6:00 PM FOR 7:00 PM START, IN THE GRILL ROOM, KELVIN GROVE CLUB.

Chairman: **President Owl Mike Bruton**

Guest Speaker: **Professor George Branch**

The debts we owe to the sea.

There are obvious benefits to be derived from the sea, including food and recreation. George Branch will concentrate on how forms of life (animals, plants and fungi) originated. Is the Covid-19 spectre a real reflection of the role of viruses? How important are bacteria to the functioning of our human world? He will also cover some marine creatures that live in harmony with others ... which compels a re-think of evolution.

Music: **Akash Srikewal (Sitar) & Ronan Skillen (Tabla)**

Indian classical duo.

This performance will include an introduction to the sitar and the tabla, The programme includes a classical sitar performance by Akash Srikewal who has played the sitar for over 25 years and has established a style of performing classical, semi-classical and modern music that is soothing and soulful. Ronan Skillen's musical genres include classical, rock and folk, electro, jazz and hip-hop. He has performed internationally and featured on many recordings and film scores - including the Oscar-winning documentary, *My Octopus Teacher*.

WPB: **Owl Sheila Camerer**

Being an ambassador in Bulgaria – facing the Russian bear.

The parliament can look forward to Owl Sheila Camerer who will discuss why South Africa has an ambassador in Bulgaria, how she was appointed to the post, what kept her busy in Bulgaria, the culture and geo-political situation of Bulgaria, comparisons with South Africa, and Bulgaria's love/hate relationship with Russia.

Dinner price: **R290 for Owls and guests alike.**

(Note: Full Covid-19 protocols will still be observed, including the wearing of face masks, hand sanitising, social distancing as well as restricted seating arrangements).

Dress: **Black tie (or similarly elegant attire).**

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENTS:

Any Owl who does not have internet access is welcome to telephone the Secretary Bird at **082 440 8204** or **021 671 3121** to book a perch.

All other Owls are encouraged to use the **Pay'n'Perch** procedure by paying their dining fee into the Club's bank account by EFT and instructing the bank (using the option provided) to send a remittance confirmation email to secretary@owls.capetown whereupon their perches will be booked.

No further emails will be needed from you unless you have special dietary needs or if you are using a dining credit.

In all cases, bookings will close at 6:00 pm on Saturday 16th April 2022.

All bookings will be acknowledged.

The February 2022 (AGM) meeting

A total of 44 Owls met for the 1336th meeting (and 127th Annual General Meeting) of the Owl Club, held at Kelvin Grove Club, Newlands on Tuesday 15th March 2022.

The more formal part of the evening commenced at 19:00 sharp, with **President Owl Richard Morris** welcoming all present to partake of the dinner and inviting **Owl Peter Lever** to deliver the Grace.

The repast started with a cauliflower and broccoli soup followed by cashew coated chicken breast served on sweet potato with a mango salsa, and a selection of fine red and white wines from *Hawksmoor* (at *Matjieskuil*) accompanied the meal (and were enjoyed throughout the evening).

The dessert was a fig and pistachio pavlova and the gastronomic part of the evening ended with a welcome filter coffee.

Following the meal, the **President** then asked Owls to charge their glasses and to rise for the *Toast To South Africa*, which then led into a short break whilst the tables were cleared.

The 1336th meeting of **The Owl Club** commenced with congratulations being bestowed upon those Owls celebrating birthdays during March, viz: **Max Hales** (91), **John Rourke** (80), **Mike James** (67), **John Manning** (60) and finally **Dugald Robertson** (30).

Immediate Past President Owl Geoff Everingham was called upon to deliver the traditional *Toast To Departed Owls* (a well crafted and thoughtful presentation which he delivered with great aplomb) and this memorable *Toast* is covered in detail later in this *Notice*.

In a special announcement the *President* then gave the reasons for the election of **Owl Tony Murray** as an *Honorary Life Member* of the Club and the bestowment of this honour was received by a standing ovation from the Parliament and a good excuse to propose a *Toast To Owl Tony Murray's Health*.

Only episcopal intervention (in the form

of **Owl Christopher Gregorowski** whom the *Fiscal Shrike* invited to assist with the draw of the quarterly *Flutter*) saved **Owl Richard Morris** from being accused of rigging the raffle.

The winner of two dinners at the expense of **The Owl Cub** was the *Secretary* (**Owl Hugh Amoore**), the 2nd prize went to **Owl John Earle** (who won one free dinner) and the 3rd prize went to the Club's *Senior Vice President* (**Owl Mike Bruton**) who took home a bottle of *Boplaas Cape Ruby Port*.



Owl Glenn Babb then took to the podium and proceeded to slowly fill the *Wastepaper Basket* with his delivery of *Humour and Cruelty with special reference to Lewis Carroll, Peter Sellers and Herman Charles Bosman*. This erudite allocution explored the differences in humour as expressed by different nations and cultures, and is reproduced, in detail, in pages to follow.

After a short bar break the 127th Annual General Meeting of **The Owl Club** was called to order.

As the detailed *Minutes* of the AGM are available to all Owls, the *Sociable Weaver* (*Editor*) will merely cover the highlights of the meeting in this report.

Following the *Secretary's Report*, the *Annual Financial Statements* were presented and approved in short order.

Verwey Wiese (PwC) was re-elected as the *Honorary Auditor* for 2022/3.

The *Committee* for the forthcoming year was confirmed with the following **Owls** then assuming office:

Grace

As we prepare, in comfort, to take good food and drink,
Mixing and talking freely in the company of friends,
Let us tonight remember the many who cannot, both here and abroad.
In particular, spare a thought for the innocents currently suffering the effects of a major political disagreement.
So tonight, we should enjoy the privileges that we have and be especially grateful for the fellowship of The Owl Club.

- *President*: **Mike Bruton**.
- *Senior Vice President*: **Geoffrey Ashmead**
- *Junior Vice President*: **Ron Duff**
- *Secretary*: **Hugh Amoore**
- *Treasurer*: **Richard Morris**
- *Immediate Past President*: **Richard Morris**
- *Committee*: **Bill Coetzee***, **Geoffrey Everingham**, **John Green**, **Nigel Gwynne-Evans***, **Mike James**, **David Little** and **Paul Murray** (* new *Committee* members)

The various motions which had been tabled for debate were speedily dispatched of and the demission and investiture of outgoing and incoming *Presidents* was ceremoniously handled and *President Owl Mike Bruton* delivered a short speech (also available herein) before proposing the *Toast To The Owl Club* and wishing all present a safe flight home.

The unanticipated brevity of the AGM led one Owl to remark that his wife would never expect him home (from a meeting of **The Owl Club**) so early ... and that he just hoped that he would not get home to find a cuckoo in the nest!



2022/3 Owl Club Executive : I/r : Mike Bruton, Geoffrey Ashmead, Ron Duff, Richard Morris & Hugh Amoore



President



Senior Vice President



Junior Vice President



Imm. Past President & Treasurer



Secretary

Owl Geoff Everingham: Toast To Departed Owls

Fellow Owls,

In proposing the toast to departed Owls, we recognize this as the most sombre moment in our year's activities. It is occasion to reflect on the passage of time and the inevitable toll which that takes, and to reflect on our own mortality – for in time each one of us will have their name mentioned and some brief words said.

At the same time, this is also an opportunity to give thanks for the lives of fellow Owls who have enriched our lives and I have to say that at best this tribute will be most inadequate, for two reasons.

Firstly, the majority of Owls have been members in their latter years and we may therefore only have known them in this context and not at time when they may have been at the top of their careers; that said, it is not in the nature of Owldom to speak of one's achievements and it is the conviviality of fellowship which we appreciate and recognize as we salute departed Owls.

Secondly, we will have little knowledge of how much departed Owls will have meant in the context of family, as a parent, spouse, or grandparent and of the grace and goodness which they brought in that environment.

It is with these qualifications, therefore that I remind you of those four Owls who left our company in the past year. I do so with a degree of awe and certainly admiration, for all of them had been members for at least 40 years, and two of them for over 60 years.

Commander Tony Rendell had been a member of the Club since 1970. Since he retired to Sedgefield some twenty years ago he has not attended our meetings; however he enjoyed following the activities of the Club and was in contact with the *Secretary Bird* on a regular basis. He passed away



Owl Geoff Everingham

days short of his 90th birthday, and will no doubt be remembered by long-standing members of the Club.

Owl Ronald Marks was elected to membership in 1956, and had moved to Paris many years ago. Although he had lost contact with the Club in recent years, there will be some among you who will recall the WPB that he delivered in 2004, which he titled '*Back to Front in Paris*', evoking reminders of how engagingly different the French are from other nations.

Owl Marks' length of membership has only been exceeded in living memory by that of **Owl Keith Jewell**, who had become a member in 1953, and was our longest-standing life member, having received that recognition in 1979. As most of you will know, Keith was *City Organist* for many years; he was *President* in 1972 and contributed prolifically to the musical life of the Club. '*The Third Tuesday*' notes that at the 700th meeting of the Club, in October 1970, Owl Keith sang, and I quote '*his inimitable ditty consisting of verbatim extracts from the Traffic Department Regulations, to*

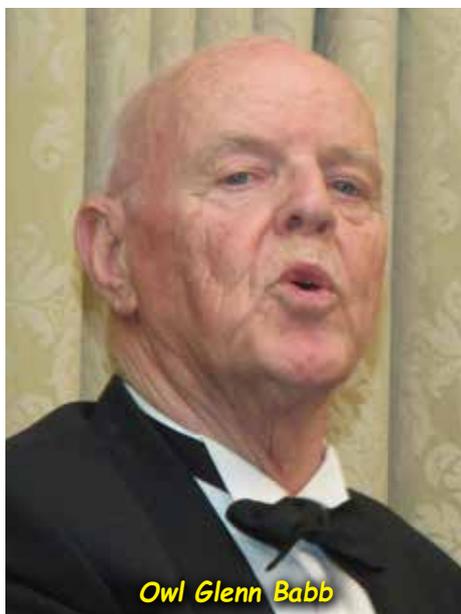
the melody of a well-known Anglican chant' - this he performed again in 1995 and at the millennial meeting there he was again, at the piano with John Juritz – truly a remarkable Owl and a man who epitomized the spirit of the Club; his memory will long endure.

In similar vein we mark with much sadness the passing of **Owl Peter Spargo**, a member since 1978, past *President* and *Life Member* from 2004. A metallurgical engineer by training holding an M Sc in Chemistry, **Owl Peter** devoted his working life to education and as associate professor at UCT, was director of the *Science Education Unit* there from 1980 until his retirement in 1997. **Owl Peter** was a man of wide interests – indeed **Owl Murray Wilson** is quoted in *The Glow of Brotherhood* as saying that **Owl Peter's** favourite pastime was reading the dictionary.

The WPB's he gave over the years, such as '*Man in an exploding universe*' at the Millennium meeting and '*Standing on Shaky Ground*' dealing with the 1994 California earthquake, reflect this. Above all he was a congenial, engaging and erudite Owl, one of our most regular members who attended enthusiastically despite increasing frailty – known I am sure to nearly all of you present tonight, a man who will be greatly missed.

Fellow Owls, we speak euphemistically of death as falling off our perch, or we may use what I regard as the preferable analogy of having flown to a higher perch. I hope that whatever views each of you may hold as to an afterlife, the notion of taking flight will resonate with you, bringing with it a sense of leaving the past behind, of a fresh journey, of new destinations and of freedom.

In that spirit I ask you to join me in rising to drink a *Toast To Departed Owls*.



Owl Glenn Babb

WPB: Owl Glenn Babb Humour and cruelty with special reference to Lewis Carroll, Peter Sellers & Herman Charles Bosman

An exam question ... compare the following two pieces:

(a) In a little Karoo dorp, a matric girl tells the librarian she is going to try to teach animals to read and takes out her quota of three books. During the day she swaps the books three times. Eaten with curiosity, the librarian, who knows where she lives, goes to her house where the girl is squatting at the fishpond's edge in front of a frog for which she opens a book. The frog says: "*Reddit, reddit, reddit*"

(b) "*O Oysters,*" said the Carpenter
You've had a pleasant run!

Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none –
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one

There is funny ha-ha and funny peculiar. Defining humour is like dissecting a frog, it dies and all you're left with is the entrails. Nothing is so disheartening as explaining a joke. The late **Owl Geoffrey Wittenberg**, wearing Dutch clogs, regaled us with a skit in a Hollands accent of how the Dutch have humour clubs - because they take their humour seriously.

The word humour

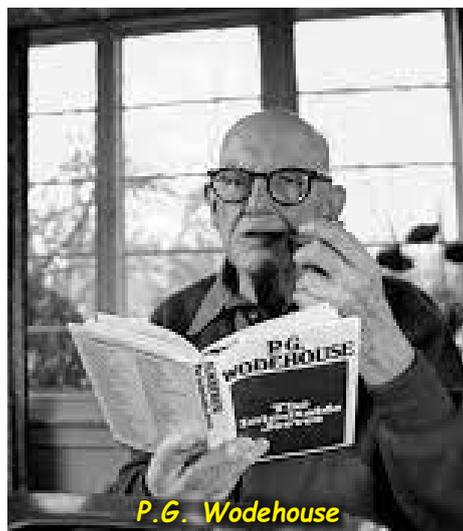
refers to Hippocrates' and Galen's dictum that human health depends on four 'humours' – yellow bile, black bile, phlegm and blood. You are only healthy when there is a balance between those. The English have rightly scrambled them all together as if wit and humour dictate your health and say: "Laughter is the best medicine".

Psychologists all agree that humour can defuse tension and ease relationships. Studies of the neuropeptide molecules in the brain gives a tenuous correlation with the four humours. Don't try humour on the French when negotiating, they find it 'ridicule' or 'risible' - even 'pas sérieux'.

Both those words originate from the Latin 'ridere' – to laugh – the natural reaction to humour. But isn't English marvellous? No, absolutely no, other languages can compete with the range of words we use in English to describe our reactions to humour: smile, giggle, chuckle, purr, laugh (LOL, doll), guffaw, cackle, snigger, smirk. The reaction barometer's needle starts on one end of the gauge with the innocent smile to the cruel and nasty smirk at the other, where satire, which is intended to be cruel, amuses.

There is a physical reaction to humour - when amused, the brain emits endorphins and dopamine, even oxytocin, the molecules giving us pleasure when we are happy from triumph, success. I should really like to see a study as to whether the dopamine quantity emitted varies according to the innocence or callousness of the humour.

Humour is also creative – read the book of Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, where he identifies humour as parallel or causative to creative thought. He almost says it is an essential element – the man who looks through the microscope cannot compete with the man who, for instance, has a smattering of Latin, knows a bit of astronomy, and reads widely and all this can inform his inventiveness – "Eureka, I've found it!" as Archimedes springs from the bath and runs naked down the street or when Fleming sees the bacteria cowering



P.G. Wodehouse



Peter Sellers

away from his penicillin in the petri dish.

English has an enviable, an incomparable list of humorous writers outdoing all other languages by a country mile from before Chaucer, Fielding, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, O. Henry, Mark Twain, H.L. Mencken, Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, the aptly named Hilaire Belloc ("We have got the gatling gun/And they have not"), Ogden Nash, Jerome K. Jerome, Dashiell Hammett, Noel Coward, Tom Stoppard, Terry Pratchett but best of all and standing above all those writers, is P.G. Wodehouse, the very epitome of innocence and wit. I implore you to read his words which a century later, still charm and entrance – the words skip across the page like fairies, sayings are truncated or warped and the English language weaves enough gossamer to capture the humour-fly.

Since this is **The Owl Club**, here is a paragraph from *The Inimitable Jeeves*: "Once a year the committee of the Drones decides that the old club could do with a wash and brush up, so they shoo us out and dump us down for a few weeks at some other institution. This time we were roosting at the Senior Liberal, and personally I had found the strain pretty fearful. I mean, when you've got used to a club where everything's nice and cheery, and where, if you want to attract a chappie's attention, you heave a piece of bread at him, it kind of damps you to come to a place where the youngest member is about eighty-seven and it isn't considered good form to talk to anyone unless you and he went through the Peninsular War together."

So innocent was P.G. Wodehouse that he even broadcast amusing anecdotes on Deutsche Welle while imprisoned by the Germans. After the war he risked the same fate as Lord Haw Haw. Luckily, it was Malcolm Muggeridge, who interrogated him, who straight away saw that P.G. Wodehouse had no inkling of wrongdoing. Muggeridge warned him not to go back to

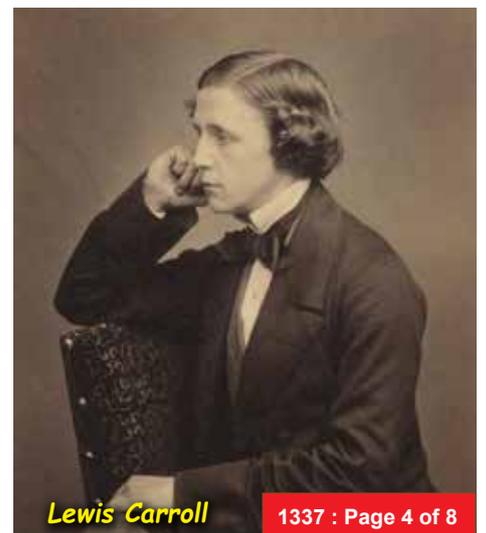
England and he spent the rest of his life in New York (until he went to London to be knighted).

Some of the writers are rescued by their illustrators. Alice would not be Alice without Tenniell, the artist. His depiction of the dodo in *Alice in Wonderland*, as **Owl Mike Bruton** told us, is what has etched the image in generations' memories. So, it is with Willans' Molesworth in *Down with Skool* and *St Trinians* – without Searle's drawings, the spice of the text is lost.

Note that all the writers I've cited are men – three professions have reached their acme under men: composer, chef, comic – the three C's. And here is some good encouragement for our witty members: Princeton University's studies show women prefer as a life partner someone with a sense of humour which can even trump good looks – the reverse is not true, however!

In spoken humour, the play was the thing. Then came radio - and what humour radio spawned in the English-speaking world: George Formby, *Round the Horne*, *The Two Ronnies*, *Beyond our Ken* ("Hello, I'm Julian and this is my friend, Sandy"), *That Was The Week that Was*, Morecombe and Wise, Dudley Moore and Peter Cook, *Hancock's Half Hour*, *Dad's Army*, *Men from the Ministry*. The summum nec plus ultra, was the ultimate in innocent zaniness, *The Goon Show*, with Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe. What a phenomenon. Hear one of the voices like Eccles or Min and the trigger is enough to make the dopamine flow and to make laughter spontaneously burst out. South African Pip Friedman's *Snoektown Calling* resonates with this English blossoming "At the next stroke of the Machanga tightskin drum it will be three o'clock, mean time ..."

Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker have long passages on spoken humour in *The Language Instinct* and they explain the intersection of the spoken word with ideas. They say that a nano-second before someone speaks, the listener knows what words



Lewis Carroll

will logically follow, so if you say “pink elephant” in a sentence, the listener pricks up his ears and it is the surprise of novelty, inventiveness and maybe shock that elicits the laughter response? Wry laughter also flows when a taboo is broken:

The dean took the bishop's wife to lie on. She said it was rude to do it in the nude, So, he kept his old Etonian tie on.'

Visual humour was the preserve of the jesters, the jokers, the clowns like Touchstone in *As You Like It*, the *jongleurs* and *tumblers*, *Punch And Judy* but film changed all that.

Of all the gags of Buster Keaton (who did all his own stunts), one is etched in historical memory as a façade falls over him as he stands before it, appearing upright through the empty open window. The silent movie gags of Charlie Chaplin and Keaton are enhanced by the speed of the film because camera technology had not yet allowed enough frames to be taken as the roll of film turned, and this speed is used to good effect in the Land Rover skit by Jamie Uys in *The Gods Must Be Crazy* and *Passim* by Bennie Hill. Once the movies became talkies, American and English films parted company.

The Americans have got stuck in the groove of slapstick after the Marx Brothers, so the physical gags continue, and their films are no longer funny. Tom & Jerry, Wile E. Coyote, Bugs Bunny are all funny peculiar, callous and cruel, none more so than Sacha Baron Cohen in *Borat*. The Americans have invented the repellent, stomach-churning ‘*laughtrack*’ to signal when the audience must laugh because the visuals do not elicit the spontaneous laugh.

Bless the English who introduce verbal humour into even the most serious films: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* – “*Here come those tired old tits again.*”

Even in my favourite movie of all time, *Educating Rita*, with Michael Caine and Julie Walters, Julie, hiding from her Scottish husband that she is taking the pill, answers him when he says: “*In my family, we just have to look at a girl and she's pregnant*”, with: “*That's because you're all cock-eyed*”. The *Carry On* films, Monty Python, ‘*Allo 'Allo*, the *Pink Panther* (“*I want to use your fern*”).

I highly recommend a tender film, *Stanley and Ollie*, about Laurel and Hardy, that shows that there was no fall-guy in real life, though the film humour depends on the casual cruelty of Hardy to Laurel.

A short look at humour in other languages

The French: Pretty well everything is intellectualised in France and laughter is stimulated by *drôlerie* not *humeur* which means ‘mood’ in French. I was on the No. 6 bus from Passy to the *Arc de Triomphe* when we were stopped by traffic at the

Musée de l'Homme on the *Place Trocadéro* at the very place photographs were taken of Hitler looking at the Eiffel Tower. After a minute or two of traffic jam, the driver left the steering wheel and stood in the aisle and said: “*On you right ladies and gentlemen, the Eiffel Tower, the Eiffel Tower: I cannot stop long so please take your snaps now. The Eiffel Tower,*” and sat down. The French passengers looked at each other and put their forefingers to their foreheads and said “*toc-toc*”, he must be mad. I guffawed, they thought it was ‘*ridicule*’. I spent a holiday in Brittany with Naomi Malan, married to a French advocate who spoke good English. While preparing a chicken roast, I said to Naomi: “*If you've got the time, I'll do the stuffing,*” and then rolled around laughing much to the chagrin of François who said crossly, “*What's so funny?*” – prosaic like the Germans, as the Franks are, actually.



A group of us South Africans in Paris went to see Monty Python's *Holy Grail* where the knight and the friar's heads bob up and down as though riding horses until they come into sight clicking two halves of a coconut. This seemed hilarious to les *SudAfs* but had the French audience looking at us quizzically for our laughter. Fortunately, French humour has been rescued by a people they condescend to – *les Belges*, because it was Belgians who produced *Astérix and Obélix*. De Gaulle declared that France was the country of *Astérix and Obélix*.

The Italians: The Italians have a sad fatefulness in their humour which produces dialect comic poets like Belli and Sallustri (*Trilussa*):

*The emperor said to the chamberlain
Every time I get in my carriage to go for a spin*

A kind of squeaking follows me wherever I go.

I don't know if it's the wheel or some guy next to the road.

In any case, grease him."

And ...

"The dog said to the cat:

'I believe that the moment you are castrated, you'll become more faithful and affectionate

to the man that did you that service'.

The cat snarled: 'I'd prefer to be faithful and affectionate without the need of the operation'."

The actor in *La Vita è Bella*, Benigni, won the best actor Oscar for a tragi-comedy in which he convinces his son that all the suffering in the concentration camp will be justified by the child's greatest desire to ride in a tank. The Yanks liberate the camp, and the boy rides in a tank, but his dad is dead. One of the best political cartoons I've seen is Italian. Forattini, in *Corriere della Sera*, depicts the Supreme Court judge, Clarence Thomas, accused of exposing himself to a student, from behind with his overcoat open before a wide-eyed Anita Hill with the caption, “*The Supreme Court – the greatest organ of the state.*” Nothing for the Italians is *ridicule*: it is *la commedia*.

The Germans: Mark Twain was heard to declare that the Germans have no sense of irony – prosaic without the French elegance. In 1830 Dr Heinrich Hoffman produced *Struwwelpeter* which had huge success in English translation and is announced as “*Pretty Stories And Funny Pictures*” on the cover. Horrors of blunt morality, tales with poor Harriet reduced to ashes by lighting matches, mourned by the cats:

*"Me-ow, mee-oo, me-ow, mee-oo,
'What will Mamma and Nursy do?'*

*The tears ran down their cheeks so fast;
They made a little pond at last."*

The Chinese: Confucius abhorred humour which he declared subversive. Perhaps we should try a little on Juju Malema – the *samizdat* brought the Soviets down, perhaps a tickle will do the same to Julius.

The Afrikaners: A wry self-deprecation of human quirks characterises the Afrikaner's amused response to the foibles of life: CJ Langenhoven (speaking in the South African Parliament):

"Half of this House is drunk!"

The Speaker: “*Order! Withdraw that remark!*”

Langenhoven: “*I withdraw; half of this House is not drunk.*”

I have always thought that the art, the literature, the spectacle should be judged separately from their author. But no: nobody could watch Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* with the same eyes once he knows what a cruel shit Chaplin was. In the slipstream of the beautiful skit by **Owl Muller's** *Oom Schalk Lourens* I've chosen three practitioners of comedy to judge whether we should divide them from their works.

Lewis Carroll: Charles Dodgson was a mathematics don at Christ Church College in Oxford whose hobby was the newly discovered art of photography. He produced a portrait of the English poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, but his great love was to



Alice Liddle (by Lewis Carroll)

photograph naked pre-pubescent girls, including Alice Liddle, the protagonist of *Alice in Wonderland*. His photography of little nude girls is disturbing, very disturbing. Most commentators regard Carroll as a paedophile, who maybe did not act on his instincts, but the falling out with the Liddle family might have been caused by his burning desire to continue photographing Alice and her elder sister. All his interest in Alice evaporated when she reached puberty. Does this filter through to his work? All his work is quarrelsome, cross, fractious and peevish – sometimes even violent: “*Off with their heads!*”

*“Speak roughly to your little boy
And beat him when he sneezes.
He only does it to annoy
Because he knows it teases”.*

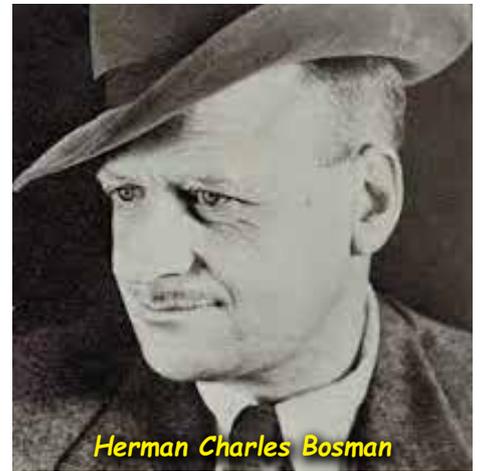
Even the flowers are argumentative and calmed only by the Tiger Lily. I don’t know how often creatures and the weird things accuse Alice of being stupid or ignorant. Is he taking it out on the evanescent Alice? Perhaps his nascent anger seeps through

to his writing which would never have had the success it did without the genius of the illustrator Tenniel drawing Jabberwocks, Carpenters, Cheshire Cats and Mad Hatters.

Peter Sellers: One of the brilliant voices in *The Goon Show*, a superb unsurpassable Inspector Clouseau, the totally deadpan predecessor to Joe Biden in *Being There* but a thoughtless, feckless, self-absorbed individual in life. He was a social climber of note and got into Princess Margaret’s slipstream. On the birthday of one of Margaret’s children, when he was married to the beautiful Britt Eklund, he presented Margaret’s child with his own three-year-old’s beloved pony, transporting it away from his sobbing daughter in a horsebox. Eklund divorced him shortly thereafter. Deadpan in *The Goon Show* – his voice was that of the bloodless Colonel Bloodknock and Colonel Gritpype-Thinn (“*Here is a copy of a £5 pound note ...*”).

Then we come to **Herman Charles Bosman**, regarded as light-hearted and rib-tickling. But personally? He was born Malan and his mother flitted from one husband to the next man whose surname Herman adopted, and then to a third in whose home the Bosman post-teen brothers had to share quarters.

Herman Charles resented the close proximity of the stepbrothers, and, when his brother woke Herman up by stumbling against his bed, causing an altercation, Herman picked up his rifle and shot the

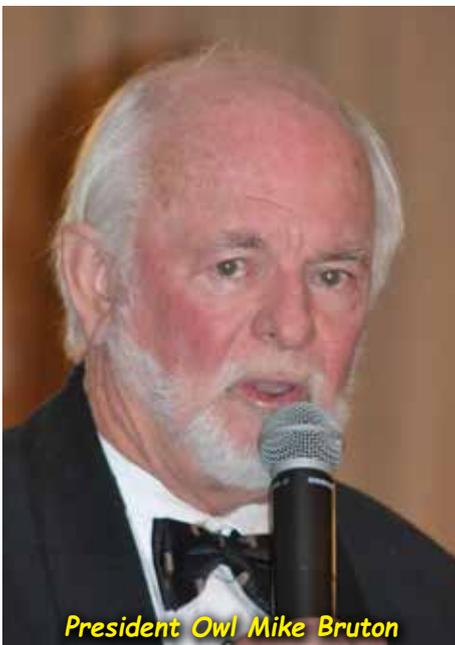


Herman Charles Bosman

stepbrother for which he was condemned to death, though eventually amnestied.

He married twice and during his second marriage, while editing the Zoutpansberg Review, he made Helena Stegmann, a teacher, pregnant. He personally tried an abortion with a syringe from which Helena got septicaemia. Asked by the matron at the hospital who had performed the abortion she protected Herman, but the police soon-arrested him, and he cruelly denied any responsibility. He abandoned Helena only to marry her much later *en troisième nocés*. Where on the cruelty meter does the needle point for Bosman? He is saved by whimsy and late-forming regret, but in his work there is the odd callousness like the accordion-player kicking the k***** for not closing the stage curtain properly

The dark soul can still amuse one!



President Owl Mike Bruton

Fellow Owls, our Owl Club has survived regional and world wars, severe economic depressions and political upheavals, and now it has also survived a pandemic. The perseverance of our Club is due to the strength of its leaders and the resolve of its members.

I am sure that you agree that Immediate Past President **Owl Richard Morris** has shown exceptional leadership over the past

President Owl Mike Bruton

year as we have emerged from the lockdown and resumed our normal activities, with a few vital adjustments. His commitment to uphold the honour of Owldom has resulted in the Club emerging stronger than ever before, with very bright prospects for the future.

We thank Owl Richard most sincerely for his steady hand on the tiller and for the outstanding way in which he has provided leadership. In particular we would like to thank him for the good humour that he has injected into our affairs which was very much in evidence this evening.

I would like to end my thanks, tipping my cap to the history of this great Club, by reading a brief extract from a poem written by the late **Owl E. Hermitage Day** and published in the 1934 edition of ‘*The Waste Paper Basket of The Owl Club*’.

The poem is entitled, *Snapius Ingeniosus. A Valedictory Ode upon a Retiring President:*
*Now, as the span of Presidency ends
And to the ranks the officer descends,
Some word of valediction may be said,
Some quittance of our gratitude be made.
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that Owl of merit tried*

*Who lately in our councils did preside,
Bringing each labour to its prosperous end –*

Great SNAPIUS, whom two Continents commend.

Last, when the warning clock brings end to cheer;

*The President becomes the Charioteer,
Collects four Owls who else might go astray,*

And through the sleeping suburbs wings his way,

Speeds thro’ the night, and with a final jest

*Deposits each in its domestic nest.
Retiring President, our thanks to you,
Tu whit, tu whoo, tu whit, tu whit, tu whoo!*

Thank you, Owl Richard.

Finally, I would like to invite you to charge your glasses, stand, and join me in proposing a *Toast to The Owl Club* and I wish you all a safe flight home.



Members' News

AGM In March 2022:

The AGM was successfully managed by the outgoing President; Owls may read the draft minutes of the AGM on the Club's website where these have been posted in the Documents section.

.oOo.

Flown To A Higher Perch:

The Committee has learnt with sadness that **Owl Clive Keegan** has flown to a higher perch. Originally elected in 1980, his membership lapsed some years ago only to be renewed last year. Owls will recall a recent WPB by Owl Keegan.

.oOo.

New Members:

Roxane Mather (S), Rudolph Brand (A, L & M), David Bridgman (S), and

Sean King (M) have been elected.

We wish them a long and fulfilling membership of the Parliament and look forward to each playing her/his part among us.

.oOo.

Proposal Of Membership:

The Committee has received a proposal of membership and CV for **Norton Tennille** and, believing that he would make a worthy Owl, hereby Notices him for any comment Owls may wish to make to the Secretary prior to the proposal being put to a ballot of the Committee.

.oOo.

A New Book

Our indefatigable *President*, **Owl Mike Bruton**, has just published another book. Published by the HSRC, Owl Mike's book,

Harambee: The Spirit of Innovation in Africa showcases the resourcefulness and resilience of people in Africa as they search for solutions to the pressing problems they face daily ... over 800 inventions and innovations by more than 600 innovators from 50 African countries are discussed, and a variety of issues related to innovation are debated.

From mompreneurs to moguls, waste pickers to fintech wizards, locust whisperers to rocket scientists, robocops to internet-enabled balloons, surfing therapy to gin flavoured with elephant dung, *seshwehwe* cloth to microsatellites, you will be totally astounded by the creativity of the African continent's techpreneurs.

.oOo.

The Owl Club: Wine procurement expedition: Hawksmoor at Matjieskuil

The Owl Club *Cellarmaster*, **Owl John Green**, is to be congratulated on planning another very successful wine procurement expedition on Thursday 10th March 2022. 22 intrepid souls (Owls, spouses, lovers and friends) braved the (liquid) perils of the Cape Winelands for a most enjoyable wine tasting and lunch at beautiful *Hawksmoor House*, located on *Matjieskuil* wine farm,.

Mine host, **Owl Mark Borrie**, conducted an interesting, enjoyable (and lavish) wine tasting which was followed by a delicious luncheon (accompanied by much revelry, happy laughter and camaraderie).

All reports indicated that everyone got home safely later that afternoon.

Owls can be assured that they will continue to enjoy fine wines from the *Hawksmoor* label for many Club dinners to come!



Gathered beneath the gable



Too many to name individually (see which Owls you can recognise?)



"For what we are about to receive ...!"



Dining hall, Hawksmoor House



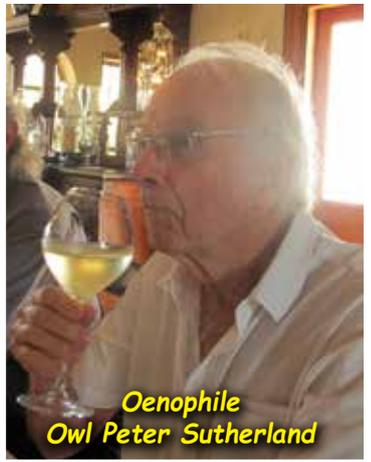
*Sommelier
Owl Leon de Wet*



*Oenophile
Owl Ralph Roseman*



*Oenophile
Owl John Earle*



*Oenophile
Owl Peter Sutherland*



Preparing to 'break the drought' at Matjieskuil



Hawksmoor House at Matjieskuil

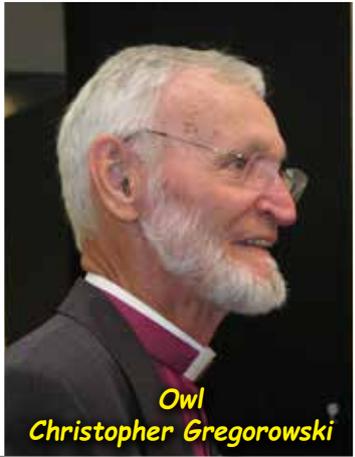
Seen & noted @ the March meeting



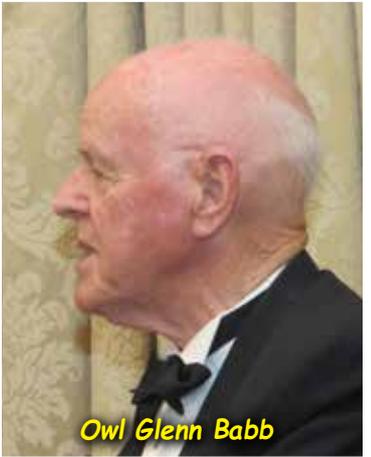
*Honorary Life
Owl Tony Murray*



Owl Geoff Everingham



*Owl
Christopher Gregorowski*



Owl Glenn Babb



That dubious draw? ... The Club 'Flutter' with Owls Gregorowski & Morris



*President
Owl Mike Bruton*