A few months later Kerr made his shickered appearance at the Melbourne Cup, where he slurred his way through a speech, referring to the hecklers as "static". **Gough Whitlam** remarked, "How much better a pro-consul the horse would have made."

To cap it off **Diamond Jim McClelland** referred to the GG as a "vulgar racecourse drunk". A raddled Kerr took the Paris option and scuttled out of the country seven years before his term of office was up.

Hughes who's who

Books, book, everywhere. A biography of lionised Sydney silk **Tom Hughes** is just out on the shelves. Historian **Ian Hancock** has done a marvellous job burrowing into various crevices of the great man's life and, being the father-in-law of **Malcolm Turnbull**, it is only natural we search for references to the current PM.

There was the occasion of an Oxford Union debate starring both father-and-future-son-in-law, where they were supporting the proposition: "That the private lives of public figures should be solely their own concern."

Liberal MP **Clement Freud**, grandson of **Sigmund** and brother of **Lucian**, spoke against the motion. Hancock says the debate was memorable for the clashes between Turnbull and Freud, where Malcolm's famous anger managed to come to the surface. Even though Hughes thought Freud was a "queer customer", he entered in his diary that Malcolm "will have to learn to take it on the chin".

"Queer customer" is the least of it, as after he shuffled off the mortal coil women have come forward to claim Freud sexually assaulted them as children.

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All in all that was a pretty triumphant trip to England for Hughes. He won a Privy Council appeal, received a fee of $40,000, plus $200 a day expenses, making 1979 a productive year with a total of $320,000 in fees, or more than $1.5 million in today's money, and that's not taking into account his retainers with Packer and Fairfax.

On the latter score, Hughes's diary records his view about the venerable newspaper publisher:

"I do not enjoy working for Fairfax. What a difference between the close rapport I have with **Packer**, when I am working for him, and the distanced relationship with the Fairfax people – they are ... a stiff-necked mob."

In 1980, young Malcolm married **Lucy Hughes** at St Michael's Church, Cumnor, just outside Oxford. Among the attendees were **Francis James**, best man **John Glover** and giver-awayer **Geoffrey Robertson**, and **Betty Fairfax**, Sir Warwick's former wife.

Betty wrote perceptively to Tom Hughes, who was unable to attend the nuptials, saying that the groom was a "remarkable young man – very like you in lots of ways ... you need not have any worries about Luce's future with Malcolm".

Francis James observed that Lucy had a "streak of toughness [to balance] a quality of quietness [and] repose".

As for Malcolm, James said he "detected the slightest indication of self-consciousness in that young man". Only the slightest, mind you.

Nowadays there wouldn't be careful entries recorded in a diary, the whole thing would be on Instagram accompanied by a string of emojis.

Bordering on out of line

Which brings us hurtling back to Canberra where we hear reports that **Mike Pezzullo**, the strongman in charge of the Department of Immigration, has slipped out of his civil servant's suit and into the uniform of the Australian Border Force.

One story doing the rounds about Mike is that he ordered a fellow in the departmental canteen to tuck in his shirt, only to be told by the untidy wretch where he could stick his lunchtime tray of meatballs and spaghetti.

The Pezz Dispenser was on the verge of imposing a severe disciplinary sanction against this underling when it emerged that the offender came from the Bureau of Statistics, and was not within the Dispenser's jurisdiction.

So much for Border Force when you need it.

Taylor-made fundraiser

There's much election news to hand. *The Smellograph*'s **Miranda Devine** and **Little Winston Howard** were the star attractions at the $1000-a-head Four Seasons fund-raising "Captains of Economics" banquet for darling of the Liberals' right-wing **Angus Taylor** MP, assistant minister for cities and Goulburn farmer.

Rural locals from the seat of Hume were wondering why the event wasn't held at a nearby hotel where they could get close to the rousing speeches and endorsements.

Gus has got the support of shock-jock **Alan Jones**, who adores the member, and together they rail against the evils of subsidising wind farms. Alan also has a unique way of putting the questions on radio: "But Angus, all this environment crap about carbon and wind turbines – how much carbon dioxide, if that's the fear, if that's the demon, how much carbon dioxide is created by building these blasted things?"

Gus didn't have a precise answer for that curly one. Anyway, to the amazement of habitués of the Bargo pub Alan, in a fuchsia-coloured check jacket, turned up to support Taylor, back-slapping old codgers quietly sipping their beers.

Meanwhile, in Warringah, local member **Tony Abbott** is facing off against nine contestants who want his seat, including Labor, Greens, Xenophon, Independents, Arts Party, Science Party and Christians.

On his election flyer, Tone describes himself as a "strong national leader".

And in Tasmania, local MP Field Marshal **Andrew Nikolic** did not attend the Bass candidates' debate at the Country Club, organised by the Launceston Chamber of Commerce.

The official reason for not being there was that the "Liberal Party is not interested in debating other candidates who have no chance of winning..." ●

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