

# WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 44

June/July 2004

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held, as planned, on 16 April. Only about 20 members attended. It was rumoured that some members stayed away in fear of being elected to Committee. In the event, these fears were totally unfounded as all the 2003 Committee undertook to serve another year and were duly re-elected (see Page 8 if you need to be reminded of their identity).

We were delighted to have as our guest Peter Noonan, CEO of SunWater, who filled us in on the activities of his people and the state of the State's storages, which are like the curate's egg; good in parts. Unfortunately, our other co-patron, Terry Hogan of NRM&E, was unavoidably detained at Parliament House.

In his report, President Jim Uhlmann informed us that our membership currently stands at 180 of whom 87 are country members. There are 111 members' spouses on the books. He regretfully noted the deaths of Cyril Bode, Bernie Credlin, Bill Day, Ron Dunn, Leon Henry, Col Lewis, David Munro, Johnny Nichols, Norm Pollard and Dave Wilmott in the course of the year.

As foreshadowed in the last Newsletter, a discussion was held on whether it would be prudent to alter the Constitution to change the name of the Association and/or otherwise encourage employees of Natural Resources etc to join us. While the meeting was sympathetic to some of the sentiments expressed, it was generally felt that no change was justified and, in any case, there was no certainty that a change would bring new members.

Members were asked to suggest what activities they would like to see included in the program for the year. One suggestion, which has been adopted by the Committee, was that members be afforded the opportunity to get together over a bite to eat and some lubrication. After all, the prime objective of the Association is esprit de corps.

## Membership Lists

From time to time, the Secretary is asked to supply a list of members. The Committee has no objection to supplying contact details of our members to our members - after all, our principal objective is to maintain contact among former workmates. We are, however, conscious of current privacy laws and the incidence of spam messages on email. If any of you members have any reservations about the release of your contact details to other members, please let the Secretary know.

## From the Editor's Chair

*'History,' Henry Ford is reputed to have said, 'is bunk.' I was never clear about what he meant until I read, much more recently, 'The past is what happened. History is what someone recorded.' There are many, many examples of history not being true to the past (take, for example, A Bad Press on Page 7). This can happen through ignorance, natural bias, selective reporting or the spin-doctors having been hard at work. History, after all, belongs to the victors. Parts of these newsletters are history (other parts are not intended to be more than amusing). Certainly Margaret and I found them very useful while we were writing the People's History. I therefore feel a responsibility to ensure that the contents are not bunk. And I'm sure all you future correspondents out there will supply me with accurate records. Please do! Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## Program for the Year

The Committee has generated what we hope will be an interesting and attractive program for Brisbane members. Further details will be provided closer to the time, but the following should serve for forward planning.

July 15 - mid-year luncheon at COTAH

August 6 - Annual Bowls Day at Aspley Bowls Club

October - Pumicestone Passage Cruise/Bundaberg trip

November - Christmas Luncheon at COTAH

Late January - Informal lunch at the Public Service Club

Early March - Tour of Government House

April - Annual General Meeting and lunch at Public Service Club

The Committee is very conscious of the need to cater for country members too and would be more than happy to sponsor/subsidise activities in the regions. If anyone has a proposal, John Connolly would love to discuss it with you.

## Taking a Caning

Last year's visit to the Port of Brisbane took us through the Hemmant area, which has a very interesting history connected with sugar cane, as President Jim told us.

Sugar cane cuttings were brought to Australia from the Cape of Good Hope by Governor Arthur Philip. Plantings in Sydney and Norfolk Island failed before Governor Macquarie had some experiments carried out at Port Macquarie. In 1862, John Buhot, a former West Indian merchant successfully grew sugar in Brisbane's botanical gardens in conjunction with Walter Hill, the director. Captain Louis Hope (son of the Earl of Hopetoun) gave encouragement and money for the trials and then planted cane himself at Ormiston. William Gibson got some of Hope's cuttings for planting at Hemmant and he and his two sons assisted with the construction of the first mill in the area. Before there was a permanent mill, the stern-wheel steamer *Walrus* became a travelling distillery, producing a potent brew. The locals could smell the ship from miles away.

A succession of frosts practically killed the local industry and growers moved north although some sugar was still sent to Ormiston for milling as late as the 1920s. The industry has continued its northerly migration ever since.

Having made his pile from sugar, Captain Hope entered politics along with Hon. Angus Gibson (William's son) and William Hemmant, who gave his name in due course to the area.

Among the early residents were Friedrich and Magdalene Uhlmann (Jim's great-grandparents) who migrated from Germany in 1852. After serving a two year bond, Uhlmann established a slaughterhouse. His business, although successful, could not support his six sons as well, so the family acquired butcher shops at Bulimba, Morningside, Cannon Hill, Stones Corner and Woolloongabba. The original Uhlmann house was heritage listed although it had to be relocated to allow for major roadworks in the area, as Jim pointed out.

A daughter married a Gibson. The state of the sugar industry almost led to their migration to Hawaii. Instead, they went to Bundaberg and formed a partnership with a Mr Howe to establish the sugar industry there.

### Milestones

According to my very incomplete 'stud-books' from many years ago:

- John 'Trump' Moreton reached his 'use-by date' on 23 February.
- Graeme Bertram had his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on 26 March.
- Jim Mienert reached 65 (and so will be allowed to retire) on 7 April.
- Alan Wickham's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday fell on 11 May.
- D-Day and I shared a 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Erroll Bietz hit 65 on 9 June (but still shows no sign of retiring).
- Jack Pont will celebrate his 75<sup>th</sup> on 19 July.

*I still live in hope that members will keep me informed of other milestones. – Ed.*

## Lytton Secrets Out

In the last Newsletter, I promised more about Fort Lytton. This is the more.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Australian states were very apprehensive about the possible invasion of foreign nations which were entering the Pacific Ocean. The Russians in particular were thought to pose a major threat. Accordingly, parliaments appropriated relatively large sums to fortify their settlements. Queensland allocated £10,000.

Construction of a fort to protect Brisbane began at Fort Lytton in 1880. Lytton and the adjacent Bulwer Island were named after Baron Edward Bulwer-Lytton, British Colonial Secretary in 1858 and 1859 and perhaps better known as the author of *The Last Days of Pompeii*. The fort is a classic 19<sup>th</sup> century design whose close similarity to Fort McHenry in Baltimore (an 18<sup>th</sup> century construction) shows how little progress had been made in design in a hundred years. It originally included four gun pits with a further two pits being added in the 1890s into which the original 64 pounders were moved.

This was the main defence installation in Queensland at least until federation. The guns had a range of 10 000 yards, so that enemy vessels could moor just outside that range and shell the sea front. In World War II, Fort Lytton became a secondary defence with new establishments on Bribie and Moreton Islands. Their guns still only had the same range so enemy ships were safe just outside the 10 000 yard distance. New installations were made at Fort Lytton with modern guns that could be retracted into their bunkers. An additional defensive device was the moveable barrier between an anchored ship and the shore, operated by the navy. This could be swung into place to prevent ships moving up the river if they failed to respond to a challenge. On at least two occasions friendly ships failed to respond in the belief that they were well known to the challengers, but as these had no way of knowing whether the crews had been replaced by enemy boarders, warning shots were fired. That brought an immediate response!

After World War II, the fort fell into disrepair and was eventually acquired by Ampol when they constructed their refinery. Fortunately the fort was not destroyed and the land was handed back to the state in 1988 for preservation. It is now a National Park.

Fort Lytton is open for inspection 7 days a week, but organised tours and the museum are only available on Sundays unless prior arrangements are made. The site is well worth a visit.

## Connections

- Observant members will probably have noticed a reporter on Channel 9 by the name of Rob Hazel. Yes, he is the son of Col and Sandra. On Channel 2, there is a reporter called Deirdre Hazel. She is Rob's wife.
- David Giffen, the former Vice-Captain of the Wallabies, is the grandson of Garney Johnson.
- Lee Rogers, now a keen bridge club member, has encountered the wife of Dr Jim Butler, son of Norm Butler, erstwhile Chief Designing Engineer.
- Mike Marley, former employee of the Water Resources Commission, is the great-grandson of Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, late Premier of Queensland, Chief Justice and one of the creators of the Commonwealth of Australia, after whom Griffith University was named. Another ancestor of Mike's was one Miles Marley, a friend of Charles Dickens. According to Mike, one day Miles and Charles were discussing names and the former commented that Marley was uncommon. Dickens replied that he would make it a household word and wrote Jacob Marley (who was long dead) into *A Christmas Carol* which was published in his magazine *Household Words*.

*There must be many, many more connections which readers would like to share. Please let me know. – Ed.*

## Vale William Moreton Day (12-02-1929 – 25-02-2004)

Bill was born at Gayndah, the son of the Superintendent of the hospital and a nursing sister. As a boy, he lovingly tended his orange and mandarin orchard and competed favourably with professional growers at the Gayndah Show.

Fear that the Normanby railways may be bombed during the war resulted in his secondary schooling at Childers High and Toowoomba Grammar (as a boarder) instead of the intended BGS. He studied Civil Engineering at Queensland University, residing at St Oswald's College and then at King's College.

He began his working life in the Water Supply Section of the Brisbane City Council in 1951. In 1952, 17 year old Ninna Kaye began her working career as a cadet in the same drawing office. He stole her heart. Bill joined the then Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and was promptly posted to Longreach for the next three years to supervise stock routes and bores. Bill would be out for six weeks at a time in an old Holden utility with Dick Hurn, a man for whom he had the highest regard. Ninna would receive a letter about every six weeks but she got on with life in the city.

In 1955 Bill was transferred to Millaroo and then Tinaroo. He married Ninna in November 1956 and they set up home in Tinaroo, a major construction camp just like a mini suburbia – sealed roads and streetlights. In 1957 he transferred to Walkamin – halfway between Mareeba and Atherton – to supervise the West Barron Channel. Bill liked to say that the Commission channelled water across the Great Divide before the Snowy River scheme!

In 1960 he was transferred to Borumba Dam. He and Ninna and newly-born Sue lived in an old pre-fab hut brought in from St George with bowed masonite sides, steel frame and no lining, no sink, no bath, an old wood stove and a steel thunder box outside. After twelve months, the government decided to build the dam by contract and they transferred Bill to Brisbane. He served in

Irrigation Branch until 1967 when he was promoted to Groundwater Branch, where he served the rest of his career. He was Senior Engineer Groundwater on his retirement.

Bill and Ninna built a home at Aspley where he could pursue his passion for growing things. He competed in the Annual Spring Rose Show where he won the grand champion on one occasion. In 1980 they purchased an acre of beautiful Maleny. Bill was able to indulge his passion for growing things yet again. When the cottage was sold in 2002, there were over 300 camellias, pecans, avocados, fruit trees and a cottage garden in the acre. On the range there are over 1000 camellia trees people bought from him.

In 1990 Bill was diagnosed with cancer and had radical surgery followed by radiotherapy, chemotherapy and then radiotherapy for secondary cancer. He was also severely affected by one of the drugs he took. At no time did he complain and was quite remarkable with his approach to his illness.

Through the last 14 years, despite his illness, Bill and Ninna enjoyed many bus trips around Australia. Together they valued the fellowship of Probus and their Church. Bill was a man of the highest integrity, who showed by example his great moral and ethical code to his daughters: Sue (born 1959), a biochemist; Anne (born 1961), a medical practitioner; and Helen (born 1969), an architect.

He was much loved by Ninna, his three daughters, their husbands and his ten grandchildren. He was once asked what he would like on his tombstone and he answered that he would like it said, "He was an honest man."

– Adapted from the eulogy written by Ninna and delivered by son-in-law Ian Bennett

## Bundy and Water

Members will not be surprised to know that regular correspondent Roy Maxted is off on yet another rural safari with Iris. We look forward to his report.

When I rang Lois Pollard for an update on Bundaberg news, she had just returned from the funeral in Brisbane of long-since retired Water Resources Officer Arthur Henry (Dan) Swindley aged 92. Dan's son Alan also worked for the Commission. Lois was chuffed to have met up with former colleagues she had not seen for years although she shared the view, usually expressed on such occasions, that it was a shame funerals appeared to be the most common excuse for a reunion. She endorsed the feeling expressed by many that a repeat of the reunion organised by the Maxteds some years ago would be most acceptable. Such an event may yet come to fruition. Secretary John is negotiating with locals – particularly Warren Hutton who now manages SunWater business in the area. Keep early October free.

Lois regretfully reported the passing, some months ago, of member Merv Scheuber and previously of Dawn Sinnamon.

## Pay Run to Bruce Weir

I am sure a lot of us had experiences like the following story and, with a bit of luck, this telling might bring back a few memories that could be shared.

I was rather young when I joined the 'old' Commission (in fact it was still a Department then). Being the youngest (of three) in the Cairns Office, I tended to get the jobs nobody else wanted.

Pays (and just about everything else) for the construction of Bruce Weir, then being built on the Walsh River near Dimbulah, were handled out of the 'old' Cairns Office. It was the custom to pay the twenty or so blokes on the weir every second Friday in cash. Usually that was a ute trip from Cairns to Mareeba – just over an hour – pick up the cash and an escorting policeman; off to Bruce Weir – three miles off the Dimbulah Road; make up the pays and deliver them about lunch time; then all afternoon to return to Cairns.

But at the time of this tale we were having a Wet. The Barron had the road blocked at Kuranda and Mareeba and the Walsh was way over the crossing (before there was a bridge) on the way to Dimbulah. But trains were still running.

Drawing the short straw, I had to get out of bed early that Friday (that hurt at my age, and it was raining hard), catch the 6 am train Cairns to Chillagoe (steam engine, mixed goods in various wagons and a passenger/guards van on the back); four hours to Mareeba; cross the street (in the rain) to 'The' bank and collect the cash; back to the train (which had waited a few minutes); and wave goodbye to the escort. One other passenger but he looks like he is on his way back to the bush.

*Continued on Page 8.*

## New Agreement for Border Rivers

One project of the Water Planning group in NRM&E is the drafting of a new intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for water management in the Border Rivers. This new agreement will replace the 1946 agreement between the states, ratified in the New South Wales – Queensland Border Rivers Act. It will integrate the management of:

- All water entitlements of the Dumaresq-Barwon Rivers catchment upstream of Mungindi, including on allocation, off allocation or waterharvesting, unregulated stream extractions, overland flow extractions and non GAB groundwater sources,
- Environmental flows dealing with aquatic environments, including floodplain wetlands, dependent ecosystems, groundwater connected systems and end-of-system flows.

A statement of principles has been agreed by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministers of the two states and covers a whole of catchment approach, state cooperation, community support, environmental protection, water sharing and access, accounting, interstate trading, monitoring, management review and auditing and reporting. This will be complemented by other joint activities relating to water pricing and institutional reform of the Border Rivers Commission (BRC). The latter builds on work done for the BRC by Peter Bevin and Bill Eastgate with Warren Martin from NSW a few years ago.

The States will give effect to the finalised IGA through their respective water resources planning processes. Queensland intends to have its Resource Operations Plan for the Border Rivers finalised in the next year or so.

Further details are available from Greg Claydon or Tom Vanderbyl.

**Greg Claydon**

## SEQ Regional Water Supply Strategy – Update

Last Newsletter flagged the development of stage 1 of an SEQ regional water supply strategy. A draft report aimed at meeting short to medium term urban water needs has now been prepared. It identifies current urban water usage as about 370,000ML/yr. This could rise to 515,000ML/yr by 2021, based on median population growth projections. Rural water demand is about 124,000ML/yr, but this could double if water were available and prices and markets were “right”. The current demand from power stations for cooling purposes is about 29,000ML/yr.

The report recommends more rigorous determination of water availability, including a “managed yield” approach which involves demand restrictions and provision of contingency volumes for worse than historical droughts and climate change. Existing surface water storages will not meet the needs of increasing populations past about 2025 based on a “business as usual” approach. There are some more pressing supply issues for the Gold Coast, Toowoomba and parts of the Sunshine Coast.

The report recommends that more work be done to specify future regional water services arrangements involving:-

- additional demand management such as incentives for water efficient devices and reductions in water losses;
- increased water source substitution including water recycling, stormwater and rainwater tanks, and adoption of dry cooling rather than wet cooling of power stations;
- assessment of water sources augmentation infrastructure like new dams and/or desalination plants with interconnecting trunk mains networks;
- water sensitive urban design and integrated urban water management, especially in new developments.

SECROC’s comments will enable the report to be finalised over the coming month or two. More strategy development will be required. Further information is available from Greg Claydon or Richard Priman.

**Greg Claydon**

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## Natural Resources Sciences

In the early 1990s, when the Water Resources Commission was part of DPI, the Resources Sciences Centre was established in the old DPI centre at Indooroopilly. Scientists from (the former) DPI, WRC and Forestry were brought together to provide the science that underpins the management of the State’s natural resources. Following the separation of the new Department of Natural Resources from DPI, the Resource Sciences Centre (including many original DPI employees) went to NRM. But what, you may ask, does the Natural Resource Sciences (NRSc) group do?

NRSc is an organisation of some 420 scientists, researchers and support personnel most of whom are based at the major research facilities in Indooroopilly and Sherwood, Brisbane. There are also research centres located at Charters Towers, Toowoomba, Inglewood, Rocklea, Zillmere and Mareeba employing another 120 staff. Staff skills include hydrology (surface and groundwater), biology, land resource sci-

ence; numerical modelling; climatology; geology; remote sensing; acid sulfate soil drilling; salinity modelling; GIS data capture and spatial analysis and bio-control of weeds and pest animals.

Some recent achievements for NRSc include:

- The Aussie GRASS spatial pasture growth model was used to assist in the assessment of drought exceptional circumstances.
- The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) project was founded in 1995 as a major vegetation monitoring initiative to investigate overall woody vegetation cover and report on the previously unquantified extent of land clearing in Queensland.
- Salinity hazard maps were completed for all National Action Plan catchments in Queensland. Drilling programs for observation bores were established in the Lower Balonne, north-east Darling Downs, the Dawson and Lower Fitzroy catchments.

- Hydrology modelling was completed to support Water Resource Plans for priority catchments.
- The Queensland input to the Murray-Darling Sustainable Rivers Audit pilot study to assess the river’s health was completed.
- Land use maps for the 28 coastal catchments from the NSW border to Townsville were completed using satellite imagery.
- The Queensland Digital Exploration (QDEX) system provides mineral and petroleum explorers with unparalleled access (via the Internet) to historical, non-confidential data held within the Department.

Successive Directors have been Bill Eastgate, Frank van Schagen and Chris Robson, all water men.

For further information on some of the projects NRSc has been involved in, visit the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy website at <http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au> – information provided by Karen Graydon pkf Chris Robson

## SunWater Snippets

As Peter Noonan regretfully reported to the AGM of WRRRA, Project Aqua (written up in the last Newsletter) has been abandoned. After a Supreme Court hearing, the NZ electricity industry was unable to secure the necessary allocation of water for the project to be viable.

SunWater assisted Burnett Water to select the Alliance partners for the construction of the Burnett River Dam (formerly known as Paradise Dam) and has now completed its involvement – at least for the time-being – in the project.

SunWater and the Stanwell Corporation have been investigating the possibility of incorporating a hydro power station in Burdekin Falls Dam. This is not the major station once proposed, but a more modest scheme that does not require raising of the structure. The plant would be able to generate 30 megawatts of renewable energy – enough to supply up to 19,000 homes each year.

The Government has announced the construction of a new fishway at Clare Weir. The new structure will replace the existing fishway which has been found to be ineffective. Extensive studies by SunWater and DPI Fisheries have come up with the new design, in line with the more recent developments outlined in the accompanying article. It is similar in concept to the effective works incorporated in Neville Hewitt Weir (Dawson R), Eden Bann Weir (Fitzroy R), Ned Churchward Weir (Burnett R) and Dumbleton Weir (Pioneer R).

– information largely taken from *Water Channels* pkf Peter Noonan

## Dam Dangerous Things

Australia has been very fortunate in having had no catastrophic failure of a major dam, unlike other places where people have been killed in large numbers. The lack of accidents has been in part lucky, as early dams were designed without full understanding of such concepts as uplift and were constructed by fairly primitive methods. More recently, of course, the technology has improved and the authorities have gone to great pains to assess risks and develop policies for dam surveillance and management, particularly through ANCOLD. Queensland owes a lot to such stalwarts as Alan Wickham, Norm Rossi, Russ McConnell and Peter Allen for their contributions.

Members will probably be aware of the major upgrade to the spillway of Warragamba Dam (NSW) and the current modifications to the Wivenhoe spillway to cater for the reassessed probable floods. Member Ian Ferrier was part of the Wivenhoe team headed up by Leightons.

The damage that can be caused by dam failure, both from the flood and the loss of water supply, is well recognised. During World War II, this led to the development by Barnes Wallis of the “shock wave” mine used by the Dam Busters to destroy dams in the Ruhr Valley. I’m told that the South Koreans are terrified that the North Koreans will breach the inaptly named Peace Dam just above their border, causing untold devastation.

I was once told, and I think in all seriousness, by a member of the public that we should never build any dams in Queensland because they would be a sitting target for an enemy who could blow them up or poison the water supply!

## A Fishy Tale

Almost all of the 130 Queensland freshwater fish species share a common need to migrate. This need has been greatly impeded by construction, over the years, of dams and weirs as well as culverts, diversion structures and bridges. The need for fish passage was recognised long ago and fish ladders were incorporated in a number of weirs and barrages. Unfortunately, few of these have been effective, in part because their design was based on experience from the northern hemisphere. All too often, they served as fish traps affording predators the opportunity to catch fish easily!

More recently there have been significant developments in design and the more recent installations have demonstrated far greater effectiveness. The Mary River and Tinana Creek barrages incorporated the old-fashioned step-and-pool fish ladders which on occasions served as little more than fish-traps for predators to utilise. In recent years, several structures have been targeted for modification of their existing ladders or the retrofitting of new devices. As well, new structures such as Ned Churchward Weir, have had state-of-the-art structures incorporated from the word go. In general, lower structures incorporate vertical-slot fishways while fish locks are used in higher structures.

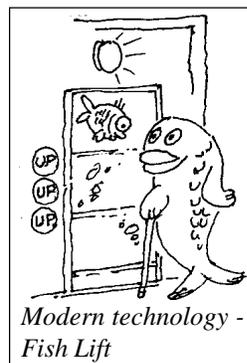
The vertical-slot fishway is a pool-type design, with a channel divided into pools or cells by evenly spaced baffles. The vertical-slot baffle has a slot that runs the full depth of the baffle and angles a jet of water into the downstream pool, which dissipates the energy of the water.

The operating principle of a fish lock is very similar to a navigation lock. An attraction flow encourages migrating fish into a holding chamber where they are trapped. The majority enter the adjacent lock chamber, then an entry gate is automatically closed and the chamber fills with water to the upstream storage level. The upstream exit gate is then opened and the fish are encouraged to leave the chamber by a flow of water in the exit channel. In the new Burnett River Dam, the fish lock

will need to be 37 metres high! Provision will be made for separate downstream migration.

Observations have been carried out to measure the range and numbers of fish making their way through the fish passages. The range of sizes and classes of fish negotiating these new structures indicate the success of the new designs. In terms of recent design, construction and biological fishway expertise and experience, Queensland is arguably the national leader.

– information provided by Errol Beitz and Mike Barry



Give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day.  
Teach a man to fish and you can get rid of him  
for the whole weekend.

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## The Cure may be Worse than the Complaint



Back in Tudor times when the famous Dr Dee was practising, medical science had many absolutely infallible (well they may have accidentally worked occasionally) cures for common complaints.

Those readers who despair of modern practitioners may care to contemplate their use.

1. A treatment for **headache** is to drink a mixture of lavender, bay, rue, sage and marjoram or (preferably) press a hangman's rope to your head.
2. A **bad chest** can be cured by imbibing a mixture of thyme, campanula and hyssop (this may actually have worked!)
3. **Rheumatism** is infallibly cured by wearing the skin of a donkey (time unspecified. Obviously if it doesn't work you haven't worn it long enough.)
4. To cure **gout**, boil a red-haired dog in oil, add worms, pig's marrow and herbs. Make a mixture and put it on the affected area.
5. **Deafness** is treated by warming the gall of a hare and the grease of a fox and placing the mixture in the ear.
6. To cure **baldness** (*and I know plenty who'll be sweating on this*), shave the head and smear with the grease of a fox. Or wash the head with the juice of beetles. Or crush garlic and rub it in the head and wash in vinegar.
7. **Plague** is simply dealt with by putting the herb rue on your windowsill.
8. Deal with **smallpox** by hanging red curtains round the patient's bed (the red light is the cure).
9. **Head-lice** are treated by pouring on tobacco juice.
10. **Jaundice (bad liver)** calls for the patient to swallow nine lice mixed with a little ale each morning for a week.

If any of these cures should fail, you could always be bled or have leeches applied.

-- taken from *The Terrible Tudors; one of the Horrible Histories* of Terry Deary

*Thank goodness we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when quack remedies are entirely a thing of the past!* Ed.

## Exercise those Brain Cells

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The inscription above was found by an unmanned spacecraft on a piece of purple rock from a newly discovered planet. The scientists who received it assumed that it had been written by a humanoid and represented an addition sum. From this, they inferred that the humanoid had how many fingers?

## The Place of Beer

A professor stood before his philosophy class and filled a large jar with golf balls. The students agreed that the jar was full. He then poured pebbles into the jar, shook it lightly and they rolled between the golf balls. He then poured sand into the jar and it filled up everything else. He poured in two cans of beer.

'Now this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – your family, your children, your health, your friends, your favourite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter – like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness: play with your children; take time to get medical checkups; take your partner out to dinner; play another 18. Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. The rest is just sand.'

A student inquired what the beer represented. 'I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers.'

- thanks to Bob Kay

### Circle

The man who works will have the wealth  
To keep his sanity and health;  
And then, with any luck, he may  
Be fit to work another day.

## Solution to Puzzle in Newsletter 43

Hector Macdonald provided a solution very rapidly in the hope that the first correct entry might receive a bottle of scotch. I pointed out to Hector that with his lineage, he should know that we Scots are always happy to drink it, but are loath to give it away. Here is Hector's solution (slightly modified).

The five couples are Mr and Mrs A, Mr and Mrs B, Mr and Mrs C, Mr and Mrs D and Mr and Mrs Smith(S).

A person cannot meet him/herself or his/her spouse. Therefore no person can meet more than 8 people.

If each of the other 9 people has met a different number of people, then the nine people met 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8 people respectively.

Could Mrs Smith meet 8? No, because if she did, none of the other 8 people would have met no one. So someone other than Mrs S has met 8. Let us call that person A1. He/she has met everyone he/she is eligible to meet. Everyone A1 met has now had 1 meeting. So the only person who can qualify as meeting no one is A2.

Let us call the person who met 7, B1. B1 has already met 1 person. Therefore B1 needs to meet 6 more eligible people. Four are ineligible (B1, B2, A1 and A2). Therefore B1 meets Mr and Mrs C, Mr and Mrs D, and Mr and Mrs S. B1 has now met 7 people. Everybody except B2 (and of course Mr and Mrs A who we need no longer consider) has now met at least 2 people. Therefore B2 is the person who meets 1 person.

This process is continued. Let C1 be the person who meets 6 people. C2 must therefore be the person who meets 2. Similarly if D1 meets 5 then D2 meets 3. This in turn leads to the conclusion that Mr and Mrs S must each meet 4 people. The Smiths are the only couple that can have met the same number of people because we are told that each of the other 9 (apart from Mr Smith) has met a different number of people.

## Suffer the Little Children

Doctor Dan's four year old granddaughter, Milly, was struggling to keep up with the other kids. 'Wait for me, Fast Coaches!' she called out.

Milly was inspecting the family photographs. She looked at the shot of her parent's wedding party and asked, 'Why aren't I in the photograph?' Her mother explained, 'You weren't born then.' Milly thought about this and then went on looking through the album. She came to a photograph of her aunt's recent wedding at which she (Milly) had been flower girl. There she was, in the middle of the photograph. She smiled with satisfaction and then a puzzled frown crossed her face. 'Mummy,' she asked, 'who wasn't born at Auntie Susan's wedding?'

Lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbour was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

## A Bad Press

We often hear of people complaining that the media have quoted them out of context or they have been the victims of selective quotation.

One of the worst injustices of a bad press was that suffered by Canute, King of Engla-lond from 1016 to 1035. As we all know from our Primary School history, Canute was the conceited idiot who ordered the waves to go back and not to wet him. The history books were right – up to a point – but they failed to record the rest of the story. When the waves came in and wet his feet – as Canute knew they certainly would – he exclaimed to his nobles, 'Let all the world know that the power of kings is empty and worthless!'

Canute went on to be one of the most wise, just and competent kings the Brits ever had. But he got a bad press!

## Time Immemorial

When my daughter Margaret Cook (co-author of our People's History) was researching Stock Routes, numerous bushies told her that things had been there from 'Time Immemorial'. This is not the vague term that one would generally assume. In fact 'Time Immemorial' is defined in an English statute of 1275 (during the reign of Edward I), which set 1189 (when Richard I succeeded his father Henry II) as the earliest date that could be taken account of by English law. Any events prior to that were assumed to have a common date and hence to have existed from 'time immemorial'. So it is highly improbable that even the oldest European artifacts in Australia date from then!

## Calendar Girl

In Norwich Cathedral, there is a memorial to the daughter of Frances Frank who was born on April 13, 1736 and died on February 20, 1736. Sounds a bit like the cannibal's daughter who was ate before she was seven. No, the dates are not an error on the part of the mason. At the time, New Year's Day was celebrated on March 25, so February did come after April.

New Year's Day has had a number of homes (the Chinese, for example, still celebrate it between January 21 and February 19) including Christmas Day, Easter Day, March 1 and March 25 (the time of the Feast of the Assumption). January 1 only became standard when Britain adopted the Gregorian Calendar – nearly 200 years after other parts of Europe had implemented it (1582). It was decreed that the year 1751, which had begun on 25 March, would end on 31 December (making it only 281 days long) and that 1752 would commence the next day on January 1. To correct for the cumulative errors in the previously used Julian Calendar, it was further decreed that in the year 1752, September 2 would be followed by September 14, resulting in only 354 days in that year. This upset quite a few Brits who rioted and demanded that they be given back their 11 days!

## A Subtle Story

On the subject of rainfall, the Orkney Islands, to the north of Scotland (which we visited a year ago), have a reputation for being extremely wet. One of the unhappy troops who was posted there during World War II penned some verses of complaint which included

All bloody clouds, all bloody rain  
No bloody kerbs, no bloody drains  
The Council's got no bloody brains  
In bloody Orkney!

In fact the annual rainfall is only about 1 metre – the same as Brisbane. The difference is that there it rains about 300 days a year and here only about 65.

A major feature of the Orkneys is the harbour of Scapa Flow. Towards the end of World War I, once Germany had asked for peace terms, Britain decided to impound the German *Hochseeflotte*. The entire fleet was held in Scapa Flow with a skeleton crew under the command of Rear Admiral von Reuter. There were difficulties in brokering the Armistice agreement, it appeared likely that war would break out again and a rumour went round that the *Hochseeflotte* would be mobilised against the Fatherland. Von Reuter sent out the order to scuttle the entire fleet and within five hours every vessel had been sunk.

Tourist operators on the Orkneys now sell T-shirts with a portrait of an exasperated Admiral exclaiming, 'Fools! I said "subtle retreat" not "scuttle the fleet"!'

## • Signs of the Times

In the basilica in the Valley of the Fallen in Spain, there is a sign that reads –

**During Mass, visitors will be suspended at this point.**

*And I thought the Spanish Inquisition was a thing of the past. Ed.*

**If you long for the good old days, try turning off the air-conditioner.**

## Book Club

I have no doubt that many members are always on the lookout for a new book or a new author. I have decided to introduce this column, which will allow readers to share their happy reading experiences with others. Anyone who has read an enjoyable book is invited to pass on the news. The future of this column is entirely in your hands – no contributions, no column.

- *Windmill Hill* by Michael Jacobson is the most satisfying novel I have read in years. Set in Tasmania, it tells the story of the narrator's abduction of his grandfather from the Old Peoples Home to let him build one last garden. It explores the history of the family and Tasmania and is so realistic that people actually go to Tasmania to find the (imaginary) garden.
- For lovers of crime fiction with an interesting social/cultural background, I thoroughly recommend the works of Donna Leon. From the first, *Death at la Fenice*, to the latest, *Doctored Evidence*, the tales of Commissario Brunetti, his family and colleagues, portray a fascinating picture of contemporary Venice as well as providing well-structured specimens of the sleuthing genre.
- *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss has been a best-seller in both Britain and Australia, which is extraordinary for a book about English punctuation. For a stickler like me (Truss's term) it is a thoroughly enjoyable read. But it would not appeal in the least to those who believe that punctuation is too difficult so we should simply abandon it! For me, the solecisms are simply hilarious!

## Pay Run to Bruce Weir (cont. from page 3)

Get out at Chircan (rain still pouring); now where is that jeep and the timekeeper who are supposed to meet me? No sign. Ah well, it's only three miles down a dirt track; walk (in the rain). Get there to find that the (only) truck got bogged, the (only) other vehicle, a jeep, was bogged in front of the truck trying to pull it out and the (only) tractor, a D4 crawler, was bogged in front of the jeep. No wonder I had to walk.

Distribute the pays, and with everyone now in a good mood most of the twenty pack around the jeep and carry it out to the track. Of course that is the sign for the rain to stop. Catch the return train (mostly cattle this time) back through Mareeba to Cairns and home by 9 pm.

This day and age, everybody would be more security conscious, no doubt. But on reflection, if I had been held up, the 'baddies' would have had to swim away with the loot!

### Jack Pont

Jack sent me a recent photograph from The Cairns Post (which cannot be reproduced here) of a pontoon at Tinaroo Dam. Because of the water levels produced by recent rains, the access is under water and the shade at the far end is only suitable for pygmies!

## Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen; to Josie Alati and Trevor Lynam who printed this; to the contributors; to Scott Spencer, Peter Noonan and Don Alexander who put it on departmental intra-nets; and to Bob Kay who did the cartoons - I am so pleased to work with him again. It's 25 years since we collaborated on Aquarius.

## Office Bearers

Current Office Bearers of the Association are given below for the information of anyone wanting to contact them.

President	Jim Uhlmann	133 Sapphire St HOLLAND PARK 4121	3420 5168	jimncath@dovenetq.net.au
Past Pres	Gordon Wilson	7 Prout St CAMP HILL 4252	3398 7247	gordonfwilson@optushome.com.au
Vice Pres	Eric Davis	19 Morland St MT GRAVATT 4122	3349 6638	etjd@optusnet.com.au
Secretary	John Connolly	28 O'Grady St MT GRAVATT 4122	3349 5480	jonnolly@acenet.net.au
Treasurer	Lee Rogers	61 Upland Rd ST LUCIA 4067	3371 3200	leerogers@mail.com
Executive	Dave Morwood	35 Bellata St THE GAP 4061	3366 3570	djlmorwood@acenet.net.au
	Tom Fenwick	3 Waterford Pl. BRIDGEMAN DOWNS 4035	0419 655 259	fenwick.t.v@bigpond.com.au
Auditor	Ray Sutherland	Dept Natural Resources & Mines		
Editor	Ian Pullar	21Lansdowne Way CHUWAR 4306	3281 4437	pullarhandi@optusnet.com.au

## Dodging the Office

I met him down town one morning years ago. He was a renowned practical joker, always good for a laugh, but he looked worried. "Have you still got any influence with the Office?" he asked. That was a change, for a Water Joey to ask an office type for help, let alone an 'ex'.

"It's like this. We're putting in a few extra rain gauges to get a better idea of the variation in rainfall. Yesterday, I was putting one at Josip Bloggs' front gate when Joe rolled up. 'What are you doing?' he asked.

"As you know Joe is a friendly sort of bloke, but I should have remembered his short fuse before I answered, 'This is just to see how much rain falls on your place so we can charge you for it.' Joe just wandered off to the house and I thought no more of it.

"But today I get the word the office wants to see me urgently! Me! Urgently! Have you got any influence? ..."

"Well, I suppose it is pay day. And I have got to go in some time ..."

### Jack Pont

