

APRIL 2024 – IN REVIEW

Counting “Carbs” –

I continue torturing myself with the “low-carb” diet, counting out grains of rice to exactly meet the criteria. My weight has dropped from ~111kg (BMI 34.6 – obese) to ~105kg (BMI 32.8 – obese). Now, a 6kg drop in weight, which happened in less than six weeks, sounds pretty impressive. But one could also say that I’ve gone from being obese to slightly less obese. And my weight now seems to have plateaued. Oh dear! 😞

An Evening with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra –

The ASO concert on Saturday, 13th April, “Grandeur”, was an amazing mix of modern and baroque, and it worked! There was a modern piece by a woman with whom I am not familiar, Dobrinka Tabakova (born 1980), the Australian Premiere of “*Barbican Glade*”. This was followed by a Bach Cantata. After the interval, we delighted in Jakub Jankowski's World Premiere composition, “*Before the Law*” based on an excerpt from Kafka. The evening finished in regal splendour with Handel's “*Music for the Royal Fireworks*”. All four were more ensemble pieces than the full orchestra. Special mention to the conductor Stephen Layton, soprano Sara Macliver, and the young Adelaide composer Jakub Jankowski, who was born only in 1994! It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening!

Progressive Christianity Service –

In the *January 2024 – In Review*, I mentioned that I would be presenting at the September Progressive Christianity Service on the theme “*The Good Samaritan in Action*.” The April presenter was to have been Reverend Esmond Dowdy, but Esmond managed to work himself into a bout of congestive heart failure in the lead-up to this month’s Service. I was asked to swap my presentation to this month.

The idea of my theme was to explain that in First Century CE Judaea, the Jews and the Samaritans absolutely detested each other, and so the Parable of the Good Samaritan has considerably more charitable duty placed upon the Christian than the “help out a bloke in trouble” idea we normally have for the Parable.

I wound up designing and delivering the entire Service. The Presentation part tried to overview the history of the Israelites in Canaan (Palestine) to account for the Jewish/Samaritan animosity. We were then to discuss contemporary examples of where such situations could arise. My historical talk of course went way too long, and we adjourned the Service abruptly nearing 8:30 p.m., already half-an-hour overtime! The original plan for May was hastily ditched, and I’ll be backing up with Part 2 of my April Service on 15th May.

Vale John Darroch –

Professor John Darroch died during April, aged 93. John was my Professor and mentor at Flinders University for most of my career, as well as being a good friend. As is so often the case in Adelaide, I discovered that the two Darroch boys I knew at Prince Alfred College were his sons! I visited John and his wife Elisabeth many times at their house in Glen

Osmond, which had beautiful views over the city. Sadly, Elisabeth died several years ago, but John later remarried another wonderful lady, Gloria. Gloria and John attended Nam and my wedding in 2019. John was clearly very frail by then, and it turned out to be the last time I saw him.

Ian Gordon, President of the Statistical Society of Australia, wrote, “Professor Darroch was a major statistical figure in the Australian statistical community in the 20th century. He made important methodological contributions to several areas of statistics, including log-linear models, methods for efficient maximum likelihood estimation, and capture-recapture data. He was Head of Statistics at Flinders University, South Australia for 30 years, and was a valued and significant contributor to the life of the Statistical Society of Australia, serving a term as President. He was awarded the Society’s Pitman Medal for 2005.”

Bits and Pieces –

- I enjoyed a few visits for lunch from friends during the month, Danny Gibbins on one occasion and Steve Vickers on another.
- On the last Sunday of the month, Michael Vidler and David Wheeler came for lunch. Michael and Nam are both keen cooks, so they planned the meal between them. Michael brought an African-style lamb dish and Nam made his maiden cheesecake. David and I just sat there and enjoyed the food! 😊
- Nam made yet more visits to the native plant nursery at Belair Recreation Park. One Sunday, we both decided to go and have lunch out on the way. I enjoyed getting out of the house, but I stopped short of trying to look around the nursery. There are now several shrubs awaiting Nam’s attention to get themselves planted.
- Our friends Adriana and Chris have been in the process of having a new house built, following somewhat the trail that we (well, Nam, really) blazed. They did it the hard way: they were living in Canberra at the time and Adriana had family concerns that took her back to Canada! They originally signed with the two architects we had used, but, when they saw what a mess they had made of our design, they quickly “unsigned”. They did use the same builder as us though. On the last Saturday of the month, there was a small soiree in their new house. It was now theirs but yet to be moved into. I doubt they’ll be building again anytime soon! 😊