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BARRY BARFLY ON THE BACK...

From the editors

The principles of the eight hour day were born out of the industrial revolution in Britain, where the growing productivity of industrial factories was creating longer working hours for labourers.

The labour movement wanted a healthier working structure and they felt an eight hour day would foster this ideal.

It was Robert Owen in 1817 who developed the idea to balance eight hours of labour, eight hours of rest and eight hours of recreation.

During the Victorian gold rush of the 1850s, the stonemasons' working hours accelerated dramatically, and they brought Owen's principles to Australia.

They told employers that by the 18th of August 1855 their working day would not exceed eight hours.

We want to re-examine this concept by celebrating, dissecting and reflecting on the activities that make up the eight hour day.

From the satisfaction of a day's work to the rewarding beers at the end of the week.

It's about a song that lifts your spirits, or a debate with friends. It's about discussion around skills, and the satisfaction of creating something with your own hands.

These are the principles we aim to capture and report on.

We hope you enjoy it and discuss it, with friends, over that unbelievably delicious, hard-earned and satisfying meal at the end of an eight hour day.

- Cameron Miller & Nicholas Yallop

Contact us

Eight Hour Day is a forum to share our passions, and we want to hear what you've got to say about pretty much everything.

Whether it's about a stellar gig, album or film you've checked out, or an issue we discuss in the magazine, we want to hear about it.

All you need to do is contact us via email, twitter or our website and we'll do our best to slot your thoughts into a future issue.

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The cult of Julian Assange

Wikileaks has made Melburnian Julian Assange a saint with civil libertarians and an arch enemy of governments across the world, especially the paranoid U.S. regime. But is Assange really blowing the lid off the diplomatic world, or is he just chasing the limelight? **Hamish Coleman** explores.



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has attracted his fair share of headlines. Photo: © STRINGER/epa/Corbis

There is no doubt the Wikileaks juggernaut has produced its fair share of copy and intriguing stories. Not least that the US State Department and various others leak like sieves.

There are the fundamental questions about whether we are seeing a new media form, a direct conduit between those who consume and make the news. However, we have also seen how reliant new media remains on the old for promotion, sustenance and legitimacy.

Then there is the character of Julian Assange, a man who, while ascribing some higher purpose to his activities, exhibits the desperation for publicity of any celebrity or western politician. He's a man who wouldn't look out of place playing a comic book villain and who, bizarrely, has been charged with what appears to be a spurious rape allegation in Sweden.

What's disappointing about Wikileaks is the utterly uncontroversial nature of the leaked 'revelations'. We have been exposed to the earth shattering intelligence that the Saudi regime (the closest thing

the world has to an authentic fifteenth century feudal society) is petrified of the Iranian government and its activities.

We have also learned that Iran has been heavily involved in extra-state activities in the Middle East, including supporting known terrorist groups. Hardly breaking news.

"Is Assange the heir to the Woodward and Bernstein legacy? "

What was surprising was Sinophile Kevin Rudd's eminently sensible analysis of China, their ambitions and paranoid delusions about Taiwan, which he provided to the Americans. Unsurprising was the news that US diplomats realised the Rudd government had lost its way well before the Canberra press gallery caught wind.

Wikileaks promises much but has so far delivered little.

For the vast majority, the contents of the copious documents released serve largely to reassure that while diplomacy dictates a certain public discretion, those charged with protecting the interests of the civilised world at least have some idea what's going on.

That they realise the Saudi regime is weak and afraid and that elements of the regime support terrorism. That they realise that while China is friendly now, they have a fundamentally divergent political system to ours, a difference which has the potential to cause issues in the future.

“Wikileaks could provide a global forum for the collection of ‘smoking gun’ leaks in the public interest.”

That's the thing with international diplomacy, it requires some ability to obfuscate, to say something that's not exactly what you think... that's diplomatic. Wikileaks could provide a global forum for the collection of 'smoking gun' leaks in the public interest and protect the anonymity of whistle blowers where dissent can mean danger or death.

Think Burmese military personnel sympathetic to the democracy movement releasing documents to discredit the junta, or Nigerian bureaucrats confirming corrupt misspending of oil money. Wikileaks could be a great force for transparency where it is actually truly needed. Instead, it has become a circus.

In the broadsheet media, coverage of Wikileaks has descended into a fawning cult of personality around Assange. There has been hysterical chauvinism in the conservative blogosphere, and tawdry scandal journalism in the tabloid media.

Indeed, the broadsheets have been no less obsessed than their

tabloid counterparts with the salacious and frankly bizarre details of Assange's Swedish sex charges.

There has also been significant newsprint dedicated to discussions analysing the implications of Wikileaks for the journalistic profession and the ethics of disclosure generally.

Is Assange the heir to the Woodward and Bernstein legacy? Almost certainly not, but journalists have never been ones to miss a chance to navel gaze. However, as there is very little news contained in the revelations, perhaps it is unfair to blame the media for finding something more interesting to report.

The obvious question is 'why'? To the mostly American conservative media, it is a fait accompli that Wikileaks is seditiously attempting to subvert US foreign policy. They believe Julian Assange is an ideological enemy of the US state. While this is perhaps true, the unsexy nature of the revelations means their treason value is limited.

The most obvious reason that Wikileaks bothered to publish the documents is that Wikileaks' social and political goals are subservient to Assange's desire for publicity. Assange has become the pin-up boy for the global chattering classes.

He is the face of oh-so-appropriate middle class dissent. While Assange would argue that he is the heroic defender of the anonymity of his sources, becoming the lightning rod for negative reaction, his position as the public face of Wikileaks also means he is now one of the world's most famous people.

Can Wikileaks simply be considered a high water mark in self-promotion? A blueprint for publicity for those who'd like to be famous, but don't want to go down the Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian path of vacuous notoriety? Not really. It is probably more than that.

Many media companies have actively cooperated with



Should Paris and Kim be turning to Julian Assange for PR advice?

Assange. They have helped him sort, collate and disseminate his information. They have delivered (and possibly helped formulate) a planned campaign of activity, designed to keep the Wikileaks story going for as long as possible.

So, why did these media companies choose to publish the revelations, surely realising their at best mildly interesting contents? Who knows. Most likely a fear of missing out.

This is hardly new. However, what is new is media companies actively participating in the development and delivery of a communications campaign.

This undoubtedly has implications for the future of media, but really Swedish sex-crime laws seem so much more interesting.

Contact us

Does Wikileaks represent a legitimate voice for the people, or should the confidential information it has been exposing be kept out of the papers? Let us know what you think about Julian Assange via email or twitter.

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twitter.com/eighthrday

Bringing imagination into the everyday

Justin Hutchinson is a Melbourne-based industrial designer who is inspired by injecting imagination into the things we take for granted. He has worked on benches, bike racks, tables, chairs, urinals, roof top gardens, bollards and more. If you've every walked around Melbourne, chances are you've walked past some of Justin's work. He talks to **Cameron Miller** about his job.



Poster pole in Stanley Street, Collingwood, as designed by Justin Hutchinson.

Justin Hutchinson spent his childhood in South Africa, before moving to Melbourne with his family at the age of nine. Today, he is the director of Justin Hutchinson Design, an industrial and urban design consultancy based in a studio at the Abbotsford Convent.

Justin explains that as boy he would always be making, playing, building and creating. In retrospect to the interview, I think that most children do this as they grow up; make, play and create, but Justin made a point of it. Even as a boy he needed to bring imagination into his work. Maybe as kids we play, and as adults we redefine it as work.

At high school, Justin excelled in graphic design and art, and his teachers recommended he pursue industrial design. While he was accepted at Swinburne University, Justin claims that it took him "three years to really understand industrial design".

During his university years, Justin continually questioned the processes behind industrial design and mass production and explored how they pair with concepts of sustainability, utility and humanism.

After taking time off to explore the world (highlighted by a visit to Hundertvasser's kunsthausewien in Vienna) he found sanctuary in his blue-sky ideals, knowing they were not parallel to many of his fellow university students. This provided the motivation and courage to push the boundaries in the industry.

During his honours year at Swinburne, Justin's lecturers struggled to understand the basis for his design ideas. In a way, he was just beginning to discover them himself. Consequently, he found it challenging to communicate his abstract ideas.

Justin describes one of these concepts, Wabi Sabi, which, in its basic form, is the idea of beauty in the organic. He explains how ideas always evolve, things always change, and how accommodating for this in furniture design, urban landscapes and industrial design is what inspires him. Wabi Sabi, he says, challenges the idea that decay is a problem, viewing it not as an end, but as an agent of change.

After university, Justin found work with a manufacturer and design team called Tait, which was based in Collingwood. They encouraged him with his passion for furniture design and his constant questioning of the manufacturing process.

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Curving timber (kerfing)

Cameron Miller is passionate about old knowledge and skills. He is going to attempt to motivate others to adopt this knowledge, to enable them to accomplish tasks that may otherwise seem complicated, merely because the skill set is forgotten. In this article he will explore his skills background and the process of curving timber.

My father is pretty handy. Growing up I remember standing in the garage with a hammer smacking nails into the work bench, just so I could build, like him I guess.

A family friend, Tim, was also a carpenter and I remember him telling me how to hit a nail into a block of timber with three hits: the first hit to guide the nail, the second to drive it in and the third to neaten it up.

Over the years, I have watched my dad build dog kennels, walls, sky lights, tv cabinets, tables, doll houses, decking, framing and garden paths, and I always helped as much as I could. As I got older I started trying my own timber work and have become more competent as a result. I have benefited greatly from being taught these skills over the years.

In this magazine I want to incorporate articles that explain the method behind some of the tasks I have taken on, tasks that require the basic knowledge of tools and materials.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to pass on your own knowledge, please contact us. I will also endeavour to interview others to explain their trades and generally showcase DIY skills.

The first process I want to talk through is curving timber, also known as kerfing. I recently built a decorative trim for a curved counter face in a store, as seen in the image above.

Kerfing can be useful as a finish to benchtops, cabinetry, beds, coffee tables and more. While curving timber is a challenge, the basic elements simply require patience – respect the timber and it will return the favour.

In this process I will talk specifically about the curved timber facing, it is assumed a curved frame has been established.

As a reference for timber work that has inspired me – see Wharton Esherick online



Method

1. The timber used in this counter was a hardwood, 12mm x 90mm, about 1-2 metres long. Curved around a full corner on a curved benchtop (quarter of the circumference of a circle).
2. Take the timber and on the unexposed side, cut vertical grooves every 10mm.
3. When the grooves are cut, soak the timber in water for 2-3 minutes.
4. Once soaked through, bend into the curve. The main point is to take your time bending it into shape. Move too fast and the timber could snap.
5. Secure the newly curved timber onto the framing timber using wood glue and tacking nails or wood screws.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the first instance, I tried to use a router to cut the grooves. Being a novice with power tools, I fucked it up, badly. It made heaps of noise and was an uncomfortable process. Given my experience with handsaws, this was far more efficient. With intricate tasks, it can be beneficial to use hand tools from start to finish.

The ultimate humiliation heralds start of new era

The recent Ashes series saw Australia on the receiving end of an unprecedented thrashing at the hands of a merciless England. It was a nightmare series for Australian cricket fans, and being a dual national didn't stop the once disillusioned **Nicholas Yallop** from feeling the pain. But there is hope and excitement just around the corner, beginning in Sri Lanka this August.



Australian captain Ricky Ponting had a shocking Ashes series, averaging just 16 from eight innings. Is it time for 'Punter' to call it a day? Photo: Patrick Eagar.

In the end I wanted the seemingly inescapable nightmare to reach its conclusion. For more than a month, the hapless Australian cricket team had left me cringing with embarrassment. While I was willing to allow England their all-too-rare moment in the Australian sun (they hadn't won a series here in 25 years), this was simply too much.

Wicket after wicket fell, run after run was plundered by England's batsmen. Australia's inadequate bowlers and batsmen couldn't comprehend the question, let alone find an answer. And, to make matters even worse, song after bloody song was sung by the irritating but essential Barmy Army.

Three severe defeats in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney tainted the beginning of my summer. England were patently the better team: they batted and bowled with more discipline, they fielded unlike any contemporary England team ever has, and mastered the conditions as if it were their home series.

Many pundits wrote England off before the series

began, claiming players such as Alastair Cook (who ended up scoring an incredible 766 runs at an average of 126 per innings) and James Anderson (who swung the ball as if it were on a string and took 24 wickets at an average of 26) were weak and uncompetitive. How horribly wrong these predictions have proven to be.

For local fans, the most disappointing aspect was Australia's utterly pathetic performances. With the exception of Perth, where the match was turned by an inspired Mitchell Johnson spell, the Australians bowled waywardly and without a plan, and batted with the discipline of a bunch of high school kids. Their period of dominance has finally come to an end, in the most undignified fashion imaginable.

I have not always felt this passionate about the Australia cricket team. In fact, it is something that stirred in my mid-20s, only when they began to lose.

The dominant Australian teams of the late 90s and early 21st century had left me cold. While I admired and respected their outrageous skill, their poor sportsmanship, sledging and arrogance tipped the scales.

They didn't play in the spirit of the game. It's a cliché, but it's true.

I have always ardently supported the national soccer and rugby union teams, just not the cricketers. Their lack of humility irked me, until they were on the verge of defeat to England. Then, like a hibernating grizzly bear waiting for the weather to turn, a deep passion was awoken.

The cricketing climate turned in the European summer of 2005, when England awoke from their Ashes slumber and won back the famous urn for the first time in almost 20 years. Their triumph came out of nowhere and reignited interest in Test cricket across the globe.

Being half English, I had always been partial to supporting the 'mother country', mainly on the soccer field (which wasn't short of its heartaches). As far as cricket goes, I can vividly remember cheering England on to an unlikely win in the 1998 Boxing Day Test, inspired by their colourful and enigmatic fast bowler, Darren Gough. I even joined the jubilant Barmy Army for a post-game sing-song in front of the England change rooms.

However, I was not really barracking out of patriotic pride, but more for competition. At the time Australia was unbeatable and this was a rare Test win for England (Australia ultimately won the series 3-1).

Between 1999 and 2001, under the stewardship of Steve Waugh, and between 2005 and 2008, when captained by Ricky Ponting, Australia twice won a world record 16 consecutive Test matches. The next best was the fearsome 1980s West Indian team that won 11 in a row.

Led by legends of the game - Steve Waugh, Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Ricky Ponting, Adam Gilchrist - Australia's team of champions was all-but invincible for a decade. They were a supremely gifted group of players that won with mundane regularity. It was exciting only to the most fervently patriotic cricket fans and each summer I found myself willing the opposing team to put up some form of a fight.

But when the contest was suddenly alive and England won, I felt as though the world had been turned on its head and we were living in a parallel universe.

Everything that was once wrong was now right. The space-time continuum had been interfered with. For the first time in 18 years, England had beaten Australia in an Ashes series. I had wanted a contest, but this wasn't right.

To make matters worse, I was in London for the beginning and end of the series. For the parts in between I was in Canada, nervously tuning in via the web. Suddenly I didn't give a toss about Australia winning with dignity. As far as I was concerned, Shane Warne and co. could have picked

up stumps and beaten their opponents, as long as they won!

To make matters even worse, before the series started I had confidently dismissed England's chances of winning in the company of a group of Londoners. Suffice to say, when I returned a matter of days after the final Test, they were quick to remind me of some of my more obnoxious comments.

In saying all of this, it was an epic series and provided a much needed lifeline to what has been one of sport's great contests. If Test cricket was to survive a seemingly endless period of Australian dominance and a sudden preoccupation with Twenty20 cricket, an exciting Ashes series was required.

Since 2005, Australia has won once (5-0 whitewash in 2006/2007) and England twice (last year on home soil to go with this summer's resounding win away from home). While it has been a painful summer of cricket for Australian fans, it should also be seen as the dawn of an exciting new era.

The old guard is going or gone (Ponting, Hussey, Katich and Haddin can't last much longer) and a new generation is emerging, led by exciting players such as the first Muslim to play for Australia, Usman Khawaja.

Fans have never been more engaged in what the Australian cricket team should look like and there has been an almost deafening call for change since the Ashes defeat. If the selectors show some spine and have faith in young cricketers, Australia can build a team from the ground up. A team that can work hard towards reclaiming the Ashes in England in 2013.

But that is a while away yet, and the first opportunity for redemption comes in Sri Lanka in August. Here's what my team would look like for the first Test (in batting order):

Shane Watson, Phil Hughes, Usman Khawaja, Michael Clarke, Ricky Ponting (captain), Steve Smith, Tim Paine (wicketkeeper), Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Hauritz, Peter Siddle, Trent Copeland.

Contact us

What does your Australian Test team look like? Let us know via email or twitter .

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Steve Waugh modelling a text book forward-defensive stroke during his innings of 152 at Lord's during the 1989 Ashes series. He made 506 runs during the series, which Australia won 4-0. Photo: Patrick Eagar.





*License, registration, I ain't got one, but I've got a clear conscience
'bout the things that I've done – State Trooper*



The name Bruce Springsteen evokes stirring anthems, from *Born to Run* to *Badlands*, or, in more recent years, *Radio Nowhere* and *The Rising*. Songs of this ilk are brimming with orchestral production and his quintessential blue-collar growl.

Amidst these era-defining hits sits the high-point of his acoustic recordings, *Nebraska* (1982).

This starkly produced record may not feature the wall-of-sound production that characterised *Born to Run* and *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, but its haunting narratives are no less powerful. In fact, thematically, Springsteen has rarely been bleaker than *Nebraska*, on which he tells tales of serial killers, murderers, conflicted policeman and various other vagrants.

Springsteen recorded *Nebraska* by himself on a four-track cassette recorder as a demo for an album he planned to do with long-time collaborators, The E Street Band. However, once given the E Street treatment, he and the producers felt the original, stripped back feel gave the album more intensity. How right they were.

Bereft of drums, bass and electric guitar (except on *Open All Night*), *Nebraska* is driven by Springsteen's emotion-charged vocal performance and sombre lyrics.

They are transfixing throughout, no more so than on the thrilling *State Trooper*, the story of a misunderstood, escaped convict on the run through New Jersey.

Springsteen plays the same droning guitar chords throughout, but it doesn't stop the song building to a powerful crescendo, thanks mainly to his eerie, affected vocals. The story finishes with the protagonist pleading, "Hey somebody out there, listen to my last prayer. Hi ho silver-o deliver me from nowhere".

On *Nebraska*, Springsteen inhabits his various protagonists' skin with such ease and conviction. From the honest copper Joe Roberts sparing his miscreant brother, Frankie on the sombre *Highway Patrolman*, to the frustrated son of *Used Car*, dreaming of a lottery win and who's been walking the "same dirty streets" his whole life.

Driving is a popular motif in Springsteen's songs, particularly his earlier work. Whether driving out of pride (*Born To Run*, *Open All Night*), to survive (*Racing in the Street*), or, most commonly, to escape (*Thunder Road*, *State Trooper*, *Atlantic City*), cars define his characters.

Despite the predominantly gloomy parables, *Nebraska* ends on a relatively uplifting note with

Reason to Believe. It's a song that encapsulates the poignant realism that colours the album and his immense back catalogue.

While he may wear his heart on his sleeve and is prone to a fair degree of melodrama, that's the whole point of his music. It's the histrionics that make his songs so compelling.

Thunder Road from his breakthrough album *Born To Run* (1975) features a line that dryly encapsulates this characteristic:

*So you're scared and you're thinking,
that maybe we ain't that young
anymore.*

*Show a little faith there's magic in
the night, you ain't a beauty but hey
you're alright.*

Oh and that's alright with me.

No songs on *Nebraska* feature the all-out rock and roll or veiled optimism of *Thunder Road*, but they do share a dedication to telling real stories of Springsteen's favourite muse – middle America anti-heroes.

While he can be accused of being overly sentimental, it's this connection to real people that helps him remain relevant today.

NY



Foals are playing at the Palace Theatre on 10 February

Gigs in February

5 February - I Heart Hiroshima

\$12, Northcote Social Club. These guys' dynamic tunes are postively explosive live and Susie Patten's venomous drumming is worth the price of admission alone. They haven't released any new songs since 2009's *The Rip*, but they will be testing out some new material at this gig - their first in Melbourne for some time.

10 February - Foals

\$60, Palace Theatre. Their superb *Total Life Forever* was one of the albums of 2010 and this Laneway Festival sideshow promises to be an ethereal affair.

Stonefield (supporting Immigrant Union throughout February)

Total Hotel. Big, big things are tipped for this band of teenaged sisters (the youngest member is 13!) from Gisborne. They won last year's Triple J Unearthed High competition and, believe it or not, have been hand-picked to play at Glastonbury later this year. Their rollicking first single, *Walk Me Through The Clover* is catchy enough, but go along to the Tote to see if they're worthy of the hype.

11 February - De La Soul

\$70, Billboard. This legendary east-coast hip-hop trio were just in town with Gorillaz, and they're coming back to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of their influential sophomore record, *De La Soul Is Dead*. In what's sure to be a memorable night, filled with early 90s nostalgia, they'll be performing the album from start to finish.

18 February - Kate Nash

\$57, Billboard. In town for the second time in six months (she played two sold-out shows in August last year) Kate Nash has come a long way since her precocious 2007 debut, *Made of Bricks*. She has abandoned the floral dresses and juvenile themes, embracing a far grittier and mature sound on her latest record, *My Best Friend is You*. Despite the lazy comparisons, this riot grrrl is no Lily Allen - her music packs far more punch than that pint-sized pop star.

Eight Hour Day playlists

Albums

1. Darren Hanlon - *I Will Love You At All* (2010, Flippin Yeah)
2. Warpaint - *The Fool* (2010, Rough Trade)
3. Best Coast - *Crazy For You* (2010, Mexican Summer)
4. The Hold Steady - *Heaven Is Whenever* (2010, Vagrant Records)
5. The Soft Pack - *The Soft Pack* (2010, Kemado Records)
6. Refused - *The Shape Of Punk To Come* (1998, Burning Heart)
7. The National - *Boxer* (2007, 4AD)
8. MC5 - *Kick Out The Jams* (1969, Elektra)
9. My Disco - *Little Joy* (2010, Stomp)
10. Personal and the Pizzas - *Raw Pie* (2010, 1-2-3-4 GO! Records)

Songs

1. The Holidays - *Heavy Feathers*
2. Crowded House - *Silent House*
3. The National - *England*
4. Interpol - *NYC*
5. Little Red - *Slow Motion*
6. Cloud Control - *Just For Now*
7. Phoenix - *Sometimes In The Fall*
8. Warpaint - *Undertow*
9. School of Seven Bells - *Windstorm*
10. The Cure - *All I Want*
11. Washed Out - *You'll See It*
12. Shout Out Louds - *Impossible*
13. The Soft Pack - *Mexico*
14. Best Coast - *Bratty B*
15. The Hold Steady - *Our Whole Lives*

Send us a playlist

Put together a 15-song playlist and we'll publish it in this regular column. Send your latest faves to eighthourday@hotmail.com or post them on our website Don't forget to include your name and suburb.

Classic film: *Memento*

Christopher Nolan hit the big time in 2008 with his spectacular Batman sequel *The Dark Knight*, and deservedly so. As a dramatic action film it is peerless, let alone for a comic book adaptation. It's tense, gripping and meticulously crafted.

He followed it up last year with another hit, *Inception*. At last glance this mind-bending sci-fi film had taken almost \$900 million worldwide.

These two films have made Nolan a superstar and he can demand a blank cheque as he prepares his third Batman film, *The Dark Knight Rises*. It seems a long time since he introduced himself to mainstream audiences in 2000 with *Memento*.

Nolan appears to gravitate towards emotionally unstable leading men. In *Insomnia* (2002) Al Pacino played a morally panicked policeman who can't sleep; Christian Bale's Batman in *Batman Begins* (2005) and *The Dark Knight* (2008) has a few skeletons in the closet and Heath Ledger's sociopathic Joker in the latter film speaks for itself.

He had Hugh Jackman play a fatally envious magician in *The Prestige* (2006), and, this year, Leonardo DiCaprio continued the tradition, playing the irrevocably tormented Dominic Cobb in *Inception*.

In *Memento*, Leonard Shelby (Guy Pearce) was one of the first of Nolan's unhinged creations. Shelby is a man possessed by the desire to avenge his wife's brutal rape and murder. But the same incident left him unconscious and without the ability to form short-term memory, severely hindering his chances of catching the killer.

In an ingenious device that places the audience in a similarly confused state, Nolan tells the

story from end to beginning, in the ten-minute bursts that Leonard's shattered mind can handle.

It begins with Leonard shooting Teddy (Joe Pantaliano), a mysterious cop whose story is fleshed out as the film moves backwards, or is that forwards? Whatever it is, it's not until the final scene that Teddy's death makes sense.

Leonard brands himself with tattoos and inscribes innumerable polaroids to remind him of what may come next, and we similarly scramble for pieces of the puzzle, desperately trying to make sense of the complete picture. And, just like *Inception*, not all is as it seems.

Guy Pearce is outstanding, as he always is. Ever since his scene-stealing role as the goody two-shoes Lieutenant Edward Exley in *L.A. Confidential*, he has proven to be one of his generation's best actors, not to mention *Neighbours'* finest graduate.

It is unfortunate that Pearce is rarely seen on screen, seemingly due to his aversion to the spotlight.

His Leonard is incredibly focused with an emotionless drive to kill his wife's murderer. But there is a vulnerability to him as well, as he relies on others to help him on his quest, others who invariably betray him in some fashion.

In typical noir style, Nolan depicts a seedy world, filled with drug dealers, femme fatales, cheap motels, abandoned warehouses and dingy bars, that Leonard, the former insurance salesman, must somehow negotiate to catch his wife's killer.

NY

February releases

3 Feb

Tamara Drewe – Directed by Stephen Frears (*The Queen*), this English comedy tells the story of a sleepy village brought to life by a fetching journalist returning from London.

10 Feb

127 Hours – Danny Boyle (*Sunshine & 28 Days Later*) enlists James Franco to play Aron Ralston in the true story of a mountaineer who was trapped in a crevasse and went to extraordinary lengths to survive. Boyle and Franco are tipped for Oscars (which the latter is co-hosting).

Hereafter – Clint Eastwood (*Gran Torino & Unforgiven*) is now 80 and has been directing films for 40 years (his directorial debut was *Play Misty for Me*). In an usual move, *Hereafter* sees Eastwood apply his meditative touch to sci-fi, with Matt Damon playing a reformed psychic.

17 Feb

Inside Job – A scathing, critically-acclaimed documentary that delves into the story behind the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Narrated by Matt Damon.

Rabbit Hole – Nicole Kidman and Aaron Eckhart (*The Dark Knight*) play a husband and wife paralysed by grief after their son is killed in a car accident. A change of pace for director John Cameron Mitchell, who also made the controversial *Shortbus*.

24 Feb

Conviction – In a typically intense role, Hillary Swank (*Million Dollar Baby*) plays Betty Anne Waters in the true story of a woman who fought for years to save her brother (played by Sam Rockwell) from a life in jail for a murder he apparently didn't commit. Looks compelling, but is Swank ever going to lighten up?



Great art inspires you to reflect on your own life and the experiences that colour it.

This type of feeling can be derived from a painting, a song, a book, a joke or a performance. I remember seeing The Strokes in 2006 during a rather difficult period and thinking to myself, "yes, this *is* it, this is what life's all about". It was a watershed moment.

Recently, a cult television show that only ran for one season of 18 episodes has stirred that feeling again.

Freaks and Geeks is a 1999 comedy/drama about a motley bunch of Detroit high-school students, and a series that gave actors James Franco, Seth Rogen and Jason Segal their starts in show business. It is also one of the first projects prolific comedy director/producer Jud Apatow – of *40 Year Old Virgin*, *Knocked Up*, *Superbad*, *Pineapple Express* and *I Love You, Man* fame – worked on.

Freaks and Geeks never aired earlier than 11pm in Australia and unless you're a night owl like me, you may well have no idea what I'm talking about.

It's fundamentally a coming-of-age story focusing on Lindsay Weir (Linda Cardellini) and her younger brother Sam (John Francis Daley), who attend the same high school.

They are battling the often excruciating vagaries of adolescence. Lindsay is in the midst of a 1/5 life crisis. She has rebelled, turning her back on her mathlete past and embracing the 'freaks', a group of slackers and stoners who epitomise everything Lindsay wasn't in her nerdy past. Out goes the pigtail and pretty floral dress, in comes the oversized army jacket, boots and pot. We've all been there.

Sam must be only 14, but it is he and his 'geek' friends whom I most strongly related to. Sam and his friends Neal (Samm Levine) and Bill (Martin Starr) are awkward, self-conscious and anxious, wear their hearts on their sleeves and think far too much for their own good. Apart from their penchant for *Dungeons and Dragons*, they're pretty much what I was like when I was in Year 9.

Sam's story evoked many of my own high-school memories, both good and bad. Some I would rather bury along with my innumerable basketball caps and trading cards, but still, any piece of art that makes you *feel* is doing very well indeed.

Freak and Geeks is about trying to be cool, asking girls out, being uncomfortable at parties, being someone else, being yourself, loyalty, playing spin the bottle, French kissing, farting, does she or doesn't she like me?

The writers don't mock their characters' geeky tendencies, they embrace and celebrate them with equal parts wit and reverence. This is what sets *Freaks and Geeks* apart from the rest and makes it such a joy to watch.

While the conversations we have at that age seem incredibly serious at the time, they are often completely irrational and ridiculous. The writers play up these absurdities to great comic, and occasionally dramatic, effect.

It also has a great soundtrack, full of wonderfully cheesy 70s rock, and, in Joan Jett's *Bad Reputation*, probably the best TV show theme song ever.

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Memorable Freaks and Geeks quotes

"Everybody looks good in a turtle necks, that's the point"

"The dance is tomorrow. She's a cheerleader, you've seen *Star Wars* 27 times. You do the math."

"I'm Jewish. That's no cakewalk either. Last year, I was elected school treasurer. I didn't even run!"

"I have to get into a bar. Everything fun in life happens in bars"

"Are you calling me irrational? Because I'll tear your head off, Daniel. I'll tear it off and I'll throw it over that fence"

Multiculturalism in Australia

Australians have long been proud of their multicultural society, and for good reason. While its immigration history book is not without its misguided pages, Australia has been a place for migrants to come and flourish. But as population continues to grow and space in its cities becomes increasingly scarce, **Adam Coleman** asks whether Australia's approach to immigration could be set to change.

A rather peculiar thing happened in Germany last year. Angela Merkel, the country's notoriously austere Chancellor (a post equivalent to our Prime Minister) declared that German multiculturalism had "utterly failed".

While there were some caveats on her seemingly bald diagnosis, can anyone imagine an Australian politician saying anything like that? Ever? In Australia, it is a bi-partisan position, tri-partisan if you count the Greens, that our policy of Australian multiculturalism has been a rip-roaring success.

More familiar to Australians would be the treatment of another German, Thilo Sarrazin, who was pushed to resign his role as a director of Germany's central bank after he wrote a book that argued muslim immigrants are a drain on German society and failed to integrate.

He has also claimed all Jews share a "particular gene", which, in a country with such a despicable history of anti-Semitism, was poorly-advised at best. Despite this, Sarrazin got off lightly by Australian standards.

As a comparison, readers may recall the case of Danny Nalliah, a kooky but harmless Christian pastor who, along with his colleague Pastor Daniel Scot, was sued under Victoria's then new racial and religious tolerance laws.

Nalliah and Scott had presented a seminar critical of Islamic teachings and aspects of the Koran which offended three Muslims in attendance.

The pair ultimately prevailed in court, but the risk of litigation, even when it is unsuccessful, is

usually effective at sealing lips and stymieing debate.

Another example is that of Pauline Hanson, a small businesswoman turned professional rabble rouser and MP who briefly became the most reviled person in the South Pacific after, in her inelegant manner, expressing concern that Australia was being "swamped by Asians".

Hanson was disendorsed by the Liberal Party and eviscerated by the media, reducing her to the status of a frequently unsuccessful independent candidate.

While Pauline eventually went on to compete in *Dancing with the Stars* and pen an autobiography, hilariously titled *Untamed and Unashamed*, the lessons are obvious: multiculturalism remains one of the most revered of Australia's sacred cows. Mess with it at your peril.

There may be another lesson, though. One that is very rarely discussed. And it goes to what Merkel, Sarrazin and Nalliah were really talking about.

When Europeans think of migration and multiculturalism, they see riotous youths in Paris' desolate banlieues, Germany's ever unwelcome Turkish gastarbeiters and radicalised south Asian youths in the heart of the UK.

Likewise, whether it be the rise of anti-immigration leaders like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Switzerland's extraordinary ban on minaret-building or France's assimilationist banning of the full veil, it is Islam, rather than multiculturalism itself, that Europeans are finding it hard to get along with.

The perception (and, in many ways, reality) of an ageing native-born population being displaced by a growing, confident Muslim community that doesn't think much of the native culture appears to motivate much of the European disquiet. Indeed, 'our' Pauline's original warnings about "Asians" seem quaint and naive in the present day, a piece of politically-incorrect nineties nostalgia.

"Australians as a rule regard their own multicultural society as resilient and dynamic."

Australia is not immune to worries about Muslim immigration, with private concerns mumbled quietly, but with some regularity in suburban sitting rooms around the country.

However, unlike in Europe, 'multicultural' and 'Muslim' are far from the same thing in Australian minds. And, rather than seeing their own society as being besieged by an essentially alien culture, Australians as a rule regard their own multicultural society as resilient and dynamic; certainly not in retreat in the face of recent arrivals.

Perhaps it is the 'multi' in Australian multiculturalism that is the secret to its success.

Unlike much of Europe, whose immigrants are disproportionately Muslim, Australia has received people from a wide range of source countries, with more recent arrivals coming from countries either close to Australia culturally (the UK, New Zealand and South Africa) or geographically (China, India, Vietnam and Malaysia)

allowing ongoing trade and familial ties to flourish.

Germany and Australia started mass migration programs for similar reasons after WWII. Germany needed hands for the production lines of its post-war miracle economy. Australia also had a booming economy, and, insecure in its region, saw the imperative to populate or perish.

“...it was our good fortune to receive a broad mix of migrants, with none becoming a dominant, insurgent ‘other’, but rather being encouraged to integrate”

Unlike Germany, which initially hoped to return and rotate its *gastarbeiters* rather than resettle them, remote Australia actually had to pay European families to make a new, permanent life in the Antipodes.

The Germans, thanks to the demands of their industrial firms who balked at having to re-train migrant workers every few years, never did manage to return their Turkish population.

As Australia broadened its migration intake (and its mind) to include non-Europeans, it was our good fortune, rather than good planning, to receive a broad mix of migrants, with none becoming a dominant, insurgent ‘other’, but rather being encouraged to integrate with the host society. The breadth of our origins is now a quite genuine matter of national pride for Australians.

However, it is a truism to say that the character of any society depends upon the individuals who comprise it. And, despite recent changes to the rhetoric about a ‘big Australia’, mass immigration will continue to be a vital part of Australia’s growth and development in the years and decades to come.

If we want to maintain our admirable living standards and social harmony – in other words, what makes us so attractive to prospective migrants in the first place – it is simply unrealistic to rely on good fortune in future.

Australians have recently been debating the nation’s response to expanding immigration. Ultimately, though, we need to investigate the program itself, and how it can continue to advance Australia in the generations to come.

Justin Hutchinson – continued from page 6

Tait supported his belief in Australian designed and manufactured products, helping him to discover the pathways to get his work into spaces around Melbourne.

The most satisfying part of Justin’s career thus far has been witnessing people interacting with and enjoying his designs in Paul Mathis’ Transport complex. Justin was only 23 when he helped design furniture for the popular Federation Square venue. “Seeing the tables get danced on was pretty satisfying,” he says.

Justin is now an established industrial designer in Melbourne, working predominantly with councils, helping to question and resolve urban design problems. A poster pole in Stanley Street, Collingwood, recently enabled him to incorporate the council’s need for street signage into a space where people could put bill posters.

As a former poster plasterer myself, more street signage space for independents is much needed, and for Justin to design a solution that helps councils encourage this is great for the community.

Resolving problems is the basis for much of Justin’s work today, and becomes the framework of his day. Justin is faced with the challenges of time, manufacturing, material, engineering constraints and creating a solution that the client can adopt and utilise. This is a typical process for all designers, especially those who challenge the constraints of traditional design.

I asked Justin what skill he could impart to others, and he found it an easy question to answer. For many years he worked as a lecturer at Swinburne University, and he would tell every class that the biggest challenge designers face is explaining and communicating their ideas and values.

Like Justin, many will be challenging tradition, and abstract ideas are often hard to explain. He suggests that it pays to summarise complex ideas with a traditional portfolio, with clean images and well-explained notations.

Justin has a knack for explaining his ideas concisely and an innate ability to bring imagination into the everyday.



Justin Hutchinson

The other side of Singapore

Singapore is deemed a stopover destination by many travellers: fine to stay a couple of days to shop and relax, but any longer is unnecessary. While it may not have the rich history of other great Asian or European cities, **Nicholas Yallop** found it a fascinating place to visit with a unique social and political history of its own.



Jurong West - a quintessential Singaporean neighbourhood.

To get an authentic experience in Singapore it is important to look beyond the typical attractions (like Orchard Road's towering malls or the tacky but fun Sentosa Island) and venture into one of the many neighbourhoods that are dotted across the tiny island nation.

Pick a spot on the map (such as the far flung Jurong West, where I stayed during my week there) and hop on an MRT (Mass Rapid Transport) train. One of the great things about Singapore is that it's tiny (just over 50kms from east to west) which means getting anywhere is easy, particularly with the typically efficient transport system.

The vast majority of Singaporeans live in self-contained public housing estates, but not of the Caroline Springs or Craigieburn variety.

While the façade of each purpose-built community may appear slightly different, they all consist of dozens of identical apartment buildings, schools, sports

centres, public spaces, clinics, supermarkets, shopping strips and, my favourite feature, the coffee shops.

These are not coffee shops as Melburnians know them. In fact, coffee is probably the last thing on the minds of the scores of locals that flock to these dining centres morning, noon and night.

The coffee shops have an exceptional variety of local dishes, from traditional Chinese, Malay, Indian and western food (which you would do best to avoid), as well as fully stocked drinks and dessert sections. They are also deliciously inexpensive.

These centres are worth visiting for more than just food. They also give you a feel for how Singaporeans live. They are a hub for local activity and where many estate residents eat breakfast before work and return to for dinner on their way home.

In the evening, at least in the Jurong West neighbourhood, there was rarely a spare table between 6pm and 9pm, and you

see a diverse mix of Chinese, Malays, Indians and a scattering of Caucasians going about their daily routine, which, while mundane for them, is fascinating for an outsider.

In Australia and other western countries, public housing estates are generally associated with poverty. This is not the case in Singapore, where they are the norm and people across almost all socio-economic groups have access to them. Some apartments may be a little more spacious and sophisticated than others, but they are all provided by the government at an affordable price (by Melbourne's standards).

Organised public housing dates back to the late 1950s, when the country's patriarch, Lee Kuan Yew, won the country's first election with housing as a key platform. He pledged to replace the slums in which most Singaporeans lived with affordable public housing.

Because Singapore is so small (700km²), managing space has

always been and will always be a crucial issue.

In Singapore, there are 7000 people per square kilometre, compared to 1500 in Melbourne. For this reason, the government feels it must control the real estate market and it was decided in the mid-1960s that high-rise and high-density flats would counter the dearth of space.

So, what started off as a low-income housing scheme grew into a government controlled and subsidised housing market that now houses 85 per cent of the population.

Singapore appears a ruthlessly efficient country. Wherever you look, publicly-funded infrastructure is going up; apartments, office blocks, train lines, casinos and more. There is no resting on laurels,

no complacency, no stifling bureaucracy, just a relentless push for progress.

If Melbourne were ruled in a similar fashion, there would have been a train line to Doncaster 30 years ago, MYKI would have been implemented on time and under budget, and we wouldn't be continually held to ransom by taxi drivers when we need to go to the airport.

Sure, their checks and balances aren't as rigorous and democracy exists in word only, but there is something to admire about such commitment to providing high-quality infrastructure to its inhabitants.

But such progress does come at a cost. Upon arriving in Singapore I noticed foreign construction workers from the sub-continent, herded like sheep in the backs of

dilapidated trucks.

I was told that it is illegal for Singaporeans to travel in such a way, but, like the measly wages these workers are paid, the rules are different for locals.

Lee Kwan Yew may have created his dream society, but he has done so through ruling in a system that doesn't bear much resemblance to democracy. His party, the People's Action Party has won every election (through dubious means) since Singapore won the right to self-govern in 1959, and it wasn't until 1984 that an opposition party won a single seat.

But that's another story and, all politics aside, Singapore has a very unique history and it is quite incredible how far the country has come in the past 50 years.

Once you've immersed yourself in the culture and indulged in the delicious food and fabulous shopping, here are a few other Singapore attractions that should keep you busy.

Singapore Botanical Gardens

This is the ideal spot to experience the lushness that characterises Singapore's natural environment. These immaculately kept gardens (they even employ people to pick up leaves!) features a rainforest walk (beware of the mosquitoes) and some lovely open spaces, including a natural amphitheatre. The National Orchid Garden is also spectacular, especially if you're a keen gardener.

Price: entry into the botanical gardens is free, orchid garden is \$5 for adults.



Singapore Zoo

The renowned Singapore Zoo is a mecca for animal lovers. While the stifling humidity is sure to wear you down as you walk around its expansive grounds, the exceptional variety of animals on display makes up for the heat. Even more reassuring is the spacious enclosures each of the animals has. Highlights of the zoo, which has been cut out of dense rainforest, include the regal white tigers and adorable otters. The night safari is also said to be well worth it.

Price: \$20 adult.



Sentosa Island

While this purpose-built tourist island is rather naff, there are still plenty of things to entertain visitors of all ages. The luge is a lot of fun, although the chairlift ride to the top is a little hairy. Elsewhere, the scores of ocean liners in the near distance make swimming at the man-made beach quite disconcerting, and the aquarium is only worth it for the seal show.

Price: \$2 to enter the island



Barry Barfly's bar review



Waking up last Saturday felt like most other mornings. First, the inevitable feeling of abject heaviness in my head that one might call drinker's remorse, and then - after more than a few waters - vague memories of the night before began to populate my addled mind.

My charge was to visit and review the Albert Park Hotel in the similarly named precinct. The inherent difficulty for me was this: I typically finish working around 5pm on Fridays (some cads have alleged soon after lunch), and was not due to arrive at the chosen destination until a time befitting its usual patronage. The solution came to me via my tax agent Philip* - meet him and a female associate in South Melbourne for a few drinks to fill the gap. Never one to pass up an opportunity to discuss the federal tax system, I hopped on a tram to South Melbourne.

The night started off easily enough; a few beers at the Cricketers Arms with JD chasers (just to take the edge off), then a short stroll up Clarendon Street to the Emerald where we ran into a Christmas pub crawl with a hundred (mostly men) in Santa Claus outfits.

Appropriating a Santa Claus hat to blend in, I went a few pints with Philip and chatted with his friend Paula*, but she was frustrated that the bar staff could not concoct her preferred shot (that and her choice of lofty heels were hurting her feet).

We thus continued on to Honey, and after a few "Wet Pussies" and sav blancs we were all much better calibrated. Before too long it was across the road to The Limerick Arms for Mount Kosciusko on tap and chips with gravy (not a summer menu item, but I was insistent).

How does a grown man in a suit end up walking down Dorcas Street in South Melbourne in a Santa hat and wearing women's heels? Perhaps it is best not to answer that question.

Finally, at the bewitching hour, we arrived at the Albert Park Hotel, but alas, upon crossing the threshold to the said establishment I was detained; apparently a bouncer objected to my entering as I had had "too much".

I ask you, Reader, how much is too much? Well, my associates weren't judged so harshly, nor did they have any moral

ambiguity stealing themselves inside and leaving me behind to plead my case.

I was as steadfast in my protestations as my opponent was in his refusal. He wouldn't reveal whether the basis of his objection was the hat or the heels. After half an hour of lucid debate his colleague came over and offered to box my ears, but my new friend added "he's ok". I had my win.

Sure, I didn't make it into the place, but a bouncer there thought I was "ok". So, with my former friends boozing it up inside without me, I stumbled towards Clarendon to find the closest kebab shop, though I can't recall getting any change back from the \$20 note I handed over.

Similarly, my wallet appeared to be emptied of its contents when I opened it the next day, so I couldn't tell how the taxi fare got paid (or remember the ride itself). It is no great matter, you will be sure to find Barry Barfly* drinking at your local very soon (for review purposes, of course).

*Certain names have been changed to respect the privacy and dignity of those involved.