

easy as shooting fish in a barrel.

Interest rates were spiralling downwards and share prices upwards — both

...fall-up to the Budget, with Treasurer Ralph Willis "negotiating" with the Greens and the Democrats and the

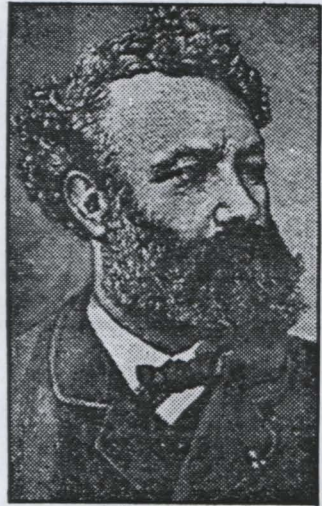
Soros fund have to sell shares and other securities to cover their losses.

This is one of three key layers of in-

reduced even faster to allow the private sector to sustain the recovery with crucially needed investment.

**Reserve Bank to the rescue: P29**

# Phenomenon no flash in the pan



Jules Verne

**I**T is, by all accounts, an amazing sight that leaves people barely believing their eyes. Watching the sun as it sinks, it seems about to disappear when suddenly a brilliant green ray of light bursts out — and just as quickly vanishes again.

This is the Green Flash, made famous in 1882 when French science-fiction writer Jules Verne wrote of it in a romantic novel entitled *The Green Ray*.

According to scientists it is the bizarre result of the rays of the sun being bent by the atmosphere like light passing through a prism.

The horizon cuts off all but the top part of the resulting "rainbow" effect, leaving only

the blue-green part, which the eye notices as a green flash.

According to the experts, special atmospheric conditions are needed to create the effect, with a flat horizon and clean, clear skies being particularly important.

This makes the Green Flash a very rare sight. Or does it?

Sheila Campbell, a primary school teacher in Worcester, England, and her husband, Professor John Campbell of Birmingham University, believe that earlier this year, while looking out across the Malvern Hills, they saw the Green Flash not once but twice.

Two separate sightings of a supposedly exceptional phenomenon in so short a period clearly raise doubts over the much-vaunted rarity of the Green Flash.

A search of the historical records by researchers has found virtually no mention of the phenomenon before Verne's novel in 1882.

But two entirely contradictory conclusions could be drawn from this: either the phenomenon is indeed very rare — or it was so commonly seen in earlier times, when more people worked outdoors, that it hardly merited a mention.

After publication of the novel, more reports emerged and the scientists started to take an interest.

Their explanations stress the need for cloudless skies, with the sun still looking yellow until just before it sets — an indication that the air is free of dust and other particles that can scatter the dying sun's light and

ruin the spectacle.

According to Dr John Allen, a physicist at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, these conditions are rare; despite his own efforts to see and photograph the Green Flash, he says he has succeeded only about half a dozen times in 20 years.

When the *Sunday Telegraph* in London asked readers for their accounts of seeing this haunting light, it received almost 100 letters from places as far apart as Aberystwyth and the Admiralty Islands in the Pacific.

It certainly seems the Green Flash is no myth.

But is the effect really just an optical illusion? Some people think the flash nothing more than the result of staring at a bright object for too long.

*The Sunday Telegraph*

Cleanevent, the company which had the unenviable task of cleaning up after the show-goers, said this year the crew managed to slash their pick-up time for litter by more than half. The average time rubbish spent on the ground, from being dropped to being collected, is now down to just four minutes. Imagine how much easier things would have been if we could only learn how to use bins.

*THE latest trendy taste of Soyaccino, based on soya milk rather than cow's milk (Telegraph Mirror yesterday), is not as yet on everyone's lips, it would appear. A young woman asked for a soyaccino in Dee Bee's, Double Bay, only to be told by a flustered waiter: "Oh, that's far too Paddington for us!"*

Sydney, NSW

CREDIT: Paul Cropper