From big things little smart things grow

BIG things these days are going out of fashion. In fact, they are almost a bit of an anachronism these days. Big things stop you in your tracks. You stare at them in awe, barely thinking, just gosh darn. Little things are different. Little things – like flowers, spokes, the workings of a watch, a baby’s hand – make you wonder. You smile at their delicacy and complexity, at their impossible smallness, and you ask, how come?

Big things in the Hunter are mostly built things. But not always. We have big weighty trees that climb forever skywards, and some decent phosphate mining. A big truly big, surf has a headland crowd shrieking. But it’s a Pasha Bulker that gets our pulse racing, 76,000 deadweight tonnes crashing onto Nobbys Beach on June 2007, beached for 24 days, and we stared in amazement. Just like motorists along the New England highway stared in astonishment a quarter of a century earlier as they watched the stacks of the Bayswater power station reach 248 metres to the top of its cooling tower, 132 metres. After it opened in 1986, visitors experienced the grandeur of the power station’s turbine house and its four giant alternators. But now how low you could slide two Pasha Bulker hulls, minus bridge and superstructure to end, inside the Bayswater turbine house? Nine storeys, that’s how.

Equalising Bayswater as the nation’s largest power station is Eraring. I remember after it opened in the mid 30s, its night glow became clearly visible from planes around, a sentinel, a rival to the old giant BH&P steam cloud 26 kilometres to the north. Glenshaw Dam is big too. Its crest length, as they call it, delightfully, is a full kilometre and then another 125 metres in length, and the wall height is as high as people, making it the largest earth and rock dam wall in Australia.

And Stockton Bridge is big enough to hold a stare too, or grab your breath and stare at our car just as you top its rise in a storm. I was down in London the other day – I’m working in Old Blighty for a few months – and visited the Tate Modern Art Gallery. The gallery is in the old Bankside power station. The old turbine room is now the gallery’s foyer. Its mega-dimensions are arresting. And when you look back across the Thames River to St Paul’s Cathedral pinnas and needlelets paralyse your back in the way that only the presence of famous big things can do.

The Bankside power station, as I have learned, was designed by a British architect with the most British of names – Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Sir Giles more famous British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave British design, though, was the red telephone box, that small piece of out-of-the-weather privacy that gave

### Saint Mary of the Cross worth singing about

She’s the woman of the moment, writes Lauretta Baker.

**REMEMBER the Paul McCartney song “Another Day”? Well, Sunday, October 17, 2010, was not another day. Yesterday marked the official canonisation of Australia’s first saint, Mary of the Cross MacKillop. It was a day of celebration for all Australians, whatever our beliefs.**

**As a nation, we’re known for being genuine in acknowledging a job well done, or a life well lived. Remember how you felt when Sally Pearson lost the gold medal just six minutes earlier? Here it is in the Commonwealth Games? And that feeling of “good on you” when she made it in the 100-metre hurdles? A job well done!**

**So for Mary MacKillop. It’s taken 88 years and two recognised miracles but this weekend Mary was finally proclaimed a saint. She’s the woman of the moment and a new song is just beginning.**

**For some of us, this “saint” thing is a young thing. Who needs saints today? What do they do for us? Why bother? In a sense we all need people to look up to, to people who inspire us to have a go we’d rather not, to try that little bit harder; to pick ourselves up when we’re feeling low.**

**Recently there was printed a list of “People who Matter Today”, of people who could change the world. They included Barack Obama, Pope Benedict XVI and Angela Merkel; but also Angelina Jolie, Oprah Winfrey and Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga! Why bother to compile such a list? There’s something about inspiration and influence and the potential to energise and affect lives. And that’s the value of naming our saints. Mary MacKillop wasn’t on the list. She’s dead, anyway; yet her spirit lives on in the hearts and actions of so many people within Australia and elsewhere.**

**As a woman, she was independent, fiery, determined, generous and full of energy. Her innate goodness and down-to-earth approach to life, her ability to bring hope and purpose in the midst of suffering, have endowed her to many.**

**Mary MacKillop was outspoken, fearless, and a defender of the poor and defenceless. A true saint.**

**Sister Lauretta Baker is the congregational leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar. This article is submitted by the Churches Media Association – cmahunter.com.au**

**Today's fact**

The collective name for a group of hogs is a parcel.

**Today’s word**

Swindle (cheat) (a person) of money, possessions, etc.

**It happened today**

From our files – 1886: The Reverend Seth Jones delivered a very interesting and instructive lecture on gambling to a fairly large audience in the King Street YMCA hall.

**Today in history**

1767: The boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania, the Mason-Dixon line, which divides America’s south from its north, is agreed upon.

1887: The US formal possession of Alaska from Russia.

1968: The US Olympic Committee suspends two black athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, for giving a black power salute at a protest at a victory ceremony in Mexico City.

1994: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldavia and Azerbaijan refuse to sign an economic union treaty with the Soviet Union.

2002: The Vatican rejects parts of a plan adopted by the US Council of Catholic Bishops to deal with the sexual abuse of minors by Roman Catholic clergy in the US.

2008: Canada declares a chemical widely used in food packaging a toxic substance, and says it will now move to ban plastic baby bottles containing bisphenol A.

**Born today**


Tommie Smith and John Carlos, US sprinters, won gold in the 200m at the 1968 Olympics.

**Opposite**

The collective name for a group of hogs is a parcel.

**Today’s text**

But I know that there is someone in heaven who will come at last to my defence. I will see him with my own eyes.

**Monday, October 18, 2010**

**NEWCASTLE HERALD**