

## WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 32

JULY 2000

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### .....ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.....

The Annual General Meeting was held on 12th April in the Public Service Club and was followed by finger food and drinks at the same venue. Minutes of the meeting will be sent out later. A couple of changes were made to the Executive, **Heather Clarke** is our new Secretary and **Gordon Wilson** is Vice President. It has been four decades since Heather worked in the old Irrigation Commission, and the following notes are intended tell us a bit about Heather's background.

*Heather Murdoch* commenced duty with the Irrigation Commission on 3rd June 1953 in the "Pool" - the Typists' Pool, that is - at the age of 15. Mr Nimmo was the Commissioner, Fred Haigh and Harold Buckle were the Assistant Commissioners, Don Ericsson was Secretary and Jim Pill the Staff Clerk. Helen Wixted (later Mrs Bill Sharp) was the Head Typist.

The girls in the Pool typed and typed and cringed fortnightly as they had to type those wretched fortnightly reports which were handwritten by people like Don Beattie, Ted Kernke, Jack O'Shea, John Morse, Harry Stark, Dave Wilmott to name a few. Their handwritings are indelibly imprinted in Heather's mind. In 1954 she was assigned to take shorthand from the C.E. Parkinson, retired Director of Stock Routes construction as he prepared his Minority Report on the Great Artesian Water Basin. She admits that, at that age, she had no idea what he was talking about.

She was then seconded to the ministerial offices of Lands Minister Foley, then on to the office of Premier Gair. After Ken Carmichael joined the Commission, Heather became the typist for Rivers & Streams Branch. In 1957 she moved to the office of the Education Minister Diplock. With the change of Government Heather worked for a time in Education Minister Pizzey's office.

Then it was marriage, the birth of four sons, back to the Government as a casual typist for the Courts (in those days the Government did not employ married women). Heather worked as an Electorate Secretary, she set up the first tape-recording of court proceedings in Queensland (the Land Court), worked in Parliament House and Ministerial Offices before retiring. However she is still asked to do a bit of casual work at the House.

In a letter to Heather, George Pearce made the following observation:- “.....with the skill you demonstrated in controlling Cabinet Ministers, you should have no trouble in controlling Barrie Fawcett.”

As your new Secretary, Heather promises to do her utmost to continue the good work of Grahame and the previous Secretaries. **Later in the Newsletter, Heather recalls a few memories of those years.**

**Remember!**

**The annual Bowls Day at Aspley on 4<sup>th</sup> August.  
The possible boat trip on "Forceful" on 15<sup>th</sup> October.  
The probable Christmas luncheon on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.**

.....**GETTING BETTER**.....

**Harry Horne** has been poorly and is now diagnosed with Motor Neurone disease which is affecting his speech and walking. The Home Assist organisation has been able to provide fittings in his house which he hopes will remove the need to enter a nursing home. Harry still enjoys playing bridge and euchre several days each week, but he hastens to point out that visits from old friends are welcome. We sincerely extend our best wishes to Harry.

**Leon Henry** has had cardiac surgery but is very much recovered and back at work!

**Sherry Credlin** underwent knee surgery in June and is getting back to normal.

**Don Beattie** had further surgery on 11th May and is now progressing well and walking many kilometres each week.

*Did you hear about the podiatrist who thought that something was afoot.*

**Stan James** has had surgery to improve the sight of one eye, and henceforth, hopefully, he will be able to follow the flight of his own golf balls. This single event has convinced his golfing partners that there is a God who will answer prayers. Stan will be having the second eye done later.

.....**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**.....

**George Pearce** celebrated his 84th birthday on 16th June.

**Alan Vizer** was 70 on 22nd June. It is probably fortuitous that it was the shortest day of the year and the sun set early.

.....**REST IN PEACE**.....

Many will remember **Len Moore** during his time as hydrographer in the old Surface Water Branch. Len died on 23rd December at the age of 76 years after a short illness. He is survived by his second wife Trish to whom we offer our sympathy. His first wife Sheila died many years ago. Len was buried at Kalbar.

We extend our sympathy to **George Toone** whose sister Adelaide Bush died in Yorkshire UK in early May after a long illness.

We also extend our sympathy to **Lindsay White** whose father recently passed away in Sydney.

**Cec Christiansen** formerly of Kelso, Townsville passed away suddenly on 15th June and was buried on 20th June in Sarina. He was 72 years. Cec began work with the old Commission at Walkamin as a labourer at the end of 1959. He subsequently worked at Paddy's Green and Wuruma, Atkinson, Ross, Kinchant, Cania and Burdekin Dams. He retired in the 1988, a highly respected Works Supervisor at the Burdekin Dam. Cec is survived by his mother of Townsville, five sons and one daughter, grandchildren, a great-grand-child, brothers and sisters. to whom are extended our condolences.

.....**HOOK , LINE AND SINCA**.....

A recent edition of The Courier-Mail reports that Messrs Darrel *Hook* and Vincent *Sinca* may be registered for a forthcoming aquaculture conference to be run by DPI Fisheries. Among those already registered are Miss *Crabb* (Gatton), Barry *Whiting* (Northern Territory), Gary *Seels* (Kempsey) and Ivan *Eels* (South Australia). A *flood* of e-mail inquiries have been received via *bigpond.com.au*.

.....**BLOCKHEADS**.....

The large number of our members devoted to rock music, particularly those who followed the English band *The Blockheads*, would have been saddened to hear of the death of its leader **Ian Dury** on 27th March aged 57. The critics agreed he couldn't really sing ( I guess that's not terribly important in a rock band.) but they say he was a great lyricist, eg.

"I could be a lawyer with stratagems and muses  
I could be a doctor with poultices and bruises  
I could be a writer with a growing reputation  
I could be a ticket man in Fulham Broadway Station  
What a waste!" from **What a Waste.**

"Van Gogh did some eyeball pleasers  
He must have been a pencil squeezer  
He didn't do the Mona Lisa  
That was some Italian geezer." from **There Ain't Half Been Some Clever Bastards.**

He also did a show "about a meeting in the back of a Cortina  
with a girl who could not have been more obscener." from **eXpress** in The Courier-Mail of 29th  
March

#### .....MID-YEAR LUNCHEON.....

The mid-year luncheon at the Skyline restaurant at the College of Tourism and Hospitality, Southbank, on 15th June. The decision to change the mid-year function from a dinner to lunch appears to have been much appreciated as 44 members and friends attended. The food and service was again excellent and the view from the fifth floor dining room was superb. Our thanks go to Heather and Gordon for organizing the function.

#### .....FROM JOHN LE CARRE.....

"(The Federal Capital) is half as big as the central cemetery in Chicago but twice as dead." le Carre was writing about Bonne but many unkind souls would maintain that the comment applies also to Canberra.

#### .....CORPORATE WIND-UPS.....

Here are some phrases to describe the collapses of a few businesses:

The Tasty Ice Cream Company went into liquidation.  
The Up Front Brassiere Manufacturing Company goes bust.  
Builders go to the wall.  
Clockmakers wind up.  
Glaziers crash.  
Launderettes are taken to the cleaners.  
Paper manufacturers fold and the Plunger Plumbing Company went down the gurgler.

#### .....DRIVE SAFELY.....

A motorist, not one of our members, was driving along the freeway when his wife called him on his mobile phone to tell him the radio was warning that there was a car on the same freeway travelling in the wrong direction. "That's true, but it's not just one car, there are 100's", was his surprised reply.

#### **DONT TEACH HER TO DRIVE**

BY **BOB MCKENTY**

Oh, man, if love is to survive  
Take heed: no matter what  
You mustn't teach your wife to drive  
Or chip or putt or pitch.

She'll have a stroke.  
She'll get teed off.  
Her errant slice may bean you.  
Life's rough enough,  
You don't need golf

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To drive a wedge between you.

Readers will be pleased (I hope) to know that this project is progressing steadily. To date, we have interviewed just over 100 people, both retired officers and present employees of DNR, plus a few outsiders. These people have most generously provided us with a wealth of information and the most marvellous anecdotes – so much material, in fact, that it is a fairly daunting task to digest and integrate it. Just as an example, I printed out the interviews relating to one chapter and they totalled nearly forty pages. The chapter has to be kept to no more than about fifteen after incorporating the linkage material! We expect to interview another score or so. We appreciate that there are many, many more out there who could contribute, but we have to call a halt somewhere or we'll never be finished. But if there is anyone who feels he or she has some material that really should be included, please contact us.

The book will be quite large (perhaps 300 pages) comprising 16 chapters, each covering a theme usually closely related to the business of the old Branches. To date, two chapters are probably close to complete, three more are at about the 80% stage and another half dozen have at least some text written. We confess that there is one chapter for which we have collected very little material, but that will come.

Our Steering Committee of Bernie Credlin, George Pearce and Alan Wickham are doing a sterling job reviewing work and providing guidance and additional material. Their load will increase as the material is produced in more or less coherent form. Other readers will also be pressed into service to provide the finishing touches.

Our target is to produce the manuscript by the end of 2000. It will then require final editing, formatting, collection of illustrations and printing, Completion by the middle of 2001 is anticipated. – three years after we first suggested the project!  
**Ian Pullar (and Margaret Cook in absentia)**

### .....ENTER!.....

A rugby referee arrived at the Pearly Gates. "Have you ever done anything wrong." asked St Peter. "Yes. I wrongly awarded a try to England in an International match against Wales." Said the referee. "And how long ago was that?" enquired St Peter. "About 30 seconds" was the answer.

Two men waited at the Heavenly entrance. "What did you do on earth ?" asked St Peter. "I was a taxi driver," replied the first. "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter Heaven." welcomed St Peter. The other was then asked his previous occupation. "For more than 40 years I was pastor of St Mary's church." was his reply. "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter." answered St Peter. The pastor was upset that a nondescript taxi driver would be given higher status than he, a man of the cloth for so many years, and asked the reason for this discrimination. "Up here, we work by results," said St Peter. "While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."

### .....PUBS AND PUBLICANS.....

Responses to our appeal for stories on pubs and their licensees have been underwhelming suggesting that our members had little to do with these establishments in their working lives. Alternatively they do not wish to reveal their associations. However we have received the occasional story from the odd shameless member.

### .....CORONES HOTEL.....

A former Chief Engineer, now deceased, visited Charleville in the '60s and stayed with his party at the very up-market Coronas Hotel. When he retired for the night the CE slid his wallet under his pillow. Next morning he lifted up the pillow to get his wallet but could not see it. He charged noisily downstairs to report the "theft". Poppa Coronas and the housekeeper and a couple of housemaids soon arrived accompanied by several members of the CE's party who had been wakened by the commotion. Pandemonium reigned until the wallet was found *inside* the pillowslip where the CE had slid it when he thought he put it *under* the pillow.

.....THE EULO QUEEN.....

*Have you ever been to Eulo?  
If not where have you been?  
Have you ever seen the woman  
They call the Eulo Queen?*

In the 1870's three large opal fields were being mined in the area to the north and east of Thargomindah by some six hundred 'gougers'. Isobel Robinson and her husband, Richard, built a one room shanty at Eulo using mud from the nearby Paroo River and arranged for teamsters to bring in a good supply of grog. Gougers, stockmen and travellers flocked to the shanty to wash the dust from their throats. Isobel was always on hand to take their cheques and opals and to see that they lingered until they had no more to spend. Even in the one roomed mud shanty she dressed well with bare shoulders and warm smile and her fame spread widely. More mud was brought from the Paroo to add rooms and finally, as The Royal Mail Hotel, it was licensed. Isobel blossomed and with a suggestive shrug of a bare shoulder she could start a fight and with the rough edge of her tongue she could clear the bar. On one occasion after she evicted a belligerent stockman the other drinkers drank a toast to "The Eulo Queen" a title that she kept until her death in 1929 at the age of 79.

The Queen had a variety of interests. With a German opal-cutter she traded in opals, at the back of the hotel, she provided accommodation and work for the more attractive of the local indigenous young ladies and she added a gambling room, the State Room, with rich drapes and ornate furniture which hid mirrors to see opponent's cards and devices to slow down the gaming wheels. The customers rarely won! When a younger jackaroo displaced him in the Queen's affections, the opal-cutter told her customers about the cheating in the gaming room and got himself severely beaten for denigrating a "lady".

There are many stories of her generosity to down and out miners whom she grub-staked. Others said that few hard luck stories penetrated the barrier of her warm smile, and a man whose money was gone, was soon shown the door, "She would take your last deener and turn you out in a dust storm."

Somewhere along the line her husband moved away to manage a Cobb & Co depot at Charleville and the Queen had a succession of live-in boy friends. One of these had expensive tastes and sometimes helped himself to the takings. Several times she had him charged with theft and sent to gaol to think things over, but he always returned.

The Eulo Queen was certainly a legend in her time and even today the older people of the area speak of her, sometimes with affection and sometimes with disdain.

Based on Hector Holthouse's "Up Rode The Squatter".

.....ANIMALS IN THE HOUSE.....

A jaguar in the garage.  
A mink in the wardrobe.  
A tiger in bed, and  
A jackass to meet the cost.

.....STATE OF THE NATION.....

Unfortunately, neither the Director-General of DNR, Terry Hogan, nor the Executive Director of Regional Infrastructure Development, Bill Eastgate, was able to attend the Annual General Meeting on April 14th. In their absence, **Ian Pullar** reported on the State of the Nation. The following is based on his address with some updating.

The Department of Natural Resources is barely recognisable as the descendant of the old Water Resources Commission and more change is on the way.

Currently the business of WRC is scattered among basically for Business Groups: **State Water Projects** (Design, Construction and Operation); **Regional Infrastructure Development** (Planning, Local Governments, Dam Safety, facilitating infrastructure development, Water Boards etc and the water reform agenda); **Resource Management** (Water Allocations, Licensing, RITs etc); and **Resource Sciences Centre** (Surface Water and Groundwater hydrology, water quality, GIS and publications etc). This will change.

Following the retirements of Peter Bevin and Tom Fenwick, the Department is under new management. The new DG is an historian by profession with a lot of experience in government. He came to us from Premiers Department. The Deputy DG is Rob Freeman, formerly a surveyor in Lands Department.

In response to a number of influences including the water reform agenda and the State Government's output management requirements, DNR is to be restructured. It has been recognised that the Department, by July 2001, will have only two outputs, viz. **Integrated Resource Planning** and **Integrated Resource Planning and Use**. Accordingly there will be one Business Unit under a Deputy Director-General dealing with these outputs. The water business will have a General Manager responsible for water allocation and planning and another responsible for management and use. The Branch structure has still to be determined.

There will be a second Deputy Director-General with responsibilities for the groups that deliver the outputs: Regions, Registrations, Resource Sciences Centre, State Water Projects (while it remains in DNR). There will also be an Executive Director responsible for Strategic Policy.

Four Senior Executive Service officers (one of whom is Bill Eastgate) have chosen early retirement. The remaining General Managers will be allocated new roles under the new structure. It is expected that this will be in place early in the new financial year.

State Water Projects was expected to be corporatised and leave the Department on 1 July 2000. Before this can happen, the new legislation (WAM Bill) needs to be passed. There have been some delays in introducing it into the House and these will lead to delays in the corporatisation. Under the new arrangements SWP (probably with a new name) will own and operate most of the water infrastructure assets. They will also be a water service provider that has to compete with other providers for the right to develop new assets with negotiated financial arrangements with Government. The Engineering Services group will also be competing with private sector consultants for work. The group has already been successful in being awarded a number of consultancies including interstate and overseas work.

The Department of Natural Resources will no longer be a dam building authority. The Department's role as the proponent of new infrastructure still has to be defined.

It is interesting to report, particularly to those with a nostalgic outlook, on some of the current investigations. Consideration is currently being given to the possible construction of **Nullinga Dam** (which many will recall was the alternative to Tinaroo Falls Dam), one of the advantages being that less water would need to be diverted west from the Barron. Interest is once again being expressed locally in **Urannah Dam**. The possible construction of **Nathan Dam** (though on a site some distance upstream of the original gorge location) continues to be the subject of negotiation between a private sector consortium and the Government (through Department of State Development). There is a great deal of enthusiasm in Bundaberg for the construction of **Kalliwa or Paradise Dam**. All of these potential developments are very much subject to the Water Allocation and Management Planning process and to further detailed project assessment. But it is interesting to see things go inexorably round again. As I have often said, a dam site is always a dam site – until it becomes a dam!

#### .....BRITISH ICE-CREAM.....

A competition to find a name for a new ice-cream product included the following entries: Cream Victoria, Vanilla Parker-Bowles, John Lemon, Minty Python, Cool Britannia, Queen Yum Mum, and The Rolling Scones. The winning entry was submitted by an American!

.....COMPREHENDING

ENGINEERS.....

The graduate with a science degree asks, "Why does it work?"  
 The engineering graduate asks, "How does it work?"  
 The graduate with an accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?"  
 The arts graduate asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

**Borrowed from "Australian Aviation"**

And from the same magazine.

The Captain of an Australian airliner really hammered his jet into the runway giving his passengers a very hard and frightening landing. The First Officer stood at the exit door farewelling the passengers and expecting angry comments from at least some of them as they left the aircraft after the horrific landing. Not even a smart comment was made until the last to leave, a little old lady, asked timidly :-  
 "Did we land or were we shot down?"

**"Flying? I have been to almost as many places as my luggage." Bob Hope.**

**Skydivers: Good to the last drop.**

.....LIMERICKS.....

The school days limerick is back in favour. Even Education Queensland ran a competition recently for the best entry. The following were taken from the "*Lure of the Limerick*." The other 149 in the book could not be included in a family publication like our Newsletter as the first limerick explains:-

The limerick packs laughs anatomical  
 Eton,  
 Into a space that is quite economical,  
 plenty of meat on.  
 But the good ones I've seen  
 So seldom are clean  
 rear  
 And the clean ones so seldom are comical.  
 your feet on.

There once was a sculptor named Phidias  
 Whose manners in art were invidious;  
 He carved Aphrodite  
 Without any nightie,  
 Which startled the ultrafastidious.

There was a young lady of  
 Whose figure had  
 She said, "Marry me, dear,  
 And you'll find that my  
 Is a nice place to warm up

There was a young lady named Bright  
 lot of a friend  
 Whose speed was faster than light;  
 the end  
 She went out one day  
 In a relative way,  
 And returned the previous night.  
 trend.

I sat next to the Duchess at tea;  
 It was just as I feared it would be;  
 Her rumblings abdominal  
 Were truly phenomenal,  
 And everyone thought it was me!

I once thought a  
 Who turned out to be in  
 The southernmost part  
 (As I feared from the start)  
 Of a horse with a northerly

.....WHERE ARE YOU?.....

**We have had mail returned marked as "unclaimed" or "not at this address" for the following:-**

**Mrs Maud Willis, 44 Basalt St., Mareeba.**

**Mrs Eunice Scott, C/- Post Office, St Lawrence.**

**Our Secretary would welcome any advice that will help us keep in touch with these friends.**

.....AFFO'S ANNECDOTES.....

Ernie Jones was in charge of the Mechanical Workshop at Tinaroo. He had a habit of kicking loose rubbish lying on the floor to draw attention to any untidiness. One day he kicked what he thought was an empty lamp packet. He almost broke his toe because his crew had filled the packet with nuts and bolts. When he exploded no other sound could be heard as all the men had their heads under car bonnets.

.....

Another Tinaroo worker who loved a punt had a large win at the races. Anxious to keep the winnings from his wife and to keep some in reserve for future wagering he rolled the notes into small tubes and pushed them down the barrel of his shotgun. He came home one day to find that his wife had loaned the gun to his friend. Much rubber was burnt before he found his friend but it was too late. His money had been blown away.

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On first aid duty at Leslie Dam I got quite a shock when a car pulled up outside the Project Store and the driver sang out that he had a passenger with his foot off. I looked out and sure enough the guy was sitting in the car with his hand out the window and his foot in it. My heart skipped a beat until I realised he had an artificial leg. It wasn't a job for the first aid man, but one for the fitter and turner as the patient had stripped the thread holding the foot to the leg.

**Thanks Ron Afflick.**

### .....MISS PRINTS.....

The following are taken from relatively recent newspaper advertisements:-

The ---- Health Region has vacancies for Nurses with tertiary *cursing* qualifications.

The ---- Data Services Company offers *some* day computer service.

A high class Gentlemen's Clothing Company provides *altercations* for those who bought it's suits.

### .....THE MURDOCH MUSINGS.....

When Heather joined the Commission, the Attendance Book was in use (and for a long time after). All employees were to sign the book on arrival and at exactly 9:00am Jim Pill, the Staff Clerk, would rule a red line across the page. Woe betide you if you signed below the red line too often. Rumour has it that Heather was so often late that Jim would stand outside the entrance to the building and wait for her with the book as she rushed down William Street. He would then draw the line.

When she was typing C.E.Parkinson's report, Cyril Young, the Commissioner's chauffeur at the time, used to drive Heather over to Mr Parkinson's gracious home on the banks of the Brisbane River at Norman Park and there she would spend day after day taking shorthand from Mr Parkinson.

After Helen Wixsted (Sharp) left, Elaine James (Murphy / Murph) headed up the Typing Pool. Heather tells us that Elaine was responsible for educating the young girls in the Pool in a wide range of interesting areas!!

When she was appointed to Rivers & Streams Branch, Heather's desk was just outside Harry Hiley's office (he was then an Assistant Commissioner), Jack Conroy was his Clerk and Bill Knox was Fred Haigh's clerk. In the Branch, Reg Fox was engineer, Jim Ole was the draftsman, John Swales was an adviser and Bill Duncan was the Clerk. Bill gave Heather lots of shorthand for that Branch. He told her at one stage, "Do you know they have named you and I '*Hide and Seek*'? You hide and I've b...y well got to seek you out." (Heather spent a fair amount of time talking to the boys in the drafting room!!!) Bill also used to get Heather to entertain the kids at the annual Christmas Tree and Party put on by the Irrigation and State Stores Social Club. Heather was heavily involved in the organisation of the Social Club and was Secretary at one time and arranged functions including the fantastic the week-ends at Tallebudgera, 72 people attended the first camp! In those days club members were given the day off to decorate Kurilpa Hall for the Christmas Tree and Party. Many will remember Graham Swan, Donny Pryke, the staff from State Stores? Irrigation and State Stores were like one big family.

No doubt there are many other memories about those years like Paul Kerswell and the Thursday deadline for advertising applications for Waterworks Licenses and the chariot races through the corridors to the Strong Room on Accounts Branch trolleys.

Remember those days? 1953 and 1954 saw the appointment of a number of Clerk Typists and many of these "girls" still get together at South Bank on the first Saturday of each March each year. What a wonderful tribute to the fellowship that existed in those years.

The Newsletter would welcome contributions about life in the office in those days and also about the Welfare (Social) Club, its members, its function and its role in bringing people together.

.....**FROM MAREEBA**.....

Sheila Turner sent us a cutting of this photograph from the Cairns Post of 27th April. It shows **Mick Henderson**, one of our members from Mareeba as he prepares to lay a wreath at the Rocky Creek War Memorial on Anzac Day.

There are now 28 memorial plaques at Rocky Creek, between Mareeba and Atherton, commemorating the units based there during World War 11.



**Cheers ; Bernie Credlin**