



# WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 61

March 2010

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## We'll Meet Again ...

... on Thursday 22 April at the Public Service Club for the Annual General Meeting of the Water Resources Retirees Association (see the notice enclosed with this Newsletter).

Apart from the opportunity to catch up and chat with former work colleagues, it's an invitation to dine at the expense of the Association and to maintain the traditions of the Association.

The co-patrons, Peter Boettcher (SunWater) and John Bradley (DERM) have been invited to attend personally or to send a representative to give us an address on the "State of the Nation". It is particularly to be hoped that John, who will be new to most members, will be able to come along. We certainly hope that you'll be there and you'll bring your friends.

We are also looking for members to take on membership of the Committee. Lee Rogers is keen to stand down as President after three years in that office (and eight years on Committee) and Eric Davis is equally keen for him to do so, so that he can relinquish the role of Past President. John Connolly, after seven years as an outstanding Secretary is unable to continue (see page 2). In any case, new blood is always welcome.

The Committee would also appreciate input from members on what activities it should arrange over the next twelve months.

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

## Can You Help?

Jon Henry and the Sub Committee are continuing to develop their ideas for the Web Site. The trial pages are looking good and will be capable of being displayed consistently on all screen sizes, including mobile phones. The domain name has now been registered but the site is not yet open for business.

Obviously, the committee want it to be as useful and attractive as possible. They would like the home page to be illustrated by pictures showing the range of activities of water resources e.g. investigation, construction, boring, dams, channels, irrigation and mining. Despite numerous attempts, photographs from publications cannot be reproduced in acceptable quality of resolution or colour. The committee has access to plenty of eminently suitable images on 35 mm slides if only they could be translated successfully to digital form.

Is there any member out there who has equipment capable of scanning the slides at high resolution who is willing to help? It would be wonderful if someone could oblige.

## From the Editor's Chair

*Well, that's the end of the noughties. And so far no one has suggested a collective name for the next decade. The 'tweens, perhaps?*

*It's hard to believe that we are already into the tenth year of the twenty-first century and the third millennium. Doesn't time fly?*

*And talking of time flying, this is my twentieth newsletter which means that it is almost seven years since I first sat in this chair. Dare I say it in a watery sauces newsletter – a lot of water has flowed under the bridge and over the odd spillway (although far less than if it hadn't been a period of continuing drought)? I am most grateful to all the members who have provided me with fascinating copy over the years. Another bumper issue this time. More articles and news, of course, are always welcome.*

*With Minister Garrett's rejection of the Traveston Dam proposal, the water industry faces new challenges to address burgeoning populations and climate change. But no doubt, following past performances, contemporary water people will rise to the occasion. And we will be able to record their efforts with a touch of nostalgia.*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## Out and About

Numbers attending the Christmas luncheon at COTAH in November were somewhat smaller than usual and unfortunately neither of our co-patrons was represented. Nevertheless, those attending enjoyed themselves with the pleasant company, Terry Loos's trivia challenge and, most particularly, the sonorous serenading by the barbershop quartet *A'cafellas*, starring our John Connolly, Col Cooney and two of their friends.

*On the nth day  
of Christmas ...  
four Clippers  
singing.  
- photo courtesy  
Terry Loos*



As you know, John and Col are members of the *Brisbane River City Clippers*, who will be hosting the barbershop convention in Brisbane next year (which is why John is unable to continue on as our secretary). The group recently sang at the Parliamentary Annexe, entertaining members of the Royal Commonwealth Society of Queensland. The Society is a wholly autonomous, non-political, non-sectarian, educational organisation devoted to the increase and spread of knowledge respecting the peoples and countries of the Commonwealth of Nations and their cultures. Gordon Wilson is the President and Malcolm Pegg is a Councillor.

At the WRRRA Christmas luncheon, a few of the attendees were prepared to divulge information on their current activities. Eric Davis still plays tennis twice a week, works for his church and Meals on Wheels and breeds budgerigars and finches for a hobby. Geoff Eades works as a part-time consultant for SunWater and QWI when he can squeeze it in around golf, revegetating his property at Mapleton and travelling overseas. Warren Lane is compelled to visit his extensive family (nine grandchildren) in such far-flung places as Chicago, Gosford, Atherton and Darwin as well as managing a number of rental properties. Don Gardiner is enjoying retirement and travelling in Australia and overseas from time to time. John Hillier is trying to retire from consulting so he can play more bowls on Bribie Island and travel more.

Col Hazel, apart from trying to retire and spend more time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, is still active professionally. He mentors young hydrogeologists and engineers, chairs and lectures at Groundwater Schools, has rewritten his "Groundwater Hydraulics Lecture Notes" and with three others has rewritten all the lectures for Australian Groundwater Schools.

Fourteen retirees attended the social luncheon at the Public Service Club on 18 February and enjoyed each other's company. Unfortunately, Len Redmond's funeral was held at the same time and I was at that along with ten other 'old boys' and four wives.

Among the attendees was Charles Julian who is greatly changed in appearance (bearded) but with the same delightful accent and manner. Charles has joined Bob Geddes as new members of WRRRA.

Boris Wookovich looks unchanged – must come of enjoying a quiet retirement in Chapel Hill where his wife Jean has become a lay preacher. The Viziers and the Bertrams were in good form too.

Shirley Beattie is recovering from a hip replacement operation while Norm White is lining up for knee surgery. It was good to see Lindsay along with Don Beattie, Col Taggart and Jim Uhlmann.

Kev Devlin has been good enough to supply information about former officers who are enjoying retirement in the Burdekin area.

- Keith Hughes, retired district clerk etc. Now over 80, and still fighting fit, although Daphne has slowed of late. Doesn't get to fish much any more, and the beach house now has a grandson living in it. Went to Melb last year to see kids and grandkids, but might think long and hard before doing it again. Sounded good.

- Tradge McGowan, retired boring inspector. Now also over 80, and fighting fit. Still walking each day with Marilyn. Says he is keeping the specialists in Townsville on their toes. The kids are in Sydney and Mackay, so still visiting them periodically. Seems to be planning to build a kit plane, but not sure how far the planning for that has progressed.

- Bill Ferguson, retired cost clerk. Now 76, and still going fairly well. Gets a bit of trouble with arthritis. Has been involved in a number of community groups since retirement, including the local radio, and the tourist centre. Gets a lot of enjoyment from a computer group. Has had a trip to Tasmania, but had some health problems on that trip. Goes to the Gold Coast each year with some family relations.

- Col Lakin, retired works supervisor. Retired in 2000, but came back for a bit at Gattonvale and early BMP. Had a cancer scare on BMP, but currently in remission. Spends the winter months each year travelling in Aust, and has most of it now covered now. Off again once it cools.

By the time you are reading this, Lee and Denise Rogers will have returned from a quick trip to Capetown to visit their son who is a temporary resident in South Africa.

I had a missive from David Dempster who, as well as providing the proverbs (DD) that appear at the feet of some pages, informed me, "No, I haven't put the feet up. I've taken up part-time employment with a small firm based in Newcastle, carrying out geological exploration – mostly for coal. Managed to put my Water Resource skills to good use when a drilling program unexpectedly encountered some problem groundwater. The finances generated from this activity help to supplement the lack of superannuation-generated funds during the financial downturn so we can travel."

Hector Macdonald left IWSC nearly 40 years ago, on a promotion to the Department of Harbours and Marine. He certainly anticipated that he would never again be associated with Water Resources (in the capacity of an employee). As they say, "Never say never." After several departmental organisational changes (including a stint in EPA) Hector, having (almost?) reached retiring age, now finds himself located in 400 George Street, Department of Environment and Resource Management – back with the water boys!

Regretfully, I have to inform members of the passing of a number of people as you will find on the next two pages.

**If you look like your passport photograph, you probably do need a vacation. - DD.**

## Vale Rosina May (“Sherry”) Credlin 17 April 1926 - 4 December 2010

Rosina May Sherrin was born on 17 April 1926 in Normanton, North Queensland, the elder of two children. Rosina spent a happy childhood in Normanton, Atherton and Mareeba, before work took her family to Mt Perry. From here, the war intervened and like lots of children of the time, in 1942 she was relocated from Brisbane to Warwick to complete her schooling.

Rosina always had a yearning to become a nurse so, with her parents still living in Mt Perry, she went to Bundaberg General Hospital to train. As with so many nurses, her surname of Sherrin was shortened and she became “Sherry” to all her friends.

Sherry loved to travel and went nursing in Mt Gambier and Perth before going to St George in 1951. Her aim was to save to go to Europe. However, she met and married a young engineer, Bernie Credlin who was also far from his home town of Wycheproof in Victoria.

Bernie and Sherry both loved their time in St George. Their daughter Elizabeth was born there in 1957 and seven years later Tricia was born, shortly after Bernie and Sherry transferred to Brisbane.

Sherry chose to be a stay-at-home wife and mother, which she enjoyed immensely and often said she kept the home fires burning while Bernie travelled extensively for work throughout Queensland, interstate and overseas. Sherry loved to travel which she did with Bernie across Australia and overseas. Sherry would have continued to travel if ill health and Bernie’s conservative notion that their money was also “made flat to stack” hadn’t interceded!

Sherry was diagnosed with some serious health issues in 1974 while the girls were still at school. This news would have daunted most people, but Sherry soldiered on, determined to outlive the four days the surgeons gave her, and as a minimum see Tricia, then aged 9, celebrate her twenty-first birthday. Even through all her health problems, she always managed to keep a smile on her face, and laughter in her heart.

Sherry was devastated in 2003 when Bernie passed away. She had lost her soul mate and her best friend. She was disappointed that she had just undergone major heart surgery to give her more time with Bernie, and that now that time was cut short.

Sherry welcomed everyone into her home even when her mobility and health were not great. She will always be remembered for her warm and generous nature, her honesty and her loyalty, her vibrant laugh, her ability to lend an ear, and for being such a great friend.

- Adapted from the eulogy written by Elizabeth Credlin and delivered by Geoffrey Brown, Sherry’s godson

## Vale Leonard Hugh Redmond 29 April 1923 – 14 February 2010

Leonard Hugh Redmond, was born in Parramatta NSW on 29 April 1923, the second of three sons. (*Brother Don also worked for the Commission*). Len’s father was a mines inspector and his work frequently took him and his family travelling around Queensland. Eventually, the Redmonds settled in the Townsville area and Len attended boarding school at Townsville Grammar. In 1937, at the ripe old age of 14, Len finished at Townsville Grammar. Shortly after, he was travelling through North Queensland with his Dad when they stopped at a small mining town. It was mentioned that there was a job going at the mine. As they left, Len said “What about me, Dad!” So his father promptly turned him around, signed him up and left him there! And so began Len’s “gentle transition” to a working life!

In 1942, at the age of 19, Len joined the Australian Imperial Forces. He served his country honourably for the next four years. His leadership qualities were readily recognised and he rose to the rank of Lieutenant while still very young. He also managed to earn the nickname “Horace” – a true reflection of Len’s preferred position in this life – Horace-ontal.

Len earned his Diploma of Engineering from the School of Mines of Western Australia in Kalgoorlie and in 1949 he took a job with the Queensland Public Service where he worked for the next thirty-four years until his retirement in 1983. Life with the Queensland Water Resources Commission suited Len’s bachelor lifestyle as it took him travelling again – this time to Queensland towns such as Emerald, Claredale and eventually in 1951, as District Engineer, to Theodore where his life would change forever!

In Theodore, he met the love of his life, his secretary, Cecelia Lovett and there ended his bachelor life when they married on 29 April 1960 – his 37<sup>th</sup> birthday, a day chosen so he would never forget his anniversary. In that same year Cec and Len moved to Brisbane and bought a house in Pevny Street and, for the next fifty years they lived what Cec describes as “a wonderful life” – a life filled with love and friendship, community service and travel. He continued his engineering career in the Queensland Public Service rising to the position of Senior Engineer. Travelling on a diplomat’s passport, Len was sent to Burma on a few occasions to consult with Burmese government officials about water resources and teach the locals how to dig drains for water supply.

Len was a keen sportsman and loved to fish and play golf and tennis. He was a mechanical wizard. Given enough time to fiddle and figure out how things worked, he’d attempt to fix anything, engines, locks, TV remotes, the lawn mower or the smash repair work on the van – anything you could produce, Len would have a go at.

Len was an adventurer, always looking for the next place to go and the next adventure that needed to be had. A man’s man and, at the same time, a gentleman’s gentleman, Len was an accomplished conversationalist. He had impeccable manners and the gentle knack of sharing his story while showing a keen interest in yours. One of Len’s most endearing habits was always addressing colleagues as “friend”. Len himself was a true friend and a fine man.

- Adapted from the eulogy written and delivered by Jim Seaha, Len’s friend and neighbour

*Footnote: I have particular reason to be grateful to Len. My father and Geoff Redmond (the third brother) were colleagues in the sand mining industry. When I was finishing secondary school and contemplating a career in Civil Engineering, Dad contacted Len to see if he could get me some work experience. Len couldn’t, but suggested I might like to apply for a scholarship with the Commission. I did and the rest, as they say, is history. - Ed.*

**Eric Wheeler** passed away in January 2007, which news we only received recently. Eric worked for the department from 1952 to 1982, the last 18 years as storage supervisor at Moogerah. His three sons Peter, Ross and Mark and his son-in-law Ray Hargrave have all been Water Resources employees. His wife Peg continues to live in the family home in Bundaberg.

**Jack Squire**, former draftsman, died on 5 December, having recently moved to Regis Aged Care Centre at The Gap. Jack and his wife Romola were faithful attendees of WRRRA functions and inveterate travellers.

Former IWS employee **Jack Scott** passed away peacefully on 29 December, aged 87 years. Jack was the Farm Manager at Pilot Farm No 2 at Emerald in the late 60s and early 70s where he was both liked and well known in the local community.

**Gwen Warren (nee Cathcart)** was born in 1941. After completing her Junior certificate, she joined the Public Service and worked in the old Stock Routes section of IWSC (where Jim Uhlmann remembers her) until her marriage in 1962. She died recently after a long illness.

**Robert Norman (Bob) Fell** had been battling ill health for some time before he died on 18 January at the age of 65. Bob was a long time stream control man in Mareeba and Innisfail. His funeral in Cairns was a typical Fell event with far more jokes than sadness and he was ushered out by a full jazz band.

**Ronald Albert Willis** died in late January at the age of 77. Ron had been a senior officer of the Department of Local Government, having served as Senior Design Engineer, Chief Construction Engineer and then Principal Engineer Technical Services Division, Dept of Local Government. He was in this last position when the Town Water & Sewerage function translated to Water Resources Commission in early 1988. A major claim to fame was his involvement in the design of the Fitzroy Barrage at Rockhampton.

Our condolences to their families and friends.

## Travels in Spain

Denise and I spent five weeks in Europe last September/ October, mostly in Spain with ten or so days in France. Again we travelled with Intrepid Travel whose style of travel appeals to us so much.

Spain is a fascinating place with quite a tumultuous history. Indeed travelling in Spain is almost like reading a history book and yes – the Romans were in Spain too. Segovia, which is about 70 kilometres west of Madrid, has a quite incredible Roman aqueduct which delivered water into the city across a valley. The aqueduct, a two level arch structure 27 metres high and 800 metres long, was constructed of granite blocks without any mortar. It remained in use until the 1960s and still appears to be in perfect condition a mere 2000 years after it was built!

Another major group who occupied the southern half of Spain for many centuries were the Moors from North Africa. They built in their style of architecture some wonderful buildings which remain today – the Alhambra – a walled city high above the modern city of Granada which included a fortress and a beautifully decorated palace with extensive gardens including numerous water features. In Cordova, the Moors built a mosque in stages, which ultimately could hold 40,000 worshippers all under cover. It still stands but with a Catholic cathedral later built in the middle of the mosque area.

Northern Spain was eventually unified under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella who pushed the Moors back to Africa and encouraged the large Jewish communities which existed at the time to leave. Subsequently many of the Moorish mosques were knocked down and Catholic cathedrals built on the sites. The cathedrals at Seville and at Toledo, which is not such a large city, are enormous.

Ferdinand and Isabella were of course smart enough to support Christopher Columbus – an Italian – to sail westwards out into the Atlantic – they thought to find a fast route to India and China. Surprise – he found America instead and Spain and later Portugal subsequently colonised all of Central and South America. Great

wealth followed with a steady flow of gold and silver back to Spain which at one time also controlled the Philippines, Cuba, the southern half of Italy and the Netherlands. Not surprisingly there are quite a few Columbus monuments.

Spain's great strength then declined through ineffective government and through numerous defeats in European wars. The United States pushed Spain out of the Philippines and Cuba and all of their colonies became independent. Spain itself had strong divisions which led to a catastrophic civil war during the 1930s and to many years of a dictatorship under Franco. Now the royal family has been reinstated but the Basque people in the north-west and the Catalan people in the north-east strive to maintain a separate identity.

Today, Spain seems to be relatively prosperous with a huge tourist industry although unemployment and national debt are reportedly high. A high speed train network is being developed – 230 km/hr between Segovia and Madrid seemed pretty smooth – and has invested hugely in wind farms – not that it seemed at all windy. Olives, grapes and citrus trees seem to be the main crops with large areas irrigated.

The Spanish appear to enjoy themselves and come out in huge numbers at night to promenade, visit bars and restaurants which only seem to get busy after 9 pm. And in groups, the conversations are noisy – very noisy. Bull fighting continues which seems to us barbaric so we didn't attend a fight. Some of our fellow travellers did but left after the first fight.

And soccer now seems to be the national religion with Real Madrid and Barcelona FC being the two top teams.

And finally a comment about Spanish wine – tempranillo from the Rioja and Ribera del Duero districts – a very nice red and not expensive.

**Lee Rogers**

**If four out of five people suffer from diarrhoea, does that mean one ENJOYS it? DD**

# Reminiscences of the Early Days of the Emerald Irrigation Area

*Concluding the reminiscences of Peter Bevin and Bob McDonald*

## Office responsibilities

Locally, project responsibilities were divided between construction activities (under Norm Rossi at Fairbairn Dam) and the irrigation area design works handled in the District Office. Trevor Sleep managed the survey team that was based at Weemah, a little way out of town.

The district office was simply structured around those who worked on the design of the irrigation area and those who provided wider regional services like farm advisory and stream control work.

## Other Water Resources activities by the District Office

While development of the Emerald Irrigation Scheme progressed, the Farm Advisory officers were involved in the development of one of the biggest land settlement schemes for decades. The 'Brigalow Scheme', run by the Lands Department, subdivided a large portion of Central Queensland bounded by Emerald-Clermont road in the west and the old Bruce Highway to the east.

Stalwarts like the late Tony Bucknell and Warren Hutton provided invaluable assistance in the development of the scheme by investigating and surveying water storage sites for individual blocks. They spent many days each week away from the office and families camping out or bunking in with the land agents at the old Pasha Homestead about 75 miles north of Clermont near the Suttor River and at Bartheaston, about the same distance east of Clermont on the Connors River. That was hard work and their exploits over the years would fill many volumes of this newsletter.

## Final Reflections

**Bob recalls** "I built a BBQ in the backyard, probably in late 1969. There were no such things as 'Besser Blocks' in Emerald at the time so I had to make my own on the floor in the garage. The concrete mix was a bag of cement mixed with sand and gravel from Theresa Creek on the northern side of town. At the grand opening we had a bottle of sparkling red burgundy to go with the usual XXXX and six 1¼ pound T-bones supplied by Merv at Bridgeman's Butcher. After innumerable BBQ's over the next three years, I was devastated to learn that the next occupant of the house (Ian Fox, I believe) planted a tree in it.

"While groceries were sometimes difficult to afford, meat was relatively plentiful and of good quality if you knew the butcher. Tony Bucknell and I once shared a smoke cured pig from a Clermont butcher and it didn't need refrigeration. We purchased it in December and

used the hams for Christmas. My half hung in a fly-screened cage in the garage and we chewed upward cutting off bacon rashers as we went, to finish off with the shoulder for Easter. Where can you buy that now?

"One of the 'cons' of living in Emerald then was that because we lived south of the Tropic of Capricorn, we only received three weeks annual leave. We could see the blasted T of C out of the office window to the north about one or two kilometres away. How do you explain to the family when you go for a holiday to beautiful Mackay, the public servants there received four weeks leave.

"I suspect that some of the biggest parties ever held in Emerald in the early days occurred when well respected staff members left town, mostly for greener pastures. The venue was inevitably the single men's house in Old Airport Drive where food wasn't as important on the menu as beer.

"As there was little else to do after work, family get togethers were a regular occurrence. Kegs on the verandah, BBQ's and cards 'till all hours of the night were common. A get together at Fairbairn Dam meant a slow trip home in the pitch black trying to keep a look out for straying cattle or wild pigs".

**Peter recalls** "firstly the good fortune we had as a family to have lived for four years beside a cross section of a truly local rural community - butchers, painters, bankers, kangaroo shooters, mechanics - and their wives and families. However, in particular, we remember Harold (Pop) and Mrs Barry who lived next door. Pop was a retired Emerald barber and knew more about the history of Emerald than anybody - so he was a good mentor if you were willing to spend some time and listen to him.

"The second thing that comes readily to my mind was the camaraderie in the office - somehow, we quickly shared a common goal of trying to help turn a drought prone part of Queensland into a productive farming area for the long term. I think it was because the group was a relatively young lot and generally quite inexperienced at the start and they simply thrived on gaining the necessary expertise along with a sense of accomplishment.

"Thirdly, how quickly Fairbairn Dam filled the first time (matter of a year or two from memory) when all the locals were saying it would be many decades before we would see water over the spillway. Local knowledge will only take you so far!

"And finally, the nature of those same locals in welcoming us and proving in many cases to be long held friends".

*Thank you both for this fine contribution. - Ed.*

## A Sign of the Times

On a Brisbane street:

If it wasn't for the last minute, nothing would ever be achieved

A habit is a hard thing to get rid of. Take away the h and you've still got a bit. Take away the a and it's still there. Take away the b and you've still got it. Take away the i (point to self) and you've still got it to a t.

**Old age is when former classmates are so old and wrinkled they don't recognise you.**

## Travelling Round

*Continuing the adventures of Hein and Françoise Van der Heide. - Ed*

### Augusta to Eucla – October 2008 continued

Further east along the coast we stayed in Denmark (the town not the country). Another town on a coastal inlet, with great forest and coastal drives. One of the coastal spots we visited was called Madfish Bay – you may have come across the Madfish wine label, which is produced by a nearby vineyard. Then on to Albany – the largest town in the region (pop 30,000). Albany has a fantastic harbour – well sheltered from the southern ocean – an obvious plus for the whaling ships that used its whaling station from the late 1800s until the 1970s. The town has a large number of historic buildings, as well as massive granite outcrops right in the middle of town. The Torndirrup National Park is on the coastal side of the harbour and this contains some of the best views of coastal cliffs and beaches in the region. We did a trip north to the Porongurup National Park, but unfortunately it was quite wet and the top of the mountains were covered in cloud. We drove west to Mt Barker and did a scenic drive to St Werburghs Chapel – a small rural mud walled church built in 1873.

Our next stops were to be Bremer Bay and Hopetoun on either side of the Fitzgerald National Park, but unseasonal rains resulted in some of the NP roads being ‘suspect’, while some buildings in the town of Hopetoun were damaged by 90+ kph gales. So it was on to Esperance – another coastal town with great views from a lookout on a granite outcrop. The highlight here was a day trip to the Le Grande National Park – great white sandy beaches and cliff lookouts with names like Hellfire Bay, Thistle Cove and Lucky Bay named by Matthew Flinders, as well as Le Grand Beach and Frenchmans Peak – which reflect the early French expeditions along the southern coastline. There are literally hundreds of islands along the coastline in the Esperance region.

We now left the coast, as we headed north through Norseman on to the Town of Kalgoorlie - Boulder, where we were some 400 km from the coast. Once again we were back in mining country. The traditional gold mining (the first gold rush was in 1893) is still the main ‘event’, but it is now complemented by nickel mining. The main gold mine is called the ‘Super Pit’, an amalgamation of hundreds of small mining leases. By 2017, this will be a hole some 4 km by 1.5 km and 600 m deep. Some 245,000 tones of material are excavated every day to produce two x 20 kg gold bars. In the side of the Super Pit you can see the holes of the old mining shafts that are now exposed. We went on the ‘Super Pit Tour’ and visited the ‘Mining Hall of Fame’.

While we were in the area, we just had to visit Coolgardie (some 40 km to the SW). Unfortunately this town did not prosper after the initial gold rush, and it is now virtually a ‘Ghost Town’. The town still has a number of fantastic historic builds, but many are falling into ‘disrepair’, as there is no income for their significant maintenance and repair costs.

We then left Kalgoorlie, going back south to Norseman and then we turned east to head across the Nullarbor. We over-nighted at Balladonia, some 200 km east of Norseman. The following day we got our first sight of the ‘Nullarbor Plain’ some 25 km east of Balladonia.

The area was not exactly ‘treeless’ and a ‘plain’, but it was certainly approaching that. However the 500 km trip to Eucla was still interesting, with the major feature being the Roe Plain after Madura, with the Hampton Tableland along the northern side of the road. Eucla (just 12 km west of the WA/ SA Border) was our last overnight in WA. Apart from being a fuel and overnight stop, there are the ruins of an old Telegraph Station near Eucla. The ever encroaching sands have filled the buildings with sand, up to what would have been their ceiling height. We spent some three months in WA.

### Eucla to Coonabarabran – November 2008

The section of the Nullarbor Plain in SA soon proved to be significantly different to the WA section. While it was relatively green in WA (due to recent un-seasonal rain), the SA section soon turned a dark shade of brown. Then for a 50 km stretch east from the Nullarbor Roadhouse, it really became a ‘treeless’ plain – flat and barren with just a few low salt bushes.

Once we were in SA, there were a number of access points to the Great Australian Bight, where there are great views of the Bunda Cliffs - these extend for nearly 200 km and they are almost a sheer 50 m to 80 m drop to the ocean. The best and most spectacular views are from the Head of Bight lookout, which is about 25 km from the Nullarbor Roadhouse. Then on to Ceduna, which is the first significant town in SA, some 500 km from the WA/ SA border. Ceduna is known for its oysters and one of the first places you see, as you come to the town is the Oyster Bar, a co-op style outlet for the local produce. After a long stretch of cool weather, we struck a 2 day ‘heat wave’ in Ceduna, where the hot northerly and gusty winds sent the temperature to over 40 deg for two consecutive days – followed by more cool weather !

After Ceduna we dropped in to Smokey Bay and then stayed a few nights in Streaky Bay – both of these bays are also oyster producing areas. Beautiful clear water, with great surrounding views. From Streaky Bay we made a day trip along the coastal tracks down to Point Labatt, which is Australia’s only mainland Sea Lion Colony. Great scenery, as well as watching the sea lions at play and at rest, from an elevated lookout. On the way back we detoured via a feature known as Murphy’s Haystacks – large granite boulders on a hill top, which from a distance look like old haystacks.

On our way down the coastline we stopped in at Port Kenny, Venus Bay and Elliston, before we came to Coffin Bay, where we stayed for a few more days. Another fantastic bay and more oyster farms. We did a day trip into the Coffin Bay National Park, where the highlights were the Point Avoid Cliffs and the Golden Island Lookout.

Then on to Port Lincoln, the most southerly point on the Eyre Peninsula. There are a number of good lookouts over the town and Spencer Gulf. The locals told us that Port Lincoln has the largest number of millionaires in SA – they have made their money from the fishing industry. Again another day trip into the Port Lincoln National Park – a great drive with views west to Port Lincoln and north-easterly into Spencer Gulf. The highlight was climbing Stamford Hill (reasonably challenging) – Matthew Flinders climbed this hill in 1802 to get his bearings, after rounding the southern tip of what is now Eyre Peninsula – in his ship the *Investigator*.

*To be concluded ...*

**Experience is what you get when you don’t read the instructions first. - DD**

## Gallivanting Gilbo

*Continuing the Peter Gilbey odyssey - Ed.*

After a couple of comparatively quiet days at Borrooloola where I managed to do some fishing without being eaten by the local crocs, I headed off to Darwin to catch up with Lesley and her sisters who were flying in to meet up with one of our nephews who is head stockman on one of the VRD outstations. On the way from Borrooloola to Daly Waters the first sign of my folly in crossing those rock filled creeks on the way from Burketown became apparent.

The front mudguard was found to be rubbing at speeds greater than 90 km/hr which was hard to find because every time I stopped to find the source of the noise the mudguard (plastic of course) would spring back into place and so it took me a few stops before I finally worked out what had happened. Crossing one of the creeks I had managed to lose the plate which holds the front end together – and so I had to wire the mudguard in place until I could get to Darwin to get a new plate.

The night at Daly Waters was a real highlight with the local entertainment and barbeque steaks first rate. From there I headed to Mataranka – making sure to keep to the bitumen – where I found some most excellent hot springs at the head of the Roper – one of the Territory’s larger east coast rivers. I would recommend the stop at the springs to anyone wanting to break the journey up the Stuart Highway. From there it was plain sailing into Darwin where I made good the repairs, picked up Lesley and headed off for Kakadu.

On the way we stopped at Alligator River where I was informed the saltwater crocs were called alligators by the early settlers to distinguish between them and the pointy nosed freshwater species – not a bad idea when you think of it because, boy, did we find some “alligators” particularly when the tide went out. I had encouraged Lesley to wear her bright orange sun shirt and she was not impressed to be told by Harry the guide that tests had shown crocs really liked that colour.

She needn’t have worried though because the crocs seemed to know to make for the back of the boat where yours truly was sitting – they seem to have worked out the big boys are told to sit there so the boat can get up on the plane!

One of the special treats on the trip was to call into a remarkable pub about 40k upstream which has its own resident croc and a

recluse who loves to show you how mad he is by hand feeding it – one day he will probably end up being lunch.

After that we moved into Kakadu proper but on the way we also called into the failed rice growing area of Humpty Doo set up by none other by the entertainer Art Linklater in the 50s/60s. What encouraged Art to invest there I do not know but he seems to have been the first of many who have tried in vain to tap the resources of the North.

On entering Kakadu we made our way to Ubirr where some of the original Crocodile Dundee film was shot and that is a truly amazing place with the rock formations, aboriginal paintings, wetland swamps and animals there for all to enjoy. Unfortunately we did not have time to explore it fully but one day we might go back for a better look.

On the way out we stopped over at the Yellow waterholes camp and visitor centre and that too is pretty special. From there it was off to catch up with the sisters and nephew at Moolooloo station which is on the Buchanan Highway, along the route used by the renowned drover Nat Buchanan which is mentioned in Mary Durack’s book “Kings in Grass Castles” which I purchased once we got to Lake Argyle – but that’s another story.

Suffice to say on reading the book I came to recall many of the landmarks she mentions including Jasper Gorge which is on one of the headwaters of the mighty Victoria River.

I should also note the Buchanan Highway is that in name only – it is very rocky as it cuts through a fair deal of very old basalt country which makes up a fair bit of the eastern end of Moolooloo. So it was back to worrying about would the Ford hold up better than the last off road venture; and lucky for me – having Lesley now on board – it did.

On arriving at the Station we were greeted with the news there would be a short cattle drive next day and so the girls went off to support the drovers while I went fishing in the local creeks – unsuccessfully I might add – but boy did I see the rotten cane toad swimming about in the waterholes as if they owned the place.

Surprising thing was the toads can’t be doing as well as when they went through Mount Isa twenty years ago because the ones I saw – and dispatched – were all runts. It really is a shame though to see these rotten things making their way west and we were by that time only a couple hundred k’s from the WA border.

Well that’s all for this instalment – stay tuned for the trip up the “Highway” and our visit to the Ord.

*... obviously to be continued - Ed.*

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## The Gamble of Life

Older members may remember Bob Gamble who joined the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in 1953. After his Senior at Brisbane Grammar, he was offered a scholarship in Architecture but, out of concern for his family’s finances, became a cadet draftsman with IWSC. After seven years he graduated as a Civil Engineer from QIT. He worked at Tinaroo and supervised the workers township at Moogerah. He developed a passion for flood mitigation and water harvesting.

In 1961 he accepted a position as Assistant Engineer with Ipswich City Council, and remained with the Council for the next 31 years. Among other activities he redesigned the David Trumpy Bridge (the city’s main river crossing) on his dining room table. In 1974 he became Deputy City Engineer and was particularly proud of his efforts during the major floods (he returned home to shower and shave only twice during the entire crisis). In 1978 he became City Engineer and continued in that role until ill health forced his retirement in 1992. He died in November 2007.

His great contribution to Ipswich was recognised through the award of an OAM in 1992. His name appears on many city plaques and a park was named in his honour.



*Another Water Resources boy made good! - Ed.*

## Glimpses of Vietnam

*I am delighted to share this contribution from John Cantor with all our readers. Many thanks, John. - Ed.*

Having spent much of the last 14 years working and travelling in this beautiful country, I feel it time to record a few of my observations and opinions on its people, culture, politics and history. The travel brochures and TV programs rightly paint a fascinating picture for both potential tourists and armchair travellers so I'll focus on some of the other lesser-known aspects which it has been my good fortune to experience.

The National motto translates to "Independence – Freedom – Happiness", and it would be fair to say that the more than 80 million inhabitants strongly pursue these three ideals often to the surprise of the visitor who has difficulty seeing beyond the chaotic traffic, poverty and pollution. The people are noted for their strong love and respect for their traditions, family and ancestors combined with humility, an indomitable spirit and a fierce determination to succeed. A strong matriarchal system with historical roots survives today.

The language Quoc Ngu, was developed by a French linguist in the 16<sup>th</sup> century who retained the pronunciation but replaced the original Chinese characters with the Roman alphabet and six tonal signs. As a result a simple word like *ga* can have up to six different meanings ranging from chicken to railway station. *Cuu Long* (Chinese for nine dragons) is Vietnamese for the nine mouths of the mighty Mekong. There are three different accents; southern, central and northern which clearly identify the origin of the speaker. Many older people still also speak French while Russian is a common second language among educated middle-aged beneficiaries of the Russian-aid era.

The scenic beauty of Ha Long Bay, Sa Pa, Da Lat and Dak Lak; the architecture, art and music of Hanoi, Hue and Hoi An; the historic significance of Hanoi's Temple of Literature and One Pillar Pagoda; the remnants of the Champa civilisation between Da Nang and Ninh Thuan; the beautiful and unique women's dress the *ao dai*; the beaches of Nha Trang, Mui Ne and Phu Quoc Island; the *Tet* (lunar new year) holiday celebrations and the endless waterways and villages of the Red River and the Mekong Deltas are familiar to many thousands of tourists.

Lesser known are the sophisticated and spectacular engineering achievements of more than 100 major irrigation and flood control schemes, which I understand were further developed by the French colonial rulers to provide a second rice crop for export to their famine-prone colonies in Africa. These include:

- Locks connecting irrigation canals with rivers to allow water craft to deliver farm produce to the coastal ports
- Extensive mechanical barrages which can be raised from river beds to divert flow into canals while others can be lowered to allow floods to escape from rivers before flooding key downstream centres such as Hanoi
- Huge, sophisticated floodgates, which permit passage of barges, prevent ingress of floods and tidal salt water, allow inflow of fresh water for consumptive use and outflow of excess rainwater during the wet season
- Water management schedules for delivery of predetermined irrigation supplies by adjusting regulators on primary and secondary

canals. The French ensured strict compliance with these schedules by regular visits of a guillotine. With deterioration of the infrastructure these schedules are no longer understood or used, resulting in very poor system operation efficiencies.

The country has four levels of government; national, provincial, district and commune. Provincial authorities are very powerful and frequently pay only lip service to the plethora of laws, decrees, ordinances and directions that flow like a torrent from the Central Peoples' Committees and Ministries in Hanoi. Elections are held regularly but I believe the results are pre-determined. There are no competing political parties to provide debate on important issues or waste funds on mud-slinging and electioneering campaigns.

Vietnam has what can be described as a centrally planned market economy, which emerged from *διο moi* (the new beginning) following the failure of their economic system and mass starvation in the 1980s. Small businesses are prolific and very popular. All kinds of shops, restaurants, art galleries and karaoke bars flourish not only in the 60 or so provincial capitals but also in every district centre and even in individual communes. All businesses are registered, regulated and taxed. Every town and village has a number of markets with an amazing variety of fresh food and every conceivable consumer item. Competition is intense and bargaining is commonly enjoyed by both merchants and consumers.

Corruption is endemic. A 10% 'spotters fee' is common on all services while the World Bank reports that contracts for construction of infrastructure routinely involve enormous leakage, sometimes as much as 30% of the cost. An interesting aspect of this process is that the funds are then spread widely among the huge army of bureaucrats whose base salary is quite inadequate to support their lifestyle and whose discipline and numbers are determined by 'labor norms'. Attendance fees are paid to participants at all meetings, training events, etc. This process is seen as inappropriate only when a recipient loses support of 'the party'.

75% of the population live in rural areas and lead a simple but apparently happy lifestyle. Rural land ownership is widespread but not well documented. Individual holdings are very small and fragmented to provide equity of the better soil types particularly in the densely populated lowlands such as the Red River Delta. While the two-child policy is common in the cities, large families with a dozen or more children are still common in rural areas. The leaders of the commune meet and speak with their people regularly to deliver political ideology and directions on their agricultural activities and social responsibilities. It is reported that farmers can be liable for as many as 30 different taxes and refusal to pay is not uncommon by individuals. Stories of occasional mass refusal to pay are whispered very discreetly as the authorities are terrified of the consequences of any escalating civil disobedience.

... to be continued.

### Answers to Terry's Trivia on page 11

1. (b) 150; 2. (c) turn left; 3. (a) 1973; 4. (c) Murray Rose; 5. (b) 1984; 6. (a) Nellie Melba; 7. (c) 103; 8. (b) Eileen; 9. (c) 300 million; 10. (c) nosebleed.

**Life is like a sandwich – the more you add to it, the better it becomes. - DD**

## DERM Dossier

Eighteen employees of the Department of Environment and Resource Management were presented with Australia Day Achievement Medallions this year in recognition of the noteworthy contributions they have made to the work of the department.

Awards were presented to staff working on the water agenda as follows: **Scott Buchanan** – in recognition of his leadership of the Wild Rivers program; **Ed Donohue** – for leadership in delivering water resource, planning, monitoring and water management; **Lyll Hinrichsen** – for team leadership in developing water planning instruments in North Queensland; **Geoff Pocock** – for his contribution to water monitoring programs; and **Waitong Wong** – for his commitment and contribution to water management and water security.

The Regional Water Supplies Group is continuing to work on Regional Water Supply Strategies for areas of the state other than south-east. It is anticipated that in the near future strategies will be released for Far North Queensland, Wide Bay, North West and North Queensland. Mackay-Whitsunday will follow.

The big news is that RWS has now been given responsibility

for the implementation of the program of works for Regional Water Infrastructure by the COG – this includes Connors and Nathan Dams – with SunWater continuing as the proponent. This appears to be a return to previous arrangements.

One ongoing problem that is still being addressed is how to manage the rising groundwater levels on the left bank of the Burdekin.

Recently DERM officers travelled to Richmond to discuss with local interests proposals for the establishment of local irrigation projects. There is interest in private investment in the area with cotton/grain and cattle fattening in the Flinders River area and possible tropical fruit, asian vegetable, peanut and banana production in the Gilbert. There is also interest in sandalwood which is endemic to the area.

In the last issue of the Newsletter I promised an article from Peter Allan dealing with Dam Safety. The article will not be appearing in this edition. I have promised Peter a rain check and I'm sure you will forgive under the circumstances. Peter has recently had a long-awaited kidney transplant and is in the process of recuperation. We wish Peter all the best for a future with much improved health.

## South-East Infrastructure

Following Minister Garrett's rejection of the proposed Traveston Dam proposal, what has happened to Queensland Water Infrastructure?

QWI still has the responsibility for Wyaralong Dam on Teviot Brook which will provide an additional 21,000 ML/a into the water grid when operated in conjunction with Cedar Grove Weir. Work is in progress by a consortium led by McMahan Contractors. The new Beaudesert-Boonah Road (parts of the old one will be inundated) is well advanced as are the access roads to the dam site and recreation areas. (It is possible that WRRRA will organise a site visit this year if there is sufficient interest from members.)

QWI had acquired around 85% of the land required for Traveston Dam and this is no longer required. Under the voluntary acquisition arrangements, the previous owners were to be offered the first rights to repurchase. QWI has sought expressions of interest in repurchasing with a closing date for applications of the end of May.

P.S. Graham Young, who was seconded to QWI and worked in the land acquisition activity, has now returned to DERM (if indeed one can return to an organisation that didn't exist when one left!).

## SunWater Snippets

Members will no doubt have heard from the media of the potential massive coal projects in the Galilee Basin. These will, of course require significant water supplies. SunWater continues to evaluate options including the long-mooted Connors River dam and associated pipelines. The Burdekin is another possible source.

The Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project, currently under investigation, is part of the government's Statewide Water Policy and is linked to meeting future demand for water in the Rockhampton, Gladstone and Capricorn Coast areas.

Other projects on the SunWater books include a new pipeline to Cloncurry to secure town water supply, the Water for Bowen project, the Coal Seam Gas/Water project, Nathan Dam and pipelines project and as a sub-alliance partner in the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme (undertaking the design and documentation for the pipeline and pump stations associated with the eastern pipeline component).

People of western Queensland, particularly in the area around Roma, St George, Charleville and Cunnamulla have suffered/benefited from recent record rainfall/runoff events. Overall, this has resulted in the greatest quantity of water ever stored in SunWater dams. Although many dams are essentially full, some remain stubbornly at low levels. Wuruma Dam is only 8% full, Leslie 10%, Coolmunda 11%, Callide 29% and Cania 36%.

Information on storage levels is available on the SunWater website.

### Change

A change, they say, is as good as a holiday. Jude Munro who, for ten years, has been Chief Executive of Brisbane City Council, has resigned to take up a new career as non-executive chairman of Queensland Urban Utilities. This may not be a holiday.

This body was set up under the new arrangements for water supply in south-east Queensland to supply water to Brisbane, Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley. From June this year it will be owned by the councils of Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset.

*Did I hear correctly? I thought an ABC reporter recently commented that the Federal Government was becoming increasingly frustrated at the difficulties in getting legislation through the Senate and speculated that this could lead to a double-disillusion.*

**No matter how much you press the envelope, it remains stationary.**

# HEALTH *and beauty*

More and more research is showing that the secret to a long, healthy life is a happy marriage. Yet, in case you hadn't noticed, men and women are different – not just physically, but psychologically. Further research has tried to help us understand these fundamental differences, which should lead to even greater happiness. For the benefit of readers, I have put together some of the profound revelations of Allan and Barbara Pease in their book "Why Men Lie and Women Cry." And I've only scratched the surface. - Ed.

Being male today has become a tough call. Since the 1960s, when feminists became more vocal and successful, women's suicide rate has decreased by 4% but men's has risen 16%. Yet the focus is still on how hard a woman's lot is in life.

Over past generations, the roles were clearly defined. Man was head of the house. He was the protector and provider. His wife was mother, housekeeper, social secretary and carer. He knew his responsibilities and she knew hers. Things began to change, but evolution continues to get in the way.

Women evolved as child-bearers and nest-defenders and, as a result, female brains became hardwired to nurture, nourish, love and care for people in their lives. Men evolved with a completely different job description – they were hunters, chasers, protectors, providers and problem solvers. Women regularly make the mistake of assuming that just because a man loves her, he must also understand her. But he usually doesn't. We call each other the 'opposite' sex for a good reason – we are opposite.

Take, for example, the different attitudes to shopping. Women shop the same way as their ancient ancestors would gather food: heading off for a day with a group of other women to a place where someone remembered some tasty things were growing. There did not have to be a specific goal. If nothing was available or ready for picking and they returned home with little to show for their efforts, they still considered it a successful day. But for men, this is an inconceivable concept. To return home empty-handed would class him as a failure. That is why when a man is asked to buy milk, eggs and bread on his way home from work, he may come home with sardines and marshmallows – as long as he has made a quick kill!

Research shows that not only do men dislike food and clothes shopping, it's detrimental to their health because of the stress it causes them. To many women it seems as if men are hardwired to buy ugly clothes for themselves. For at least a hundred thousand years, women dressed to attract while men dressed to frighten off enemies – they painted their faces and bodies, wore dead buffaloes on their heads, put bones through their noses and attached rocks to their penises.

## Exercise those Brain Cells

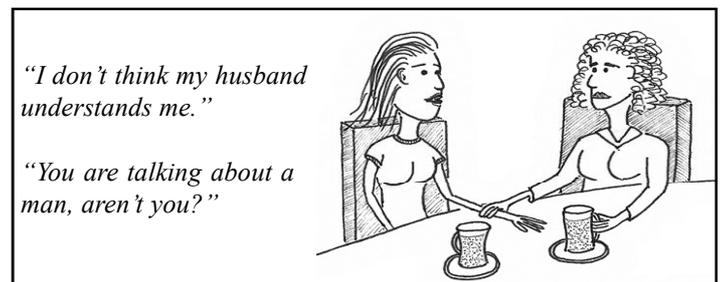
Barry, Garry and Harry have just finished a game that was played in five rounds. They have only bet in dollar coins.

In each round the loser has doubled the stake of the other two. Now, at the end, Barry has \$8, Garry has \$9 and Harry has \$10.

How many dollars did each have at the beginning of the game?

**Why does it take 4 million male sperm to find and fertilise an egg? None of them will ask for directions.**

And then there's the different approach to articulation. A woman's brain is organised for communication through talking and the main purpose of the talk is to talk. For the most part, she is not looking for answers and solutions are not required. By the end of the day she usually wants to talk about the events that occurred and share her feelings, but he thinks she is giving him her problems to fix and starts to offer solutions. She becomes upset because he won't listen to her talking and he becomes angry because she won't accept his solutions. "Why don't you just keep quiet and listen?" she bristles. "If you don't want my opinion, don't ask for it!" he responds. He thinks he is being loving and caring by solving her problems, but she thinks he is trivialising her feelings by not listening.



Some women claim that the story of the three wise men illustrates all the male traits that frustrate them. First, the Magi assumed that the world revolved around them – the star had been put there expressly for them to follow. They arrived at the stable more than two months after Jesus was born – probably because they wouldn't ask directions. And what possible use would a newborn baby and his exhausted mother have for gold, frankincense (a resin used for fumigation) and myrrh (a smelly oil used for embalming the dead)? If the story had starred three wise women, they would have asked directions, arrived on time to help deliver the baby and brought practical gifts like nappies, bottles and toys. Then they would have put the animals outside, cleaned the stables, made a casserole, stayed in touch and there would have been peace on earth for ever more!

**from I do, I will, I hope**

... I hope husbands and wives will continue to debate and combat over everything debatable and combatable,  
Because I believe a little incompatibility is the spice of life, particularly if he has income and she is patable.

- Ogden Nash



## Solution to last edition's puzzle

Alan used Bill's ball and Colin's bat.

Bill used Colin's ball and Doug's bat.

Also, Colin used Doug's ball and Alan's bat and Doug used Alan's ball and Bill's bat.

**Why did the chicken cross the Mobius strip? To get to the same side.**

## How Come – ?

The late Harry Stark told the tale of the private school which decided to reduce its administrative costs and wrote to the parents of its students that fees would no longer be collected each term but would in future be levied *per anum*. One father wrote back that he was used to paying through the nose and would try to get used to the new system.

But what was the origin of the expression *paying through the nose*? One suggestion is that it arose through the gruesome practice of some ancient governments' enforcement of levies and taxes with defaulting citizens having their noses slit or even cut off. A ninth century tax imposed on the Irish by their Danish overlords was known as the 'nose tax'.

In seventeenth century England, the slang for money was *rhino*, the Greek for nose. This probably arose from the fact that powdered rhinoceros horn (from the animal's 'nose') was considered a powerful aphrodisiac and was sold for outrageous prices – a classic example of *paying through the nose*.

### Dishwasher cycle

Now we've finished washing up  
We've cups for morning tea.  
Now there's much more washing-up –  
Goodness, gracious me!

## Terry's Trivia

Some more trivia from Terry. The answers are on page 8. - Ed.

1. To what angle can a Hippopotamus open its mouth? (a) 90 deg; (b) 150 deg; (c) 180 deg.
2. When bats fly out of a cave do they: (a) fly straight ahead; (b) always turn right; (c) always turn left.
3. The Sydney Opera House was opened on: (a) 20 Oct 1973; (b) 20 Oct 1978; (c) 20 Oct 1983.
4. Which Australian male swimmer has won the most Olympic gold medals?: (a) Ian Thorpe; (b) Keiren Perkins; (c) Murray Rose.
5. In what year was Advance Australia Fair proclaimed as the national anthem by the Governor-General?: (a) 1977; (b) 1984; (c) 1988.
6. Who is on the front of the current issue \$100 note?: (a) Dame Nellie Melba; (b) Patrick White; (c) Albert Namatjira; (d) Ned Kelly.
7. How many albums did Slim Dusty record: (a) 53; (b) 83; (c) 103.
8. How many ships were there in the First Fleet: (a) Six; (b) Eleven; (c) Eighteen.
9. Approximately how many rabbits are there in Australia today? (a) 3 million, (b) 30 million; (c) 300 million
10. Attila the Hun, 453 AD, died from: (a) Poisoning; (b) a sharpshooter's arrow; (c) bleeding to death from a nosebleed (on his wedding night).

### A Sign of the Times

On a T-Shirt:

**I'm an Organ Donor**  
see inside for details

## Travellers Tales

### You know what sailors are

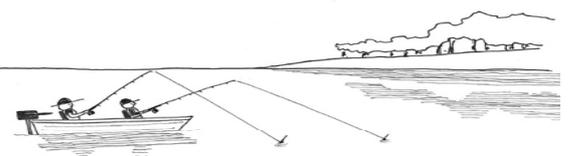
Lady Nancy Astor (1879-1964) was the first woman to sit in the British Parliament. When she was running for the seat based on Plymouth she made a house-to-house door knock appeal for votes in the company of a naval officer. Knocking at one door, she asked the little girl who answered it if her mother was at home. "No," the child replied, "but she said if a lady comes with a sailor they're to use the room upstairs and leave ten bob."

### Be prepared

In Scotland, Robert Burns is famous as the nation's greatest poet and a man with 'an eye for the lassies'. The story goes that one day as he was out strolling, he observed a milkmaid carrying two pails on the traditional yoke, approaching. As he came up to her, he wished her "Good morning." She responded, "Good morning, sir." Once past, he turned back and asked, "Did you recognise me?" "No sir." "I'm Robert Burns." "Och wiel," she sighed, "I guess I'd better be putting down my pails."

### Elementary

Sherlock Holmes is the most famous fictional detective of all time (although in none of his recorded adventures did he actually say, "Elementary my dear Watson"). His creator, Arthur Conan Doyle, devised the process of deductive reasoning used by his detective, based on an eminent Edinburgh surgeon, Joseph Bell, who often deduced the life and habits of a stranger just by observing him. Once when a French taxi driver had driven Doyle to his hotel and collected the fare, he ventured "Merci, Monsieur Conan Doyle." "How do you know my name?" "Elementary, my dear sir. I had seen in the papers that you were coming to Paris from the south of France; your general appearance told me you were English; your hair has clearly been cut recently by a barber from the south." "This is remarkable!" exclaimed Doyle. "And you had no other evidence to go on?" "Only the fact that your name is on your luggage."



*"If only you'd told me earlier that if your wife asks your honest opinion of something she bought, always say you love it!"*

**Some people bring joy wherever they go. Some people bring joy whenever they go.**

## Book Club

*Paths of Glory* by Jeffrey Archer is a semi-historical novel telling the story of George Mallory's 1924 British mountaineering expedition to conquer Mt Everest. Much of the climbing detail is told in the many letters Mallory sent to his wife, Ruth, to whom he was devoted.

Archer tells the story of Mallory from infancy, to experiences in the trenches of WWI and vividly described trips up mountains in France and Tibet.

Mallory befriended a brash but capable Australian, George Finch, an advocate of modern climbing methods including the use of oxygen at high altitudes, who was denied the right to join the expedition to Mt Everest because his educational and social qualifications were not considered up to par for an English gentleman amateur. Archer might be right; he knows a thing or two about social exclusion.

On their second attempt, Mallory and Sandy Irvine failed to return. Whether they reached the summit or perished before they did has been a mystery ever since. The discovery of Mallory's body in 1999 did little to clear up the enigma. He was found at 27,000 feet, with a broken rope still tied round his waist. Some said this meant the two climbers had been roped together, so they must have been climbing up, rather than down. Others pointed out that Mallory had taken off his goggles – they were found in his pocket – so the accident must have occurred in the darkness on the way down. Sadly, there was no sign of the camera Mallory had been carrying, nor of the photograph of his wife he had promised to leave on the summit.

Some New Zealanders claim the idea Mallory might have made the top is an insult to Sir Edmund Hillary. So who really did reach the summit of Everest first? Mallory's family seem confident in their conviction. Mallory's grandson is/was a senior water engineer in Victoria, Australia. On May 14, 1995, George Leigh Mallory II placed a laminated photograph of his grandparents, George and Ruth, on the summit of Everest. In his own words, he was *completing a little outstanding family business.*

**Warren Lane**

## Credits

*My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to Graham Bauer who printed this; to the contributors; to Ajanthi Ranasinghe and Rebecca Wall who made it available to departmental staff; and to Harvey Yates for his cartoons.*

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*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is the first of the Millennium Trilogy by Swedish novelist Stieg Larsen. The head of a huge family corporation is obsessed by the mysterious disappearance of his niece years ago and engages Mikael Blomkvist to investigate. But Mikael soon finds that there are people who will go to terrifying lengths to guard their secret.

When Blomkvist's path crosses that of Lisbeth Salander, a security specialist, he is fascinated by this strange, enigmatic, young woman. Classified as delinquent by those meant to be caring for her, she is clearly damaged by a past she keeps strictly secret from everyone. She appears to care for no-one and does not tolerate the normal rules of society. But she has extraordinary skills in several areas, and it is as a computer hacker of some genius that she enters the world of Blomkvist and his investigations. Together they face increasingly dangerous situations from which there appears little likelihood of escape.

This unusual thriller is far better and more intelligent than most in its genre. The process of detection is a satisfying intellectual exercise interspersed with impassioned social commentary. The characters are intriguing and complex. You can't guess how they will behave or react and especially in Lisbeth's case you are constantly surprised and often horrified. But you find yourself caring about her very much indeed. The plot holds us in thrall to the very end.

Unfortunately, Larsen died soon after delivering his three million-selling manuscripts to his publishers.

**Ruth Scott** (*an English friend*)

We were recently in Melbourne at the same time as Alexander McCall Smith (author of the No 1 Ladies Detective Agency series) and were privileged to attend a 'conversation' with him and a packed house in the Capitol Theatre (designed by Walter Burley Griffin). He is an excellent and gentle raconteur as could be expected from the style of his many enjoyable series. We particularly loved his *La's Orchestra Saves the World*.

**Ian Pullar**

