



WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 65

July 2011

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

DERMAL Treatment

Members are probably aware that following the devastating natural disasters (i.e. widespread flooding and Tropical Cyclone Yasi) across Queensland during late 2010 and early 2011, a major change to Cabinet portfolios occurred on February 21, 2011 to reflect the government's key priority of rebuilding the state. The Premier also became responsible as the Minister for Reconstruction and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority was established to coordinate the massive reconstruction efforts. The Hon Kate Jones MP became responsible for DERM adding the natural resources portfolio (except for water utilities) to her environment portfolio (existing since March 2009). The Hon Stephen Robertson MP retained the water utilities portfolio (including the Queensland Water Commission and SunWater) as the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities.

Following the resignation of the Hon Kate Jones MP from State Cabinet, the Premier on June 20, 2011 announced the appointment of the Hon Vicky Darling MP as the new Environment Minister and the Hon Rachel Nolan MP as the new Minister for Natural Resources. Minister Darling has responsibility for the environment side of DERM's operations, including parks, nature conservation, wild rivers, water quality, climate change, environmental planning and regulation. The Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and The Arts, the Hon Rachel Nolan MP, takes on responsibility for DERM's natural resource management policy, planning and operations including land, water, vegetation and indigenous services. Minister Robertson continues being responsible for the department's interaction with Queensland's water utilities and associated matters.

These changes do not alter DERM's name or the scope of its environment and resource management responsibilities and operations. The department's water related functions also remain the same. Following the recent appointment (effective June 6, 2011) of the former DERM Director-General John Bradley as the new Director-General for DPC (Department of Premier and Cabinet), Terry Wall is currently the Acting Director-General of DERM.

- article contributed by Greg Claydon and Pushpa Onta of DERM

From the Editor's Chair

"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan, according to Banjo Paterson more than a few years ago. It is hard not to agree as the cost of living soars, hitting hard on the budgets of self-funded retirees. The Prime Minister, in introducing the Carbon Tax, admits that costs will go up but her government will compensate the battlers by reducing income tax (superannuants don't pay this tax) and increasing pensions (self-funded oldies don't draw a pension). And now, we're told, interest rates on our investments are likely to be **reduced!**

But we mustn't complain or display the self-interest exhibited conspicuously by others. We could live in another country like most of the others in the world.

Even editors shouldn't complain about the lack of contributions they receive for their Newsletter.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

WRRRA Events

The committee has decided on the following program for the coming year:

- Luncheon and a selection of plays at Ipswich Little Theatre on 4 September (see enclosed flyer)
- A City Cat cruise and lunch at Kapsali on Southbank on 13 October (see flyer)
- Christmas luncheon at COTAH on 17 November
- Social lunch at the Public Service Club on 23 February 2012
- AGM on 26 April 2012

Please note that there will be no Bowls Day this year because of the indisposition of Norm White, our valued host in previous years.

Out and About

The Annual General Meeting was duly held at the Public Services Club on 28 April. There were no surprises at the elections (office bearers are shown as usual on the back page.) For the first time, however, the meeting was attended by both co-patrons – John Bradley of DERM and Peter Boettcher of SunWater. Their addresses can be found in this newsletter.

As I was overseas at the time, Lee Rogers provided more information, gleaned at the AGM, on some travel plans.

Geoff and Helen Eades are headed to Canada – to the Rocky Mountains and an *Inside Passage* cruise to Alaska.

Lee and Denise Rogers are spending June in Germany, Finland, St Petersburg and in the Baltic States after a few days in Northern Ireland to attend a wedding.

New member, Errol Beitz is travelling to Colorado where one of his sons works.

John Cantor is exploring options for more overseas consultancy work. His fellow consultant, Doug Flanders, who has just completed a seven year assignment improving the irrigation system on one of the Mekong River delta islands is also exploring options.

Michael and Hjordis Marley have since attended the ICOLD meeting in Switzerland and caught up with their three daughters in London.

Unfortunately only nineteen members or spouses were able to attend the mid-year lunch at COTAH on 9 June. Among the attendees were new recruits Paul Mills and Russ Robson whom we welcome. Apart from Terry Loos's trivia competition, the highlight of the day was the address by Richard Priman, representing the department, which is summarised on page 5.

John Newell retired in July after more than 39 years with SunWater and its predecessors. He commenced work as a cadet draftsman in 1972 in Rockhampton where Norm White was his boss. A function to mark the next stage of his career was attended by many SunWater workmates as well as retirees Hein, Eric and Brian. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Many members will know Ted Gardner, a former DPI scientist who did some wonderful work in relation to urban water use and management. Ted retired recently after an award winning career. Among those who attended his farewell was Frank van Schagen.

For some of us, retirement is a chance to pursue cultural activities. I am continuing my theatrical endeavours and have been persuaded to invite members to attend my next production. A flyer is enclosed with this newsletter for luncheon and a show at the Incinerator Theatre in Ipswich. As places are strictly limited, a rapid response is essential.

And don't forget that the River City Clippers (of which John Connolly and Col Cooney are members) are hosting the 2011 Pan Pacific Barbershop Convention in Brisbane from 28 September to 2 October. This convention brings together choruses from all over the Pan Pacific with singers from New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, USA and Australia performing and competing.

Visit www.panpac2011.org.au for details.

Apology: In the last edition, I neglected to point out that Tom Fenwick turned 70 in January and Col Cooney reached the same venerable age in February.

Col Hazel also achieved that milestone in July.

CEO's Address

The following is a summary of John Bradley's address to the AGM, provided by Lee Rogers. As Richard Priman covered some common ground, it has been abridged. - Ed.

John started by acknowledging the knowledge and skills of officers, now retired, who were largely responsible for the development of Queensland's water resources. These skills are so valued that some people keep getting drawn back into the workforce!

There are four or five key areas in water management that are occupying DERM's efforts at the moment. Firstly, the Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the January floods which is advised by several barristers and technical experts. DERM provided more than a million documents to the inquiry. It will be a big challenge for the COI to digest all this information and to publish an interim report by August 2011. It is expected that matters such as the effectiveness of early warning systems will be extended to other river systems and dams.

Without pre-judging the inquiry, one has to feel for the key officers involved in the management of the Wivenhoe-Somerset dams. First they had the stress of the management of the flood event, and now cross-examination in a stressful court situation.

The organisational structures in this area are not straightforward. There are at least three organisations involved and, for instance, some officers are DERM employers contracted to SunWater who is contracted to SEQ Water. The Government and the Department have however, placed no limitations on what evidence its officers give to the inquiry. They are to cooperate fully.

Secondly there is the environmental recovery component of the post-flood Reconstruction Authority. John chairs the Environment Sub-committee – which comprises several State and Local Government Agencies and community groups.

Prior to the floods, DERM's efforts in water management were largely consumed by the juggernaut of the CSG industry and the management of associated water. Protection of the resources of the GAB – both quantity (through the risk of water loss between aquifers) and quality (through the risk of contamination of aquifers); the protection of landholder groundwater access rights; and the management of the salinity of the associated water, are all issues that have placed huge demands on the Department. Fortunately the earlier decision by the Government to merge the previous environmental protection agency with the previous natural resource management agency is now paying dividends.

Another key area of activity for DERM is in the development of the second generation of Water Resource Plans. For the first time quantity management and quality management are coming together in a statutory sense. At the same time DERM is endeavouring to make the WRP process more efficient, without any loss of rigour.

Lastly, DERM is also working actively in the area of urban water reform. John was CEO of the QWC during the stressful times of drought management in SEQ and the development of the SEQ Regional Water Supply Strategy. This involved huge investment in infrastructure to enhance the level of service of the SEQ water supply. It also involved immense technical expertise because many of the solutions were highly innovative. The people of SEQ have proved to be efficient water users when motivated but they are having difficulty accepting that the enhancement of water supply security costs money. A drought is temporary but the costs of insuring against it are more permanent.

Vale Geoffrey James Ward

Geoffrey James Ward was born in Sydney on 23rd August 1921 to Jim and Flo, the eldest of three children. Geoff grew up in a happy family that did not have much and they made their own fun playing cricket in the back yard which led to his taking up scoring for the Banksia Cricket Club. Geoff was a gifted child who excelled at school, eventually winning a scholarship to Sydney Boys High School.

These were the Depression years and the family finances were severely stretched resulting in Geoff taking a position with Herbert Small Photographics after completing three years of high school. This engendered a lifelong interest in photography. He regularly turned his bedroom into a darkroom to develop his own prints and his two sisters were forbidden to enter!!

He then accepted a position with Malleable Castings and commenced a course at St. George Technical College studying metallurgy. Geoff topped his final year receiving his choice of prize, which was the Complete Works of Henry Lawson.

World War II commenced and Geoff enlisted with the RAAF and was selected to do a course in radar, which at this stage was in its infancy. He was then sent to Pt. Cook to do an officers training course.

His first posting was to Caloundra as a supernumerary where he first met Joan Carmichael who was to become his wife of 64 years. Joan was stationed at Caloundra in the WAAF as a wireless telegraphist. After six months Geoff was sent to Darwin, then to Bathurst and Melville Island and the relationship continued by correspondence for some years until they were married in Kingaroy in 1946.

They returned to Caloundra for their honeymoon then moved to Sydney where they remained for eight years. Geoff studied Civil Engineering at Sydney University on a RAAF grant and was employed by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission initially in charge of the civil engineering laboratory and then transferred to Glenbawn Dam. After a spell as resident engineer in charge of Burrendong Dam near Wellington, he returned to Head Office, commuting to Sydney from Gosford.

Geoff and Joan had four children: Ken, Irene (who died in infancy), Pam and Rosemary.

Geoff moved to Queensland in 1963 as 2 IC to Alan Taylor on Leslie Dam before taking over as Project Engineer. He then transferred to Wuruma Dam near Eidsvold. At the completion ceremony, an unexpected blackout occurred caused by a power pole being burnt down by a runaway property fire as dignitaries were due to arrive to observe the last concrete pour. He managed to keep the visitors entertained with the help of free beer until an emergency power supply was connected to the concrete batch plant and the concrete placement occurred as planned.

The next project was Maroon Dam near Boonah which presented major challenges with unstable coal seams found in the foundation.

His last country posting was to the Bundaberg Irrigation Area as Project Engineer. This large scheme included the construction of Monduran (later Fred Haigh) Dam, the Gooburrum and Burnett Barrages and large channel and pipeline systems. He returned to Head Office in Brisbane, eventually becoming the Deputy Chief Construction Engineer before retiring in 1981.

His children shared the life of many on construction sites. Geoff's boat building skills meant fishing and boating were normal weekend activities. He made three boats, one, a canoe that is still being used by his great grandchildren. Few children other than Geoff's could boast a father who could deliver orange juice and toast and later tea and toast as an early morning wake up call to get them to the school bus after they had planted their feet in immaculately polished shoes. For some reason he never saw the reason to impart to them the knowledge of shoe polishing skill – he insisted on doing this himself. Being model children, none of them can ever recall being chastised.

He loved music, Australian poetry, natural history and most of all Australian humour. The irreverent Lennie Lower was his favourite author. He was multi-talented and apart from his skills as a husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather he was a speleologist, artist, photographer, chef, upholsterer, gardener, house designer, painter, boat builder, lawn bowler, carpenter and later in life took up computer classes.

Throughout an 89 year lifespan Geoff retained the positive approach which made him so successful in any role that he undertook, whether that be as a family member, engineer, school parent or member of any organisation. He was an active member in his parish. He was a great support to his family until his last illness overtook him.

Ten years before he died, as a part of an aged care course, Geoff jokingly referred to his position as "moribund" and claimed that it had taken a lot of doctors and pills to get him to his current decrepit state.

A highly respected engineer and man, Geoff will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him.

- from the eulogy delivered by his son Ken, who is also a Water Resources Retiree

SunWater Snapshot

As noted on page 2, SunWater CEO Peter Boettcher was also our guest at the AGM. His address has again been summarised by Lee Rogers. - Ed.

Peter gave a comprehensive overview of SunWater's operations and of its development proposals.

The SunWater business is thriving with earnings steadily rising over recent years and with a large investment program looming. This growth has been almost entirely driven by the mining and industrial sector, particularly by the coal mining sector. Revenue from industry and mining now exceeds \$100 million/annum with irrigation revenues having declined slightly to \$40 million/annum.

The 2011 wet season was one of plusses and minuses. On the positive side, every SunWater storage filled, Callide Stage 2 and Cania Dams for the first time with Wuruma and Leslie Dam Stage 2 filling after years of very low storage levels. The automatic spillway gates at Callide Dam had worked perfectly.

On the negative side, there had been extensive damage of channels and levees in irrigation areas, 10 of SunWater's 15 fishways were inoperable owing to siltation or equipment damage. Spillways and weir protection works suffered erosion and at Paradise Dam the valve house was flooded. The repair bill was likely to exceed \$10 million.

On the development side, the proposed Connors River Dam and pipeline to Moranbah is moving towards a March 2012 commencement. Approvals were nearly in place and foundation customers likely to be confirmed above the investment threshold level. When completed in March 2014, the dam will be able to supply 49,000 ML/annum to Moranbah with potentially 25,000 ML of the available supply being delivered more than 200 kilometres further on to Galilee Basin coal mines near Alpha.

The Nathan Dam impact assessment study was nearing completion and a cultural heritage management plan was now agreed with traditional owners. Timing for development is linked to the possible availability of coal seam gas water but could be a 2015 commencement with a 2018 completion.

Peter also referred to a number of pipeline proposals including an augmentation of the recently completed Burdekin to Moranbah pipeline. Again each of the proposals was to meet coal mining demands.

Peter also outlined proposals to use the water associated with coal seam gas production. The first project will be take water from the Kenya gas field to Chinchilla Weir to increase the supply available for irrigation with another project proposal being to deliver water to the proposed Wandoan coal mine and potentially on to the Nathan project area.

Answers to Terry's Trivia (on page 9)

1. (iv) Azerbaijan 2. (iii) Buckley 3. (ii) Northern Union 4. (iii) Damascus 5. As time goes by (You must remember this) 6. Nothing rhymes with them. 7. (iv) Eileen 8. Bradman, Sobers, Hobbs, Richards, Warne (Warne noted that the other four were knights. "Where's my knighthood?") 9. (i) Georgia 10. (iii) The Duke of Edinburgh 11. (iii) Atlantis 12. Valencia

If a man opens a car door for a woman, either it is a new woman or a new car.



Callide Dam - FULL!



Cania Dam - FULL!



Wuruma Dam - FULL!



Neville Hewitt Weir - severely damaged

DERM Doings

As noted on page 2, Richard Priman attended the mid-year luncheon and provided a comprehensive report on departmental activities as summarised below. Thank you Richard. -Ed.

The January 2011 floods impacts and recovery

DERM has significant responsibilities under the Queensland Recovery Road Map which has a mission to rebuild and improve the resilience of communities after the devastating floods including:

- providing significant information including flood maps and stream flow records
- contributing to a review of flood monitoring networks
- urgently repairing DERM's Gauging Station network
- reviewing protocols with BoM and EMQ for flood warnings
- contributing to longer term flood mitigation policy reviews
- providing a policy framework to fast-track development approvals for reinstating flood damaged works
- providing advice about the potential impacts of climate change on flooding across the state

DERM will also have significant involvement in the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry which is examining:

- the adequacy of forecasts and early warning systems
- the preparation and planning by federal, state and local governments and emergency services
- the operation of dams across the state
- land use planning and development in flood-prone areas.

In particular, an outcome of the Inquiry may be recommendations concerning the flood operations for Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine Dams.

Update on Water Planning in the Murray Darling Basin

There was considerable controversy over the Guide to the Basin Plan that was released in October 2010.

The smallest water recovery scenario in the Guide called for 3000 gegalitres cutback to current diversions, of which 278 gegalitres would be cut back from Queensland. Of this, 203 gegalitres would be from the Condamine-Balonne. This represents 29% of the whole Condamine-Balonne diversions or 47% of the Lower Balonne diversions.

Since then a parliamentary inquiry was instigated to look into the impact of the Basin Plan on regional Australia. It received 643 submissions including one from the Queensland Government and held hearings in 27 locations. The Inquiry Report can be read on the Australian Parliament House website.

Mr Craig Knowles, an ex NSW MP, was appointed the new chair of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority earlier this year.

Rob Freeman, CEO of the MDB Authority, (and formerly with NRM) has just retired and has been replaced by Dr Rhondda Dickson.

Following the release of the Proposed Basin Plan in July, there will be a 16 weeks consultation period to make a submission.

The Basin Plan is due to be finalised next year.

There will be more work in the coming years in terms of buy-back of water entitlements, environmental works, on-farm water use efficiency investment and eventually amending the Queensland water resource plans to be compliant with the Basin Plan.

Coal Seam Gas Water

DERM has established a compliance unit with responsibility for inspecting CSG production sites. Legislation aims to protect local water supplies and avoid any adverse environmental impacts. The Department has a major role in the monitoring and regulation of the provisions of the legislation.

A Healthy HeadWaters CSG Water Feasibility Study is expected to start during the second half of the year to identify and assess infrastructure options for delivering CSG water to the Central Condamine Alluvium and distributing it for the purpose of groundwater substitution and/or aquifer injection.

Water Resource Planning

DERM is beginning to roll out "second generation" Water Resource Plans. The first Water Resource Plan, for the Fitzroy River Basin, which was released in 1999, is now under review and a draft was released in December 2010.

Preparation of the first Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan commenced early in 2010.

The Program of Works

On 2 June 2011 the Governor in Council approved an amended Program of Works which reflects the current situation.

- No further work is required for the Kinchant Dam and Nullinga Dam proposals.
- No further work on the Water for Proserpine project until the Mackay Whitsunday Regional Water Supply Strategy has been completed.
- The Business Case for the Water for Bowen project is anticipated in June 2011.
- Investigations by SunWater on Connors River Dam are nearing completion and, subject to necessary approvals, funding and sufficient customer take up of water in the Bowen and Galilee Basins, construction could commence late 2011 or early 2012.
- The Nathan Dam Project is currently being considered by SunWater as part of a wider Surat Dawson Integrated Water Project involving the distribution and use of coal seam gas (CSG) water with its principal use likely to be more for mining and industrial use in the Surat and Southern Bowen coal basins than for irrigation.
- One of the initial steps in establishing the Surat Dawson Integrated Water Project is the Kenya to Chinchilla Weir Pipeline providing treated CSG water for beneficial reuse, and predominantly to new and existing agricultural customers.
- Drought and continued expansion of industry in Gladstone were driving consideration of weir development options in the Fitzroy River upstream of Rockhampton and a Fitzroy River to Gladstone pipeline. These pressures have been relieved in recent times as a result of the filling of Awoonga Dam and the deferral of major industrial projects which required significant volumes of water.

Regional Water Supply Strategies

DERM also continues to develop regional water supply strategies across the State. Significant technological advances are allowing more comprehensive climate change and variability assessments. Improved techniques are being used to assess potential risks and impacts beyond the historical record and placing confidence limits around the results using stochastic modelling (synthetically generated data.)

A message to members from the country

Ed Donohue sends his regards and best wishes to members.

Ed joined the IWS in the 1971/72 graduate intake with the likes of Mike McKenna, Ian Hanks, Ross Kapitski, Rod Lemin, John Gilmore, Syd Dunford and a few others.

He has been in Rockhampton since transferring from the Burdekin in early 1997. As Regional Manager, Water Services he is custodian of John Moreton's and previously Sam McCall's solid timber desk, something of a rarity in the days of modern office furniture.

Also in Rockhampton with the Department are long term employees, Maurie Clewley, Kerry Marler, Kel Roberts, Mike Keane, Mick Neubecker, Ian Wallace and Bill Reurich. Other long term employees in the region are Laurie Patterson at Mackay and Lenny Cummings at Emerald.

Following the Ensham flooding in 2008, Ed has largely been involved with water quality issues in the Fitzroy Catchment.

After the trip of a lifetime with wife Jenny, to Alaska and British Colombia last year, he moved to Environmental Services where he is involved with the environmental regulation of coal mining activity in Central Queensland and predominantly water management issues.

Eldest daughter, Kelly works for JCU in the international marketing of the university.

Son David is a surveyor and works for the Department in Rockhampton.

Rachael is an environmental engineer and also works for the Department in the GABSI group at Toowoomba.

Youngest daughter, Lucy and her daughter, Elizabeth live in Rockhampton.

Two weddings this year (Kelly, August and Rachael, October) will ensure Jenny and Ed work another year or two before retirement.

Thanks, Ed, for this contribution. It's always nice to hear of the activities of former workmates. Other volunteers? - Ed.

The Sewers of London

This article was submitted by Tery Loos and is reprinted here with gratitude. It's a good read. - Ed.

Roy Hattersley is a wonderful writer. He has written nineteen books and countless articles for various English newspapers and magazines. Born in 1932, he is perhaps better known as a British Labour politician who rose to Deputy Leader of the Party from 1983 to 1992. He is now a Baron in the House of Lords.

Hattersley has for many years been writing a series of articles under the theme, *In Search of England*. A large collection of these articles has been drawn together in a paperback of the same title. It is a terrific collection of stories about the English landscape, architecture, and the character of the English, their literary heritage, sense of humour and resilience. A great read, particularly for all Anglophiles.

In July 2005 Roy Hattersley wrote for the *Daily Mail* about a tour he was taken on through the sewers of London, *A Hidden Beauty Going to Waste*. The following are some excerpts:

Donning a pair of regulation thigh boots with tungsten-studded slip-resistant soles, he was taken down a manhole near the Albert Gate entrance to Hyde Park in Knightsbridge and was fascinated by the construction and current effectiveness of London's sewerage. Built about 150 years ago (using 318 million bricks) the approximately 2900 km sewerage system is today effectively serving a population ten times what it was when first built. The decision to build this marvellous system was taken after the House of Commons was closed as a result of the "Great Stink of 1858". Readers may know that the system was designed by Joseph Bazalgette and built by Victorian brickies. "If you want to see the best brickwork in British history, go down into London's sewers".

Much of the system is over 2m high but this is needed because the system also serves as stormwater drainage. Hattersley marvels at how clean the sewage flowing along the sewer floor is, "it looks clean enough to drink". However, there are parts of the system where blockages are common. The Piccadilly sewer under Leicester Square receives hundreds of tonnes of fat washed down from London's fast-food restaurants. This enters warm and in liquid form

but then soon sets solid once it reaches the low temperatures underground. Thames Water advised in 2005 that the annual cost of clearing London's sewers was \$300M. Nevertheless, the system which was initially maintained by a workforce of four hundred today is maintained by thirty-nine.

The 'flushers' carry gas detectors to monitor for methane and hydrogen sulphide. Hattersley noted that during his time down there he smelt not a whiff of either nor anything else. And he saw only one rat. Rats are one of the myths of London's sewerage system; as is the myth that the flushers spend hours under Hatton Garden looking for diamonds that the jewellers may have flushed down.

In conclusion, "When Parliament decided to build the best sewerage system in the world, their objective was magnificently achieved. Underneath London lies one of the engineering marvels of Victorian England".

P.S. 1. Here's an interesting You Tube entreaty at Christmas time from London's sewer men – encouraging us all not to put fat into sewers. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1rItAH60MU>

2. Thames Water has since decided that on high rainfall days the stormwater still carries too much sewage into the Thames and so is now proposing a \$A5.4 billion Super Sewer, which will be larger than the Channel Tunnel. The 32km Thames Tunnel would run from west to east London, broadly following the route of the river. It will be at a depth of about 75m and will emerge to the east of Tower Bridge at Limehouse before going one of three ways. The project appears to be under some community challenge. There are to be inquiries. A public consultation on the project will last for 14 weeks. But Thames Water maintains the tunnel is vital to cut pollution which kills fish, damages wildlife and poses a health hazard. Thames Water hopes to submit a planning application in 2012 with construction due to be completed in 2020.

3. Nearly £1 in every £5 of a Thames Water bill goes to funds run by an Australian financial group that owns the utility. Latest figures from Britain's largest water company reveal that the business paid out dividends of £308 million to Macquarie last year. It equates to 19 per cent of Thames's £1.6 billion income from its 8.5 million customers.

Tripping Over

The Pullars have returned from yet another enjoyable trip to Europe. I have no desire to cause readers like John McKenna any further symptoms of jealousy, but am contributing this article partly for the record and partly because of the paucity of other contributions.

Our trip was in two parts: a package tour on the continent and self-guided (ie the results of Helen's diligent research and planning) travel in the UK. In countries where they drive on the right (ie left) side of the road and speak more-or-less the same language, we are happy to manage our own itinerary, but otherwise we prefer to have someone else look after the itinerary, the route and the accommodation, etc. Call us squibs, if you like.

We started in Prague and travelled by bus through Dresden, Berlin, Warsaw and Krakow to Budapest. We loved this tour which really drove home the miserable history of so many central Europeans who have suffered invasions, World Wars and the Cold War era. Our Polish guide's grandfather was shot in front of her grandmother (who never got over it) and her mother who herself would have herself been shot if the Americans had arrived ten minutes later. One of our party was an American whose mother, a Polish Jew, had narrowly escaped the Nazis and always feared what would happen to her son if he returned to Poland. George's exciting connection with his heritage moved us all.

The scale of the post-war rebuilding is mind-boggling!

From Budapest, we sailed the Danube and Rhine with *Scenic Tours* to Amsterdam. Apart from the amazing engineering of the locks, there are so many wonderful, picturesque and culturally and historically interesting places to visit that every day was a thrill. We enjoyed a Chopin piano recital in Warsaw, a Strauss/Mozart orchestral concert in Vienna, an organ recital in Durnstein and a number of folk concerts on or off board. All very wonderful and mind-broadening (see also poem and a few of the many anecdotes collected on the trip on page 9)!

Once in Britain, we did what we like to do: hire a car and use a cottage for a base from which to explore a region of this fabulously fascinating country for Anglophiles like us. So we had a few days in London (where we saw *Warhorse* again), a week in Oxfordshire, a week in Scotland (also catching up with rellies), a week in transit and a week in the Cotswalds before enduring the interminable trip home and for once jet lag.

There were four of us on the British leg: Helen, her two older sisters (circa 80 years old) and me. So the pace was inevitably slower than our first trip there 14 years ago when we frenetically travelled the length and breadth of the country. This was more leisurely, but still very enjoyable as we were able to savour things which we had previously only sampled.

We are often asked, "What were the highlights?" There is no answer to that, and there never is. Even the worst bits can be highlights. Swindon clearly established itself on a previous trip as our least desirable destination in Britain – and we invariably highlight it as such!

The Falkirk wheel – a marvellous piece of engineering that lifts narrow boats from one canal to another without traditional locks (but with little apparent economic benefit) – was fascinating for a retired engineer. Our visit to the revamped Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre in Stratford was a thrill for an incorrigible thespian (though the Scottish play with no witches and no "Double double, toil and trouble" is a bit of a shock). And castles, cathedrals, manors, Roman villas and a whole panoply of civilisation never fails to fascinate an amateur historian.

As they say, in Britain a hundred miles is a long way and in Australia, a hundred years is a long time. But as the Brits keep reminding us, "You've got the climate!"

Ian Pullar

Nounal Verbs

So I am not alone in deploring the current vogue (particularly of sporting journalists) of turning perfectly respectable nouns into jarring verbal forms. On his afternoon program on 19 July, Richard Fidler and his guest Professor Roly Sussex discussed this appalling trend. The erudite professor contributed a poem by Ray Kelly which addresses this issue brilliantly, as readers will see for themselves. - Ed.

Triathlete Emma Snowsill swam and pedalled
And ran magnificently as she medalled.
She got so far in front the others folded:
One bronzed, one silvered, true, but Emma
gilded.
In hailing her, let's honour all who raced
Including those contestants who non-placed.
Heaven forbid that we regard with odium
The also-rans who strive but never podium.

New meaning

The *Washington Post* has published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words. And the winners are:

1. Coffee, n. The person upon whom one coughs.
2. Flabbergasted, adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.
3. Abdicate, v. To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. Esplanade, v. To attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. Willy-nilly, adj. Impotent.
6. Negligent, adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
7. Lymph, v. To walk with a lisp.
8. Gargoyle, n. Olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. Flatulence, n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
10. Balderdash, n. A rapidly receding hairline.
11. Testicle, n. A humorous question on an exam.
12. Rectitude, n. The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. Pokemon, n. A Rastafarian proctologist.
14. Oyster, n. A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. Frisbeetarianism, n. The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. Circumvent, n. An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

Marilyn Caton supplied this and more (next time?). Thanks, Marilyn, for your continuing contributions. I think 2, 5, 10 and 12 would win it for me - Ed.

HEALTH *and beauty*

Despite the continuing crisis in health management throughout Australia, there have been enormous advances in treatment and continuing research promises even more improvements.

My daughter Margaret is currently writing a history of nursing at Ipswich General Hospital which documents huge changes in both medical treatment and the profession itself. Included are many anecdotes, one of which I have taken the liberty of including here.

During World War II, there was a distinct shortage of nurses in hospitals, eased a little by assistance from the Red Cross and the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) – the forerunner of the St John’s Ambulance. VAD was also a sedative powder made up of Veronal, Aspirin and Dover powders. One night in the 1940s a young male patient was having trouble sleeping. After plumping up pillows, rearranging bedclothes and giving a drink of hot milk with no success, one of the nurses asked the Sister if she could try something else. Permission granted, she said to the young man, “I’ll get you a VAD. That’s sure to make you sleep.” “Gee, thanks,” he said. “You’re a real good sport, Nurse. Can I have that little blonde who was here this afternoon?”

Here are some more tips for improving your health prospects as gleaned from the press.

Olive oil reduces the risk of stroke. A five year French study followed more than 7000 people over sixty five years of age. It concluded that, after taking account of other factors such as body weight, physical activity and overall diet, “intensive” olive oil users had a 41% lower risk of stroke than those who never ate olive oil.

If you are feeling “down in the mouth”, you should make an appointment with your dentist. Pessimists are more likely to have poor oral health, including decayed, missing or wonky teeth. (Mind you, receiving the dentist’s bill is certain to cause severe depression!)

And if you are feeling lonely, a long soak in a bath can help combat feelings of isolation and exclusion. A study conducted by Yale University has concluded that warm water acts as a substitute for company. The greater the sense of isolation, the more baths or showers a person is likely to have, the longer they stay in them and the hotter they have the water. Just don’t worry about the bills for water and heating!

“On our wedding day, we planted a small sapling to symbolise the growth and strength of our marriage. Yesterday’s windstorm blew it over.”



The Beauty/Health nexus

Beauty, we are told, is in the eye of the beholder. So fashions change, either to meet the demands of the changing eye, or to change the demands of the eye. The C19th painter Renoir thought plenty of cellulose was a thing of beauty, but such is currently abhorred by the fashion gurus who flaunt stick insect models.

Fashion (and beauty) is not influenced by health. Indeed there are many instances from the past, where beauty has been achieved to the detriment of health, for example, achieving pale complexions through the application of lead-based cosmetics. Well into the C19th, many women drank a concoction called Fowler’s Solution to improve their complexions – it was really dilute arsenic. Bill Bryson, in his recent book *At Home*, has many a tale to tell. He records that when the British first got access to sugar during the reign of Henry VIII, they couldn’t get enough of it, despite its huge price, and ate it until their teeth blackened. Some of those who couldn’t afford it, simply blackened their teeth so it would look like they were rich.

But Bryson’s scorn is probably vented most on what he claims was the most irrational fashion of all – the male habit of 150 years of wearing wigs. Wigs could be made of anything – human hair, horse hair, goat hair, cotton thread, silk or even fine wire. They came in an endless variety of styles and the more substantial the wig, the higher up the social echelon one stood – literally a big wig. A full wig could cost £50 and they were so valuable they were left as bequests in wills.

All wigs tended to be scratchy, uncomfortable and hot, particularly in summer. To make them more bearable, many men shaved their heads. For a century and a half, men got rid of their own hair, which was perfectly comfortable, and instead covered their heads with something foreign and uncomfortable. Very often, it was their own hair made into a wig.

Women took wig-wearing literally to another level, building their hair up on a wire scaffold known as a pallsade or commode. Female wigs sometimes rose as much as two and a half feet tall which made the total height of the wearer over eight feet. So women travelling to engagements had to sit on the floor of their carriage or ride with their heads out of the window. At least two fatalities were caused by women’s wigs catching fire on chandeliers.

Because of the work involved in preparing these wigs, it was not uncommon for them to be left untouched for months on end. One consequence was that wigs often swarmed with insects, particularly weevils. One woman reportedly miscarried when she discovered that mice were nesting in her upper decks.

Fortunately fashions changed and wigs suddenly disappeared. Equally fortunately, we modern people have outgrown this ridiculous adherence to fashion at the expense of our health.

Exercise those Brain Cells

Kim was hired as a receptionist for a firm and was taken to meet the Board of Directors, which comprised solely lawyers and engineers. Almost immediately two directors welcomed her, one of them saying, “Hi, I’m Jim. I’m a lawyer. This is Tim. He’s an engineer.” Kim knew that engineers naturally always tell the truth while lawyers invariably fib 50% of the time. So what were the men’s professions?



Solution to last edition’s puzzle

Laugh and the world laughs with you, snore...

Z		8
SLEEP	when a=6	19337
ALONE	becomes	69543
ZZZZ		88888

Travellers Tales

Here are a (very) few tales gleaned on our recent European trip.

Courting Polish style

A Polish custom is to decorate eggs for Easter, many of the decorations being very elaborate. If a young woman approved of the approaches of a young man, she would give him her finest egg. If she didn't approve, she would put her least attractive egg in his coat pocket and break it.

A prospective suitor was also invited to dine with the young lady's family where he was duly appraised. If he was served blood soup he knew that he was considered unacceptable to the family. But if it was tripe soup with dumplings he was over the family hurdle.

Vienna's son and hair

Johann Strauss, the Waltz King, is a much loved son of Vienna, with his music on every concert programme and his face everywhere on statues and in souvenir shops. A very handsome man, he was much loved during his lifetime, too. He had 14 official engagements and three actual marriages. Hordes of women pleaded with him to give them a lock of his black, shiny hair. In order to meet these overwhelming requests, he purchased two black poodles.

Having it both ways

Many German towns and cities were severely damaged during the Thirty Years War – but not Cologne. It was Catholic and so safe from the Swedish invaders. It was also the major arms manufacturer who sold happily to both sides. The protestants couldn't afford to lose their armaments supplier, so Cologne prospered.

How Come – ?

The English language contains many pejorative terms, often derived from a state of rivalry at a particular time. For example, during the ongoing competition between Britain and the Netherlands for control of the seas and trade, English propaganda claimed that their foes could only fight if they imbibed large quantities of gin first – thus giving themselves Dutch courage. And to be invited to dine by a Dutchman but then be expected to pay for your own meal – a Dutch treat – demanded that such avarice be scorned.

But as Sir Humphrey Appleby reminded us, there has only been one real enemy – the French. So syphilis was known as “the French pox” and condoms were “French letters” (the French, in turn, labelled these “English caps”).

To take “French leave” may have been derided as the cowardly French soldiers going AWOL. Or perhaps it arose at a time when the French considered it impolite to call attention to their departure from a social function so they quietly withdrew. The English considered this utterly rude and unfitting for a gentleman.

Catering for cruises

Travel, we're told, by sages of old
Is certain to broaden the mind;
But if you should choose to indulge in a cruise,
It broadens the waist and behind.

A Sign of the Times

On a London metropolitan tube line:

**Peak hours may necessitate that you
let other people sit on your lap.**

Terry's Trivia

Some more trivia from Terry taken from the set posed at the mid-year luncheon. The answers are on page 4. - Ed.

1. Which country won the Eurovision song contest in 2011? (i) Poland; (ii) Serbia; (iii) France; (iv) Azerbaijan
2. Which English village do the Middletons come from? (i) Bunbury; (ii) Bibury; (iii) Bucklebury; (iv) Beriberi.
3. Rugby League was first known as: (i) Northern Rules; (ii) Northern Union; (iii) Northern football; (iv) Northern lights.
4. What is the capital of Syria? (i) Nicosia; (ii) Beirut; (iii) Damascus; (iv) Ankara; (v) Amman.
5. In the film *Casablanca* Ingrid Bergman asks the piano player to, "Play it again, Sam". What was the name of the song: (i) Thanks for the memory; (ii) On the sunny side of the street; (iii) As time goes by; (iv) Night and day.
6. What is unusual about the words: month; orange; purple and silver?
7. Julia Gillard's middle name is: (i) Elaine; (ii) Elle; (iii) Ellen; (iv) Eileen.
8. Who were recently rated by Wisden as the five most prominent cricketers of the 20th century:
9. In which US State is 'Gone with the Wind' set: (i) Georgia; (ii) Mississippi; (iii) Texas; (iv) Louisiana.
10. Who made the following observation about the efficiency of toilet cisterns: "The biggest waste of water in the country is when you spend half a pint and flush two gallons". (i) David Attenborough; (ii) Margaret Thatcher; (iii) The Duke of Edinburgh; (iv) John Cleese.
11. Which is the last Shuttle to make a trip into space: (i) Endeavour; (ii) Discovery; (iii) Atlantis; (iv) Enterprise.
12. Which Spanish city is the third largest in area and the traditional 'home' of paella? (i) Seville; (ii) Valencia; (iii) Zaragoza; (iv) Bilbao.



Book Club

Kate Norton is an Australian novelist, yet all three novels she has written so far are set in England because, to quote her, “England makes my heart sing.” Her latest, *The Distant Hours*, is set in Kent and London.

In the 1990s, Edie Burchill’s mother receives a letter that has been missing for fifty years, with the return address of Milderhurst Castle, Kent, on the envelope. Mother does not want to talk about it and Edie suspects her reluctance masks an old secret. Edie is drawn to the castle, now occupied by three elderly sisters whose father was once famous as the author of a best-selling novel, *The True History of the Mud Man*; a book that triggered a love of literature in a much younger Edie. In the castle, the present is haunted by the past, as the sisters do their best to isolate themselves from both.

Edie narrates the sequence of events in which she attempts to unravel the mystery of her mother’s wartime association with the castle and the connection between the madness of the youngest daughter and the fiancé who jilted her during World War II. Kate Norton also uses the device of interleaving events from earlier eras told in the third person so that the reader gains an insight more quickly than Edie.

Apart from weaving an intriguing narrative, Norton certainly knows how to write good prose. Take, for example, the following sentence. *He kept the window open but the day’s sun accumulated in the flats beneath, spread up the staircase and shrugged through the floorboards, before hitting the ceiling and stretching out with proprietorial ease to shake hands with the steam.* I can’t help but admire the ability of someone who can turn such an elegant phrase.

A fact that is probably irrelevant but which I find interesting, is that my daughter Jean taught English to Kate Norton when she attended Somerset College.

Ian Pullar

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to Harvey Yates for his cartoons; to Lee Rogers and Terry Loos who helped cover for my absence overseas; to other contributors; to Graham Bauer who printed it; to Natasha Carson and Rebecca Wall who made it available to departmental staff; and to Jon Henry who placed it on our website – www.waterysauces.org.au.

Office Bearers

President	Hein van der Heide	18 Bamburgh St CARINDALE 4152	3395 2084	hf.vanderheide@bigpond.com
Past Pres	Lee Rogers	61 Upland Rd ST LUCIA 4067	3371 3200	rlrogers@gmail.com
Vice Pres	Geoff Eades	6 Gleason Street MCDOWALL 4053	3353 0629	geades@ozemail.com.au
Secretary	Peter Jones	PO Box 297 PADDINGTON 4064		secretary@waterysauces.org.au
Treasurer	Bevan Faulkner	21 Honeysuckle Way CALAMVALE 4116	3273 2809	bevwendy@tpg.com.au
Executive	Brian Shannon	14 Trebonne St THE GAP 4061	3300 2823	bbj@bigpond.net.au
	Terry Loos	7 Codford PI CHAPEL HILL 4069	3378 8656	tloos@bigpond.net.au
Auditor	Ray Sutherland			
Editor	Ian Pullar	21 Lansdowne Way CHUWAR 4306	3281 4437	hpullar@bigpond.net.au

Odds and Ends

With an Australian census due to be carried out within the next few weeks, I thought members might be interested in the following letter to the editor of the *Oxford Times*.

Sir, As a census enumerator in the 1981 Census, we recalled in my area this response to Q 12 – Occupation. The reply was “I am a sculptor of stone lions.”

To the next question: Please describe the nature of the work done the respondent wrote “I chip away all the bits of stone that are not lion.”

Roderick Hunt, Abingdon.

According to a press report, a 15 centimetre Yorkshire terrier has been accused of terrorising postmen and neighbours alike in the English city of Northampton. Peggy has been dubbed the “Beast of Dorset Gardens” and the Royal Mail has issued a letter to residents of the street – “Because of the dog’s behaviour, he (the postman) believes your mail cannot be delivered safely and in the circumstances I have instructed him not to deliver mail to your address.” How this edict was delivered with the blanket ban in place is not explained.

We were in London just after the Royal Wedding. A taxi driver told us that one day his wife turned up at his daughter Florence’s pre-school and was asked to stay behind along with the mother of fellow pre-schooler Logan. The teacher explained to the mothers that there was a development they should be aware of. Florence and Logan no longer answered to those names, but insisted on being called Catherine and William. They persisted in holding hands and had announced that they were going to get married. Florence thought this was a good idea because Logan would have to give her all his teddy bears!

We were in England for Summer. It occurred on June 2.

