



WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 51

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Newsletter of the WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Great Scott! A New DG

Following the State election, there were a number of changes made to departmental arrangements. The Mines unit of NRM&W was amalgamated into the new Department of Mines and Energy, with the rest of the department being redesignated Natural Resources and Water. Former DG Bob McCarthy accepted an invitation to become DG of State Development and Innovation. His replacement is former Deputy DG of NRM, Scott Spencer, who had had a brief stint as DDG of Premier's Department. A very hearty welcome back to Scott.

Attendees at our mid-year luncheon will recall the warmth of Scott's address. He will be a most supportive co-patron of WRRRA.

The new Minister is ~~Kerry Shine, from Toowoomba~~ Craig Wallace from Thuringowa. We wish him well in his new vital role. (Mr Shine was moved to Attorney-General and replaced.)

But this is not the end of the changes. The Deputy Premier, Anna Bligh, now has the responsibility for Infrastructure including new water supply elements. The Queensland Water Commission has taken over the responsibility for the South East Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy (due for publication early in 2007), so numbers of staff (including Richard Priman, Ian Hanks and I) are in transit. The Water Task Force, headed up by Greg Claydon, has been superseded by a new Business Unit in NRW named Strategic Water Initiatives. Greg is still in charge. The youngest engineer in the group is Dr Wai Tong Wong, aged mid-forties!

Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd has the responsibility of building new dams and the Co-ordinator-General is managing a number of pipelines etc. Tom Fenwick is on the Board of QWIPL which employs Dave Murray and Hein Van der Heide among others. We certainly live in interesting times.

Annual Bowls Day – 2006

On a perfect winter's day, 27 members, spouses and guests attended the Annual Bowls Day at Aspley Bowls Club on 11 August. Of those present, 19 players took to the greens and another eight came to give support before joining the players for a most enjoyable lunch. The facilities and hospitality provided by the Aspley Bowls Club were up to their customary high standard and all present experienced a most pleasant day.

Special thanks go to Norm and Lindsay White for once again organising everything in the lead-up and on the day, with able assistance from Don and Shirley Beattie.

Phil James sent me some photographs of the day, but unfortunately, owing to technical problems which have threatened the production of this entire Newsletter, I'm not able to reproduce them. Thanks anyway, Phil. Ed.

From the Editor's Chair

"Whisky is for drinking, water is for fighting over," Mark Twain reportedly opined. The world has already gone to war over water many times (see the article on page 7) and all the pundits are predicting increased tension over access to this most important commodity during this century. This is likely to be aggravated by climate change or attitudes to climate change.

There is nothing like the current drought to focus public attention on the importance of water to our way of life and to demonstrate that people are prepared to go to considerable lengths to secure their use of it.

Belatedly this gives recognition to the valuable work all of us have been engaged in over so many years, so we have every reason to be proud of our achievements.

Best wishes to all our members for Christmas and the New Year.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

An Apology

In the last Newsletter, I spoiled Alan Vizer's entertaining article by printing the diagram of his 'dunny' upside down. Alan kindly pointed my error out to me, but I'm sure he's such a gentleman that he's forgiven my 'Senior's moment'. I trust other readers, including Ian Ferrier, who also noticed, will too. Ian ventured the suggestion that it was simply a demonstration of the 'upside down' nature of the water industry.

Exiled to St. Helena

There was noticeable authority in the voice that commanded, "Sit down and listen!"

It was an odd looking character who spoke; he was dressed in dark grey trousers, silk scarlet waistcoat, fully buttoned three-button dark sports coat, white shirt buttoned up to the throat with the collar turned up except for the wings which were pinned down by the black tie which encircled his neck.

There was something 'John Cleeseish' in his manner, furred gentleman's umbrella and all.

"I am the Visiting Surgeon," he declared, and then proceeded to demonstrate the donning and effective use of the life jackets available on the *Cat-of-Nine-Tails*, the catamaran that transported us to St Helena Island on Thursday, 5 October.

Thirty members and friends from WRRRA were joined by another dozen 'prisoners' for a delightful walk through an interesting part of Queensland's history. A bright sunny day, a calm bay crossing and a gentle breeze made the conditions pleasant for our outing.

It was good to see Pat McCourt attending his first function with the Association. Pat is currently Water Engineer with Pine Rivers Shire Council. We shared some reflections on the days of Princess Anne and Lady Di and the delights of *New Age Thinking*. Also on board were Doug and Shirley Quinn (nee Horrobin) and Mark Siebel, now in his 84th year. Unfortunately Shirley Rieck was detained by last-minute work commitments but husband, Arnold, and three of their friends still joined with us.

Committee members would like to see more of our new members on these excursions. It is a good opportunity to renew friendships while enjoying interesting venues. We are also open to suggestions of new places to visit.

The Visiting Surgeon, as part of the tour, demonstrated some of the punishments meted out to the prisoners. He pointed and commanded, "That man, come here!" Dennis Gillbard looked around quickly to see who was the unfortunate victim and discovered that the lot had fallen to him. He was stretched out on a tripod ready for the lash. The description of the injuries inflicted by the hit and tear of the cat-of-nine-tails was gruesome indeed but the good doctor was more savage in word than in deed. Dennis escaped with a mere tickling, to Lyn's relief.

In its native state, St Helena Island was

thickly covered in Moreton Bay Fig trees. These trees attracted fruit bats in the fruiting season, and Aborigines followed to feast on the bats. During the off-season the Aborigines returned to feast on dugong caught while giving birth in the shallows around the island. The resulting midden has thousands of years of alternate layers of bat and dugong bones.

St Helena was chosen as the site for a quarantine station for Brisbane. Convicts from a prison hulk moored in Moreton Bay rowed to the island each day, did a full day's building and then rowed back to the hulk in the evening. The authorities soon realised that more could be achieved by confining the convicts on the island. Having built two cellblocks, the authorities realised that St Helena was an ideal location for a prison so the quarantine station was located elsewhere.

Under astute administration, the prison achieved recognition as the best prison of its kind in the world. It went beyond self-sufficiency to return a handsome profit from industries on the island. Initially it provided molasses for Brisbane by milling its own sugar cane, however over-pumping of the aquifer resulted in saltwater intrusion that led to the demise of the sugar industry. Olive oil produced on the island won prizes at competitions in Italy and the prison's Ayrshire dairy cattle constantly won awards at the RNA show.

Prisoners had the opportunity to gain a basic education and to learn a trade in the prison workshops including bookmaking, sail-making, tailoring, saddle-making, tin smithing, candle making, book-binding and carpentry. In the early years of settlement tradespeople were in short supply so the prison contributed a valuable workforce to the community while giving the prisoners the means to establish themselves in business, on release. Our Visiting Surgeon remarked that the prison even became a finishing school for foundation politicians of the ALP. Many of the leaders of the 1891 Shearers Strike were confined together on St Helena.

The prison closed in 1932 after 65 years of successful operation. Less than ten percent of the original buildings remain on the island. EPA now administers St Helena as a national park for its historic value. More information is available at www.sthelenaisland.com.au

Jim Uhlmann (*Many thanks, Jim*)

Out and About

Hurrah! Hurrah! Our house has finally been renovated and we are home again!

Last edition, I reported that Mike Wilke was short-listed for QUT's Alumni of the Year. He won the category of Built Environment and Engineering. He is now Chief Operating Officer of Parsons Brinckerhoff in USA. Well done Mike!

You may also remember an ad for new members of John Connolly's Barbershop group. Col Cooney volunteered and is now singing along happily with the rest.

WRRRA has acquired several new members - Warren Lane, John Way, Phil Sternes and Mike Barry. Welcome aboard!

Jack and Marcia Pont have shifted from Mareeba to Little Mountain on the Sunshine Coast. Jack commented, "I told my wife when we were married 51 years ago that we were subject to transfer anywhere in Queensland. It took 18 years in retirement to happen."

Jack and Romola Squire report that they have practically finished their long distance travelling as they have been virtually everywhere in Australia and places overseas including Denmark and the land of the midnight sun. An account of one of their trips is on page 6.

John Cantor reports that he is making good progress and his prognosis is positive.

Gordon Wilson is "hanging in" and doing reasonably well despite having to cancel his Pacific Cruise at the last moment. His specialist is happy with him.

Stan Ross has had surgery but has come through that and is recovering well.

John Ward has been diagnosed with liver cancer but has taken a positive step by offering himself as a "guinea pig" for research in a three month program at Greenslopes hospital.

We offer our colleagues our very best wishes - our thoughts are with them.

Regretfully, I have to report the passing of Karol Netzel. Some memories of his life can be found on page 6.

Barrie Rogers of Mackay Office passed away on 1 August after a long battle with cancer. Barrie joined IWSC in the early 1960s and worked throughout the State on many projects including the Great Artesian Basin and drilled many bores in the Pioneer Valley. His vast knowledge and experience was highly valued by the department. He will be sadly missed by his colleagues.

Advice

Way back in 1997, retired officer Dave Morwood responded to a request from Peter Bevin, then DDG. The advice (slightly condensed) appears to be as relevant today as then. – Ed.

Peter,

I've thought about the changes in engineering practice, and for what it's worth I will set out some thoughts.

- It was in the late 1960s that calculators really took over from slide rules. I always thought that the big advantage of the slide rule was that it FORCED you to do some mental calculation as well, to sort out where the decimal point belonged. The calculator does the whole sum so it's tempting to simply accept the answer without checking whether it is reasonable. Also, it stopped you kidding yourself about precision of answers.

- Calculators had an inability to handle numbers above 10 E99, so if you got above that you threw away your calculation. That forced me to think about the size of the numbers. Since the number of atoms in the known universe at that time was 10 E78, 10 E99 probably really was an error.

- I well remember the new powerful GE 225 at the University. You had to write lines of code, get these punched onto cards, take the cards to Uni without shuffling them, and leave them over-night to be processed. Almost invariably the result came back "ERROR IN CARD NO XYZ". Which is why I didn't persist with computing, and never did again until I retired!!

- Now "software" is written by "someone else" who is quite likely to have become an engineer in the old days, diverted into "computer science".

- I think there's a clue to one of the real changes: there is more specialisation in engineering, and increasingly specialised specialisation. That leads straight to the thought that it will become increasingly difficult to get the good generalists that you

need for senior management. Maybe we really need something like the medicos have with their FRAGP (the specialist in General Practice) and you can't be the D-G unless you have this specialty.

- A big change is environment requirements etc. The change of culture from "Develop at any cost" to "Develop only if it can be justified against the negatives of environmental change." This is really a change in what the Community want us to do. The difficulty is really one for 'the Gummint' to sort out what the community really want, as opposed to what the noisy minority want. The Engineer can help by presenting and interpreting facts about proposals. It isn't, and never should have been although it once was, our role to enthusiastically promote our projects, especially if that involves glossing over known negative factors.

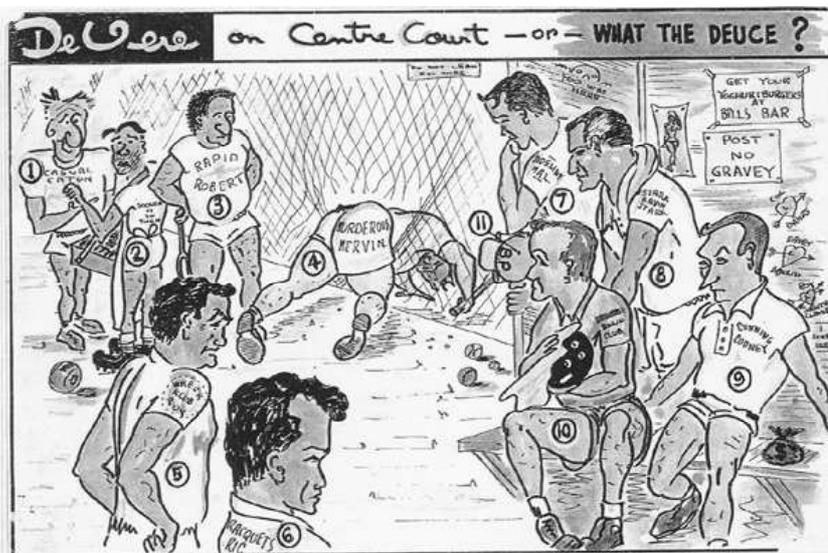
- the big thing for the older engineer is the need to keep up with the younger generation with their different training. You have to run like mad just to keep up ...

- Maybe it was always thus, although I think there has been a real acceleration in the pace of change. The job hasn't changed fundamentally. It is still "to use all available data, test results, research information, calculation techniques and your BRAIN, to provide economical solutions to the Community's needs.. What's new about that? Only some of the inputs.

- The community now perceives different needs as they become more aware of "problems" = "opportunities for brilliant solutions". Engineers need to be aware of the changing perceptions and they are.

- and calculation methods are quicker, easier, more reliable. That gives us more time and spare brain power to come up with the brilliant solutions. I know this isn't the answer you asked for, but it might help a bit. I can come in and talk about it if you want to waste more of your time.

Regards David Morwood. 8 October 1997.



Way back in 1964, the Commission established a Thursday Night Tennis Club which continues until this day. The brilliant cartoonist Reginald de Vere O'Reilly drew this cartoon of the then participants of the club for Aquarius (the Staff Magazine) some time in the '70s. Eric Davis, a foundation member of the Tennis Club and now President of WRRRA, provided me with a copy of the cartoon together with the key to the players.

1. Nev Caton (now living in Ayr)
2. *Bill Morris (Snack Bar owner adjacent to the Courier Mail Building, now living in Brisbane)
3. Bob Dwyer (now living in Brisbane)
4. Merv Head (Eric's brother-in-law on Gold Coast)
5. Roy MacArthur (Gold Coast)
6. *Eric Davis (Brisbane)
7. Mal Robson (deceased)
8. Harry Stark (deceased)
9. Col Cooney (Brisbane)
10. Dave Dewar (Bundaberg)
11. Col Davey (friend of Roy MacArthur. Brisbane)

* still playing

Wojciech Poplawski (1938 - tba)

I intend to write about events, which influenced my professional life only, because lack of space.

My father was killed during Warsaw Rising in 1944 and I was raised by my mother with substantial assistance of my extended family. I decided to study Civil Engineering at Warsaw University of Technology, because my father studied at this department and I had no specific other interest. I was rather ordinary student at high school and at the university. Mountain climbing was much more interesting to me. In 1960, however, I had an opportunity to go to Austria as an exchange student. I could go there only because I have passed quite stringent language exam and year before one communist apparatchik was expelled from Germany, because he could not speak a word in German. That was important lesson to me. I realised that I could survive without joining the communist party provided that I was better than them and secondly I noticed that Scharding Weir on River Inn in Austria was constructed in 1.5 years, while in Poland weir of comparable size was built in 6-10 years.

After graduation I joined Water Management Research Institute and my first job was joining hydrographic party on Vistula River. It was an eye opening and enjoyable experience.

A few years later UNDP conducted a project 'Poland 26: Protection of River Waters against Pollution'. I was nominated to the team, because of my relative good knowledge of English. This resulted in winning UN fellowship to US mainly to Vanderbilt University. I also spent some time in Tennessee Valley Authority hydraulic lab in Norris. This in turn led to my Ph.D. thesis in environmental engineering, which I defended in 1974.

By that time I was promoted to Adjunct Professor and I became Acting Manager of Hydro-Physics Group in my Institute (unofficially I was told that I can get appointed to be a Manager if I join the party, something I had no intention of doing). In 1976 I had difference of opinions with the Managing Director of the Institute related to the future of my group. He wanted us to focus on fundamental (pure) science in hydrology; I wanted to continue expert analyses, which were useful to the day to day water management. In fact, I developed network of customers who wanted our services and this was something not to his liking. I realised that I would not survive for much longer on my position, so I sought an individual contract in a developing country, which I finally won in 1978 in Libya.

Two years in Libya was a waste of time professionally. I was employed in the Department of Agriculture and Dams. There was virtually nothing to do, because our Libyan handlers did not want to be involved in professional activities, but were too suspicious to let us carry out projects without them. They also preferred to out-source as many projects as possible, because this was additional income to them. I suspect that most if not all project awarded to outside consultants were based not on merit. So when my family joined me there we decided to emigrate for good.

From Libya we moved to Vienna, where we applied for refugee visas to Australia. This was granted after 3 months of waiting and we landed in Adelaide 17 November 1980 (this date is embedded in our memory).

I did not know anybody in Australia, so I sent letters to mainly academics offering my services on top of applying to ads. After reading my C.V. Colin Apelt helped me to find my first job with GHD in Brisbane, even though he did not know me at that time. However, 14 months later I was unceremoniously sacked together with 30 other engineers, because GHD did not win contracts they expected.

Fortunately, there was vacancy with the Commission, which I filled. After interview, Bernie Credlin told me that he was happy that I was successful, because he expected that water quality problems would become important and secondly, because I was Polish and Central Europeans proved to be excellent officers in the past. I wish to pay the credit to my predecessors of the Central European background working with the Commission and I hope that at least to small extent I continued their good services.

I worked 18 year in total with the Commission (and the DNR) on different positions. I retired from a position of Manager, Water Monitoring in 2000. Professionally it was very gratifying period of my life. I think I contributed a little in studying sediment transport and water quality. As a highlight I consider, contribution of my team in developing water quality monitoring network and in developing statistical methods of assessing water quality data collected randomly. That led to publication of Qld Water Quality Atlas and later its second version prepared together with EPA and GBRMPA. Assessment of sediment transport rates in Queensland I also consider as important contribution of my team.

I was well in my retirement, when I was notified that I was nominated to DNR Achievement Award. I treasure this nomination, because I know that it was initiated by colleagues working in my Group. That indicated to me that I did something right for them.

After retirement I worked part time for private consultants and eventually for SunWater. I retired for good in January this year for health reasons. Altogether I worked 44 years in the Civil Engineering profession; more than half of this period in Australia.

For my wife and me, the highest achievement was to provide good education to our children. Obviously, job stability was important in achieving this goal.

How pleased I am that Wojciech agreed to provide this account of part of his life. I'm sure other members were as interested as I was. The 'health reasons' he referred to were a quadruple bypass operation from which he has recovered well. Ed.

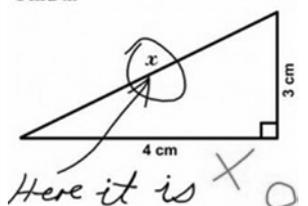
Maths for the not-so-gifted

$$\frac{1}{n} \sin x = ?$$

$$\frac{1}{n} \sin x =$$

$$\text{six} = 6$$

Find x.



To the optimist, the glass is half full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

The Perfect School Trip

My wife Helen is the editor of the Ipswich Girls Grammar School Newspaper IGGSPress. She has kindly allowed me to reprint her account of our wonderful recent trip to the battlefields of the Western Front. - Ed.

A school trip with no students? It sounds like a script for *Yes Minister*. This was, however, the unusual scenario experienced by 27 very fortunate associates of Ipswich Girls Grammar School.

Two years ago an IGGS student won the Simpson Essay Prize for Queensland and a tour of the WWI Battlefields of the Western Front accompanied by the school's Head of History, Julie Younger. Inspired by what she had seen, Julie determined to organise a similar tour so that others could share the amazing experience. And what better year to choose than 2006 – the 90th Anniversary of the commencement of the Battle of the Somme?

Why no students? The itinerary for this two week whirlwind tour, outlining the key points of interest, read a little like an endurance test for WWI history 'nutters'. But as the adult 'class of 27' was soon to discover, the War was the focus but the trip was so much more!

As one of that fortunate class of slow learners (which was how our Tour Director explained our presence on a 'school' trip to the puzzled French!), I would like to share some of my personal highlights and memories. This is not an account of our daily itinerary – I don't have the space to do that justice – but a random list of just some of the things which made this trip so memorable.

Firstly, our expert guide was none other than the Deputy-Director of the Department of Veterans' Affairs – Ian Kelly. His expertise and ability to impart his knowledge added a real dimension to our understanding. Yes, his chosen itinerary did include a significant number of battle sites and war memorials and cemeteries. But three things became obvious very quickly – firstly, they had all been selected as having particular significance for Australians; secondly, on any given day the sites chosen were very close to each other and so distances travelled were not great; and, finally, for every grave or monument we stopped to see, there were at least a dozen others we drove past.

There were two particularly moving events: the Last Post Ceremony at Menin Gate in which our party was officially involved in the reading of the Ode and the laying of wreaths; and the 90th Anniversary Celebrations held at Thiepval Memorial, attended by Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall. These two sites summed up for me one of the most staggering aspects of the war – the unbelievable number of unknown dead. Thiepval, for example, is a 150 feet high memorial standing in grounds of 40 acres and it commemorates 72,085 missing Commonwealth soldiers. Standing on a ridge overlooking the Somme Valley, it dominates the skyline for miles – and though the largest such memorial built by the War Graves Commission, it is only one of many.

And that leads me to another heartwarming memory – the wonderful efforts of the War Graves Commission. The countless numbers of sites which they manage are so beautifully maintained. All the sites are, in fact, but it was very interesting to compare the different cemeteries. Our soldiers are buried in beautiful grave sites with individual headstones with as much information as was known recorded on them and set behind pretty gardens of informal plantings

of roses, rosemary, lavender and many other varieties of flowering plants. The American graves are, by contrast, the stark rows of crosses which seemed by contrast very impersonal. One very sobering fact is that while France and Belgium have willingly donated generous amounts of land to the Allies War Graves Commission, the Germans were afforded no such honour. They are buried in mass graves and no standing headstones were allowed.

And so to another wonderful memory – the incredible feeling of gratitude that still survives today towards the Australians. The very word brings an unbelievable response. Many of the little villages we visited feel that they were liberated by the Aussies. There are still Australian flags flying, kangaroos and Rising Sun images are ever-present. We visited excellent private museums dedicated to the Diggers. They remember them affectionately for their comradeship, their larrikinism and their unparalleled bravery. Signs of the Aussie humour are still there – the street (rue) named Roo de Kanga; Mouchet Farm (a German stronghold) renamed Moo Cow Farm and many more.

Our opportunities to mix with the locals in the smaller towns and villages was definitely a highlight and some of the party upheld the traditions of camaraderie and larrikinism at the local pubs!! Our reputation remains intact!!

Tourist highlights for me were Amiens with its wonderful Cathedral and the breathtaking *Son et Lumiere* which we witnessed there late one evening; the medieval towns of Ypres and Bruges; the beautiful Somme Valley itself and finally our memorable night at the *Moulin Rouge*.

I'm sure I speak for all of the party when I say that we returned completely sobered by the enormity of what we had learned about the war: the devastation; the enormous loss of life; the incredible acts of bravery and self-sacrifice; the incomprehensible bungling by some of those in command; the use of the Colonials as 'cannon fodder'; the impact on the local villagers – the entire litany of the evils of war.

But at the same time we were uplifted by the peacefulness of the final resting places of those who did not return; the warmth of discovering the high regard in which the Aussie soldiers are held; the beauty of the countryside which was once a battlefield and the realisation that no matter where a group of Aussies gets together laughter, friendship and national pride still prevail.

Helen Pullar

If Only ...

One of the places we visited on our June-July tour of the WWI Western Front was Fromelles. This was the scene of the greatest casualties suffered by Australian troops – they lost more men there in one day (23,000) than during the entire Gallipoli campaign. Despite the failure of the assault, British General Haking was of the view that "it had done the Australians a lot of good."

One week after we returned home, *Sixty Minutes* carried an article on Fromelles – did any of you see it? There was one bunker that the Australians very nearly reached. Had they taken it out, it could have changed the whole course of world history. One of the occupants of the bunker was young Corporal Adolf Hitler. If only ... **Ed.**

No mad tripping

On our recent trip with *Down Under Tours* we went westward to Broome then up through the Kimberleys country to Kununurra then across to Barraloola on the Gulf, on to Escott Station and Riversleigh fossil fields, then down to Cloncurry, Longreach, Rockhampton for Brisbane in 24 days, covering nearly 12,000 kms, nearly half that distance on dirt or gravel roads.

We covered flat desert type country, some stony, and through the red, rocky mountains of the Kimberley country. There were very few areas where there was nothing growing, even in the desert country. The weather was kind to us except on the Tanami track which was too wet to travel over. Some of the gorges were fantastic with water ways and all the birds. Camel rides at Alice Springs where there is a marvelous Desert Park with all kinds of animals and birds in large aviaries and a replica of desert areas. The waterfalls were pretty. In one crossing we pulled out another coach which was stuck for eight hours, thus we were able to go through the crossing. We stayed at a number of Station Homesteads and in tents one night.

We visited a number of museums including a working one of Birdsville. We had auctions to raise funds for the Flying Doctor, inspected the base at Charleville and raised \$750 to hand over at Cloncurry. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the journey.

We thought the day going from Boulia to Birdsville was really a testing time for the driver. After lunch at the NT border at Tobermory the rain started to pelt down on the dusty gravel road, thus making it slippery. The driver did a great job holding the coach in the middle of the road for the whole afternoon to Hart's Range Police Station where they wanted us to ring them when we arrived at Alice Springs. OK. There was 41 km to the bitumen road and it was getting dark. No further incident. We had a late dinner at Alice Springs. The driver had some respite next day in Alice Springs.

We were scheduled to go on the Tanami Track to Halls Creek. However there had been rain that made the track hazardous, so our two drivers decided to keep to the bitumen road, the Stuart Highway up to Katherine, leaving Alice Springs at 3.30 am then 6 pm Katherine then to Kununurra and Halls Creek at 5 am. We had a late breakfast and an easy day with an afternoon cruise on Geike Gorge.

Jack and Romola Squire where did you go?

From the east coast to the west. From the centre to the top end.

From high speed jet travel by boat to a leisurely cruise through canyons.

From small aircraft and helicopter rides to coach bush tracks, over rocks and causeways.

From towing another coach out of a bog to changing a flat tyre on our own coach.

From our 'Auction Sales' for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to donating \$726 from our trip.

From snoozing, dozing, snoring, to listening to tapes or watching videos.

From humorous ditties to stimulating thoughts for the day.

From dining rooms professionally set to meals under shady cooling trees.

From a coach, windows so mud-spattered vision was impossible to a coach with 360° horizon views.

From a motel room which offered ample soap and shampoos to a two man tent minus lights and with 'open air'.

Through hot showers and a pit toilet.

From cold, wet, parka, track suit days to shorts and sleeveless tops.

From directions 'men to the right, women to the left', or men to the front, women to the back of the coach, to dinner at 7 pm breakfast at 6 am depart 6.45 am

From a day starting at 3 am, in the coach for 25 hours to a day relaxing, no coach travel but exploring by helicopter and walking the lost city where even God could not get away from it all.

From listening to Geoff's wide knowledge of all aspects of the vegetation and life out in our huge varied land to the auction of numerous items by the bloke out the back.

From an unscheduled chicken and champagne breakfast at the Devil's Marbles to lunch at Australia's most remote traffic light at Daly Waters.

From a camel ride where dogs frightened the camels, to a working museum everything, EVERYTHING, was designed to move and work.

Travelling 11,539 km to arrive at the appointed time 5.30 pm at the Transit Centre after a safe, exciting and enjoyable three weeks, just full of praise and thanksgiving.

Jack and Romola Squire

KAROL NETZEL (1913 – 2006)

Karol was born on 20 February 1913 in Breslaw (which was in Germany at the time). He lived on a farm in Rokszycze, about 140 km from Warsaw, which grew sugar beet and other small crops and raised cows, pigs and sheep. He received Polish citizenship in 1918.

Karol married Halina and had a son, Richard, while in Rokszycze. They left Poland on 17 January 1945 and travelled into Germany. For 16 months the family kept moving from village to village, eventually moving into Czechoslovakia into the American zone and then into Bavaria. They left Europe from Naples on 21 July 1949 on the *Fairsea* and arrived in Newcastle, Australia on 19 August 1949.

He moved to Brisbane and worked in Army Stores at both Banyo and Gaythorne. He spent from July 1950 to February 1953 in Mareeba working for the Department of Primary Industries. There followed a period in 1953 without a job. Then for 3 months in 1953 he worked at the whaling station on Moreton Island. In January 1954 he started work in a sawmill at Tennyson.

He joined the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission on 7 February 1955 as a non-staff employee for 2 years then as a Hydrographer. He worked for 23 years in the IWSC and retired on 20 February 1978 at 65 years of age. During his time with the IWSC he spent 1500 days away from home.

Among Karol's closest friends was John Ward who shared his birthday and who kindly provided these notes. - Ed.

Watery Facts

- During C20th, the world's urban population increased more than tenfold, while rural population increased but twofold.
- Today, half of the world's population lives in urban centres, compared to less than 15% in 1900.
- Human population growth and the expansion of economic activities are placing huge demands on coastal and freshwater ecosystems. Water withdrawals, for instance, have increased sixfold since the 1900s, which is twice the rate of population growth.
- In 1900, 'million cities' (cities with over 1 million inhabitants) were unusual and cities with over 10 million unknown; by 2000, there were 387 million cities and 18 with over 10 million inhabitants.
- In most urban areas in low- and middle-income countries, between 25% and 50% of the population lacks provision for water and sanitation of a quality that greatly reduces the risk of human contamination with faecal-oral pathogens.
- As the urban population increases, many major cities have had to draw freshwater from increasingly distant watersheds, as local surface and groundwater sources no longer meet the demand for water, or as they become depleted or polluted.
- In 2000, more than 900 million urban dwellers (nearly a third of all urban dwellers worldwide) lived in slums. A slum dweller may only have 5 to 10 litres per day at his or her disposal. A middle- or high-income household in the same city, however, may use some 50 to 150 litres per day, if not more.
- In many places of the world, a staggering 30 to 40% of water or more goes unaccounted for due to water leakages in pipes and canals and illegal tapping.
- An analysis of provision for water and sanitation in urban areas of different sizes in 43 low- and middle-income nations showed that in almost every case, the smaller the size-class for urban centres, the worse the provision. It was found that the percentage of households with piped or well water on the premises or with flush toilets generally declined with city size, and that generally the worst served urban populations were those in urban centres with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants.

Information from 2nd United Nations World Water Development Report, 'Water, a shared responsibility'.

Cheap Water

Water has played a central, albeit usually overlooked, role in conflicts throughout human history, far more so even than oil; and many of the wars of the 21st century will be fought over it.

During the past 50 years alone, there have been 507 conflicts pitting country against country, and 21 instances of actual hostilities, as a result of disagreements over water.

The earliest known example dates back to 3,000 BC. Well before the remarkably similar accounts of the Great Flood to be found in the Bible, ancient Sumerian legend tells of the deity Ea, who punished humanity for its sins with a devastating six-day storm.

There have been hundreds more instances of water wars across the ages, involving just about everybody from Nebuchadnezzar to Louis XIV and famous military operations such as the Dam Busters during WWII. In 1503, Leonardo da Vinci and Machiavelli planned to divert the Arno River away from Pisa during hostilities between Pisa and Florence. Astonishingly, Arizona and California almost went to war in 1935 over the construction of the Parker Dam and diversions from the Colorado River.

In the 1970s, Ethiopia's wish to build dams on the headwaters of the Blue Nile led to a furious reaction from Egypt. "The only matter that could take Egypt to war again is water," said Mohamed Anwar al-Sadat, the Egyptian president later assassinated.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian diplomat who became UN secretary-general, said in 1988: "The next war in our region will be over the waters of the Nile, not politics." During the past 15 years, there have been armed conflicts over water in Bangladesh, Tadjikistan, Malaysia, Yugoslavia, Angola, East Timor, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Ecuador and Peru. Several terrorist groups have threatened to poison water systems and water distribution has been regularly targeted in Iraq.

Countries such as Egypt, Hungary, Botswana, Cambodia and Syria all derive more than 75 % of their water from rivers that flow

through other countries first. Particularly tricky are cases where one river system provides water to many nations, some of which may be steadfast political or ideological opponents. At last count, there were 263 river basins shared by two or more countries and these were home to roughly 40% of the global population.

One particular area of contention is the Jordan River basin, which is divided between Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The problem is who owns the water and how the water should be shared out between different countries.

Why so many conflicts and so much misery? The problem is not that there is too little water; in fact water is extraordinarily plentiful. The challenge is getting the water to the right places and the right people; the issue is one of the allocation of a scarce resource and is economic and political in nature, not physical.

About two-thirds of the earth's surface is made up of water; if one strips out sea water, which of course can quite easily be turned into drinking water with the help of desalination plants, one is still left with 2.3 million litres per person.

There is also plenty of rain: each year, 113,000 km³ showers down on the earth. Much evaporates but we are left with 19,000 litres a day per person. The global economy consumes only about 1,300 litres per person a day, 6.8 % of the daily rain fall. The United Nations does the sums differently and finds that we use about 8% of the available water every year – but unlike oil, which can only be used once, this water can endlessly be recycled.

As many economists put it, when water is cheaper than dirt, it will be treated that way – and that is the great problem with water in the world today. Unless it is priced rationally and managed by markets, countries will continue to go to war over it and the poor continue to die from a lack of it.

Condensed from *The Business* (London) March 5, 2006.

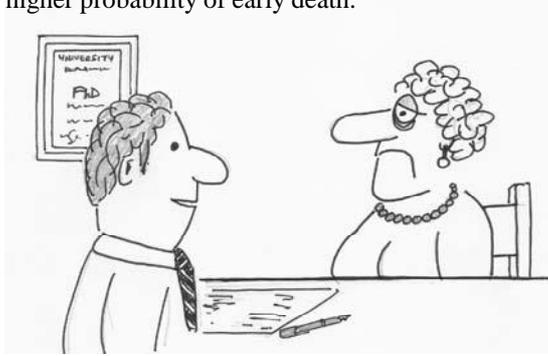
Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. That's why engineers sometimes smell pretty bad.

HEALTH *and* beauty

Not only are some health fears misguided, but coffee can actually reduce the chances of developing illnesses such as Parkinson's disease or diabetes, a meeting of the International Association of Coffee Science has been told. Up to six cups a day will not lead to heart or digestive damage in a healthy person.

Coffee contains chlorogenic acids and melanoids which trap so-called free radicals or atomic particles which damage DNA and are also powerful antioxidants. Coffee can also cut the risks of cirrhosis by up to 80%. The risk of type-2 diabetes can be halved by drinking five to six cups of coffee daily. *Courier-Mail 16-9-06.*

The *Courier-Mail* of 12-8-06 confirmed that a happy marriage is good for your health. A solid marriage can add five years to your life while unmarried adults (including widowed, divorced and separated) have a higher probability of early death.



Doctor: When did you first notice your husband's hearing problem?

Wife: Just after we got married.

Exercise those Brain Cells

Farmer Smith owns a rectangular property entirely contained inside a county 23 km square. The boundaries, which are parallel to the county boundaries, are an integral number of km long.

Farmer Jones knows the area but not the dimensions, which he proposes to calculate. He asks if the width is greater than half the length and, on being told, knows the dimensions.

Farmer Brown does not know the area or the dimensions, but on hearing the answer to Jones' question, can calculate the dimensions. What are they?



Solution to last edition's puzzle

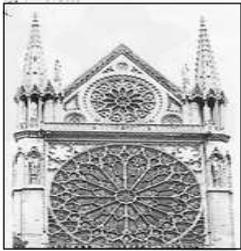
The logician reasoned, "I can see two white discs. If mine were black, one of the others would reason, 'I can see a black one and a white one. If mine were black the applicant who could see two blacks would automatically know his must be white. Therefore mine must be white.' Therefore mine must be white."

ORDERING PIZZA IN 2010

Operator: Thank you for calling Pizza Hut. May I have your national ID number?
Customer: Hi, I'd like to place an order.
Operator: I must have your NIDN first, sir.
Customer: My National ID Number? Yeah, it's 6102049998-45-54610.
Operator: Thank you, Mr Smith. I see you live at 42 Meadowland Drive, and the phone number is 494-2366. Your work number is 745 2302 and your mobile number is 266-2566. Email address is smith@home.net Which number are you calling from sir?
Customer: I'm at home. Where did you get all this information?
Operator: We're wired into the HSS, sir.
Customer: The HSS, what's that?
Operator: We're wired into the Homeland Security System, sir. This will add only 15 seconds to your ordering time.
Customer: (*sighs*) Oh well, I'd like to order a couple of your All-Meat Special pizzas.
Operator: I don't think that's a good idea, sir.
Customer: What d'ya mean?
Operator: Your medical records and toilet sensors indicate that you've got very high blood pressure and extremely high cholesterol. Medicare won't allow such an unhealthy choice.
Customer: What?! What do you recommend, then?
Operator: You might try our low-fat Soybean Pizza. I'm sure you'll like it.
Customer: What makes you think I'd like something like that?
Operator: Well, you borrowed 'Gourmet Soybean Recipes' from your local library last week, sir. That's why I made the suggestion.
Customer: All right, all right. Give me two family-sized ones, then.
Operator: That should be plenty for you, your wife and your four kids. Your two dogs can finish the crusts, sir. Your total is \$29.99.
Customer: I'll give you my credit card number.
Operator: I'm sorry sir, but I'm afraid you'll have to pay in cash. Your credit card balance is over its limit.
Customer: Well, I'll run over to the ATM and get some cash before your driver gets here!
Operator: That won't work either, sir. Your cheque account is overdrawn also.
Customer: Never mind! Just send the pizzas. I'll have the cash ready. How long will it take?
Operator: We're running a little behind, sir. It'll be about 45 minutes. If you're in a hurry you might want to pick them up while you're out getting the cash, but then, carrying pizzas on a motorcycle can be a bit awkward.
Customer: Wait! How do you know I ride a bike?
Operator: It says here you're in arrears on your car payments, so your car got repossessed. But your bike's paid for and you just filled the tank yesterday.
Customer: Well, I'll be a #%^&\$%^@#
Operator: I'd advise watching your language, sir. You've already got a July 4, 2005 conviction for swearing at a copper and another one, I see here, in September. For contempt at your hearing..swearing at the judge. Oh yes, and I see here that you just got out from a 3 month stretch in jail. Is this your first pizza since your return to society?
Customer: (*speechless*)
Operator: Will there be anything else, sir?
Customer: Yes, I have a coupon for a free 2 litre Coke.
Operator: I'm sorry sir, but our ad's exclusionary clause prevents us from offering free soft drinks to diabetics. The law now prohibits it. Thank you for calling Pizza Hut.

Words, Words, Words

While we were in France and Belgium, we inevitably visited the usual quota of gothic cathedrals. (One of the most extraordinary spectacles was the *son et lumiere* display at Amiens Cathedral – but I digress). Looking at the ornate rose windows, I was reminded that our English word *flamboyant* is derived, via this architectural style, from the windows that were created to resemble flames or *flambeaux*. It now means something very much closer to *ornate* or *ostentateous*.



The flamboyant rose window of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris

Much of our language is, of course, derived from the French. Following the Norman conquest in particular, many French words passed into our language. It always fascinates me that the sophisticated words tend to be of French origin and the cruder ones (let's not go there too far) are pure Anglo-Saxon. Hence *pork* (French) from the *pig* (Saxon), *beef* (*boeuf*) from the *cow*, *mutton* (*mouton*) from the *sheep* and *venison* from the *deer*.

Many of the French words (*portmanteau*, *cul de sac*, *lieutenant*, *avenue*) have slipped through virtually unnoticed. So much so that President George W. Bush could utter his (in)famous line, "The problem with the French is that they ain't got no word for 'entrepreneur'".

Readers have probably become aware of the criticisms of the school curriculum because so many students have inadequate knowledge of word usage and grammar. (I am always intrigued to see such railing from the *Courier Mail* whose grasp of the above could only be described as appalling.)

For me the guru of grammar and word usage is H.W. Fowler whose *Modern English Usage* was first published in 1926. It has been revised many times but has retained its idiosyncratic view of language. Fowler himself was a fascinating character. A schoolteacher who was retired by the time his lifetime's work was published, he was an atheist, yet he dutifully accompanied his wife to church each Sunday and waited outside until it was time to take her home.

Level Playing Field

"Unfair!" the disbeliever rants in spoiling for a fight.
"Atheists won't get the chance to gloat that they were right."

Blaise Pascal formulated, as well as his famous *Principle*, his *Hypothesis* which stated, "You might as well believe in God: if you're wrong you've got nothing to lose, but if you're right you've got everything to gain."

How many Fs are in the following sentence?

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS...

How many? Are there 3?

WRONG, THERE ARE 6 — no joke.

READ IT AGAIN !

The reasoning is the brain cannot process "OF".

Anyone who counts all 6 "Fs" on the first go is a genius. Three is normal, four is quite rare!

Management

A man in a hot air balloon realised he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted someone on the ground. "Excuse me," he shouted, "I promised a friend I'd meet him an hour ago but I don't know where I am."

Back came the reply. "You're in a hot air balloon approximately ten metres above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

Amazed, the balloonist replied, "You must be a technologist."

"How did you know?" came the reply.

"Well, everything that you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of the information. The fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been of much help at all. If anything, you've delayed my trip."

From the ground came a smile and the response, "You must be in management."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"You don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are because of a lot of hot air. You have made a promise which you have no idea how you are going to keep and you expect people below you to solve your problems. The fact is, you are in exactly the same position as you were before we met but now, somehow, it's my fault."

Keeping Mobile

Q. How can you stop your mobile phone being used after it has been stolen?

A. Check your phone's serial number by keying in (* # 0 6 #). A 15 digit code will appear that you should write down and keep somewhere safe. Should your phone be stolen you can phone your service provider and give them the code. They can then block the handset so that even if the thief changes the Sim card, your phone will be useless. You may not get your phone back but at least you know that whoever stole it cannot use it. If everybody did this there would be no point in stealing mobiles.

Thanks to Jim Uhlmann for this useful tip.

A Sign of the Times

On a church at Silkstone

Never give up - even Moses was once a basket case.

'In the Poo'

So everyone is running out of water. Down here south of the border in the Tweed, the same campaign is being broadcast about the lack of drinking water and what to do with the ever increasing volumes of the other stuff. The NSW State Government sacked our councillors about a year ago and appointed three 'administrators' who are currently overseeing an Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy to sort out what water goes uphill and what is left for the fish. In this shire, the equivalent of about four Olympic sized swimming pools of water is unaccounted for, every day of the year (ie, lost).

A few years after recycling begins in earnest, some may be debating what actually causes the stain in the bottom of the teacup, or why the toilet really has got a brown stain on the bowl. It gives new meaning to the statement, "I was 'drinking' (or other such words) with Fred all weekend".

Fortunately, our house won't have a connection to 'The Grid'. Our water supply comes straight from nature's natural water cycle, ie, rain on the roof and into water tanks. We also have a septic tank, the outfall of which is delivered under ground to a 120 square metre evapo-transportaion area. An 'On-site Sewage Treatment System' in government speak. This is covered with lush kykuya grass, very green even in the middle of winter. It could double as a boccie rink, and you won't bog in it either (I mean it's dry under foot). There will be no effluent harvesting for toilets here, let alone drinking the stuff. And best of all, no water or sewerage rates either.

We've got tonnes of fresh water. So much so that it has been necessary to incorporate that well known water engineering principle – the self priming syphon on our water tanks to prevent back flow out of the tank inlet opening during big storms. I first saw them on the channels in Mareeba more than forty years ago. We made ours from standard PVC fittings costing less than \$10. They work automatically with no moving parts. During a heavy storm excess water is removed from the top of the tank in a big hurry. Visualise a 90mm pipe flowing full under two metres of head. The action goes from start to stop in around 30 seconds unloading about 200L of water from the tank. The noise level is audible and you can definitely hear the syphon breaking as air is sucked into the pipe. Visualise a tape recording of an elephant with flatulence, played backwards. Water wise is not an issue here, as if we don't use it, it overflows down to a 1ML dam.

The amount of water that falls on the roof in an average year (370 tonnes) is at least three times our annual consumption. We have a storage volume of about a third of that consumption. There was sufficient water to exist through winter 2004, the driest five months on record here. Believe it or not, we also get water in winter from

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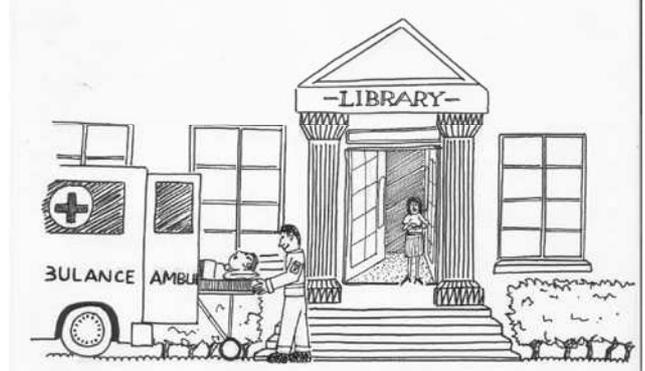
condensation on the roof. On foggy nights, I estimate some 200L per night runs off 200sqm of roofing. You can actually hear the down pipes dribbling. Something to do with 'dew point' and/or frost when it's cold enough. On foggy mornings visitors may be dragged out of bed at sunrise to see the 'fog bow'. Very impressive. Think I'm pulling your leg? Type 'fogbow' in the Google search line and see what you come up with. Look for 'The Glory', which we are yet to see down here.

In Tyalgum (about 5km away) 100% of the town effluent from the sewage treatment plant is recycled on to paddocks. In nearby Uki, all their effluent goes on to a eucalyptus plantation producing leaves for Currumbin koalas. So why does the proposed treated effluent pipeline from Luggage Point to Tarong have to pass so close to Wivenhoe? We all know about pipelines and the necessity for scour valves. How many of these could we open to let effluent into the Wivenhoe in the middle of the night when Tarong doesn't need it? One thing is for sure – if you wash your curtains, they will definitely fade and/or go brown – one or the other.

So get organised and install a big water tank, say 10,000L, which we can live off for 80% of the year. Then go and ask for an appointment to see the person at the council about being disconnected from the reticulated water supply and to have all water charges removed from your rates notice. I guess BCC saw this coming and added a 'service charge' just in case.

Bob McDonald

Many thanks Bob. The article was so publishable that I have held over "Book Club" till next time - but not the cartoon. Ed.



Patient: The whole bookcase fell on me and all the Librarian could say was "Shhh!"

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen; to my daughter Jean Yates; to Graham Bauer 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.