



WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 43

March 2004

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Our efficient Secretary John Connolly has enclosed, with this Newsletter, the Notice for the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Public Service Club (as usual) on 21 April. It is to be hoped that it will be well attended, particularly as it is a very good opportunity to “catch up” with former colleagues.

There will, of course, be the normal elections so anyone with a yen to be on Committee will have the opportunity and anyone with a yen not to be on Committee will be equally able to exercise that option.

Over the past few years, there has been some discussion within the Association regarding its future now that there is no longer a Water Resources Commission. One school of thought is that

membership should continue to be restricted to those who have retired from a Water Resources entity. Others feel that this may be too restricting and unreasonably exclude those who have served in a Natural Resources portfolio.

The Committee is seeking guidance from members on whether the constitution should be amended. One suggestion is that the Association could cater for Retirees from Water and Natural Resources.

It is proposed that part of the AGM should be devoted to a discussion on this issue. If you have a view (or would like to be influenced by what others think), here is your opportunity.

We look forward to meeting once again with as many as possible – the older and bolder the better.

Recognition

Following Bernie Credlin’s passing, the Committee spent a deal of time considering how his outstanding contribution to the Association could be recognised.

This led to a discussion on the contribution made by others and how it could be acknowledged during their lifetime.

The Association has only ever created one Life Member – founding President Noel Ullman is the sole recipient of the honour. The current Constitution allows for the Committee to award such an honour, but does not specify criteria to be applied. If any member is of the view that a colleague is worthy of such recognition, the Committee would be only too pleased to evaluate any proposal. All you need to do is submit a nomination together with a description of the contribution made by the nominee.

From the Editor’s Chair

Yet another New Year is upon us – where do they all go? The controversy over the New Millennium seems so recent and yet it’s already four (or three?) years ago.

Anyway, let me – on behalf of the Committee – wish you all a Happy New Year. Welcome to the year 2004 – two thousand and four. Now here’s a question for you. When will this year retrospectively become twenty-oh-four? There is no doubt in my mind that the world will never see the year two thousand and-sixty-six any more than it had one thousand and sixty six. Twenty sixty six, just like ten sixty six. My personal feeling is that we’ll have twenty thirteen instead of two thousand and thirteen and then everything will fall into line, forwards and backwards. So, with the benefit of hindsight in advance, let me welcome you all to twenty-oh-four. May it be a better year for the world than its immediate predecessor.

I need your contributions of news of retirees – awards, achievements, milestones, activities. Unless you tell me, I can’t possibly know interesting snippets to pass on to others. So please, please, let me know.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

WRRR Re Members

The AGM marks the time for members to renew their memberships – unless of course they have taken advantage of the Treasurer’s generous offer to join for a number of years. Under the Constitution, members who have attained the age of 75 and make application to the Committee may be exempted from further membership fees.

We welcome new northern members Frank Swinburn and Ray Evans who were proposed by our esteemed colleague Jack Pont. Recent retirees Mike McKenna, Sam Elms and Dudley McIntosh have been playing hard to get, but will no doubt respond to the Secretary’s letters and join up.

Members may see fit to persuade their former colleagues to join – in return new members will receive this magnificent Newsletter. We don’t have any steak knives or chooks to offer as well!

Membership is not limited to retirees. Anyone approaching that desirable state – and who is going the other way? – is welcome to join.

Christmas Luncheon

The Christmas Luncheon at COTAH was, by any measure, a great success. It was fully subscribed with all 65 available places filled. President Jim Uhlmann, who undertook the logistical arrangements, must at times have felt like a juggler. The initial booking was for 45, but as the numbers came in, Jim persuaded the management to extend that to 65. More bookings came in, but others fell by the wayside. In the end, the late arrivals just balanced the gaps and all were accommodated.

Nevertheless, it was unfortunate that some were unable to attend through indisposition. In particular, Sherry and Elizabeth Credlin had hoped to come but, on the day, Sherry was not well enough.

The meal, as usual was well presented and the conviviality was unrivalled. Unfortunately, neither of the Association's patrons, Terry Hogan and Peter Noonan, was able to attend. Brian Shannon represented SunWater and brought us up to date on some of the activities with which he is involved (see later articles on Project Aqua and ANCOLD).

It is encouraging to see this level of support.

Memories Flood Back

With the thirty year anniversary of the Brisbane floods receiving publicity in recent weeks, the following (perhaps slightly enhanced by time) story comes to mind. Beyond Mareeba, when Springmount Weir construction was finished, the office was transferred some dozen or twenty miles to the new office at Mutchilba. The transfer of records etc, was accomplished in the usual way for those days, in the back of a ute. Coming down the road from Springmount, the ute got stuck in a gully, and of course being wet season, the gully flooded. Pen and ink records do not like getting wet, and so a proportion became rather useless. In the months that followed, details could not be read to satisfy some enquiries from Head Office, but when this was offered as an excuse, the reply contained a modicum of disbelief and some ribald comments. Of course it was not long before subsequent requests had the last line "unless it was lost in the flood".

This, of course, upset the hard-working and conscientious office blokes, and it was with great glee when, a few years later, similar requests to Head Office elicited the answer "it was at Rocklea", that they could add a similar last line. Of course seniority soon won out, and Mutchilba were told to cut it out, we are fair dinkum. Did they think we weren't?

Jack Pont

That Dam Committee

Included in Brian Shannon's talk to the Association at the Christmas luncheon was the news that he is now Chairman of the Australian Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD). Congratulations Brian.

Members will recall that Queensland has had a long association with that body. Former Commissioner Bill Nimmo was a foundation member and served as Chairman from 1948 to 1961, at which time the body was reorganised. Fred Haigh, Frank Learmonth, Alan Wickham and Brian Shannon have all served as vice-chairmen. Alan served as Chairman from 1979 to 1982 and went on to become a vice-president of the International Committee.

Brian was formerly Treasurer of ANCOLD (1979-82) while Lee Rogers was Secretary. I had the honour of being Secretary during Alan's chairmanship while Denis Connellan was Treasurer. During Brian's tenure, Peter Allen will serve as Secretary.

ANCOLD is very different today from the body it was at the outset. Then, it was largely interested in design and construction. Now it is very interested in management issues. A major undertaking, which has now been completed, has been the writing of Risk Management Guidelines for all dam owners. These include such thorny issues as dam safety and the need to upgrade the spillway capacity of existing dams. Wivenhoe Dam is currently undergoing such a major upgrade.

Awards for Water Men and Monitors

Two staff from NR&M's Water Planning team in Brisbane have recently been recognised for their significant work contributions.

Don Alexander, Principal Project Officer, Water Monitoring and Information, received the 2003 NR&M Award for Excellence in the category of NR&M Business – Integrated Resource Management. Don, who is recognised widely for his in-depth hydrographic knowledge and experience, as well as his strong support for hydrographers across the State, was nominated for the award through one of the regional hydrographic teams. The Judging Panel commended *his excellent Leadership of the Statewide Water Monitoring and Information Team*.

More recently, Tom Vanderbyl, Director, Water Planning, South West, was awarded an Australia Day 2004 Achievement Medallion for his outstanding work in water resource planning and policy development throughout Queensland and Australia. Tom has been working on sustainable water plans and policies for some years and has been recognised for his role in creating successful water resource plans that share available water resources effectively between competing environmental and human uses. Tom is well renowned for his in-depth knowledge and practical advice amongst planners, policy makers, scientists, communities and industry leaders at State and national levels.

Another significant recent "award" involved the department obtaining, for the first time, internationally recognised accreditation for its water monitoring program. The need for accreditation under the ISO 9001–2000 management system arose because the department recognised that a quality-assured approach to water monitoring was an essential tool for the broader water resource management agenda. Accreditation followed 12 months of intensive work by water monitoring staff who built on existing practices and standards that had evolved over many years.

Greg Claydon

Tour RePort

The Port of Brisbane is the only purpose-built One Stop Shop major port in Australia, as the 26 members who took the most enjoyable tour on 18 February learned. The port handles 580,000 containers a year, compared with 1.2 million in Sydney and 1.6 million in Melbourne, but is undergoing a major expansion on yet more reclaimed land.

After lunch, we toured Fort Lytton where we were shown around the historic site in a National Park by an old digger. More information in the next Newsletter.

Project Aqua

SunWater, as a commercialised entity, finds itself – if it is lucky – in unusual situations. Currently it is involved in a major project in New Zealand as part of an Alliance. Project Aqua is being carried out for Meridian Energy, the (NZ) State Owned Enterprise whose principal assets are hydro-power dams in the South Island.

The project, expected to cost more than \$1 billion, is to develop the water resources of the Waitaki Valley, whose headwaters lie in the slopes of Mt Cook, to serve a series of six new hydro stations with a total normal capacity of 584 MW. A substantial portion of the flow will be diverted to an artificial channel across the floodplain with a capacity of 350 cumecs. The remainder is required to maintain fish habitat and recreation activities such as whitewater rafting.

SunWater is a sub-consultant for Parsons-Brinckerhoff, which is, in turn, part of the design team along with BECA (US) and Binnie, Black and Vieth (UK). The constructors are Bechtel and Connell-Dowell, who constructed works in the Haughton section of the Burdekin River Irrigation Project.

SunWater's expertise in channel design won it its role, even though the magnitude is much greater than anything in Queensland. Each of the six power stations depends on a 30 m drop, so each channel section of virtually zero gradient involves about 15 m cut and 15 m fill. The principal problem is to ensure the water tightness of the channels in the coarse sediments of NZ's young alluvial valleys. Impermeable material is in short supply. Management of the groundwater is a major consideration.

The project management team has now been established in Christchurch. Kev Devlin heads up SunWater's team. Fortunately recent NRM retiree John Hillier was available to look after the groundwater aspects. Erroll Bietz is managing the fish aspects, although in this case the main concern is to keep fish **out** of the channels so that they won't have to pass through the hydro plants and the 30 m drops.

Yet another "old boy" is a member of the cast list – Mike Wilke (now Queensland Manager of Parsons-Brinckerhoff) is the Chairman of the Alliance Board.

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Signs of the Times

On a shop in the Adelaide Hills –

Family Butcher. All orders executed promptly.

SEQ Water Futures

A major study is currently under way to develop a regional water supply strategy for South East Queensland, which has been the fastest growing metropolitan region in Australia over the past 10 years. The population is projected to grow by more than 1 million people to reach 3.4 million by 2021 – more than two out of every three Queenslanders.

The study aims to forecast what future water demand and sources will be, and who will be responsible for providing them. The study is being overseen by a Steering Committee, chaired by Greg Claydon and involving members from several State Government agencies, Local Governments, SEQWater, SunWater and rural water interests.

The objective of Stage 1 is to ensure that the short-term availability of urban and industrial supplies (ie to 2020) does not undermine medium and long-term productivity from available regional water resources.

Stage 2 will develop an agreed basis for sharing the limited available water resources and for the least cost provision of critical infrastructure.

Stage 3 will identify options for meeting long-term water needs recognising the constraints on the availability of water resources and the trade-offs between social, economic and environmental benefits. The preferred long-term water supply strategy will be negotiated, including arrangements for the allocation, delivery and operation of infrastructure.

Stage 1 activities already under way include:

- NR&M undertaking Water Resource Plans for the Logan and Mary River catchments and progressing

preliminary work for the Moreton catchments;

- Gold Coast City Council reviewing the safe yield of the Hinze Dam in light of the current drought;
- Toowoomba City Council reviewing short term water resource needs;
- Brisbane City, Ipswich, Beaudesert, Logan and Gold Coast Councils working with SEQWater on the planning for a regional pipeline which would service the southern sub-region of SEQ;
- Brisbane City and SEQ northern sub-region Councils investigating existing distribution infrastructure constraints;
- Individual authorities undertaking work on levels of service, demand management, water loss management and source substitution opportunities.

Stage 1 has a cash budget of \$500,000, funded 50:50 by SEQROC and the State, with a significant amount of in-kind support. A report on Stage 1 is programmed for May, 2004.

Greg Claydon

Rain

The following verse comes from the west coast of New Zealand where the average annual rainfall is some 5 metres – very different from here. Project staff be warned!

**It rained and rained and rained
The average fall was well maintained
And when the creeks were simple bogs
It started raining cats and dogs.
After a drought of half an hour
We had a most refreshing shower
And then the most curious thing of all –
A gentle rain began to fall.
Next day but one was fairly dry
Save for one deluge from the sky
Which wetted the party to the skin
And then at last the rain set in.**

– Anon.

A Light Christmas It's Not so Rum in Bundy

It must be wonderful to be fully committed to a project like many members of the light brigade. The 13 adults and two young children who ventured on the Christmas Lights bus excursion on 16 December were certainly impressed.

Dinner at the Pacific Golf Club was a great starter – good food and not too expensive. The bus driver, who must have been let into the secret, took the sightseers firstly to Tingalpa where they 'oohed' and 'aahed' over about eight streets which had gone to elaborate lengths (and expense) to provide a magnificent display. Only a very few 'bah-humbugs' hadn't joined in – imagine how they must have felt!

Onwards, ever onwards, to a Retirement Village at Eight Mile Plains where the magnificence was replicated. Everyone was impressed by the magnitude and creativity of the displays. Lee Rogers is now under tremendous pressure from Denise for next year!

Eric Davis & Jim Uhlmann

The recent rains have made an enormous difference to the water supply situation in Bundaberg. Fred Haigh Dam, which had fallen to 4%, full was replenished to about 60%. Summer usage dropped this somewhat, but then more rain brought it back to about 60%. The best for years.

The somewhat controversial Burnett River Dam is proceeding and will ultimately add to the availability of water in the Burnett.

Members were very saddened to hear of Bernie Credlin's passing and know that he will be sadly missed.

On the members' front, things have been a bit of a mixed bag with some not so well. Merv Schreuber's health has not been good for some time. Trevor Tuesley had an operation, but appears to be on top of things. Barry Lennon also had an operation but is recovering well at home.

Roy and Iris Maxted continue to spend more time away from home than at it, and while Roy admits it is a good life, in his usual self-deprecating way, reckons that one day it will come to an end! Nevertheless, he and Iris wish all the members a Healthy New Year!

Thanks Roy and Lois for this information.

Cricket at Kulara.

Some of the old Tinaroo-ites may remember that the hamlet of Kulara, up near Yungaburra, was inundated when Tinaroo filled. Indeed, some of them may have played cricket on the Kulara cricket field, in the early days of construction, before the dam filled. The pitch was apparently a "state of the art" concrete job.

With the record low level of water in Tinaroo at the start of 2004, the pitch reappeared, and after inspection, was pronounced "fit to play", so a challenge was issued by "The Cairns Branch of the Pioneers" and this was accepted by "The Old Kulara Team". The match was arranged for Australia Day, and in spite of rain in January was duly played - well started anyway. The *Atherton Tablelander* reported that "The seriousness of the contest only became apparent when a Tony Greig lookalike was caught probing the shoulder of the batsman's crease with a mattock—" The pitch may have been OK but the outfield left a bit to be desired, so after a few "special" overs from each side, the match (and crowd) moved to Yungaburra for lunch and the "serious stuff". Mid- afternoon, and down came the rain in the form of a very heavy thunderstorm. The players braved the elements long enough for each side to score 162 and so the match was declared a draw. As the paper said, "Maybe the Gods of Tinaroo had intervened, deciding "OK, you've had your fun, now we're going to finish it!" Certainly this is reinforced by the same paper's two small photos in this week's issue, the first captioned: "The old Kulara pitch being played on for the first time in 43 years", which shows a paddock with a few cars and a cricket game going on the distance. The second says, "February 8, 2004: The old pitch sinks below Lake Tinaroo, maybe for another 40 years", showing the same paddock, under water.

Jack Pont

Vale David Ross Wilmott

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Dave Wilmott in November.

Dave was born in Brisbane in 1918. Because his father worked in the timber industry, he spent his childhood in country Queensland – Yandina, Eudlo and Kyogle – before moving to Toowoomba where he received most of his education. Following his graduation from Gatton Agricultural College, he worked on a mixed farm at Murphy's Creek. He joined the Militia and received his Commission before the war. In World War II, he enlisted in the AIF and served in New Guinea.

He and June were married in 1950 and shortly after, he joined the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, initially in the clerical section. He accepted a transfer to Mareeba, where he was in charge of stream control from Townsville north. He was responsible for the layout of irrigation systems on farms. His two sons, Rohan and Myles, were born in Mareeba.

Following an 18 month stint at Gympie he moved, as Officer-in-Charge, to Bundaberg where he spent six years. In 1966, he was transferred to Rivers and Streams Branch in Brisbane. He spent his last years in the Commission in Construction. When the retiring age was reduced to 60, in 1979, he decided to go, aged 61, to do some serious writing.

Writing had always been a passion and many will remember his writings for the Commission with *Splash*, *Trickle*, *The Quarterly Review* and *Aquarius*. Early in his retirement he prepared a manuscript text of a Commission history which was not published. He wrote several novels which unfortunately weren't published either.

In retirement he and June lived in St Lucia, Carindale, Maroochydore and finally Buderim. Latterly his health was poor. He suffered a number of strokes and was confined to a nursing home for some time before his death.

It was a privilege to know you, Dave.

NIMBY

Not surprisingly, the average John and Mary Citizen are not exactly enamoured of having their property resumed to make way for a proposed dam. They are therefore usually keen to persuade the authorities to take their proposal elsewhere – Not In My Back Yard. Their arguments, though, are often dictated by passion rather than logic.

At a public meeting in Rosewood, I was told that it would be sheer stupidity to give any consideration to constructing a dam at the Mt Walker site on the Bremer River. It was in a rain shadow and there was so little flow in the stream that it would never fill a dam. ‘And besides,’ said the same landholder, ‘the floods there are so large that you couldn’t possibly build a dam that could withstand them.’

When we were searching for sources of water supply for south-east Queensland as a substitute for the formerly proposed Wolffdene Dam, a woman told me that engineers always assumed the solution was a new dam and we should consider alternatives. I told her that we had already investigated the possibilities of groundwater, waste water re-use, rainwater tanks, desalination plants, cloud-seeding (to boost the yield of existing dams), demand management and towing icebergs from the Antarctic, and none of these competed with a new dam. ‘Well think of something else,’ she said. I asked if she had any suggestions. ‘No. You’re the expert,’ was her response.

Mind you, we don’t upset everyone. When I announced at a public meeting in Beaudesert that the Government had approved the future construction of a dam at the Glendower site on the Albert River and that the (then) South-East Queensland Water Board would purchase any affected property, one woman was over the moon. She’d had her property on the market for four years without even a nibble.

In Springsure, a local was strongly opposed to the notion of a new dam on the Comet River, arguing that if it were built, the water would be used to grow cotton. ‘This is cattle country,’ he asserted at a public meeting, ‘not cotton country. It’s always been cattle country. If God hadn’t meant it to be cattle country, he wouldn’t have put cattle on it.’

Moving on

When the Government selected the Wyaralong dam site on Lower Teviot Brook for a future source of water supply for south-east Queensland, I went to inform the locals. One of the landholders greeted me with, ‘Oh no, not you lot again. You’ve already resumed me to build Wivenhoe. I moved to the Burnett and you resumed me for Bjelke-Petersen Dam. And now you’ve got me again. I’m sure as hell not leaving you my forwarding address.’ At least he held no grudges and thought the resumption process had treated him fairly and humanely.

This tale has been topped. The Department of State Development is investigating the possible resumption of land for an industrial estate at Targinnie, north of Gladstone. One of the residents is a very elderly Russian who was dispossessed in his homeland during the Stalinist era. He fled to China, only to be later displaced by the Maoist regime. And now the Queensland Government ...

The Importance of Punctuation

See how just a few small punctuation marks can make all the difference.

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we’re apart. I can be forever happy – will you let me be yours?

Gloria

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we’re apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,

Gloria



The women did everything they could think of to stop the men talking about cricket.

Election Fever

How lucky can we get? With the State election over, we still have local government and federal elections to look forward to. I’m told that the viewing of stage plays and films requires the *suspension of disbelief*, but I think that’s got nothing on enduring an election campaign. And of course, no matter whom we vote for, we’ll elect a bunch of politicians. Maybe there’ll be more fever after than before.

It’s interesting how every party will claim after the election that it was a disaster for all the others and very good for theirs. And before the event, all are striving to be seen as the underdog. Australians are supposed to favour the underdog.

The expression itself dates from the pioneering days. Timber was pit sawn – a log was set up on supports over a pit. A string line was marked with a notch along the top of the log. The guy who stood on the log had to raise the cross-cut saw after each stroke and make sure the cut was along the notch – hence he was called the *Top Notcher*. The poor guy down the pit, who had to do all the dog work, pulling the saw down on its cutting stroke – and getting filled with sawdust for his troubles – was the *Underdog*.

HEALTH *and beauty*

This page is devoted to promoting health and beauty among members (although it's probably a bit late for the latter in most cases). Future contributions will be gratefully accepted.

Longevity

- One centenarian, when asked to what did she attribute her longevity, replied, 'To the fact that I haven't died yet.'
- My recommendation is the red wine and crosswords treatment – as long as he doesn't drink all the red wine and she have all the cross words.
- One good thing about growing old is you can meet new people every day.

Puzzle

Problem solving is reputedly good for mental health. So here is a puzzle to exercise that grey matter. Answer next edition.

Five married couples attended a dinner party. After the introductions were made, they all sat down to dine. One of the participants, Mr Smith, observed to himself, 'Each of the other nine diners has met a different number of people tonight.'

How many people did Mrs Smith meet?



Recipe for Long Life

Here is a recipe for achieving a long life, but I doubt there will be many who will want to take it up.

In the cemetery on Norfolk Island, there is a headstone:

Sacred
to the
Memory of
Thos^s Saulsbury Wright
Native of
Frodringham Yorkshire
who died Feb 9th 1843
aged 106 years.

His story goes like this. Young Thos was an accountant (I think in Norwich) until, at about age 50, he was found guilty of forgery and transported to Botany Bay. There for some secondary offence, he was sent to Norfolk Island (one of the most brutal of the penal settlements) to serve the rest of his 30 years with hard labour sentence. He survived and was repatriated to NSW.

He set up an accountancy business in Windsor, but old habits must have died hard. He was again convicted of forgery and, at the age of 85, was given another 20 years hard labour on Norfolk Island. He completed the sentence, but died shortly afterwards. Perhaps he just couldn't cope with the unaccustomed freedom!

Grandparenting

- Doctor Dan reported that his daughter and son-in-law had purchased a motel at the Sunshine Coast. After they had been there a couple of weeks, they received a fax requesting a booking and suggesting they'd have more bookings if they responded to requests. They were totally puzzled as there had been a dearth of enquiries. Their seven-year-old daughter sighed, 'Don't tell me you don't know you've got a web site.' She marched through to the office, punched a couple of keys and announced, 'and you've got fifteen enquiries.'

- Three year old Robbie asked, 'Grandma, can we go into the office and do some dot coms?'

- Name one good reason why you should have grandchildren? – Every family needs someone who can program the video.

- If I'd known what fun grandchildren can be, I'd have had them first.

Time – a Relative Thing

Ann Ezell was born in England at 1.57 a.m. on October 26, 2003. Her twin sister, Emily, was born 28 minutes later. Officially, however, Emily is legally the elder because that was the day the clocks went back with the end of Summer Time. Emily was born at 1.25 a.m., 32 minutes before her sister's birth time.

– John Hay, *Sunday Mail* 16 November, 2003

This Electronic Age

Haven't computers made our lives so much easier? I can sit here at my word processor and type away. Mistakes are easy to rectify, text can be re-ordered at the touch of a key and I can change the style of lettering, lay it out in any manner, add pictures and generally do what I like. And at the end, with another touch of a key, I can send it to anywhere in the world.

A couple of years ago my daughter Margaret was working on a project whose co-author was in Edinburgh. She would work during her daylight hours and then send it to him so that he could do the same. Virtually 24 hours work every day. Where would we be without emails?

And yet they are not an unmixed blessing. In the office environment they can become a dominating factor on the working day. A survey by the Australian Psychological Society revealed that 69% of managers find having to deal with a daily avalanche of email is stressful. Eighty percent of respondents spent more than 20% of their day dealing with 20-50 work-related emails, plus personal mail and spam.

And what of the impact of this ephemeral form of communication on archivists and historians? What will be their future source of reference material? Imagine *The Complete Emails of Colleen McCulloch?* Or *Peter Carey's Collected SMS?*

Peter Wear, in one of his *Courier Mail* articles, speculated on what the impact of modern technology might have been on writers of the past. As I recall his article, he thought that if Banjo Paterson had been writing today, he may have produced something like this:

I had written him an email
Which I sent him via a female
Who runs the local server out beyond the far Barcoo.
And an answer came in seconds.
Its address to me still beckons -
clancy@theoverflow.com.au

WATERY SAUCES of Words and Phrases

A young child growing up in Australia today with combined exposure to television, radio and movies could well believe that our language originated in America, specifically from Sesame Street, Disneyland or Hollywood.

Over the many centuries that Britain developed its empire, contact with peoples of other countries, particularly its close neighbours/rivals the French, Germans and Spaniards through commerce and armed conflict, inevitably led to cross-pollination of language. The impact of American media and electronic entertainment on not only the English language but also those of other countries is but a more recent albeit potent example.

The influence of the French on the English language is obvious in words such as *carte blanche* and *par excellence*. Less clear perhaps are the European origins of common words like *house* (German) and *budget* (French). What may be even less well known is that many English words and phrases derive from the British Navy.

This is perhaps not so surprising when it is realised how large, important and influential the navy was in terms of British security, development and culture. At the time of Nelson the British Navy was the largest industry in the world. The British public service had its origins in the navy's administrative establishments at Portsmouth and Greenwich.

The British Navy's early contribution to the English language are many, varied and interesting, the following being but a few examples.

On-Board Training

A ship of the type and size of Nelson's "Victory" had around two thousand individual pieces of rigging. A new seaman serving on board was required to become familiar with each and every piece and so the phrase *learning the ropes* was coined.

Extra Curricular Activities

Sailing ships of that era carried around 600 to 800 persons in conditions that at best were very cramped and oppressive. This number included the naval crew as well as a wide range of support trades and other skilled and unskilled men and women. Given the extended periods of cohabitation and the cramped conditions, inevitably the ship's complement increased. Apparently it was not uncommon for the children to be born on one or other of the artillery decks, from which arose the term *son of a gun*.

Time and Motion

In 1714, in response to a growing number of catastrophic navigational disasters, the British Parliament enacted a bill which in part provided for a reward of 20 000 pounds (over \$A7 000 000) to be granted to anyone who could develop and prove by sea trial a practical method of determining longitude at sea. This resulted in the development of the famous ship chronometers principally by John Harrison (over the next 50 years). However, although the clocks could be made to operate with incredible accuracy on land even by today's standards, at sea they ran slow owing to centrifugal forces acting on the moving mechanism resulting from the constant pitching and yawing of the ship. The under-registering of true time at sea (in seconds per day) was referred to as *the going rate*.

Fat Cats

Under the prevailing laws and conditions of the sea, it was not possible for a ship's captain to provide a cash or similar (rum) payment to a crew as a bonus or reward for extra performance. Instead a practice was developed where the fatty residue from the ship's kitchen was collected and on return to port sold for the manufacture of soap, with the proceeds going to the crew as appropriate, for their efforts. The unsavory waste was called *swill* a term which like the other examples above, has since been given wider usage and is now well established in the rich tapestry of the English language.

Peter Thompson

Clever, but not too smart

In 1948 William Shockley and two other scientists Bardeen and Brattain from the Bell Laboratories division of AT&T invented a small innocent looking device called the transistor. The three were later awarded the Nobel Prize for their work which was the culmination of ten years of research into the hitherto largely unknown world of quantum physics. Some time after making the discovery, Bell Labs licensed the manufacturing rights to a little known company called Sony believing that the invention had limited application. Within the next twelve months Sony had produced the first (portable) transistor radio. This would usher in a new era of solid-state electronics and the modern world as we know it.

Peter Thompson

Individuality

Every man
can
Do something I can't;
At the same time
I'm
Something they aren't.

Lend an Ear

A few years ago, Heinekin sponsored a competition for which the prize was a fully paid trip to Amsterdam including a visit to the Van Gogh Museum. All contestants had to do was to write a caption for Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Severed Ear*.



The winning entry (from a Melbourne school-teacher) was:
*Vincent! I said,
'Savour your beer, not
sever your ear!'*

When I married Mr Right, I didn't realise his first name was Always.

CRC for Coal in Sustainable Development

Not all Water Resources people who leave the department actually retire. Frank van Schagen left recently (well, it seems recent) to take up a new challenge. I asked him to pen a few words to let us know what he is up to.

Following a 33 year career that commenced with an Irrigation and Water Supply Commission university scholarship in 1968 to the University of Queensland to study civil engineering, and then working in Brisbane, Longreach, St George and Toowoomba over the next 30 years, I resigned to take up the position of CEO for a Cooperative Research Centre. You may well ask why. Well I suppose you could say he is over 50 and had a 'senior's moment'. The real truth is I had really enjoyed working with researchers from my time in Toowoomba and over the four years (1997-2001) at Indooroopilly Science Centre and wanted to try something different.

Well, being the CEO of a Coal CRC is certainly the way to go. The energy industry has many challenges particularly in the environmental area - sounds like the water industry. The integrated management processes of the natural resources area are now being applied across many industry production chains, and certainly in the Australian coal industry.

I have found the cooperative form of the organisation a challenge, especially as we are charged with getting results from researchers that have application directly into industry. To build the cooperative culture and develop the collaborative projects I spend much of my time travelling in Australia and overseas. As an example this year I will travel to the UK, Japan, Canada and China as well as many visits to Sydney, Newcastle and Perth. The Centre has a Board of Management, on which all partners have a representative. Sounds cumbersome, but when all agree on the outcomes, and they usually all do, it does work well.

Of course I should mention my small management team (there are six of us in 'corporate HQ') that do all the bureaucratic stuff that such a hybrid organisation requires, as well as manage the research, technology and business functions delivered through 19 major collaborative projects, conducted in seven research institutions, in three States (Qld, NSW, WA) by 80 or so researchers, for our 12 industry partners, using approximately \$10M in resources annually. As part of the CRC program we fund and provide supervision for up to 20 PhD students who will find their future employment in the energy industry.

The last two and a half years (yes I started in CCSD on 13 August 2001) have been exciting and the next four and a half (CRC's are funded for 7 years) looks set to be very exciting in the coal and energy generation industries as Australia prepares to adopt new advanced coal technologies that will potentially enable near zero emission of carbon dioxide - a major contributor to 'greenhouse'. We (ie CCSD) are currently looking to play a key role in that technology transition.

If you want to know more see our website at www.ccsd.biz or give me a call on 07 3871 4400.

Frank van Schagen

- **Signs of the Times**

On the Port Fairy (Victoria) cemetery:

One Way Traffic Only



The State of the State's Storages

According to the Met Bureau, South East Queensland has experienced the wettest January since 1974. So it is not surprising that the storage situation has improved.

Wuruma (14%), Leslie (12%), Moogerah (9%), Atkinson (6%), Bill Gunn (5%), Clarendon (0%), Cania (30%), Maroon (22%), Callide (29%) and Tinaroo (33%) dams remain depleted, but most of the other dams have reasonably healthy storage levels (up to 100%).

More details are available on www.sunwater.com.au.

Credits

My thanks are due to Helen, who taught me more about desk-top publishing and saved me when I got into trouble; to Josie Alati who printed this; to the contributors whose by-lines you'll see (and I'm sure there'll be lots more in the future); to Scott Spencer and Peter Noonan who have made the Newsletter available to serving officers on their intra-nets and to Don Alexander who arranged it.

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