

# The Third Tri Nations Meeting in Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease

## Bi Nations and Girdwood

When I heard about the TriNations meeting being held in New Zealand I was determined to go. I have always wanted to go to New Zealand but one has to have a good reason to go there. My mind was made up when Jake Krige had to turn down his invitation and suggested that I take on his well established role as the quiz master in the TriNations quiz. It was going to be a hard act to follow but I was offered accommodation and registration and accepted gleefully. The congress was held at Millbrook, a beautiful Japanese owned golf estate 17 kilometres outside of Queenstown, the adventure capital of South Island.

The quiz was held the first evening after wine tasting. As I was the only South African besides two ex patriots, namely Ishy Maharaj and Ian Wallace, the quiz lacked its usual competitive edge. (South Africa is the current holder of the quiz trophy). We were divided into two bland teams namely the red and the blue team and my questions, which I thought might be appropriate for the Tri Nations turned out rather obscure eg. What do the Protea Cynaroides, Waratah, Knightia (a tree from New Zealand) have in common? Who was the governor of the Cape Colony, Western Australia and New Zealand and donated libraries in all three countries? Where would one find the Cloaca Maxima, a question I thought would be appropriate for Michael Kamm ex St Marks and now of Melbourne. (answers at the end) The purpose of the quiz however was to break the ice on the first evening and I think this was achieved.

The scientific meeting took place over two and a half days in a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of time for discussion among colleagues between sessions. The highlight for me was the session on inflammatory bowel disease with Michael Kamm leading the way. He started his lecture with the statement that he could review all the latest trials on the biologicals but this would put us all the sleep (as was successfully done by a well known gastroenterologist from the Mayo Clinic at SAGES a couple of years ago). He addressed four clinical issues and discussed their management, namely 1) fistulising Crohn's disease, 2) post operative Crohn's, 3) fulminant colitis, 4) cancer surveillance. This was followed by a lively discussion and in my opinion the whole meeting could have continued in this vein. There was however other interesting topics presented including some practical issues like removal of large sessile colonic polyps. My only regret was struggling through an afternoon with jet lag listening to the chemotherapy of GI malignancy when I should have taken up an invitation of the President of the New Zealand College in

a game of golf. The meeting was superbly organised as were the previous TriNations meetings by Terry Bolin, Mel Korman and Kerrie Casey and hopefully this team will continue to organise future events. A lot of the invited faculty were younger and it was interesting that the meeting catered for their children. There was even a table for children at the main dinner, something I have not seen at SAGES since the meeting at the Wilderness about 20 years ago.

Following the meeting my wife and I departed on the Routeburn track, one of the famous tramps on South Island. This passes through beautiful beech forests up into the Alpine region which was thick with snow and over the top into Fiordland. We had our fair share of rain (this is measured in meters) but we had crystal clear blue sky over the alpine crossing which was spectacular. Our fellow trappers were from all over the world and were at least 30 years younger than us but we enjoyed their lively company. The old toppies generally go by the slack packing route staying in luxury cabins with hot water and food prepared. My wife felt this may have been a better option.

The rest of our trip was spent seeing ex colleagues who now live in New Zealand (there were 4 from my firm at Wits) who have generally made successful migrations. One, who was my best man, however had his regrets particularly the fact that New Zealand, although a beautiful country, is sterile. He missed the bushveld stating that you see more birds over a weekend in the Kruger Park than you see if a lifetime in New Zealand. We came back via Melbourne seeing many of our ex South African friends and my daughter who has just started her medical registrar training at St Vincents where Michael Kamm is a consultant. Overall a very successful holiday but a long haul and clearly not our last.

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## Answers to the questions

- 1) the 3 plants are all proteas and originated from Gondwanaland
- 2) Sir George Grey
- 3) In Ancient Rome. This was the sewerage system built in 650 BC