



WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 76

March 2015

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

31st Annual General Meeting

Our ever-efficient Secretary has advised all our members that the AGM of our Association is to be held on Thursday 30 April at Club Central (formerly known as the Public Service Club). This has been the venue for many a long year - and the lady behind the bar is still there looking after us.

It would be really good if a lot of our members came along to participate. Apart from the usual meeting components - reports, elections, etc - there will be a first-hand opportunity to catch up on any changes of focus for the Water departments resulting from the recent change of government.

And following the meeting, there will be the opportunity to catch up on the news and views of former work colleagues over lunch. And remember, that as an inducement, the Association is very happy to pay the cost of your meal.

Those of us who do go to these functions always find them enjoyable - the only downside is that there are always people we'd like to catch up with who aren't there. So how about making sure that you're not one of those?

From the Editor's Chair

Here we are in 2015.

The fifteenth year of so many centuries has hosted a significant date:

1215 - Magna Carta

1315 - the Scots still celebrating the victory of Bannockburn the previous June (as they still are)

1415 - the Battle of Agincourt

1715 - the Rebellion of the Old Pretender

1815 - the Battle of Waterloo

1915 - Gallipoli

One can't help wondering what this year will bring. We hope it brings peace and prosperity to our members and our world.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

PS The thought pieces at the bottom of pages were supplied by Ross Stewart

WRRRA February Lunch

Our regular February get-together on 19 February was quite well attended this year with twenty old-timers and two wives coming along.

It's always good to catch up with 'old' colleagues. I was particularly delighted to dine with my old boss John Morse who was hale and hearty and living contentedly at Samford. After the function, I took out my old 'stud book' and discovered that on 3 July this year, John will celebrate his 90th birthday. Congratulations and best wishes to John.

It was notable that there has been a gradual falling away of the older members of the association, but the younger members are moving in as replacements. Some members of the current committee are hoping that over time, some of these 'youngsters' (still in their sixties) might even move into committee positions.

Programme for 2015

Following the AGM, the Committee will draw up a programme of events for the next year. Suggestions from members of possible activities would be gratefully received.

New Members

WRRRA welcomes two new members - Greg Long and Ian White.

With the recent exodus of Public Servants, it could be expected that there are lots of potential members out there who just need a bit of personal encouragement to join. So why not talk to your mates at talk them into joining?

Changes in the Public Service

As all members will know, there has been a change of Government and this could be expected to result in some changes within the Public Service. For a start, there has been a reduction in the number of Ministries in government with a number of Ministers responsible for more than one department.

An early indication of changes within the departments of our co-patrons can be found on page 9 with more news to follow as time goes by.

Out and About

The Secretary received this welcome correspondence, which we are happy to share with our members

I trust this note finds you and family well. This communication is to confirm that I will be quite happy to receive any future communications including the much appreciated newsletter by email. I very much appreciate what you and your fellow committee members do on the members' behalf.

My committee days are now over, my last position was President of The Probus Club of Kirra-Tugun [Mixed] Inc.

About four ago my wife June suffered a severe stroke, and now I am her full time carer. June fortunately has made significant physical improvement, but her memory has faded and her speech is impaired. There is a lot of frustration involved, but she bravely never complains. We still live and manage quite comfortably in our own residence at Palm Beach.

How the years fly by; I turn 88 yrs this month and June is one year behind me. Life is made more interesting by happenings in our growing family; lately it's been grandchildren getting married, and the arrival of great grandchildren. For the record we have ten grand children [8 now married] and three great grandchildren, so life is good.

My best regards to you Peter and to all my friends from the much treasured Commission days.

Roy (MacArthur).

Thanks Roy. How about some more interesting contributions like this one? If Roy can do it, why can't you? - Ed.

Brian and Joanne Shannon have finally managed to sell their long-term home at The Gap and have moved to the North Coast where they intend to build a new home for a comfortable retirement.

As a result, Brian will not be a member of the incoming Committee. We thank him for his contribution and wish him and Joanne many happy years in their sea-change.

And Bruce Deen sent in this archival photograph of Pat McMahon, Ben Russo and Malcolm Pegg at Copperfield Dam for the first pour from the bucket. Thanks Bruce. - Ed.



Hein and Françoise van der Heide are about to hit the road again for another caravan safari. They plan to be on the road for seven months this time. There can't be too many pockets of Australia left that they haven't visited.

Gary and Margaret Corbett are also about to join the ranks of the grey nomads after a period of retirement catching up on (some of) the jobs working men never seem to find time to do.

Michael and Hjordis Marley will be setting off for an African Safari in April, then to London to catch up with two daughters, and then to the Bahamas where their third daughter, Caitlin, works and where Michael will celebrate (?) his 70th birthday. Then in September they will be off to London again to celebrate the marriage of their second daughter Fiona. (Helen and I will be there too).

Our President Geoff Eades has now fully retired. His children are delighted because they see him as having time to keep their property at Mapleton in a fit state for them to enjoy!

Lee Rogers still works part-time for DEWS, his current contract running until June.

Jim Uhlmann was at the February luncheon and in good form. He reported that his aunt Daree Foster (widow of Des) has now undergone knee surgery for the second time (and on the second knee!) We wish her well in her recovery.

Trevor Sleep was unable to join us on that occasion, because Thursday is one of his (compulsory) golf days. A self-confessed addict. Trevor loves to play a round.

Glynn Stewart died in December at the age of 85.

Glynn was a project proposal assessment engineer in the Town Water Supply Section of the DLG in the heady days of the sixties to the eighties when the State was assisting Local Governments to establish and operate urban water supply, sewerage and drainage schemes and communal swimming pools. He spent a lot of time in the O&M area and contributed greatly to its effectiveness and the development of the younger generation of engineers and technical staff. He was a single figure handicap golfer and was very active in the Sherwood Districts AFL club. He was a really nice bloke.

Harry Wright's Send-Off

Phil Sternes

As reported in the last Newsletter, Harry Wright is to be included in the Australian Dictionary of Biography. I was asked to provide some background on Harry's career and life outside of his war service. This of course led me to revisit all manner of memories of what it was like to work with Harry and to reflect on the type of person he was.

Of course my most vivid memory is of Harry's last day at work if only for the scale of the effort required to make it a memorable one for him.

Harry's draftsman colleagues in Project Planning (PP) Branch became aware about twelve months before that he was likely to retire sometime in advance of his 65th birthday in December 1984 so as to qualify for a Total and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) servicemen's pension. Harry as we know had suffered with respiratory disease for a lengthy period brought on in part due to his war service.

Planning began in about March 1983 with a fortnightly contribution by those inclined to build up a kitty of sufficient size that would ensure that his departing gifts would be substantial. From memory about \$1,000 was collected through this process and the general departmental collection. It was also decided that his departure would have a "survey" theme to tie in with his service as a survey draftsman dating back to before the war. It must be noted that Harry at this stage was suffering from some hearing loss so that discussions in relation to the various aspects of his send-off could be safely held within what would normally be earshot.

Given that Harry had accumulated a fair number of decorations and medals through his war service and subsequent award by the Taiwanese Government of the *Order of the Brilliant Star* for his anti-communist activism, it was decided therefore to constitute an award unique to the Water Resources Commission, the *Most Permanent Order of the Benchmark* (OBM), to honour him for his services to survey drafting and add to his already impressive collection. Not to be totally outdone by the Taiwanese, this was also to be a neck order though in the shape of a survey shield (or blaze) and include a miniature for wearing when appropriate. It was however made from aluminium unlike the Taiwanese award. The ribbon was to be in the Commission's corporate colour of blue. Manufacture and engraving of the medal was entrusted to Peter Read and the boys at the Rocklea Workshop and Ian Pullar volunteered to write a citation and deliver it during the retirement ceremony. The citation was unique in that it was written backwards as one reads a field book and caused no end of trouble with the typing and subsequently with its oral delivery on the day. These were of course the times before word processing existed as we know it today. To complement this, Roy Wheeler created a field book which laid out the milestones of Harry's life up to that moment in the form of a survey traverse and had it registered with the Survey Section. It's probably still lying around somewhere within the bowels of SunWater.

Harry announced his departure date of Friday, 30 March 1984, some two months prior and speculation was rife about how motivated he would then be to put in full days at work. Suffice to say that some days Harry "failed to launch" and absences were frequent ("coming back from lunch I ran in to an old mate I haven't seen for

years and you know I just couldn't not have a drink with him could I?"). A life-like cut-out of him was created which stood in his place when he was not able to attend the office and a large calendar was also created to mark off his daily comings and goings.

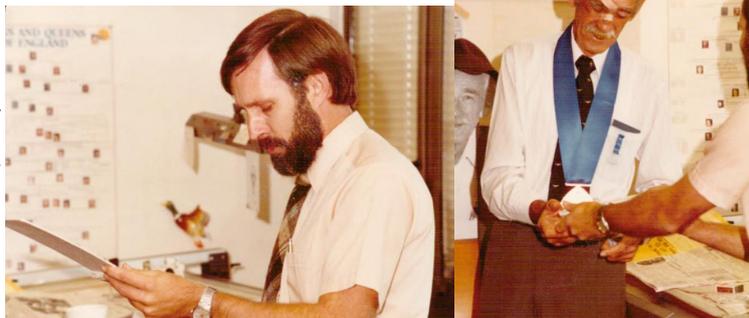
The cut-out was so life like from a distance that more than one person said hello to it.

It seems as though for the week preceding his retirement there was some aspect of his career that required a celebration on each night. One night was dedicated to Harry thanking the investors in his book publishing enterprise at the Port Office Hotel while another was the official get together at the Public Service Club which a lot of retired officers such as Stewie Robertson and Eric Robinson attended. Harry's wife Pauline also attended and was somewhat bemused by all the fuss being made about him; "Why are you doing all this for him?" Rarely am I lost for words, but I was that night.

The Thursday night before saw some other celebration, the upshot of which saw Harry arriving home at Greenslopes minus his normally reliable navigation instincts. Suffice to say that a "wheels up" landing on his concrete driveway resulted in some nasty abrasions to the outer skin but fortunately no structural damage.

Retirement day dawned and all the preparations were in place for a rip-roaring send-off when the phone rang. Al Mayne took the call from Harry's wife Pauline who advised that due to the "wheels up" the night before Harry would not be leaving the hanger that day. A Rolls Royce had been hired to bring him in to Mineral House (and was carrying an onboard survival kit which included a full hip flask), the red carpet procured by Garry Merrett was in place, the media had been alerted by Daryl White and the honour guard of survey staff bearers drilled to perfection by Maurie Nichols and Ian Holmes was holding a lift in the foyer so that Harry could enjoy an express ride to his workplace on the 18th Floor (more about that later). What an anti-climax. So much planning and the guest of honour was likely to be a no show.

Not to be discouraged by this, Al Mayne and Roy Wheeler jumped into a car and drove out to Harry's house to find him sitting in the kitchen still in his pyjamas. They convinced him that he should make an appearance at work and so with their help, he was dressed and marched out to the waiting Rolls much to the appreciation of a group of neighbours who had gathered on the foot-path.



Ian reading the citationand presenting it to Harry

Harry Wright's Send-Off *continued*

The Rolls subsequently arrived outside Mineral House to be met by the honour guard and the waiting TV media and Harry, walking briskly, swept into the building to be express-lifted up to the 18th Floor by Ian Holmes. It was only discovered later that while everybody was waiting for Harry to arrive that our Minister at the time (John Goleby?), who had his ministerial office in Mineral House, arrived at work and walked into the lift being reserved for Harry. Ian was the new cadet in PP Branch and could not have known he was addressing the Minister when he told him "You can't come in here; this is Harry's lift". As I understand it, the Minister graciously exited the lift and waited for another to arrive.

Harry, when he arrived at the 18th Floor, was not in the greatest of shape. His face was covered in band-aids and it was not a good look. Al Mayne, even then displaying the guile of a good public relations operator, decided on what is now known as a makeover. The band-aids were replaced and Lou-Anne Andrews was called upon with her makeup kit to cover up some of the less gruesome injuries. The man of the moment was ready to be called on stage.

A mock front page of *The Courier Mail* announcing Harry's retirement and edited by Peter Butler was distributed to those in attendance and when his two daughters Joanne and Patricia arrived proceedings commenced. Bernie Credlin famously began his speech by saying "as you get old you lose things: Alan Vizer has lost his hair, Malcolm Pegg has lost his sense of humour" and looking at Harry's battered face "looks like you've lost your sense of balance". Peter Zinn's video camera operated by Ken Crow recorded the proceedings. The tape of the day's events unfortunately has not survived.

While our Branch Director, John Morse had been briefed as to what was in the offing that day, Commissioner Don Beattie who was called on to induct Harry into the Order of the Benchmark was not and he was somewhat taken back initially by the whole thing. A "go with the flow" signal from John eased the moment and it was all done.

Afterwards Bill Sharp invited Harry over to the Lands Office for a celebratory drink little realising that the "organising committee" had to be shouted too. The afternoon was spent at the Port Office in quiet contemplation of the morning's happenings.

It was a grand day and many people contributed their talents to make it special for a special person. The cost, at least in time consumed was considerable, but it still seems to me that it was a small price to pay to honour someone who in the wider sphere contributed so much to his country.

Harry was one of a kind and it is pleasing that now, approaching twenty-five years after his death, he will be immortalised with an entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Postscript:

About a month after Harry retired, the Pathfinders Association had their international gathering on the Gold Coast. Harry wore the miniature of his OBM to the gala dinner and was immediately pounced upon by another Pathfinder indignantly wanting to know what was that funny decoration he was wearing.

The only other award of the OBM was made to Don McCulloch upon his retirement in 1990. Don unfortunately didn't get his last ride to work in a Rolls but rather in a chartered Council bus. But that's another story.

- *Thanks, Phil, for this wonderful account of the Good Old Days* - Ed.

A PROCLAMATION

By His Permanence, DONALD WALTER BEATTIE, Bachelor of Engineering, Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia by the Grace of God and Order in Council under the Water Resources Administration Act 1978, Commissioner for Water Resources in the State of Queensland.

Commissioner for Water Resources. D.W.BEATTIE

WHEREAS by notice duly delivered of the retirement of HAROLD JOHN ALFRED WRIGHT upon whom has been conferred the decorations of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar, the Distinguished Flying Medal, the Polish Cross of Merit and the Order of the Brilliant Star; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright having served in Her Majesty's Royal Australian Air Force in a distinguished and meritorious capacity as a Navigator in the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, One Five Six Squadron 'Pathfinder Force' wherein he did undertake Seventy Eight operational flights over Europe; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright being a pillar of the Most Holy Roman Catholic Church, hath toiled enthusiastically in community activities to benefit his fellow man; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright having been a devoted member of the Democratic Labor Party offering himself as a candidate for election to the State Legislature; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright having truly and faithfully served the Queensland Water Resources Commissioner under its various titles and on three separate occasions, to wit, from the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty eight to one thousand nine hundred and forty one, from one thousand nine hundred and forty six to one thousand nine hundred and fifty eight and from one thousand nine hundred and sixty three to one thousand nine hundred and eighty four; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright having served some thirty five years as a Survey Draftsman in Project Planning Branch and Rivers and Streams Branch (now styled Irrigation Branch) wherein he did establish a reputation for thoroughness; and WHEREAS the aforesaid Harold John Alfred Wright being the last active Engineering Survey Draftsman in the Queensland Public Service: now therefore I, DONALD WALTER BEATTIE, Commissioner aforesaid do hereby confer on the aforesaid HAROLD JOHN ALFRED WRIGHT the decoration of the MOST PERMANENT ORDER OF THE BENCHMARK.

Given under my hand and seal at Mineral House, Brisbane, this thirtieth day of March, in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty four and in the thirty second year of Her Majesty's Reign.

By Command A.E. WICKHAM

God Save The Queen!

The proclamation restored to the 'normal' layout

The Bombing of Darwin

(continued from Edition 75)

Ian Pullar

On the day of the raid, ten Kittyhawks were despatched, which were obviously no match for the 188 Japanese raiders. Five set off firstly and were all shot down. The other five started on Australian soil. One took off and hadn't got far before it was shot. The pilot decided to bail out from only 80 feet up. By some miracle, he survived, but as he walked off the airfield he was mown down in a hail of bullets. Another pilot had to bail out from a much greater (and safer) height but hit his head and knocked himself unconscious as he fell into the ocean. Fortunately his parachute opened automatically and cold water brought him back to consciousness, but he still had to struggle to free himself from the parachute harness. He made it and swam to shore. Many years later, he returned to Darwin for the Bombing of Darwin Day celebrations where our tour guide recognised his name tag at the Parliament House reception and had a beer with him!

A Zero pilot, Toyoshima by name, managed to nurse his holed plane as far as Bathurst Island where he crash landed safely. For two days he hid himself in the mangroves, unaware that he was being tracked by a local Aborigine named Matthias, armed with an axe. Creeping up behind the Jap, Matthias stuck the axe handle in his back and said "Stick 'em up!" He had virtually no English, but having been exposed to several American westerns, at the Mission run by Father McCarthy, thought this was what had to be said by an arresting officer. This incidentally was the first arrest by an Australian of an enemy officer on Australian soil. Toyoshima was sent to Cowra in NSW where he became the leader of the famous Cowra breakout.

Waterways of Europe

Trevor Ryan

My wife Sue and I have just returned from our third trip to Europe and a part of each trip has been spent exploring the waterways and surrounding countryside of some of the countries we have visited.

Our method of travel is a little different, and on each occasion has been by what is commonly called Bike and Barge. So we have a cabin on what is a small vessel (which was formerly a cargo carrier) and has been refitted and converted to contain about 12 cabins for passengers. It also obviously has a lounge/dining area and a top deck for the usual relaxation.

The real adventure is with the cycling, which commences each day after breakfast and returns for a rendezvous with the vessel again in the afternoon somewhere downstream/upstream on the river or canal. Sometimes the vessel will cruise during breakfast or dinner in order to reach a drop-off or berthing point, but generally it is our floating hotel and will be moored at a town or city each night and we usually are free to explore the town or sometimes accompany the

Prior to the war, the Australian Government had commissioned Japanese pearl fishers to develop detailed maps of the northern Australian coast. It could be that the versions sent to Japan were more accurate than the versions for Australian consumption!

Later in the war, Darwin became the airbase for bomber command which retaliated on Japanese sites, sometimes as far away as the Philippines. As this was at the extreme limit of range, sometimes the planes ran out of fuel before they made it back to base. However, Catalinas could land on water and rescue crews if they could be tracked. In one case, a Catalina picked up the crew of a bomber that was caught short, but itself ran out of fuel short of base and all had to be rescued by another Catalina. By 7 pm that night, the bomber crew, having set out early, carried out its bombing raid and been plucked twice from the sea, were having a beer with both sets of rescuers!

One airman who served latterly at Darwin was John Gorton – later Prime Minister. It was here that he was involved in the plane crash that caused the rearrangement of his facial features.

Recently, Darwin has been undergoing major development to permit the export of Western Australian gas to overseas destinations including Japan. A Japanese company was improving port capacity by dredging the harbour when they dredged up an unexploded bomb from World War II. They appealed to the authorities to have it removed safely, but it was suggested that as they had put it there, they should be the ones to remove it!

-Thanks, Ian, and particularly guide Garry, for this fascinating info. - Ed

guide on a short tour after dinner (although after some of the longer days on the bike the head usually hits the pillow and sleeps like a baby).

All meals are included in the cost of the trip and were excellent on all of our trips. Dinner is always three courses and lunch is (make your own) from a buffet provided at breakfast and carried in a pannier on the bike. Usually lunch is taken in a park in a village, town or city where it can also be bought if preferred. Tea and coffee is always available free on the vessel and of course beer, wine, etc. can be purchased cheaply under an honour system on board.

Bikes are provided and included in the cost of the trip. They are a hybrid bike (in between road bike and mountain bike) and are of a very good standard with 21 gears. Safety helmets are not provided and are not required in Europe, but we took our own. Usually the first day involves getting aboard and getting the bike and making the necessary adjustments to suit, and then a short ride of 10-15k to get the bike set up properly. Tandem bikes and e-bikes are also available.

- continued next page

Waterways of Europe *continued*

Each cabin on the Boat has an en-suite and usually twin beds. Our first boat had bunk beds and the cabin was very small (literally could not swing a cat in there) but you spend very little time there so you hardly notice. It's all happening upstairs or on the bike.

The cycling is guided and the guides were very well informed about everything from roman ruins to church organs, and knew the routes and the points of interest well, and particularly the location of the best pastry shop each day. The morning tea stop for coffee and pastries each day was a highlight for everyone. Those French and German towns and villages have excellent pastry shops. The guide also mended flat tyres and did repairs as required on the road.

One thing we noticed on all of our tours was that the people on these cycling tours are a different type of tourist. They are the more adventurous type of traveller, usually professionals or business people, not the usual sometimes pushy mainstream tourist and we met some very interesting people each time, which made the whole trip even more enjoyable.

It was important to note that it was not a race and there were no jocks on any of the tours, and so after the first couple of days the actual riding of the bike becomes secondary and we were more focused on the great outdoors, the countryside, the local people and features (remember we are on bike tracks and back roads away from the main tourist places most of the time).

Sometimes the group would be spread out along the track for a kilometre or more with a sweeper bringing up the rear to ensure no one gets left behind. We really felt that we could smell the roses and get up close and personal with whatever country we were in.

The only thing to guard against in Europe is C sickness (as in castles and churches).

I have provided below a brief summary of each of our cycle tours with some stats and highlights.

Italy (Sep. 2014)

Route: - Bolzano to Venice (11 days)

Total Distance: - 450 k Average day: - 40 k
Longest day: - 70 k

Vessel: - Ave Maria (very good, almost new and the most spacious)

Age of the group: - From early 20 (family) to 89
Average Age: - mid 50s

Cycling Terrain: - Dead flat

Getting there: - This was the start of our holiday and it took us 35 hours to get from Brisbane to Bolzano. We were a little travel weary so spent an extra night in Bolzano (so pleased we did, it is a beautiful place). We flew to Munich and took a train (3.5 hrs) from there to Bolzano via Innsbruck.

The start: - Got over the jetlag and did the tourist bit with the cable car ride etc. (Bolzano is in the very north of Italy not far from Austria, and not regarded by

Italians as Italy (even though it is in Italy). Never heard Italian spoken so I could get by with the German I learnt in school and English of course. Got our bikes, maps etc. the next day and had a ride around the underground car park opposite the hotel.

Cycling: - The first 3 days of this tour were self-guided (hotel to hotel). We hadn't tried this before and were expecting a group, turns out it was just us and a German couple (who spoke very little English) and who were self-guiding all the way to Venice. We never saw them the next day, they took off early, so we were by ourselves. (Luggage was moved from hotel to hotel for us).

We pulled into a small town called Ora for our first coffee and pastry that day. The ride along a sealed bikeway beside the Adige River with the Dolomite Mountains on each side was spectacular. The Adige River reminded me of the Tully River in flood (fast flowing). There was also a significant irrigation system adjacent to a large canal which went for many kilometres. The water seemed to be used mainly to flood irrigate pasture for fodder.

We caught up with the Germans that night in Trento, and the next day we rode with them for a while. They got us lost a couple of times after taking directions from a worker (who spoke German) who was doing repairs to a bridge which closed the track. Imagine the conversation – my broken German and their broken English.

What a terrible navigator Sue is also.

Eventually we got to Riva del Garda on time to catch the ferry which went the full length of Lake Garda (5 hrs), which was quite amazing, with several ports of call, all of which had large resort hotels and restaurants.

We joined the *Ave Maria* in Mantova the next day after cycling from Peschiara.

From Mantova to Venice was guided and aboard the *Ave Maria*.

The People: - We had a great group of people from around the world. There was another Australian couple from Mackay, some Canadians, Americans and Germans – a good mix. The oldest cyclist was an 89 year old lady from the US who was technically blind and rode a tandem with a friend who was a retired air force pilot who flew from carriers in Vietnam. She **did** pedal and enjoyed a glass of wine with dinner each night (amazing woman). What an inspiration she was.

Highlights: - Many –

Particularly Bolzano and surrounds and Venice, and of course being able to traverse the largest lake in Italy and the rivers of northern Italy.

A small town called Bergantino where dodgem cars were first made and where 50% of all amusement park rides around the world are still made. Great little museum there.

- *continued overleaf*

"One of the advantages of being disorganised is that one is always having surprising discoveries."

Waterways of Europe *continued from previous page*

Discovered a nice cheese called Grana Padano (rode to a factory) which is only found north of the River Po. Haven't been able to find it here.

Travel Trivia: - Mantova has a Church which was first built in the 5th Century (and of course rebuilt several times due to fire, war etc.) which supposedly contains some vessels (in a crypt) containing the blood of Christ. The soldier who pierced the side of Christ came from this area and allegedly established Christianity in the area when he returned.

The full itinerary, including details of the Ave Maria, for this tour can be found at the web page below if anyone is interested.

<http://www.tripsite.com/bike-boat/tours/bolzano-mantova-venice/>

The First Circumnavigator

Jon Henry

Ferdinand Magellan is one of the candidates in Terry's Trivia Q 5. Readers should find this contribution from Jon of interest - Ed.

Everyone knows that Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the earth but did he actually do this?

Ferdinand Magellan was Portuguese and familiar with the easterly route to the Spice Islands for the spice trade that was monopolised by the Portuguese. He convinced the King of Spain to finance a voyage to find a westerly route. He was provided with five ships and about 270 men

and set sail from Spain on 20th September, 1519. An Italian named Antonio Pigafetta, a tourist who paid his own way, kept a diary during the voyage.

The ships sailed south along the east coast of South America looking for an opening through which they could pass to the west. They wintered at Port St Julian and Magellan crushed his first mutiny. Continuing south, the ships eventually found a place where the coast turned directly west. It took 38 days for the ships to thread a passage through the 580km of treacherous waterways now known as the Straits of Magellan. During the passage, the crew of the "San Antonio" mutinied and returned to Spain with most of the supplies. Three of Magellan's ships reached the ocean to the west of South America.

This ocean was relatively calm so they named it the Pacific Ocean.

The distance to the Spice Islands was much greater than Magellan had anticipated. By the time the expedition reached Guam in March 1521, the crew were eat-



I can't let Italy go without mentioning Villa D'este (for us water lovers). This is a property with a magnificent garden at a place called Tivoli, which is in the hills overlooking Rome. The garden has 600 fountains and was built in 1560. This place is an engineering marvel, considering when it was built, and the fact that every fountain is gravity fed from a waterfall higher up (no pumps). How they got all those different size fountains to work at once is amazing. I'm sure some of our design engineers could do it now though.

I urge you to google Villa D'este and have a look at some of the photos.

- *to be continued next edition. Thanks Trevor. We, too went to Tivoli and the Villa D'este and also (the ruins of) Hadrian's Palace which was fabulous - Ed*

ing the leather from the masts, scurvy had broken out, and 19 men had died. There was still a long way to go.

Upon reaching the Cebu Islands in the Phillipines, Magellan determined to subjugate the natives and make them loyal to Spain. This proved fatal for Magellan. He and about 40 of his men were killed on the island of Mactan in the overzealous pursuit of their goal. Pigafetta was with Magellan and provided a first hand account of his death. The survivors burned one of their ships, the "Conception," and escaped in the remaining two. On 8th November, 1521, the "Trinidad" and the "Vittoria" arrived in the Moluccas (Spice Islands) in Indonesia. Here they were loaded with cloves. The "Vittoria" set sail for Spain while the "Trinidad" remained behind for repairs.

The "Trinidad" eventually sailed east towards South America. A number of men deserted and more than half of the original crew died of scurvy. The ship then headed back towards the Spice Islands. It was captured by the Portuguese and destroyed by a storm. Four of the crew finally made it back to Europe.

Meanwhile, the "Vittoria" sailed home using the normal Portuguese route around the Cape of Good Hope. Scurvy killed many men and the Portuguese imprisoned others in the Cape Verde Islands. Only 17 of the crew, and Pigafetta, arrived back in Spain.

These men, under the command of Sebastian del Cano, were the first to circumnavigate the earth.

The information in Pigafetta's diary is invaluable to historians.

Answers to Terry's Trivia on page 11

- (iii) matchsticks;
- (iv) Cut into thin long strips;
3. 55;
- (i) Periodic Table;
- (iii) F. Magellan;
- (iii) Men;
- (v) 3 years;
- (v) 7 billion;
- (iv) Mark Twain;
- (iv) 1670km/h;
- (iv) vape.

"The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy."

Roman Holiday

Pat McCourt

The erudite readers of this newsletter will no doubt have read *She* by Henry Rider Haggard. The principal character is Ayesha (pronounced Assha) which means “*She who must be obeyed*” (SWMBO). Well, SWMBO decided that we should go to Italy. That got me thinking. I had read quite a lot about ancient Rome over the years. I can recall reading Edward Gibbon’s famous *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* when I was quite young. But I didn’t know very much about modern Italy at all. It was time to broaden our education.

Now, I promise that this travel monologue won’t be as long as my last one. However, I’ve recalled the words of Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*. “*Begin at the beginning,*” the King said, *very gravely, “and go on till you come to the end : then stop”*. And that’s what I will try to do.

So it was that Ros and I found ourselves at Fiumicino Airport in Rome in late August 2014. The airport opened in 1961, and I’m sure that some of the original visitors were still in the queue for passport control. The crowd waiting to be admitted to Italy was huge, and the organisation to access the few passport officers was a shambles. It was so bad that people were taking photographs. What an introduction to Italy which we entered something over 90 minutes later. Still, we weren’t prepared to adversely prejudice Italy despite the less than salubrious start.

We had arrived in Rome a few days before joining our tour group in early September. The timing brought to mind the poem entitled “*September Changes*” by Jessica Millsaps.

*Its cool breezes start out warm,
Changing to cold throughout every storm
The leaves change and fall
As the Summer leaves and Autumn kisses us all.*

Well, it wasn’t quite like that. The European summer was the most unseasonably long in 50 years; there was little rain; and it was very hot throughout our tour. However, here we were in our hotel in Rome quite close to the Vatican. We spent our first few days recovering from jet lag, and wandering around the Vatican and down the streets to the Castel Sant’ Angelo near the Tiber River. I noticed that there were motifs on public assets showing Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she wolf with the letters SPQR. This stands for *Senatus Populusque Romanus* which is latin for “The Senate and People of Rome”. SPQR originally appeared on the legionaries’ eagle battle standards in ancient times. Now the letters appear on Council rubbish bins and sewerage manhole lids.

Then it was off on a coach tour for two weeks. Most of our companions were Canadians with a few Americans and a couple of Australians. And what an enjoyable bunch they were. Our Tour Director was

fantastic as well, and he couldn’t do enough for us. The coach driver was an absolute professional and he drove safely for the entire trip. All the hotels chosen by the tour company were also of a very high standard.

One of the first things that our Director told us was that Italians don’t think of themselves as Italians at all. This doesn’t make much sense to many Australians. However, Italy was only unified in 1861 which isn’t really all that long ago. Italy consisted of small principalities and dukedoms prior to that, and this is in common with many modern European nations. Apparently many Italians still think of themselves today in terms of the region and the village where they were born rather than having a truly national outlook. There are also significant regional cultural and language differences.

We went on an orientation tour of Rome which included the Colosseum, Vatican museum, and the Sistine Chapel. Then it was off to the south to visit Positano, the Amalfi Coast, Sorrento, the Isle of Capri, and Pompeii.



The beautiful Amalfi Coast.

We stayed in a hotel on the Bay of Naples with views across the water to Vesuvius hulking threateningly over modern day Napoli. Nearby Pompeii was obliterated by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD. The Italian archaeologists have done a wonderful job of excavating and presenting Pompeii, and we spent a few very interesting hours there. But now our heads are turning north and we’re off to Assisi.

Almost everyone must have heard of St Francis of Assisi. He was famous for his empathy with the animal world, but he’s revered throughout Italy for his efforts to return to the original teachings of Christ whilst living an unostentatious life. He was the common man for the common man, but still a gifted intellectual. The township of Assisi and the Basilica were well presented, and it was very much worth the visit. But now we’re going to Venice.

- and we look forward to getting there in the next edition. As usual, Pat, thank you for another enjoyable account of your adventures - Ed.

"I'm not afraid of death; I just don't want to be there when it happens."

SunWater

In regard to the change of government, the word from SunWater is that it is too early for any major changes to be effected on their structure or operation. As a Government Owned Corporation, SunWater has two share-holding Ministers - the Treasurer, Curtis Pitt and Mark Bailey, the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply. With an obviously complex work load, Mr Bailey will take some time to "come up to speed". In any case, the new government is going through a phase of asking questions before proposing answers.

There is at least one definite change. With asset sales now firmly off the agenda, the sale of pipelines will not proceed.

However, the staff of SunWater have been extremely busy of late. An issue prominent in the media resulted from the recent cyclone Marcia which produced heavy rainfall resulting in the automatic opening of the gates on Callide Dam with an impact on downstream areas including the township of Jambin. Tom Vanderbyl was one officer who faced the questions from the media. The issue is now under investigation.

We members of WRRRA have a very indirect association with the naming of cyclones. It was Queensland's first meteorologist, Clement Wragge, who came

News from DEWS

There is not a great deal to report on change – the message from the Director General Dan Hunt being to continue on with the existing program priorities until further advice.

Mark Bailey, the member for Yeerongpilly, is the new Minister for Energy and Water Supply and is also the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports. Mark is a registered high school teacher and was earlier a councillor for the Moorooka Ward in the Brisbane City Council.

Another significant change though not related to the change of government followed the departure of Abel Imaraj from the position of General Manager, Water Supply Planning last December. Bob Reilly is now responsible for both water supply regulation and for water supply planning.

Regarding some of the major programs in the water side of the department, work has continued to explore options to better protect the major communities in south east Queensland from flooding. Following the Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams Optimisation Study, the department reported last December on preliminary studies of a large number of flood mitigation infrastructure options including new dams and upgrades to existing dams. The report recommended that more detailed feasibility studies proceed to examine combinations of dam safety upgrades for Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams, raisings of Wivenhoe Dam, a new dam at the Linville site in the upper Brisbane River and a retention basin on Warrill Creek near Willowbank intended to reduce flood peaks in the Bremer

up with the idea of giving them the names of people. For many years, women's names only were used, but more recently men have had equal billing. Clement had come to Brisbane in 1886, his arrival being followed immediately by a deluge which earned him the nickname "Inclement Wragge". He died in 1922, but his son Bert became a Stream Gauger (later renamed a hydrographer) in 1909 in the newly formed Stream Gauging Branch of the Hydraulic Engineer's Department. He remained with the section until his retirement in 1951.

Despite Clement Wragge's great contribution to the science of meteorology, (to quote from *Watery Sauces*) "... perhaps his reputation had taken a battering when, in Charleville in September 1902 he attempted to end the long drought with a rainmaking experiment. Embracing an Aboriginal belief that persistent noise attracted rain, one afternoon Wragge bombarded the unresponsive skies with the noise of six Italian cannon firing at regular intervals. No rain fell. Wragge soon departed for New Zealand."

Footnote: Did anyone else notice that when the cyclone was in the early stages of formation and was given the name Marcia, the meteorologist at BOM pronounced it "Marsia"? But before too long, the name segued into the Americanised version "Marsha". No further comment required - Ed.

River and benefit the Ipswich community.

Another major initiative involves the department working with local governments to more fully understand water supply security at urban communities throughout the state. Key elements of the assessments being made are to agree on the growth and associated water demand forecast and to examine the capacity of the existing water supply source / system in meeting the forecast demand. Performance statistics like the frequency and probability of demand not being met, how often and for how long the various levels of restrictions are likely to occur, are displayed under various total demands that account for the identified growth. On the basis of these assessments, councils will be better able to consider whether to modify their restriction regime, achieve water savings, undertake planning and or develop additional sources of supply.

Separately in the water sector reform area, the possible transition of SunWater's irrigation areas to local management arrangements has progressed following consideration of business proposals from each of the area's interim boards. The previous government determined that a "Special Purpose Vehicle" company be established for the Emerald, Eton, St George and Theodore areas so that the transition to local management could commence and that further investigations proceed for the other four areas prior to a government decision as to the timing and nature of their transition. The new government are to consider whether to proceed on this basis.

Lee Rogers

Many thanks to Lee for this info - Ed.

HEALTH *and beauty*

The Rest is Silence *(sorry, Shakespeare!)*

Dr Karl Kruszelnicki is well-known for his all round knowledge of all things scientific. So we should all take notice when he recommends that we should, in our hot climate, take an afternoon nap.

While he notes that the practice is not common in Australia, the siesta is the norm in places such as Spain, Italy and the Philippines and it has substantial benefits.

“An afternoon nap gives you more protection from heart disease than a cholesterol-free diet or an exercise program,” claims Dr Karl, citing research by Athens doctors that a 30 minute siesta cut the chances of heart disease by 30%. He said that an afternoon nap fitted in with natural body rhythms.

He said the Spanish had a daily siesta, but it was often more about sex than sleep. They knock off work, go home and have sex - usually with their partners, but not always.

Famous people who had siestas include Bill Clinton (and he sometimes did nap), Winston Churchill, Napoleon Bonaparte, Albert Einstein and Margaret Thatcher.

Sleep deprivation can have serious impacts because it affects awareness, reaction times and decision making. A Canadian study showed a 7% increase in car accidents in the week immediately after the change in daylight saving time when people got an hour’s less sleep.

A further study by Harvard Medical School in Boston revealed yet another hazard to a good night’s sleep – reading e-books before turning out the light. Apparently the blue light from these devices suppresses the production of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin, resulting in readers taking longer to fall asleep, having a reduced quality of sleep and being less alert the next morning than those who read printed books.

Statistics

The Courier-Mail recently carried an article extolling the virtues of regular exercise, claiming that it reduced the incidence of heart disease and REDUCED THE DEATH RATE. *Silly me – I always thought the death rate was 100% regardless.* - Ed.

A Bloody Good Thing

A Scottish-led consortium of medical experts is using stem cell technology to create a limitless supply of fresh human blood in the laboratory for use in clinics around the world. The £5 million “BloodPharma Project” is being led by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service. A spokesperson said: “Because we make them from human cells, they are as nature intended. It’s the same thing your body makes but we’re just doing it in a lab. If I take a bag of blood from your arm, some cells would be brand new. But some of them would be 110 or 120 days old and about to die. These cells won’t do you much good.” The team originally responded to a specific call from the US military in 2007. They wanted scientists to help them build a machine no bigger than two and a half washing machines that could be dropped from a helicopter on to a battlefield and generate stem-cell-derived blood for injured soldiers. The team’s application was not successful, but they refocused their efforts and set off on a more utopian mission – to develop a similar technology to create a limitless supply of clean, laboratory-grown blood for use in clinics around the world. Using blood made from stem cells would unshackle blood services from the limits of human supply, and any risk of infection would be removed.

Thanks to Ross Stewart for this good news
- Ed.

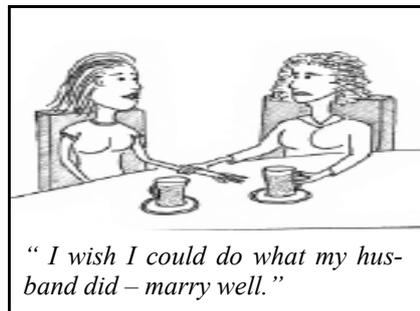
Exercise those Brain Cells



Q: At a party recently, we decided to play a card game with the following rules:

- The losers on each hand put 5 cents into kitty.
- The winner of each hand takes 25 cents from kitty
- The winner of the last hand collects all of kitty
- We play until everybody has won at least one hand.

I won the last hand and thus had \$1 more than I started with.
How many of us played and how many hands did we play?



“I wish I could do what my husband did – marry well.”

Answer to last Issue’s Teaser

You were asked to ‘decode’ this quotation from Oscar Wilde:
BMM1CBE2QPUSZ3TQSOHT4GSPN5HFVJOF6GFFMJOH

Answer: Remove the numbers, which are just word spacers, and move each letter back one to create “All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling.”

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”



I always thought the North Stradbroke Island ferry transported vehicles and living passengers. And I know that burial at sea is illegal, but – ?

How Come - ?

The siesta, recommended on page 10, has been in vogue in Mediterranean countries for centuries. And here is its origin - Ed.

A tale difficult to digest

Frederick II (1196-1250) became King of Sicily at the age of 4 and Holy Roman Emperor subsequently. In middle-age, he suffered badly from indigestion and stomach complaints from which his doctors could provide no relief. A new physician asked what he did immediately after his regular large midday meal. The king replied that he rode to hunt, just as his father Henry and his grandfather Frederick I had done. The physician suggested that a post-prandial rest might aid his digestion. Initially Frederick scoffed at the idea but, being naturally curious, he decided to conduct an experiment. He brought two condemned prisoners from prison, had them bathed, groomed and sumptuously dressed before presenting them with a huge midday meal. After the meal, one was sent to ride and hunt and the other directed to sleep. After some hours when one had returned from the ride and the other had awoken, Frederick had them both put to death and the contents of their stomachs examined to see which had the better digestion. It was, of course, the sleeper. So Frederick decreed that henceforth his entire court would sleep after dinner – the origin of the siesta which is still practised today.

Post-prandial Activities

Said the boss with his angry arms flapping,
 "You're late back from lunch again, Lester!"
 "I have to explain that I wasn't caught napping,
 I'd just slipped off home to see Esther."

A Sign of the Times

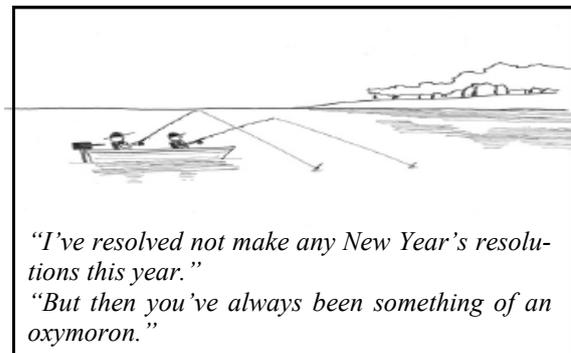
On a Northside Fitness Centre

Birthday suits tailored here

Terry's Trivia

Questions from the 2014 Christmas luncheon. Answers on page 7

1. When a chef 'juliennes' a vegetable the result looks like: (i) cubes; (ii) rings; (iii) matchsticks; (iv) shredded stuff; (v) shavings
2. To prepare a chiffonade with a bunch of basil you would: (i) Deep fry it; (ii) Puree it, then whisk into a light foam; (iii) Finely chop and make a drink with lemonade; (iv) Cut it into thin long strips; (v) Ask your partner to do it.
3. Leonardo of Pisa (Fibonacci) is credited with introducing the number system 1,2,3,4... from India to Europe in the 13th century. The next number in the Fibonacci sequence 8, 13, 21, 34, is: ...?
4. Dmitri Mendeleev (1834-1907) is credited with: (i) creating the Periodic Table of elements; (ii) Winning Wimbledon; (iii) Composing a Russian Folk song; (iv) Dancing the balalaika; (v) Walking to the North Pole.
5. Who named the Pacific Ocean (16th century): (i) Captain Cook; (ii) Joseph Banks; (iii) Ferdinand Magellan; (iv) Marco Polo; (v) Vasco da Gama.
6. Androphobia is a dislike of: (i) Anyone named Andrew; (ii) Shopping centres; (iii) Men; (iv) Reverse parking; (v) Bus travel; (v) Smoke.
7. A snail can sleep for: (i) A day (ii) A week; (iii) A month; (iv) A year; (v) 3 years.
8. The global population is 6.8 billion. How many mobile phone subscriptions are there? (i) 3 billion; (ii) 4 billion; (iii) 5 billion; (iv) 6 billion; (v) 7 billion.
9. The first author to submit a typewritten book for publication was: (i) Charles Dickens; (ii) Walt Whitman (iii) Charles Darwin; (iv) Mark Twain;
10. The Earth's rotational velocity at the equator is: (i) 1.67km/h; (ii) 16.7km/h; (iii) 167km/h; (iv) 1670km/h; (v) 16 700km/h.
11. Which word did the OED choose as its 2014 'word of the year': (i) selfie; (ii) budtender; (iii) slacktivism; (iv) vape; (v) bae.



"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

Book Club

In 1829, in northern Iceland, Agnes Magnúsdóttir was one of three found guilty of a brutal murder. She was sentenced to death – to be beheaded by an axe wielded by the brother of her victim. But prior to the execution she was sent to wait out the time on a farm owned by District Officer Jon Jonsson, also occupied by his wife, two daughters and some servants.

This real life event was the inspiration for a moving first novel by Australian author Hannah Kent titled *Burial Rights*.

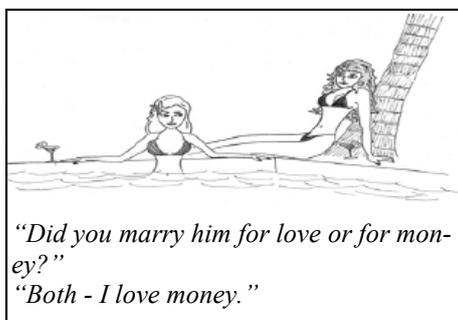
Naturally the Jonsson family are extremely apprehensive about sharing accommodation with a violent murderer and avoid speaking to her, although they take advantage of her as a worker on this subsistence-level farm. A young assistant reverend has been appointed by the authorities to provide Agnes with spiritual guidance.

As the summer months give way to the harshness of the Icelandic winter, Agnes’s ill-fated tale begins to emerge, revealing the circumstances of her life that led inexorably to her present situation. But was she really guilty as charged? Whose version of the story is the correct one?

Burial Rites is a remarkable piece of writing as, in beautiful prose, it explores the social and physical landscape of this harsh country at this stage of its development and questions the nature of personal freedom and the capacity of people thrown together by fate to develop or endure relationships.

Thoroughly recommended.

Ian Pullar



Bad Science by Ben Goldacre is an amusing, yet somewhat horrifying exposure of “The mountebanks and bullshitters who misuse science.”

To quote from the introduction, “this book ... follows a natural crescendo, from the foolishness of quacks, via the credence they are given by the mainstream media, through the tricks of the £300 billion food supplements industry, the evils of the £300 billion pharmaceuticals industry, the tragedy of science reporting, and on to cases where people have ended up in prison, derided, or dead, simply through the poor understanding of statistics and evidence that pervades our society.”

As Goldacre assets, “I meet individuals who are eager to share their views on science despite the fact that they have never done an experiment. ... To these people ‘science’ is a monolith, a mystery and an authority, rather than a method.” (*I am reminded of all the ‘experts’ out there who know all about dam hydrology and operation.* -Ed)

The book was written in 2008, and the world doesn’t seem to have corrected the errors of its ways. Goldacre is a writer, broadcaster and doctor best known for his ‘Bad Science’ column in the *Guardian*. He works full-time for the NHS.

Ian Pullar

Fans of Jane Austen will be delighted to hear (if they don’t already know) of **The Austen Project**. Originated by Joanna Trollope, the project pairs six bestselling contemporary authors with Jane Austen’s six complete works: *Sense & Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park*. Taking these well-loved stories as their base, each author will write their own unique take on Jane Austen’s novels. The Project launched with the release of Joanna Trollope’s reimagining of *Sense & Sensibility* in October 2013, and continued with Val McDermid’s reworking of *Northanger Abbey*, Alexander McCall Smith’s *Emma* and Curtis Sittenfeld’s *Pride & Prejudice*.

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