

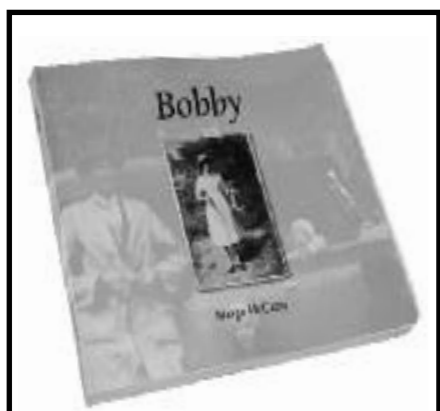


Billowing Blooms

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DETAIL FROM 'DAVID'S JOB' (ABOVE) AND 'DAVID'S DREAM' (BELOW).



Hercules. And he said, “Me piggy back you back to camp. Hop on back, Boss”.

So they carried me back to Manin-grida. I was a sorry mess. They took my boots off and massaged my feet. And they turned my toes back to relieve the cramp. They said, “Me think Boss, you little bit dead”. But

these people showed great humanity. They said, “We have big corroboree coming up, big celebration corroboree. Here’s a wheel barrow, hop in Boss, we take you to corroboree”. When this wheel barrow got to the corroboree there was one great howl of laughter. Fancy seeing a white-fella arrive in a wheel barrow.

... and the final word from Gilly Burke

Thank you Jack that was a fantastic talk. BRAG is honoured to have a retrospective of such an incredible life. Uncle Jack talked about elders — well Jack is BRAG's elder. He was one of our first members, he has been with us for 10 years. He has been a tremendous supporter. Thank you so much we are proud and privileged to have this exhibition.

GILLY BURKE, JUDIT KOVACS AND JACK FEATHERSTONE AT THE OPENING.



Interview with Charlie

12 Mar 2015 9:06 pm
Kristy Moyle follows a lead

It's never easy interviewing your own family, or 'furmaly'. There is always an element of bias — 'daily' walks and 'seamless flea treatment' are both concepts that I wish to promote as features of her story. However, as I watch my chubby Labrador scratching, I have to admit that Charlie Brown is going to walk to the beat of her own drum, regardless of what I might wish to insert, and in the face of Advantix.

Currently, Charlie is less than amused. “I have been staring at the spot for almost elebenty” (I imagine this to be dogspeak for ‘a really long time’ and ‘the spot’ means the prime bit of real estate that is the upper left corner of the couch that has her bottom shape permanently engraved upon it).

After a particularly dramatic exchange of eyebrow raisings, followed by a triumphant leap and manoeuvring, Charlie Brown takes her seat and consents to my imposition.

“What did you do today, Charlie?”

Charlie raises her disdainful eyebrow (the left one) in such a way as to indicate that, with elebenty hours to kill in a day, this question might certainly be a bit tedious.

“I chased a hoppy until it flew. Is it dinner time?”

As it is 9.00pm, and elebenty hours (2.5) since she actually ate dinner, it is not dinner time.

I enquire further, in order to ask leading questions that will ensure that particularly funny elements of Charlie's life are revealed. She sits quietly, watching the nearly-empty plate of curry that is on the table in front of her, and I realise that I am going to have to kick start the interview, and remove all culinary distractions in order to get this article.

Like me, Charlie comes from a broken home. Unlike me, Charlie's crate was damaged whilst moving interstate for a job, and this gives her story a very literal element. In spite of this, the moment she waddled across to me as an eight-week-old puppy, we have been inseparable. We are both Librans. Her birthday is 21 October, and, whilst she is not particularly good at making decisions (which is, according to leading scientists, a typical Libran trait) she is incredibly gentle with all living things (with the exception of the hoppy she chased at elebenty).

It's interesting, how the old adage ‘dogs take after their owner’ seems to hold water. It is particularly useful in situations that are unexpected — and potentially dangerous.

In the first instance, Charlie Brown is quite impulsive. Between you and my credit card, this is a shared trait; however, for Charlie, this very nearly resulted in an untimely and gruesome end when she was a puppy. Without seeing impending doom for the river, Charlie catapulted from a ute canopy window (opening the latch without opposable thumbs, I might add) and made a beeline straight toward a large, mature crocodile, sunning itself on the banks of the Johnstone River in Far North Queensland. It was perhaps the first and (hopefully) the only time that this author and interviewer has ever screamed, and thankfully Charlie turned around and came back to the vehicle.



“You are so risk averse.”

“You are so... still alive.”

“Snort.”

Also, and like me, Charlie Brown is a pacifist (and occasionally a pacifist-aggressivist) in a way that confounds burglars.

Truly.

May I make a suggestion at this point? If you want a guard dog — don't get a Labrador, unless it is crossed with a chainsaw. Sure as eggs, one night, whilst sleeping, Charlie let a young man (a burglar man) into our house. Not only did she make him a cup of tea (poor dove was drunk) but she also helped him pack the video camera, two wallets, five CDs and two digital cameras into my backpack.

I was woken, only by the furiously-friendly sound of Charlie's tail pounding the bedroom floor, as the burglar slept off his enormously successful burglary. To be fair, Charlie did seem a little embarrassed when the big blue people arrived to collect her burglar friend.

“He seemed nice and smelled like pies” Charlie recalls, wistfully. “And it was elebenty o'clock — you know I'm always a bit funny before breakfast.”

I shouldn't criticise Charlie's people skills, because I know that they are incredibly useful in all manner of situations that don't involve a burglary. Just today (and presumably before the hoppy chasing) she was sitting beside me in my office, at work, snoring to the rhythm of the keys as I typed in the search words ‘cat poo’ and ‘pancreatitis’. In the tea room at work, there is a spreadsheet, indicating the tea and coffee preferences of each staff member at work.

Positioned third from the top, and alphabetically at ‘C’ is Charlie's morning tea preference:

“Water, in a bowl and bones”.

This twelve year old girl has been with me, throughout my (occasionally quite unflattering) adulthood. She has accompanied me on virtually every expedition of note, and has been a faithful nanny and friend to each of the little people that Jo and I have had the privilege of corrupting. She can smell cat poo at twenty paces, has an insatiable appetite for expensive socks, and has left a very solid indentation upon the hearts and lounges of everybody who has ever had the privilege to know her.

I can't wait to introduce her to our baby, on the elebentyeth of September. Charlie Brown is truly one of a kind, and I am absolutely blessed to have her in my life.