

# WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 49      March 2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## Rebadged (again)

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is no more. In the latest Ministerial shakeup, the former Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Honourable Henry Palaszczuk MP, was sworn in as the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and **Water**. This change does not signify that water is considered to be an unnatural resource (although, judging from the reaction of some sectors of the public to suggestions of indirect potable recycling, this was not beyond the realms of possibility). Instead, it is a recognition of the importance the Government is placing on water. Neither does the change of title imply that Head Office will henceforth be renamed Mineral Water House.

### From the Editor's Chair

*Quite some years ago, I was travelling on a group bus tour when I overheard a conversation in front of me. One woman was about to retire and she was commenting that all her work colleagues asked what she was going to do in retirement. Her older companion intervened, saying, "But you're only retiring from work, not from life! I had so much to do when I stopped work that there was no chance of my fitting it all in."*

*The older lady is now well into her nineties and still struggles to fit into her days all that she wants to do. The younger one has certainly not retired from life and is full of stories about her activities.*

*Every day, it seems, there are tales in the press of the new generations intent on ski-ing (spending kids inheritance) well into their retirement. And there is lots of anecdotal evidence that any residual estate is being left to the grandchildren who need it more than the children!*

*I think the times they are a-changing!*

*But one way or another, I wish you all a continuation of a happy retirement through 2006.*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

As part of the new initiative (is that a tautology?), the Department has established a new Water Task Force. Its role is to expedite the preparation of Water Resource Plans and the provision of essential water infrastructure, particularly in South East Queensland. The Task Force, which will answer directly to the Director-General, at least initially, will have a staff of about 60. These will largely be drawn from the Water Planning Group headed by General Manager Greg Claydon, including the Infrastructure Planning Group currently being created under Director Richard Priman, the SEQ Regional Water Supply Strategy Group, Seamus Parker's Policy and Legislation Group and part of the Co-Ordinator General's Department which over the past few years has had the responsibility for facilitating new infrastructure. Some of the staff of EPA who were formerly part of Natural Resources (such as the WaterWise group) may also be integrated into the revamped Department.

There is a lot to be done, particularly if the current drought does not break and emergency plans have to be fast-tracked.

### Getting Together

By the time you receive this Newsletter, the Oldies and Boldies' visit to the Ipswich Railway Museum on 15 March will be over. I'm sure all the participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves at this first class show. A few years ago, we were at Sovereign Hill (Vic) attending the *Blood on the Southern Cross* son et lumiere (which is world class according to the Americans and Brits we know who have been there) and chatting to a SA couple who told us Ipswich was always a destination of their choice because of the superb museums (sorry all you Brisbanites who turn up your noses at this fair city).

Well in the past will be the Christmas luncheon at COTAH, which as usual was attended by a capacity crowd of 61 (with the now customary reshuffling of the attendees at the last moment) all of whom had the customary enjoyable time. Thanks to John Connolly for his efforts.

And don't forget the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Public Services Club on 20 April. To assist the Committee to welcome as many members as can possibly make it, all participants are invited to select their lunch from the excellent bistro menu at NO COST TO THEMSELVES! We hope to see a record attendance. This is your opportunity to make suggestions as to how members should get together next year.

We welcome as new members Warren Hutton, Keith Bedford, John Cantor, Ken Kennedy and Bruce Pearce. And there are several old boys out there who have intimated a desire to join but who haven't quite got round to it. So don't forget to encourage new members with the promise that they will receive this wonderful Newsletter!

## Rededication

At 11 a.m. on 11 November last year, as part of the Armistice Day ceremony, the World War I Honour Board of the Water Resources Department was rededicated by the current Minister Henry Unpronounceable-name (to quote from his heart-warming speech) at the Department's Landcentre at Woolloongabba.

A number of long-serving current and past officers attended (see the photograph), but unfortunately other older former officers who knew Charlie Ogilvie, Billy Kearton etc (whose names are honoured) were unable to join us at the ceremony.

As far as we were concerned, the Guest of Honour was Laurie Kearton, Billy's son, who is a retired officer of the former Lands Department and who was happy to be an honorary Watery Sauces man for the day.

There is a slight irony in the present location of the Honour Board - at one stage Water Resources was a sub-department of Lands Department which has now, in turn, been consumed by the Department of Natural Resources (and now Mines and WATER.)



*Bruce Pearce, Leon Leach, Laurie Kearton, Ian Pullar, John Hillier, Eric Davis and John Ruffini pose beside the newly rededicated Honour Board*

## Out and About

Happy birthday to you, happy birth ... On 12 March, Don Beattie turned 80. On 20 February, John Ward reached his three-score-years-and-ten milestone. On 20 April, Brian Shannon will turn 60. Many happy returns to all these highly esteemed gentlemen (it's not their fault that we are all similarly aging!) Among the guests at Des and Daree Foster's Golden Wedding on 2 April (congratulations!) were Jim and Cath Uhlmann.

Lee and Denise Rogers are booked for a four week holiday in Italy during May. Ian and Helen Pullar will be commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme with a trip to the western battlefields (in June-July) which also takes in Belgium and Paris (I guess someone has to keep the travel agents solvent). Col and Sandra Hazel are thinking of another trip to Ireland (and thought is free).

The Davises and Catons had a wonderful trip to the west (see page 3). Following his trip, President Eric had a very friendly meeting with the newish Director-General of NRM and W, Bob McCarthy. Bob assured Eric of his support for WRRA and expressed the hope that he could personally attend some of our functions or at least send a representative.

John Connolly received the following letter from Andy Winkler in Walzbachtal, Germany when he returned there for a holiday last year. *I just received my Newsletter and it cheered me up and made my day. I have been back in the old Country for several months. In the first week in October, I landed in Hospital with a stomach virus. While I was in Hospital, complications from a kidney stone saw me lose a lot of blood and by the time they got me to the Intensive Care Unit I was unconscious. If this would have happened away from the Hospital, I would have been a gonna. I stayed in the Intensive Care Unit for 12 days. All in all I stayed one month in Hospital. I still have to see the doctor twice a week. I hope that I'll be fit by 9th January when my flight home is booked. I can't stand this cold weather either. I'll be pleased when I get back home to our lovely sunny Queensland weather. I hope to meet you all in one of the gatherings in the New Year. Keep up the good work. My best wishes to all members of the Water Resources Retirees.*

I was short of information for this column and was wondering what I would use to complete this edition when the unthinkable happened. We had a major fire at our home and will not be living there for six months or so while it is being rebuilt. Fortunately no one was badly hurt. Helen, who noticed the fire after having been alerted by the cat, managed to get out, albeit in the clothes she was wearing - a nightie. I was at work and the clothes I was wearing were all I had in my possession. We also lost virtually our entire library - replacement value about \$50,000 - and the damage to our computers (among other things) has led to the delay in the production of this newsletter.

But no doubt the victims of Cyclone Larry are far worse off. The day after he struck, North Regional Service Director Mark Cranitch circulated news of the immediate impact on Departmental folk.

*As you would have read or heard the cyclone hit Innisfail, Atherton, Mareeba and Georgetown where we have offices and staff. Cairns lost power due to wind and rain associated with the Cyclone .*

*Fortunately I can report that only three officers (out of 30) had their houses substantially damaged in Innisfail /Mission Beach area. One officer was injured requiring stitches.*

*Balance of the officers in Innisfail suffered varying degrees of damaged to their property. Biggest issue is lack of power/water and sewerage.*

*There are no reports of property damage in other centres however staff are busy cleaning up debris.*

*Due to lack of power in several suburbs of Cairns staffing in that office is reduced today. Biggest impact is on the Counter Services. They are experiencing difficulty with EMs as well.*

*Atherton has no electricity so the office is closed until power resumes. Mareeba has power but staffing numbers in office will be affected by clean up.*

*Innisfail and South Johnstone Offices will be closed.*

*Please say a prayer that Cyclone Wati doesn't follow the same path as Cyclone Larry.*

## The Best of the West

Eric and Jan Davis and Nev and Marilyn Caton recently joined the wandering retirees by spending 7 weeks in Western Australia.

Eric and Jan left Brisbane in their camp and met the Catons in Adelaide where we did a bit of sightseeing for a few days, including a tour around the Adelaide Oval, before putting the car and camp on the Indian Pacific. The trip was great – especially the food – once we found that if you didn't wait until last to enter the dining room, you'd be sure to get your choice of the menu.

It was cold, showery and windy in Perth – little did we know that this was to be typical of the weather for the whole trip. It soon became apparent that having spouses drive and navigate was too stressful so the men became “Navigator Nev” and “U turn Eric”.

The wildflower season was in full swing and because of the wet/cold winter, the flowers were at their best. We saw the wildflowers in Kings Park in Perth but they are mostly hybrids so when we finally got out of the city and began our first wildflower foray west of Cervantes, we were thrilled to see paddocks of purple and yellow. Out came the cameras and it was rather embarrassing to be told later that it was Patterson's Curse and some other yellow daisy-like weed.

The wildflowers really are lovely to see but we left the nitty gritty wildflower watching to others more passionate than us as after two weeks of looking for orchids and trigger plants we felt “wildflowered out”. We kept running into people in the caravan parks who would ask us, “Have you seen the Queen of Sheba orchid, or the black kangaroo paw yet?” It seems to be like a badge of honour to tick them off as you see them – we just took lots of photos and said it was a Vanilla Bush or Granny's Bonnet or something though we did feel a sense of elation when we actually found the wreath flowers.

We went as far north as Kalbarri, the highlight being our 4 hour walk around the Murchison Gorge, noticing the really tiny wildflowers while watching where we were putting our feet the whole time. Give the River cruise a miss if you're going there – the river is very shallow which severely limits how far up the river you can go.

Nev and Marilyn had invested in beanies from an Op shop at Hahndorf in South Australia very early in the trip as it didn't take long to realise it was going to be a bit colder than North Queensland. Eric already had a red and white one and made the mistake of wearing it in public the afternoon the AFL final was on while we were in Geraldton. He hadn't given a thought to the fact all the locals would think he was a Sydney fan and wouldn't be impressed.

We were in Toodyay when the NRL final was on but the local hotel was unable to pick it up on TV so we listened to the radio at the caravan park and then went back to the pub to drown our sorrows.

We all had trouble remembering the names of towns and places – in one day we were at Mulawa, Morawa and Moora – to say nothing of all the “ups” south of Perth. One thing they all had in common though, was the cold wind!! Every time we all got back in the car there was a loud collective sigh of relief to be out of it.

We were really impressed with the accuracy of their weather forecasting – one night at Pinjarra (in Jarra country) there was a “severe weather warning” forecast for 1a.m. Sure enough the severe weather arrived right on cue and we all lay in bed waiting for the camp to blow over or a tree to fall on us but apart from a bit of a leak, we escaped unscathed.

We fell in love with the trees and the drive at the southern end of Caves Rd through the Karri forests is just beautiful. Their height is amazing and Marilyn, for one, was keen to climb up one of the trees they used for fire lookouts. There are only stakes driven into the trunk and of the three trees you can climb, one is 80m tall. Needless to say she didn't get too far and decided it wasn't such a good idea after all. A fellow we met later told us that he had climbed to the top, even though he'd had two hip replacements.

Of course the fishing rods went the whole trip with us and Jan was forever on the lookout for a promising spot. We were told you could always catch fish off the jetty at Cervantes – and you could too, providing you liked catching little herring. Jan and Nev did catch a small taylor each but the weed was a metre deep on the beach and just as bad in the water. Fish were also guaranteed at Augusta, Walpole and Albany but there wasn't even a nibble although Marilyn did see two men cleaning fish at Emu Point in Albany with a great sea lion sitting between them waiting for a tid bit.

We arrived at Esperance on a beautiful sunny and almost windless day – amazing. The weather held out long enough for us to see Cape Le Grande National Park in all its splendour but by lunch time the clouds and the wind were back. We were fascinated to watch two tugs manoeuvre a large ship into the dock and although we couldn't see what was being loaded it would have been just as interesting to see how they managed to get a fully loaded ship back out to sea with the howling wind and shallow water to contend with.

From Esperance it was on to Norseman, our stepping off point for the drive back over the Nullabor. We had been told that was the right way to drive as the wind would be behind us. Needless to say the wind blew in the opposite direction and we had to push into it for the whole journey, paying as much as \$1.70 for diesel in some places. We were fortunate that the unusually cold weather had kept the whales at The Head of Bight later than usual and we had a great close up view from the walkways.

Back in SA, we headed for Streaky Bay. We arrived in calm conditions but within five minutes of booking into the caravan park, the weather had become cyclonic. It settled down a bit the next day and we visited the abalone farm which was a real eye opener. It costs \$1m for a licence to gather abalone on the sea bed, but they can make \$2m in a season. The farm concentrates on green lipped abalone and 100% goes to China at around \$600/kg for the processed product.

Almost every photo has us in the same clothes with our arms crossed over our chests and our shoulders hunched against the cold. Eric had spent hours hours planning where to go and what to see – he warned us at the beginning that it wasn't a holiday, it was a trip and even though we didn't succeed in getting one whole crossword out the whole time and Jan wouldn't always accept our words in scrabble, we had a really enjoyable time with lots of laughs.

By the time Nev and Marilyn arrived back in Adelaide the roses were in full bloom and that alone is worth a trip to Adelaide. Eric and Jan pushed into even more wind on their way to Broken Hill. On the way home they were lucky enough to either be a day ahead of heavy rain or a couple of days behind heavy rains that fell in western NSW. Eric was pleased to see the Jack Taylor Weir almost full as they passed through St. George (he took a photo naturally).

All up, we travelled 11,500 kms by car, and 2,500 kms by train, on a very memorable trip (not holiday).

**Marilyn Caton** (*and gratefully received - Ed.*)

## Those Were the Days

*Contrary to my normal practice of abridging articles to fit one page or less, I thought this contribution from Hector Macdonald deserved a fuller coverage. Here it is, barely touched. - Ed.*

In February 1958 I was awarded a fellowship with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to undertake a degree in civil engineering at the University of Queensland. In return, I had to sign a contract to work for the IWS for five years after graduation but while at university I would be paid £4 per week (increasing to £5/10/- per week in fourth year) plus any money that I earned working in my holidays plus a £15 book allowance. I was rich!

There were two other fellowship holders that year – Lucio Cavazza, an Italian who could not speak English when he came to Australia five years earlier but had no trouble getting an A pass in English in Senior (as well as As in Latin and Italian of course) and Bob Geddes (who must hold the record for the longest serving fellowship holder) who left the dept only a couple of years ago.

Part of the engineering course included ‘vacation practice’ and in December Louie (nobody called him Lucio) and I were at the Rocklea Workshop working for George Rees, the workshop engineer and a WWII submariner. Our most notable job was to hose out the vehicle garage in the back paddock because it was to be used for the forthcoming Christmas party to which all employees and their families were invited. This project took us two days and three hours to complete – three hours to hose out the garage after two days trying to find the fire hose.

I had already acquired a driver’s licence and George Rees agreed that each lunch hour I could give Louie driving lessons. We had a left-hand-drive Jeep that the US army had not bothered to take home after the war. Despite my diligent guidance over two months, and the fact that Louie believed he was related to the great Italian Ferrari and Maserati drivers of Le Mans, I don’t think it was all smooth sailing at his driving test. Perhaps he was just unlucky to get an officious police officer for his first driving test.

In December 1960 Louie and I caught the Sunlander to Cairns for vacation practice at the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area. A local engineer named Green picked us up from the railmotor at Mareeba and dropped me at Walkamin and Louie at Mutchilba. There I met Kevin Stark, a former fellowship holder, who had just completed his five year bond. He told me he had been offered a job as a lecturer at the recently opened Townsville College of the University of Queensland and thought he’d take it. He did, and as is well known, later became the Professor of Systems and Civil Engineering at the new James Cook University.

Louie had gone to school in Cairns and knew a few of the local Italian cane farmers. One weekend we were picked up by a large jovial gentleman who was driving the latest model Ford Customline. He was obviously a man of some note. We headed off to his home, a beautiful house surrounded by hundreds of acres of cane. The hospitality of this Italian family was overwhelming. Lunch was magnificent – home-made ravioli – a dish of which I had never heard, and despite my attempts at ordering ravioli ever since I have never tasted anything to match that home cooking. But the food was not the most delicious part of the visit. This man had daughters. Even today, whenever I eat any Italian food I can still picture those dark-eyed girls across the table. I wonder where they are now.

The construction work in the area closed down for about two weeks over Christmas. Louie and I had thought about this and decided it would be good to go back to Brisbane over the break. The Sunlander in those days took 48 hours to cover the 1050 miles from Cairns to Brisbane. The logical thing was to fly. Louie had done his homework and found out that students aged under 18 could travel half-price on the airlines over the Christmas break. The normal TAA fare Cairns-to-Brisbane return was £38. Louie had two mates (whose names are best described as Smith and Brown) who were under 18, so we ended up with return tickets in the names of Smith and Brown that cost £19 each.

The flight from Cairns to Brisbane was uneventful but on the way back I decided to be a bit adventurous and find out what life was like in the cockpit of the aircraft. (It was a propeller-driven four-engine Vickers Viscount). When I asked the air hostess, known today as a flight attendant, if we could go up to the cockpit and talk to the pilot, she was most obliging and asked me our names. Before I could answer, Louie piped up, “Hector Macdonald and Lucio Cavazza”. I gave Louie a couple of fast winks and said, “Our names are Smith and Brown.” Despite his brilliance at languages, Louie did not seem to catch on to the fact that our tickets were not in our own names and started repeating our correct names. Eventually, the air hostess said, “Well, when you have worked out what your names are, give me a call and I will take you up to the Captain.”

When we made it up to the cockpit – our Cairns-Brisbane-Cairns flight was the first for both of us – it was like entering a new world. We saw the Great Dividing Range, the coastal plain, the beaches, the sea and the reefs. The Captain was alone – the co-pilot must have been having coffee with the hosties – and he asked if I had any questions. I remembered that aircraft were fitted with Pitot tubes – they had something to do with measuring pressure, or air speed, or both – so I asked him where they were. He pointed them out to me, in the wings, then asked if I would like to sit in the co-pilot’s seat and have a feel of the controls, which I did. That was in January 1961. I wonder what would happen to a passenger today who asked to be admitted to the cockpit of an aircraft and sit in the co-pilot’s seat.

After the Christmas break Louie and I shifted camps. He came to Walkamin and I went to Mutchilba. One of the jobs I was given at Mutchilba was to carry out an “as built” survey of the “laterals” that ran from the main irrigation channel. These laterals were concrete pipes usually about 12” in diameter carrying water to the farms. On Day One of the job, I was given a Holden utility with a tarpaulin cover for the back, and an offsider, a part aboriginal lad known as Jacky. I had all the gear I needed – plans, maps, compass, survey field book etc – except something to measure the length of the pipelines, so I went to the survey store and asked for something to carry out the measurements. The man must have thought I could be trusted because he gave me a survey chain, his most prized possession. He unwrapped it from its protective canvas bag as if he was handling the holy grail. If my memory is correct, the “chain” (actually a thin metal band) had a length of 5 chains or 110 yards or 500 links. Each end of the chain had a brass marker at intervals of 1 link (7.92 inches) for the first 10 links, and the middle of the chain had these markers at 10 link intervals. The chain gleamed from a thin coat of oil that the storeman had given it. “Make sure you look after it and give it back to me at the end of the day,” he said. So Jacky and I headed off for our day’s work.

During the morning we leisurely surveyed a few laterals and recorded all the measurements in the field book. However the last lateral of the day left the channel and after fifty yards or so it went under a railway line, probably the line running to Dimbulah, Chillagoe or somewhere else. It seemed to me that the only way to measure the length of the pipe was to run the chain across the railway line. I asked Jacky, my trusted offsider, whether a train was likely to come along. "No chance boss. There was a train yesterday!" With such expert local knowledge at my disposal, I felt confident in running out the full length of the chain, about fifty yards on either side of the railway line. I held one end of the chain and Jacky held the other.

It might be thought that if one was working in the bush miles from anywhere when all that is heard is the sound of the occasional crow, one would certainly hear the sound of an approaching train. However, I didn't hear the train until it was only about a quarter of a mile away. Anyone with an elementary knowledge of arithmetic knows that a train travelling at 30 mph takes only 30 seconds to cover one quarter of a mile. I think I would have had a good chance of winding in 50 yards of chain in 30 seconds if Jacky hadn't seen the train and decided that he also would wind in the chain. We spent the 30 seconds having a tug-of-war using a survey chain.

When the front part of the train first picked up the chain it was pulled out of my hands and it seemed to speed away towards the engine at an alarming rate. But it didn't remain caught up in the wheels or axles, and after the train had passed the chain remained on the line and the surrounding area. Those who have seen a clock spring after it has sprung loose from its fitting will know what a large volume it can occupy. The survey chain was a huge pile of metal spaghetti, which took up a volume of about 6 feet by 6 feet by 1 foot high. Jacky and I rescued the remnants of the chain and managed to force-fit it into the back of the Holden utility, using the tarpaulin cover to hold it all in.

Back in Mutchilba, I parked the utility outside the storeman's hut and went inside. "I've brought back the chain," I said. "It's in the utility. I think you had better come outside." When the storeman unclipped the tarpaulin cover, pieces of chain popped out everywhere. "My God," he said, "what happened to my chain?" "Well, actually," I said, "a train ran over it".

City-slicker university students from the "big smoke" in Brisbane have never really enjoyed a high reputation. I think my work experience as a student helped to continue that low reputation.

While travelling on the Sunlander to Cairns I had asked Louie about his background and also suggested that I might learn Italian. I asked him the Italian for "the train" and he replied "il treno". One weekend in Cairns I purchased a copy of Hugo's "Italian in Three Months" for 7/6. I must confess that I didn't study it in the way I should have, but it is a book that I have kept and occasionally I pick it up and glance through it. When I retire I intend to read it in full.

Louie left the IWS around 1967 and went back to his home town, Milan. Like Nino Culotta I think he regarded Australians as a "weird mob". We spent a lot of time together and I have not heard from him since, so if anyone knows his whereabouts, please let me know.

**- Hector Macdonald**

*Thank you, Hector, for this wonderful article. Hector left IWS to join Harbours & Marine in 1971. He was subsequently taken over by EPA where he is still employed. He tells me he doesn't intend to retire - one day he will just stop coming to work and he'll see how long it takes for someone in authority to realise! - Ed.*

## **It's Drought All Over**

If there's one single drop of benefit to be wrung out of Queensland's long-running drought, it's that water users have come to appreciate the true value of this natural resource.

In the past three years, SunWater dam levels have diminished at a rapid rate as a result of little or no rainfall. At the same time there has been an increase in demand.

In response to these impacts, SunWater has provided tariff relief on water usage charges for medium priority customers within schemes where announced allocations have been less than 10% for three consecutive years. These include the Bowen, Central and Lower Lockyer Valley, Logan, Upper Condamine and Warrill Valley water supply schemes.

While the situation is serious, the predicament has forced water users to search for more efficient ways to manage what water they can access. Already, under the state government's water use efficiency initiative, we are witnessing many industries and farms embracing and developing strategies. At the farm gate, adoption of trickle irrigation, evaporation monitoring and trialling less traditional, but more water-reliant crop varieties, are all a part of a shift in focus.

As well, industrial users such as mines, power stations and factories, are streamlining their operations by recycling, reclaiming and reusing water.

Not surprisingly, SunWater is also adopting new methods of water management. In the past few years, SunWater has successfully invested and trialled many water saving techniques within its water supply schemes, in an effort to eliminate losses and ensure its customers have access to as much water as possible.

In Central Queensland, SunWater has made significant headway in total channel control technology through computer-managed control gates and gauging stations along open channels systems. Another trial showing excellent results was SunWater's channel lining project which involves lining kilometres of open channels with 2mm HDPE plastic to prevent significant seepage losses.

Across the state, SunWater has also invested considerable effort in replacing natural or man-made watercourses with buried or exposed pipelines to eliminate evaporation losses.

SunWater has also become increasingly involved in investigating ways to reclaim water used in gas seam exploration and hopes the end result of those studies will translate to water being made available to townships, industries and the agricultural sector.

Like other water stakeholders, SunWater hopes the long-running drought will eventually end and all water users are able to return to normal water allocations and be in a position to develop their businesses. However, SunWater is a forward thinking organisation committed to customer service irrespective of adverse climatic conditions and as such is not prepared to sit back and wait for the drought to break.

SunWater is determined to use this period of drought to improve its water management where possible and seek ways to deliver as much water as is possible.

**Glenn Pfluger - SunWater**

# Healthy Bore Waters

*As part of the development of the Water Resource Plan for the Great Artesian Basin, NRM contracted Thom Blake and Margaret Cook to write a Cultural Heritage Overview. The work, soon to be published, contains lots of interesting historical facts. I have been given permission to publish extracts here (thanks to Randall Cox). I have chosen this section in the expectation that it will be unfamiliar to many readers. -Ed.*

Bathing in mineral or thermal springs for medicinal and recreation purposes has a long history extending back to the Roman, Greek, Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilisations. The value of thermal springs was revived in the Renaissance period and towns like Spa in Belgium, Baden-Baden in Germany and Bath in England developed into popular resorts for the upper class.

In 19th century Australia, opportunities for bathing in mineral springs were extremely limited until the discovery of artesian water.

At Dalby, a bore was sunk by the Water Supply Department to a depth of 2500 feet in 1902. It produced water at an average temperature of 101° F. In July 1904, the bore was leased to the Dalby Municipal Council who erected baths, which contained plunge and shower baths, dressing rooms and waiting rooms. In a publication revealingly entitled *Dalby and Its Wonder Waters*, the Council declared the bore contained curative properties unexcelled in any other part of the Commonwealth. It claimed that 'visitors from many parts of this great Continent have derived considerable benefit from it'.

Although the Dalby Municipal Council would have been disappointed that the baths attracted few tourists, the presence of good artesian water did help to decide on the location of a hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis patients. Dalby was considered most suitable because of the dry air and also the potential of artesian water for therapeutic purposes. The Jubilee Sanatorium was opened at Dalby in 1904 and in 1912 a bore was sunk on the hospital site.

Further west at Muckadilla, on the railway line between Roma and Charleville, artesian water was advocated as a cure for rheumatism and gout. The so-called curative properties of the Muckadilla bore prompted the Commissioner of Railways to take over the bore in 1912 in order to develop proper facilities. The Department erected four bathrooms and a cottage with rest room. At the same time, the owner of the Muckadilla Hotel produced a booklet on 'some of its marvellous cures as well as detailed information as to how to get to Muckadilla and the accommodation available there'. The booklet referred in glowing terms to the values of the 'famous Muckadilla bore':

The water is highly curative to rheumatism, while cases of gout are being benefited to a marked degree. Rheumatism, in so severe a form as indicated by the presence of fluid in the joints, seems even amenable to the water treatment. The water, it must be recollected, is singular in being radio-active. and it is consequently hard to say what it will not cure. As a curative agent radium is recognised as the marvel of the age ...

It is no means rare for a cripple to so improve as to discard his crutches after bathing for some time at Muckadilla, while bad cases have been so benefited as to permit a return of the most active exercise, such as fence-vaulting and wood chopping. It is only fair to say that the longer standing the case, the longer the cure.

The treatment regime included bathing at least twice a day and drinking the water, 'a tumblerful drunk every 10 or 20 minutes, with a walk in between, for 4 to 8 tumblerfuls', was the recommended daily amount.

The Railways Department appointed a nurse to oversee the rest-rooms and bath. The department promoted the benefits of the Muckadilla bore baths in advertisements in timetables and passenger carriages. The baths, however, did not attract a significant clientele. During the 1930s the baths only attracted an average of 50 visitors per year. The department considered upgrading the facilities but in 1943 closed the baths. In the following year, the baths were reopened when the Muckadilla Hotel leased the baths from the department. Patronage did not improve and the baths gradually fell into a dilapidated state. A report prepared for the Railways Department in 1953 noted that the baths were taking 3/4 hour to fill, the water was not hot, and seemed to have lost its healing properties. Finally in 1957 all the buildings were removed from the site.

Possibly the oldest and longest running artesian water spa is at Moree in New South Wales. These baths were established by the local council after a bore was sunk in 1895. The complex comprised two concrete baths, one each for males and females. There was a water inlet at one end and an outlet pipe at the other which ensured the water was always fresh and flowing. The water was 114° F and the pressure was regulated to 200 psi. The baths were emptied and scrubbed every night, and lime washed every Sunday.

The treatment included total immersion in the bath water, regular massage from the inlet pipe and drinking copious amounts of bore water. It was said to be effective for rheumatism in all its forms, certain forms of spinal paralysis, sciatica, neuralgia, nervous exhaustion, derangement of the alimentary system (i.e. constipation, torpid liver etc), asthma, whooping cough, nervous debility, insomnia, brain fog, general disability, hysteria and other neurotic conditions.

In 1916 Sydney solicitor P W Berne published a first hand account of his treatment at the baths in the *North-Western Champion*. Describing himself as one who had derived much benefit from visits to the local spa, Berne explained that he had been suffering from acute neuritis which had practically incapacitated him and had found that all so-called remedies only brought temporary relief. He took a fortnight's course at the baths which restored him to health sufficiently that he could resume his practice in Sydney. After a second fortnight's course at the baths he was restored to perfect health, all the symptoms and pains of neuritis having practically disappeared.

During his stay he noted other success stories. He saw many persons crippled with rheumatism who required assistance dressing and getting into the baths who were later able to leave the baths unaided. All questioned agreed they had immense relief. P W Berne declared it

is a great pity that, in the interests of suffering humanity, the curative powers of the waters, which can only be described as wonderful, are not more generally known in Australia. Their potential had in part, however, been recognised by the government who had sent a number of returned soldiers invalided through rheumatism, nerve shock and kindred diseases to the baths for treatment.

Unlike Muckadilla or Dalby artesian baths, the Moree baths have continued to operate. The baths still attract visitors eager to discover whether the waters really do have therapeutic properties and Moree promotes itself as the 'Spa capital of Australia'.

Interest in artesian waters and spas prompted the Booringa Shire at Mitchell to develop the Great Artesian Spa facility as a tourist attraction. The spa is located within the town's aquatic centre and comprises two pools, one of which is naturally heated to 38° C.

## The Incinerator

*As I have mentioned my theatrical activities now in a couple of Newsletters, it has been suggested that members might be interested in the venue in which I carry them out. if you're not, you are at perfect liberty not to read on ...*

After winning the prize for the design of the National capital, Canberra, the American architect Walter Burley Griffin established a practice in Australia. He designed many notable public and private buildings, but with the advent of the Depression his commissions dried up. He joined a partnership which obtained patents that allowed them to establish the Reverberatory Incinerator Company, designing buildings for the disposal of municipal rubbish. In all, the company designed and had built thirteen Incinerators. The Ipswich one, the only example of the architect's work in Queensland, was opened in 1936. It was augmented with the addition of an extra chimney in 1939, but by then Griffin had died in India. The chimney was designed by his partner, Eric Nicholls.

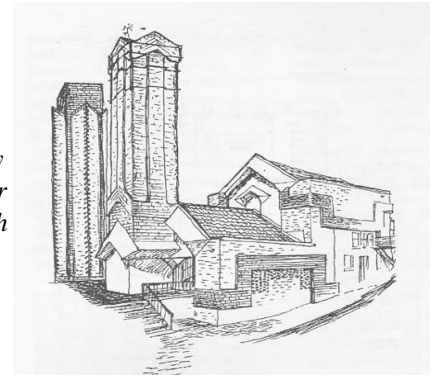
For about a quarter of a century, the incinerator dutifully disposed of the municipal garbage, but by the 1960s, it was in need of repair and incineration had lost favour to burial of garbage. The Council of the day abandoned its use. The building fell into disrepair and became a target for vandals, so the Council resolved to demolish it.

A group of citizens, respecting its historical significance, prevailed upon the City Fathers to grant a stay of execution. But without a use, the building had no future. The Organising Secretary of Arts Council, Uletta Patterson, decided that it could be converted to a theatre, so with no previous experience in that sphere, offered her services (duly accepted) as president of Ipswich Little Theatre Society (ILT) in 1967.

That august society had been in existence since 1946, but was suffering the downturn in audience numbers caused by that 20th century phenomenon, television. The City Council was also threatening closure of the City Hall which was in grave need of refurbishment. So ILT was in need of a new home.

It so happened that the night Uletta Patterson was elected was the night the Pullars joined. We, and all the other members, went to inspect the Incinerator but, captivated as we were by the building, we couldn't see how it could possibly be turned into a theatre. One day my father was visiting and I took him to see it. We walked to what was then the back of the building and it all fell into place. We could do it! The society agreed to invest all its accumulated funds, which didn't amount to much.

There is a Water Resources connection. The main structure of the building comprised a deep reinforced concrete beam supported by a concrete column about 750 mm square. For us to have a stage, the column would have to go. I (as a relatively new graduate) did some sums that showed that with lightened loads and wing walls, the stresses in the beam without the central support were identical to the existing stresses but of the opposite sign. Provided the beam was symmetrically reinforced, it could withstand the removal of the column. But there were no structural plans extant. I approached Chief Designing Engineer Norm Butler and asked him if structural engineers in the '30s were sophisticated or would they have simply stuck a couple of railway lines down the middle of the beam. I won't repeat his response!



*The Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator Theatre in Ipswich*

I designed a form of external reinforcement, but while our contractor was removing the concrete hoppers attached to the beam, he exposed some of the reinforcement. With a little judicious exploration, I became confident about what was in the beam.

I instructed the contractor to put in a "bloody big tom" and remove the column. I didn't sleep much the night he did, but 37 years later the building is still standing!

We opened our new theatre in November 1969 and the company has thrived ever since. Although our capacity is only 80 seats, we have a healthy cash flow. We do six seasons of twelve nights each year, with a very high attendance rate. One of the benefits of the small theatre is that we can rent out the entire night to a group at a reduced rate. They onsell the tickets and can make up to \$1000 per night just by providing supper. We get an audience of people who come only to support the political party, school P&C or whatever, but who are often sufficiently impressed by what they see to come back again.

In the 37 years we have occupied the building, we have continuously improved it with the addition of new buildings in the grounds, kitchen facilities and even air conditioning. We would have spent several million dollars in today's terms, including some assistance from State and Federal governments.

We have also expanded our activities and now also have a Junior Theatre (primary school age - called Smartarts -), Intermediate Theatre (secondary school), S-Troupe (special) for children with a disability and a Daytime Theatre Troupe for people (especially mothers) who can't rehearse at night but who love doing pantomimes etc for early childhood audiences. We also host the longest running One-Act-Play Drama Festival in the southern hemisphere (52 years).

And all this because of our beloved home which is the envy of every other amateur group we know.

To my mind, there are some extraordinary coincidences. Burley Griffin probably never saw many of his incinerators as each was locally supervised. Our Ipswich gem was supervised by local renowned architect George Brockwell Gill. His house was later purchased by Uletta Patterson who first conceived the notion of turning the Incinerator into a Theatre. In his retirement, Gill and his daughter Marion went to live in Coolangatta in the street to which my family later moved. My mother became very friendly with Miss Gill as a result of which my architect brother still does his designs from Brockwell Gill's draftsman's stool. The Essendon Incinerator, which was also later converted to a Theatre, had its construction supervised by the City Engineer, William Pullar - my grandfather!

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Is This Your Cup of Tea?

The commonly held view that drinking tea and coffee has a dehydrating effect is not correct according to Britain's *Journal of Nutrition & Dietetics*. A review in the journal found regular tea and coffee drinkers developed a tolerance to caffeine, and that there was no diuretic (water-losing) effect from the caffeine in a regular cuppa. The review concluded that there was no support for the notion that tea and coffee in typical amounts led to poor hydration. Of course moderation is important to good health. Aim to enjoy no more than 3 to 4 cups of instant coffee (1 to 2 of espresso) or 5 to 6 cups of tea per day (less during pregnancy!).

## No Flies on Virgil

The Roman poet Virgil (70-19BC) may not have been round the twist when he organised a funeral for a common house fly that he claimed was his pet. The ceremony, at his mansion in the hills, involved a moving eulogy for the fly and several poems Virgil had written specially for the occasion. The fly was then ceremoniously buried in a mausoleum specially built at the enormous cost of 800,000 sesterces.

It so happened that the then government of Octavius, Lepidus and Marc Antony was about to confiscate property owned by rich citizens and to reallocate it to war veterans – except where the grounds contained burial plots!

Virgil sought exemption and it was granted.

## It's How You Look at It

In Chesterfield, Derbyshire, the Church of St Mary and All Saints has a curiously twisted spire. The explanation for the extraordinary crookedness probably lies in the use, by its 14<sup>th</sup> century builders, of too much green wood. Locals like to suggest that it bent itself to take a peek at the highly unusual sight of a virgin being married in the church below. Should it happen again, they say, the spire will straighten itself back up in astonishment, but that hasn't happened in six centuries!

– **Simon Winchester** one of the stories in *The Meaning of Everything*

## Sign of the Times

### WET FLOOR

(This is not an instruction)

## Exercise those Brain Cells

You are given a box containing 12 balls. All appear to be identical but you are told that one is different in weight from the others.

You are also given a beam balance but no weights. Your instructions are to use the beam balance 3 times only, and determine which ball is different and whether it is heavier or lighter than the others. How do you do it?

## Migrants

*Spare a thought for our poor forebears who migrated here from overseas. Not only did they have to contend with an unfamiliar hostile environment, but they had to get here first. And that was no mean feat. Just as an example, I found an account [in Scots magazine No 22] of an attempted migration from Scotland which I thought readers might find interesting.*

In early July 1773, 280 emigrants gathered in Thurso to travel to North Carolina aboard the *Bachelor*. However, the ship was delayed returning from America with a cargo of rice and did not arrive until the end of August.

Then, already two months late, departure was delayed a further 18 days while the cargo was discharged and the ship reloaded. Finally, but by now far too late in the season, the *Bachelor* set sail, only to be severely damaged during bad weather in the Pentland Firth, requiring repairs at Stromness in Orkney. The ship set off again, but was again damaged, this time requiring repairs at Walls in Shetland. Eleven people had already died. The remaining passengers, their food supplies virtually gone, were reliant on the generosity and goodwill of the Shetlanders, who must have been very conscious of the potential impact on their own community of this reduction in their food reserves so late in the season.

The *Bachelor* never did leave the Pentland Firth, finally returning to Leith in April 1774, eight months after it departed Thurso, and with only 28 of the original 280 passengers on board.

## Having the Time of your Life

*Now that we have started yet another new year, I thought it might be appropriate to offer a couple of thoughts about one of the most arbitrary yet immutable aspects of our existence - Ed.*

Time has no divisions to mark its passage, there is never a thunderstorm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols.

- **Thomas Mann (1875-1955)**

I explained that for every degree of Longitude west we are four minutes earlier than Greenwich, and for each minute of distance four seconds are gained. So it was already tomorrow in London, he said, and I confirmed that it was. 'Arrah, what a miracle,' he sighed. 'They say "tomorrow never comes" but it is already here, God and Mary bless us.' And so it must follow, he further said, that if a man spent a year travelling westwards around the world he would arrive home in Ireland the day before he left. And if he kept at this for the rest of his life he would grow up into a newborn babe instead of a crooked old fellow. How happy to be able to turn back time, he remarked, and thereby undo the impieties of boyhood follies.

- from *Star of the Sea* by Joseph O'Connor



## Answer to Last Edition's Puzzle

The results of the three matches played were:

Chelsea (0) v. Arsenal (0)

Chelsea (3) v. Manchester (0)

Manchester (4) v. Arsenal (2)

Hector Macdonald again provided the correct solution and also reminded me of the problem set in this edition.



## More Origins

A *red-letter day* is, of course, a special day whose origins arise from noting such occasions including Holy Days (which became *holidays*) in red on the calendar. From time to time, church authorities have been compelled to delete Saints' days, or else we'd never go to work. (And what, you ask, would be wrong with that?)

On the other hand, a purple patch is a special period of endeavour. The expression was coined by the Roman poet Horace, presumably related to the imperial purple.

Seeing red, feeling blue, being white with rage, yellow with jealousy or green with envy simply add to the colour of the English language!

## Hospital Window

A great note for all to read it will take just 37 seconds to read this and change your thinking.

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by.

Although the other man couldn't hear the band, he could see it. In his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window

The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

**Epilogue:** There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations.

Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled.

If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.

"Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present."

- **Thanks to Ross Stewart for this valuable contribution**

The *sticks of out in the sticks* actually is *sticks*, not *Styx* (the river dead ancient Greeks had to cross to get to Hades). The phrase is American in origin, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and refers to life surrounded by twigs and branches.

The stick that means a piece of wood comes from the Old English *sticca* and that from the old teutonic root *stik-* meaning "to pierce". So a stick should be a sharp pointy thing.

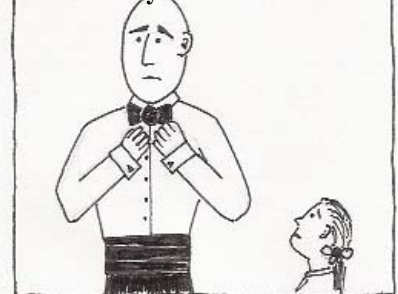
The verb *stick* as in "stick with a needle" comes from the same root via the Old English *stician*, pronounced "stitchy-an". This pronunciation explains the origin of the related modern verb *to stitch*.

In Middle English, *stick* (or more commonly *styk* or *styeke*) came to mean "tally", from the rod on which notches were cut to keep count. Umpires and referees of sports matches would often use tallies to keep score. This practice led to umpires being called *sticklers*, hence the expression *a stickler for the rules*.

### Prizes

One surmises  
people who seek prizes  
do so from a sense  
of longing for pre-eminence.  
A niggling thought is hard to be  
resisted -  
Michelangelo and Raphael and da  
Vinci co-existed.

Daddy, don't wear the tuxedo  
tonight. You know it always  
gives you a terrible headache  
the next day



### So There!

Our English teacher, Mr Smart,  
Says writing English is an art,  
That we should always take good care  
When spelling words like *wear* and  
*where*,  
*Witch* and *which* and *fair* and *fare*,  
*Key* and *quay* and *air* and *heir*,  
*Whet* and *wet* and *flair* and *flare*,  
*Wring* and *ring* and *stair* and *stare*,  
*Him* and *hymn* and *their* and *there*,  
*Whine* and *wine* and *pear* and *pair*,  
*Check* and *cheque* and *tare* and *tear*,  
*Crews* and *cruise* and *hare* and *hair*,  
*Meet* and *meat* and *bear* and *bare*,  
*Knot* and *not* and *layer* and *lair*,  
*Loot* and *lute* and *mayor* and *mare*.

Well, frankly, sir, I just don't care!  
So there!

**Gervase Phinn** in *Up and Down in  
the Dales*

## Book Club

A remarkable recent read for me was *Gallipoli – Our Last man Standing, the extraordinary life of Alec Campbell* by Johnathon King.

Tasmanian Campbell, at the age of 15 applied to join the army, declaring that he was 18. He was accepted, underwent final training in Egypt and then landed at Gallipoli. His commanders probably realised his age and he was assigned duties as a water carrier rather than in the front line. After some months, he was in such poor health that he was repatriated to Australia.

The book doesn't dwell on the Gallipoli campaign – what follows is an extraordinary record of a full life.

After a period working as a farm hand on Flinders Island, Campbell returned to Launceston and undertook a carpentry apprenticeship. He took up boxing and became bantamweight champion of Tasmania and fought professionally in Melbourne and Sydney. He married and was over the years to father 7 children with his first wife. The young family moved to the new capital, Canberra and Campbell worked on building houses. The family lived in a tent through the Canberra summers and winters.

Campbell moved back to Launceston and was employed at the railway workshops. In his spare time, he built the family home extending it several times as the family grew. He was interested in supporting his fellow workers and became involved in the trade union movement eventually becoming President of the Tasmanian Trades and Labour Council. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War he was a director of manpower based in Queenstown on the west coast deciding whether enlisting men could serve overseas or were required for essential roles at home.

After the war, the family moved to Hobart and Campbell became interested in sailing, trained in navigation and crewed on the *Kintail* in the first Sydney Hobart race in 1947. He travelled to Europe in 1952. At the age of 55 he enrolled at the University of Tasmania and graduated in Economics in 1958. During this time, he and his wife had drifted apart and were divorced. He married again in 1958 to a woman 20 years younger than himself and was to have 2 further children.

Campbell then worked in the Commonwealth public service until his “retirement” but kept busy in volunteer roles with the National Heart Foundation and with other bodies. At the age of 90 he returned to Gallipoli and continued to lead the annual Anzac Day march in Hobart until he was 96.

Campbell died in May 2002 at the age of 103, the Prime Minister attending his funeral. He was survived by his second wife, his 9 children, 32 grandchildren and 35 great grandchildren. Late in his life, Campbell was asked how he had achieved such a long and full life. His reply was that he thought that it was to do with his Scottish ancestry, good water and whisky. I liked that!

The recent film *Gallipoli* by the Turkish director Tolga Ornek with Jeremy Irons and Sam Neill graphically tells the story of the flawed campaign using letters home by a number of the Australian, New Zealand, English and Turkish troops involved. Archival film and film of the locations today are used.

Apart from appallingly inadequate planning, conditions on the peninsula were horrific and it is hardly surprising that more Anzacs like Campbell were evacuated because of ill health than there were casualties from the fighting. The Turks desperate to repel the invaders of their homeland suffered far worse casualties than the Anzacs and possibly were prepared to let the Anzacs quietly evacuate – they were utterly exhausted.

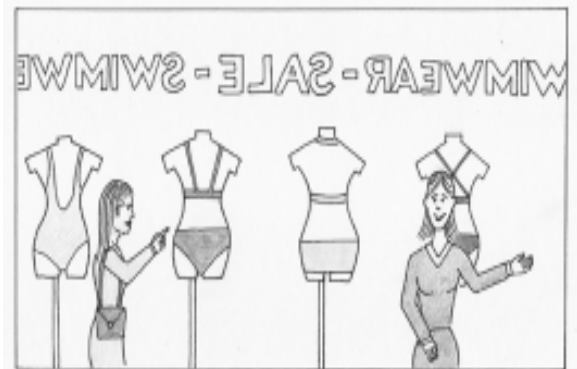
And then, the survivors from Gallipoli who were assessed as being in reasonable condition were shipped off to France to join that dreadful campaign.

Campbell compared with so many others was fortunate to have been repatriated back to Australia from Gallipoli – still a 15 year old. Nevertheless, what a life.

**Lee Rogers**

### Credits

*My thanks are once again due to Helen; to my daughter Jean Yates; to Trevor Lynam who printed this; to the contributors; to Scott Spencer, Peter Noonan, Natasha Gajda and Katrina Mack who made it available to departmental staff; and to Harvey Yates for his cartoons.*



**Can I try on that bikini in the window?**

**I think you should stick to the dressing room**

## Office Bearers

Current Office Bearers of the Association are given below for the information of anyone wanting to contact them. Until such time as we return home, please use my departmental address for all your contributions.

President	Eric Davis	19 Morland Street MT GRAVATT 4122	3349 6638	etjd@optusnet.com.au
Past Pres	Jim Uhlmann	133 Sapphire St HOLLAND PARK 4121	3420 5168	jimncath@tadaust.org.au
Vice Pres	Col Hazel	9 School Road WYNNUM WEST 4178	3396 7019	col@wynnumwormfarms.com.au
Secretary	John Connolly	28 O'Grady St MT GRAVATT 4122	3349 5480	jonnolly1@optusnet.com.au
Treasurer	Lee Rogers	61 Upland Rd ST LUCIA 4067	3371 3200	rlrogers@gmail.com
Executive	Dave Morwood	35 Bellata St THE GAP 4061	3366 3570	dljnmorwood@acenet.net.au
	Tom Fenwick	3 Waterford Pl. BRIDGEMAN DOWNS	0419655259	fenwick.t.v@bigpond.com.au
Hon Auditor	Ray Sutherland			
Editor	Ian Pullar	21 Lansdowne Way CHUWAR 4306	3281 4437	ian.pullar@nrm.qld.gov.au