

## Doctors I have known

Doctor Doolittle was the first doctor I met. I was always quite scared of him and even now he's not my book of choice. We seldom went to a real doctor in those days. In fact illness and doctors don't figure in my childhood memories. Porridge was much more to be feared or whether friend Ethel would leave my weeping at the farm gate and run off up the road to school without me. The Dr Doolittle thing comes of being fed a diet of typically English literature even though I'm a consummate child of the antipodes. My first antipodean ancestor was himself a doctor, roaming the Tasmanian countryside with his horse and jinker and of course his little black bag in which he kept a good supply of home grown opium. Oh that I'd been the one to inherit the farm!

In my student days I didn't venture down to the doctor path. There were plenty of drugs about without having to get up close and personal with the medicos. There was the PhD option. No doubt I assumed that philosophy would require me to think. Talk yes -- but stopping to think -- that's another matter altogether. As for philosophy -- we all conspired to set the world to rights in those days and just look how far we've come! With the technology of today, there isn't much we can't fix if we really want to. We got a first on Pluto didn't we? Hauled him right out of the underworld into the evening skies. And there he hung for several weeks winking at us and gloating at his successful arrival on social media.

One sunny Easter Sunday there was a tap at my door and there was Dr Spock a cruel grin on his face. From the end of his arm swung the mandatory black bag, this time overflowing with tools of torture; labour pains, howling babies and sleepless nights. As a gesture, I suppose to preserve my sanity, which was in the process of rushing out the door with him, he tossed me his ubiquitous baby book.

Talking of gods, Roman and Greek and to get back to the point ... Dr Zeus came well after my student days. It was my children who were having to digest that lot. My fear of unknown animals had been replaced by a fear that my children could all turn into little stars with stripes. However Dr Zeus had a wonderful ability to construct multiple images with a simple sentence and I confess that I spent many hours hiding cats in hats and trying to cook green eggs.

Then television arrived. Did you know that at the height of the excitement TV installers were so flat out that they frequently forgot to send out the paperwork. Free TVs in Hobart Town. What a bonus. All this opened the doors to Dr Who -- totally beyond my ken and anyway he isn't Greek or Roman. I think I'd be better off studying string theory or enrolling in an adult ed course on ropes and knots. But there were more; Dr this and Dr that and Dr Ellingham and of course my favourite Dr Karl. Now there's a chap with a sense of science.

But we've ventured a long way from literature and with Dr Google offering up online cures to everything, we can leave such elevated notions as literature behind and devote ourselves to whatever health kick takes our fancy, from remodelling our plastic brains to installing bionic every things. We can choose to live forever or phone up Dr Nitschke for an after death experience. Does this imply that doctors are obsolete? I do hope not. I've met so many really likable ones in my lifetime. Please be kind to them. It must be tough to be upstaged by a page or two of 'coding' -- important though our government deems such skills to be. Or is it simply that the IT guys have taken over and we are all helpless pawns in some evil game of thrones.

IT Pro Extraordinaire!!