

Australian Babes of Skepticism

January 2005



***“Those Skeptics! They are all old men with beards.
They don’t believe in anything and wouldn’t want to anyway.”***

If there is one thing skeptics like doing, it's dispelling myths. Skepticism, common sense and rational thought are not just the domain of men (even men with beards). More and more women are shunning superstition and embracing the wonders and mystery of the real world as shown to us through science. Australia, once again, is leading the way.

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February 2005 - Rosemary

SEEING DOUBLE - WITH SECOND SIGHT?

Rosemary Sceats is Treasurer of Australian Skeptics Victorian Branch, and is a self-funded early retiree, having worked in paid jobs for long enough, in her own humble opinion. She now works in several unpaid jobs instead. She retired from the workforce because her double vision was interfering with her ability to do her job properly, and her former employer agreed. She is now beside herself with the joy of not having to set the alarm clock to get up at an ungodly hour during the week to commute to a Big Four accounting firm in the Melbourne CBD to slog it out in an office full of tax accountants and lawyers. She found that the accountants had lost their balance, and the lawyers had lost both their appeal and their briefs. She worried that these problems may be contagious, and it all became just too taxing for words. In fact she'd run out of words, having used them all up in writing ungodly articles and poems for *"the Skeptic"* magazine and the Victorian Secular Review, and countless project descriptions documenting claims for the Research and Development Tax Concession.



Rosemary has had a few close encounters of the sceptical kind with assorted creatures from the annals of cryptozoology and alien visitation. She can be seen here in the arms of a giant albino Bigfoot (whom she met and dated in Ketchikan, Alaska – he also had big hands, which he couldn't keep off her) and a space alien called Baxter, who was more interesting and better looking than the Roswell specimen, and not the least bit interested in

abducting her and playing with her naughty bits. He was quite tame and friendly, having taken up residence in the wilds of Petersham, Sydney, where her son Tony was share-renting a house with some other bachelors, one of whom works in special effects for the movie industry. (*"It's amazing what you can do with a bit of latex and a lot of imagination."*) Some people say Rosemary has strange tastes in men. You be the judge.

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March 2005 - Gillian



Gillian is one of the original “Jr. Skeptics” of Australia. She is a published author with several reports appearing in the pages of “the Skeptic” journal.

Apart from laughing herself silly at the claims of ‘psychics’, Gillian loves The Beatles and has seen ‘A Hard Day’s Night’ more times than she has had hot dinners!

When not singing along to John, Paul, George and Ringo, you can find her quoting lines from ‘Blackadder’.

Blackadder: Never had anything you doctors didn’t try to cure with leeches. A leech on my ear for ear ache, a leech on my bottom for constipation.

Doctor: They’re marvellous, aren’t they?

Blackadder: Well, the bottom one wasn’t. I just sat there and squashed it.

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April 2005 - Sheryl

If you've ever seen the promo to that wonderful SBS series "A Food Lovers' Guide to Australia" then it parallels how Sheryl enjoys her retirement. There are two main branches to her Skepticism: She enjoys horticultural pursuits but discovered a lot of information was missing from the books.



She organises the Sub-Tropical Fruit Club of Qld., arranges excursions and guest speakers, interviews some wonderful people, records the talks, then converts them into articles for the newsletter so that non-attending members have access to this information. Her friends tell her that another hobby of hers is collecting friends and good acquaintances which make for some excellent dinner parties but she discovered early on that a lot of recipes did not turn out as they should and has a letter from a famous Australian institution as proof! Being a Skeptic means being able to access a great source of knowledge

and intellectual stimulation that you wouldn't normally come across through mainstream media. Married to Robert, she enjoys travelling, loves country life, enjoys the arts of Asia and lives with thousands of books. That's Sheryl enjoying country life next to one of her Mango trees. Life's good – hope yours is too but ... life is what you make it. As the saying goes: You only get out of life what you put into it.

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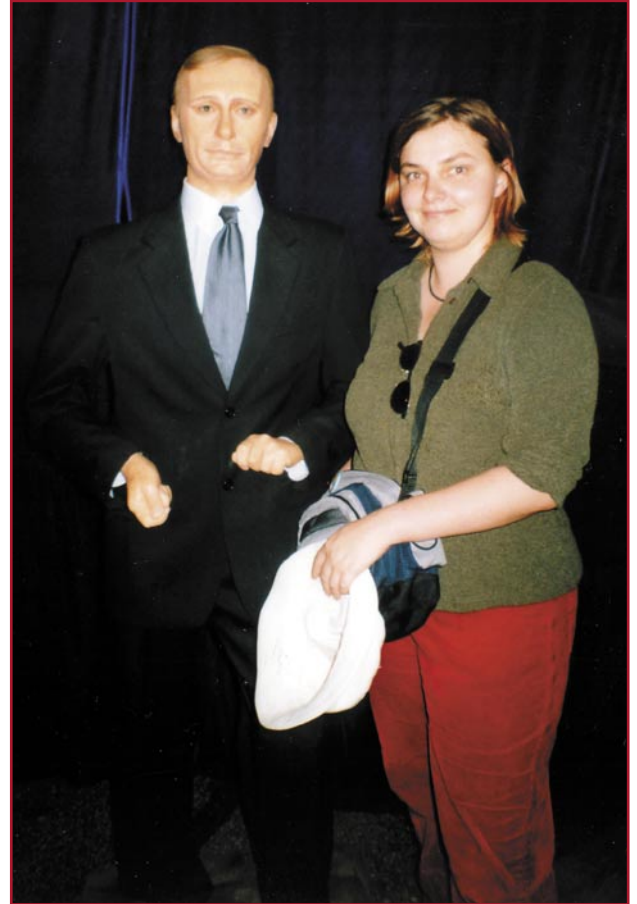
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May 2005 - Amanda

Amanda is a close personal friend of Vladimir Putin (well at least this wax figure).

When not in Russia, Amanda can be found enjoying the company at Sydney Skeptics in the Pub (3rd Wednesday of each month, see skeptics web site for details) or indulging her passion for skeptical DVDs and Videos, especially ones with Dr. Carl Sagan.

When all else fails, trying looking for Amanda at your local pub's trivia night as she and her sister Coz (see July) take on all challengers.



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www.skeptics.com.au

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June 2005 - **Belinda** (a.k.a. Ratbag Jr.)



Belinda is one of the original “Jr. Skeptics” of Australia. She is a published author with reports appearing in the pages of “the Skeptic” journal.

Also known as ‘Ratbag Jr.’ Belinda is into new music and radical bands that shake the house! In fact she is one of the coolest young skeptical thinkers in Sydney with a radical sense of style. She knows how to use the ‘net and has made great new friends who chat to her about important stuff like new bands and radical music!

Belinda always has a great time at the MindBodySpirit Festival (or MindBodyWallet as it’s known) each 6 months in Sydney, and has written a report about it for “*The Mystery Investigator*” magazine, which you can download for free from www.mysteryinvestigators.com

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July 2005 - Coz



My name is Coz Rose, I live with my husband Rob (*who is almost too good to be true*) and two totally unbelievable ferrets.

My career as professional lab monkey keeps me well stocked in books, red wine and holidays. These with the added bonus of being surrounded by smart and funny people to share them with is about as good as life can get. One goal I have in life, apart from meeting Johnny Depp, owning an island and going into orbit, is to leave this place in a slightly better situation than I found it in.

One of the ways to do this is to question and learn, and try to pass the knowledge on in a useful and constructive fashion, to encourage others to question and learn for themselves. As a young teenager I was fascinated by the "**Great Unexplained Mysterious Mysteries of this World and the Worlds Beyond**" type of books and shows. I lost much sleep worrying about spontaneous combustion, and still have a soft and unskeptical spot for crystal skulls.

This photo was taken in Parc National des Volcanes, Rwanda 1997

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August 2005 - Vicki

Vicki is the Canberra Skeptics Committee Secretary & Public Officer

Victoria Ruth Moss is pleased to be Victorian by name, birth location and style of upbringing. Vicki is fascinated by names, being known as Vicki McGlashan for three decades. Her second lifetime partner did not appreciate being called "Mr McGlashan", so Vicki returned to her original name, with her partner now happy to be referred to as Peat Moss.

The haziness of the photo is due to fine mist at Mossman Gorge.

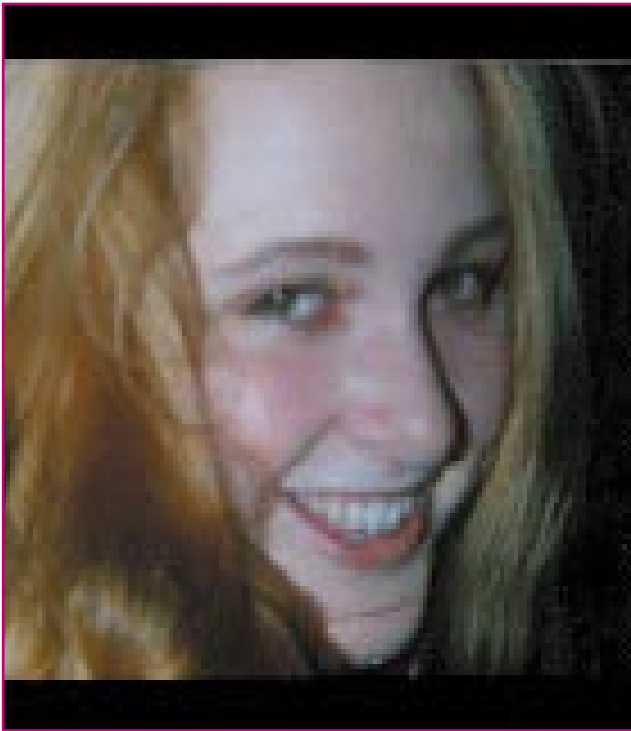


Gorgeous Moss Woman at Mossman Gorge (Photo: Sally Bolam 1997)

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September 2005 - **Karen**



Karen Stollznow is a member of the New South Wales committee of Australian Skeptics and investigator of paranormal activity for “the Skeptic” journal. During her time in this role, she has investigated a range of phenomena, including hauntings, ghosts, mediums, medical intuitives, psychic healing hairdressers, cults, graphologists, automatic writers, alternative medicine and a person who reads toes! Her crowning moment was infiltrating a psychic hotline where she was offered a job as a psychic!

Karen is a PhD student in Linguistics at the University of New England and is currently a Research Associate at the University of California, Berkeley.

Specialising in lexical semantics, she spends most of her time researching naughty words.

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October 2005 - Lynne



A member of The Australian Skeptics since its inception, Lynne Kelly loves science and mathematics. With degrees in electrical engineering, computing and education, she just wants to sing the praises of an awesome real world anyway she can. Lynne is the author of ten education books and a skeptical novel, *Avenging Janie*. Her most recent book, *The Skeptic's Guide to the Paranormal*, is doing well in Australia and was released in America in April. It is under development as a television series.

When not sprouting forth about science and mathematics, Lynne also writes fiction, heads an online school, studies spiders and continues with her addiction to performing magic. She is currently writing a narrative account of the natural history and human interaction with crocodiles for publication in 2006. Spiders come next!

Lynne lives on eighteen acres of bush near Melbourne with her husband, Damian and two very spoilt dogs and is *Skeptic of the Year* for 2005.

Website: www.lynnekelly.com.au

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November 2005 - Jennie



What is it about Skeptics and Aliens? Dr. Jennie Louise may be able to answer your questions as she is a skeptic who seeks the evidence. Active for a time in the Canberra branch of the Australian Skeptics, Jennie now lives in Adelaide, South Australia where the wine is the fine and the beaches are inviting.

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December 2005 - Alynda



www.mysteryinvestigators.com

**Mystery Investigator &
Vice President of Australian Skeptics**

I remember once when I was at university I was cornered by a creationist and couldn't get away for a couple of hours. I was listening to all his arguments and all the time I was getting angrier. Why? I knew that he was talking nonsense, but what made me angry was that he was twisting facts, science and logic into lies. Thoroughly good research by good people was being manipulated to achieve a ridiculous conclusion.

Even though I knew it was nonsense I was at a loss because I didn't know – then – how to counter his arguments. I didn't know enough about science to challenge his arguments. That was when I became a skeptic.

Since then I have learned much about scams, trickery, sophistry and deceit. Through Mystery Investigators, Richard Saunders and I use claims of the paranormal to entertain and teach critical thinking in addition to my other interest of studying martial arts.

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