



# WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 104

March 2024

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## AGM Coming Up ...

The Annual General Meeting of the Water Resources Retirees Association will be held on 14 April in the Community Meeting Room in Brisbane Square Library.

Members and partners are invited to attend. They will hear reports on the activities of the association, including the centenary celebrations. It is expected that our patrons or their representatives will be present as usual to report on activities of their organisations, SunWater and the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water..

The meeting will also elect the office bearers who will manage the affairs of the Association for the next twelve months. Our current Secretary, Peter McMahon, is retiring from the position, but have no fear, a nomination for a replacement has already been received. Not that that should stop anyone who wants to nominate for that or any other position.

It would be really nice to meet again with former colleagues on one of the few opportunities available for social contact. And remember, on this occasion, the Association subsidises lunch for the attendees.

## From the Editor's Chair

*So the Covid epidemic is now a thing of the past. Is it? For the most part we all behave that it is over and life has returned to (more or less) normal. Yet there are still people every day succumbing to it, feeling ill, being hospitalised or even dying.*

*But we survivors certainly have to be enormously grateful to those brilliant scientists and technicians who created those wonderful vaccines in record time and against the odds. There is no doubt that living in the 21st century is way better than any other (though perhaps not in every respect.).*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## Future Events

**AGM 14 April**

### Technical Session—Paradise Dam

On 7 May SunWater will host a technical session on Paradise Dam at its offices 9/515 St Pauls Terrace, Fortitude Valley. There will be a further notice via the Secretary.

### Toowoomba Regional Gathering

Mid May—Mid June date to be advised. (See page 2)

### Mid-Year Luncheon

17 July (date to be confirmed) Coorparoo RSL and Community Club.

### Annual Golf Day

The traditional day out will be held again this year, probably in September, at a venue and on a date to be advised.

**Technical Session** hosted by the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water at 1 William Street. **August /September** (date and topic to be advised). Streaming/online participation will be an option.

### Granite Belt Trip

1 – 2 October. Details will be circulated for a pooled vehicle tour of sights of the Granite Belt.

### Annual Yeppoon Regional Gathering

Mike McKenna will be hosting his usual get-together in Yeppoon in October. Dates and details to follow.

### End of Year Luncheon

Date and venue to be determined (any suggestions?)

**The Committee is keen to sponsor regional gatherings and is delighted to contribute to the fore-shadowed Toowoomba event.**

*The rebuilding of Paradise Dam always reminds me of the historical facts: John Milton wrote Paradis Lost. His wife died. He then wrote Paradise Regained. – Ed.*

## Christmas Luncheon

The Christmas luncheon was duly held on Tuesday 28 November at the Coorparoo RSL and Community Club. Attendance was quite good, though we always hope for a few more to come along and share the conviviality. We were honoured to have both our co-patrons, Linda Dobe from the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, and Glenn Stockwell, CEO of SunWater, as our guests and very much enjoyed their presentations about the work of their respective organisations.



The attendees listening to the presentation of Glenn Stockwell. Clockwise from front right: Darlene Newlove, Beverley Robinson, Jenny Robson, Chris Robson, Geoff Eades, Helen Eades, Daryl Brigden, Lyn Brigden (obscured), Trevor Sleep, Tony Clarey, Susan Clarey, Margaret Corbett, Greg Claydon, Andrea Claydon, Terry Malone, Rob Ayre, Chris Ayre, Judy Ferrier, Ian Ferrier, Peter Reid, Don Gardiner, Helen Pullar, Linda Dobe and Ian Pullar. The vacant chair is Gary Corbett's as he is behind the camera.,

As usual, the attendees were intellectually challenged by Terry Loos's trivia, some of which can be found on page 13.

It is planned to hold the mid-year luncheon at the same venue on 14 July. Further notice will be given and it is hoped there will be good attendance,

## Toowoomba Regional Get Together

David Free, Jim Weller and Adrian McKay have put their heads together and are planning a 'Wateries Get Together' in late May or early June depending on venue and people's availability. A Wednesday is the preferred day of the week David had previously caught up with Dave Quinlan to confirm his availability for a presentation on Toowoomba's water security and future planning. Or whatever Dave thought would be most interesting. Dave Q also volunteered to investigate the possible use of library meeting rooms for the presentation.

The current plan is to hold an afternoon function commencing at 2.30 - 3 pm with a meet and greet, afternoon tea, presentation and discussion. Then those who wanted to stay would cross the street to the Burke and Wills Hotel for nibbles and drinks subsidised by WRRRA and meal if they so desired.

A further update will be provided once a function date is confirmed. Invitations will be issued to former Watery employees from the Region or from wider afield. It sounds like a great opportunity to get together and enjoy meeting up again. More information from [davidfree@iinet.net.au](mailto:davidfree@iinet.net.au) (although he may have some reception problems while on the high seas).

## Port of Brisbane and Fort Lytton

Tour 22 November 2023

Richard Steindl

### Port Tour

We all met at the Port Office at 9:30 am and then proceeded to the observation deck with our guide for the morning.

There was quite a spectacular view of the port and parts of the bay. The most noticeable items in view were the wind turbine towers and blades; there appeared to be hundreds of each. They were stored waiting dispatch to the field south of Warwick.



We boarded the bus for a tour around the port. The first stop was at a pile of what looked like a white aggregate. Daryl Brigden identified the product and gave us a run down on its use. Oyster shell, recycled from local restaurants, is packed into crates made of starch from potatoes, which are then placed in the sea to regenerate the oyster population. By the time the crates disintegrate the mass is cemented together by the oyster growth.

The next item of interest was an area stockpiling recycled metal for export; this included complete obsolete suburban trains.

We observed the driverless straddle trucks moving containers to from ship to truck. As an aside, I was involved with Brisbane's first container terminal at Hamilton No 2 wharf and part of that was laying buried cables along the straddle truck routes. By the time that the system was more or less operational the drivers were so experienced that they did not need the system.

We had a distant view of several bulk handling wharves, coal, woodchip, cement and grain.

The tour of the Port was very interesting to us all.



*They say such nice things about people at their funerals that it makes me sad that I'll miss mine by just a few days.*

### Fort Lytton Tour

At Fort Lytton we met up with our guide. Daley, who gave us a rundown of the area and then moved onto the fort itself, underground bunkers and gun emplacements. The fort was originally enclosed by a moat. It was interesting to walk through the bunkers and see the sorts of guns that were used for the different periods.

We then walked on top of the bunkers and stood beside one of the observation towers. It was a timber structure with a mass concrete bunker on top. It had a good view down the river. In time the timber structure decayed and the concrete bunker was on its side at the base of the slope. This particular position was used by the submariners who controlled the mines placed on the river bed. We stood on a horizontal slot in the underground bunker. This was where the sub mariners operated the mines. There was a horizontal sighting lever which automatically selected the mine located in the direction of the sight and selected the correct contact to set off that mine. The photo below shows a surplus mine being detonated. My Grandfather was a submariner at Fort Lytton at that time. Daley made a point of telling us of his involvement. I suspect that is why I scored the short straw to write this article. why I scored the short straw to write this article.



We spent some time in the museum buildings kindly opened for us by our guide, before most of us proceeded to the Hemmant Hotel for an excellent lunch.

*Thank you Richard for an interesting account of what was an interesting tour. I'm sorry I missed it. – Ed.*

### Keeping a Date

Suddenly there is a flurry of interest in vintage 1996 calendars which can be reused this year as both are Leap Years that begin on a Monday.

Second hand sites are selling hundreds of 1996 calendars with themes such as Star Wars, Barbie and Pamela Anderson. A Pocahontas calendar sold for \$US 149.99.

Calendars from 1968 and 1940 would also serve.

### Answers to Terry's Trivia (page 13)

1. (iii) Lucky Goldstar. 2. Luxemborg 3. (i) Penrith & (iv) Par-ramatta 4. (iv) 4 5. (ii) horse 6. (iv) Sicily 7. (v) Jon Rahm 8. (i) Canada 9. (iii) 66 10. (iv) red 11. (iii) 6 12. California



## Vale Allen John Seabrook 19 October 1925 – 19 January 2024

Born in London in 1925, Allen Seabrook was 14 when World War II commenced. His seafaring career commenced in December 1941 when he signed up as an apprentice seaman with the Athel Line (a subsidiary of United Molasses Ltd), after attending the Sir John Cass Nautical School in Jewry Street for 9 months. The school was part of the Technical Institute where budding mates and masters attended for tuition prior to sitting for a Certificate of Competence.

The Athel Line operated a fleet of tankers especially constructed for the carriage of molasses which had replaced sugar during the war when sugar was severely rationed. Molasses was collected from various ports in Cuba, then carried to New York, England and Canada and by 1942 Allen had completed 11 voyages to the West Indies. He always said that his memories were vague from that first year at sea, but he did recall how brutal and alarming the Atlantic storms were and remembered gaining, very early on, great admiration and gratitude for the personnel serving on the naval escorts. He also revealed frequent attacks from enemy submarines, but all unsuccessful until the fateful occasion when the enemy was successful. It was in 1943 and the *Athel Princess* was hit with two very accurately placed torpedoes. He was off watch at the time, in the top bunk and the force of the explosion landed him onto the deck, tangled up with the steam radiator which had become detached from the bulkhead. Luckily, the ship remained on a reasonably steady keel and so lifeboats were lowered, although there was no sign of the convoy as they were a few miles astern at the time. Ultimately, they were picked up by the *U.S.S. Hilary P. Jones* which the following night was kept very busy as further attacks on the convoy were made with three ships lost. Allen recalled at one point the naval ship even attempted to ram a U-boat.

He vividly recalled other adventures during the war until he finally returned home on leave in 1945 and was actually sitting his Second Mate Certificate exam when peace was declared.

After the war, Allen spent another 8 years working on cargo ships around the Australian coastline, before he moved permanently to Australia, marrying Gloria in 1952. With Rayner being born in 1955, Allen gave up his life at sea. He later joined the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in Brisbane. Interestingly enough, at one point all three of the Seabrook men were working there. Allen's father Arthur joined him for a number of years and even his son, Rayner, did a few brief stints during his Christmas vacations.

Allen really enjoyed this career and certainly became familiar with both the city and country areas of Queensland. Perhaps this is what also led to his later, dare we say, slightly obsessive measuring of rain precipitation out here at the Fairview Retirement Village from when he arrived with Gloria back in 2006. Allen retired from the Water Resources as Supervising Hydrographer for the Brisbane Region in 1985. Living first at Sherwood, then Oxley and later Chapel Hill, Allen and Gloria established lifetime friends, through the many and varied activities they both undertook. Many of their friends came from the Jindalee Bowls Club in which both Allen and Gloria were keenly involved. Being a frustrated golfer is what led Allen to bowls, where he was much more successful as a player. As well as bowls, both Allen and Gloria played bridge and were active members of Probus. He and Gloria enjoyed travelling both around Australia and abroad.

Allen lived at the Fairview Retirement Village, Pinjarra Hills, Brisbane. By now, you would have noticed a water theme running through Allen's story. Perhaps with a surname like Seabrook there was no escaping it. Certainly his naval career explains very clearly why his abode at the village was always so incredibly neat and tidy. Possibly also explains his obsession with being on time for everything and his ultimate loathing of taking taxis because of their failure to get him where he needed to be on time.

Allen became very involved with the village when he arrived and for many years assisted in securing the hall at night and lowering the flag each evening, on a monthly roster. Anzac Days and Remembrance Day won't be the same without Allen's participation and his readings of *In Flanders Field* and *The Ode*.

Allen had very few regrets in life but relinquishing his Driver's Licence at the young age of 95 was one of them, I'm sure it was much to the relief of other drivers on the road, but he never stopped complaining about it.

After he suffered a fall in late December 2023, the doctors at The Wesley Hospital decided Allen should go into respite and then high care. A room in the Anzac Wing was secured for him, where, unfortunately, he spent only one day before being sent back to The Wesley with norovirus. He passed away at 5.00 am on Friday morning 19 January 2024. Allen's son Rayner and his wife Anne suspect the idea of palliative care did not appeal and Allen decided it was time to go.



*This is an abridged version of the eulogy delivered by Allen's son Rayner and forwarded by Don Alexander.*

## Vale Michael Merrin 26 April 1949 – 8 January 2024

Michael Merrin was the third of seven children (five boys and two girls), all born in Gympie. There were only 2½ years separating Michael and his two older brothers, so they were pretty close growing up, not just in years. When Michael was around 11, the gang had the idea of damming the Mary River – a decision which may have set him on his future path.

After he completed his last year of school at Junior/Grade 10 level in 1964, he was offered a position as a cadet draftsman with IWSC in Brisbane. So in January 1965, Michael, as a young 15 year old, left home to head off to the big smoke in Brisbane to start a new life and his career. Michael would go on to progress to Supervising Draftsman and Planning Officer, achieving his Certificate in Civil Engineering and Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning degree (externally) along the way.

In the later part of the 1960s, Michael moved to the Department's Rockhampton office, in Quay Street. On weekends though, he used to tear up and down the Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and Brisbane and back again in his mini cooper S. Around the mid 70s he met a lady here in Rockhampton who was an English and Art teacher – her name was BOND, JAN BOND. They would go on to marry in January 1976 and live in Westwood for a while before returning to live in Rockhampton. Then in September 1981 their daughter Kate was born. Their little family also included a German Shepherd called Teddy and another called Petra came after Teddy.

In 1991, Michael, Jan and Kate, along with Petra, moved up to Innisfail where his career would continue its upward trajectory and reach new heights.

Michael was seconded to kick-start the Johnstone River Integrated Catchment Management Pilot Study. It was the first of its kind in Queensland. As Co-ordinator he spent three intensive years on this with a view to reducing land degradation and improving water quality. As a result of his efforts, in 1994 he was awarded an Australia Day Achievement medallion for, as the Department's press release stated at the time, "a job exceptionally well done."

That Press Release goes on to say in part "Mr Merrin is regarded as something of a father figure for Integrated Catchment Management in Queensland. Not only was the Johnstone Project Pilot Study the first in Queensland, it has been the most strategically successful – setting a benchmark in planning excellence."

Sadly Michael and Jan went their separate ways around the mid 1990s, which was a difficult time for all concerned, especially a young Kate.

Michael then headed over to Perth to take up a position with WA Water Authority and after 15 months or so, returned to a role back here in Rockhampton with his old Department. Then in 1998 he and Anne met and went on to marry, Michael becoming a step dad to Anne's daughter Elizabeth (or Lizzie as he called her).

In 2003, Michael was appointed the first CEO of the Fitzroy Basin Association – a position he held for around 12 months before returning to his old Department yet once again.

Michael continued working in the Rockhampton and later Brisbane offices until his position was made redundant in 2012 during Campbell Newman's reign in the top job. With his forced retirement and Anne's eventual retirement later, they both embarked on some overseas travel which included Italy where Michael established a connection with his mother's relatives there. They eventually moved to Buderim to live. As Michael used to say "one doesn't live at or in Buderim but ON Buderim".

Michael was a smart, intelligent man who was always wanting to expand his knowledge and understanding of things. He was organised, structured, methodical but practical in all that he said and did. He was a good man and a fine brother.

Abridged from the eulogy delivered by Mike's brother Bernard in Rockhampton on 23 January 2024.

*Mike (as we knew him) became Vice-President of WRRRA in 2015 (and then President in 2016). Newsletter 77 outlined his career as below. A tribute to Mike by Peter Gilbey is printed on the next page. – Ed.*

Mike spent the first 25 years as an engineering draftsman, initially in Brisbane (1965-69), then in Rockhampton (1969-90), where he was involved mainly in the design and documentation of on-farm water supply projects, initially for stages 2 and 3 of the Brigalow Development Scheme and later into broadscale irrigation systems. During this time, he also had a few short term stints in irrigation area design work in Emerald and Bundaberg.

He took over the drawing office in Rocky from Norm White when Norm moved to Brisbane in 1985 and he completed a degree in regional planning that same year.

He was transferred to Innisfail in 1990 to run the first Queensland Integrated Catchment Management Pilot Study for the Johnstone River Catchment (1990-94) He was also involved in the development of Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package Projects in the wet tropics (1994-1996), before moving to the brand new WA Water Corporation in Perth for 12 months or so as their Principal Catchment Planner.

He went back to Rocky in late 1997 where he worked with Mike McKenna initially in regional management and then in statewide service delivery management (1997-2003), before an 18 month stint as CEO of the Fitzroy Basin Association, then back to DNRM as Regional Manager, Catchment & Regional Planning, before a belated return to Brisbane in 2007 to work with Greg Claydon on national water reform. He took a VER in October 2012, but was asked to go back to DNRM in May 2014 for a 12 month stint to assist with the development of the new Water Act.

## Vale Mike Merrin

I first came to know Mike when I stepped off the train in Rockhampton to be met by Mike and Norm White after joining the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in 1970.

As it was a bit hot, they took me to the local pub for a most welcome drink and thus began a friendship which lasted over the years, sometimes we worked together, but often apart.

One thing stood out was Mick's centred approach to life both inside and out of his working life and the support he gave to his family and those he worked with despite some challenges along the way.

At Mick's funeral his brother Bernard provided further insight into a man who optimised all those things which provide a life long friendship over the past 50 - 60 years.

In his eulogy Bernard mentioned Mike's time at Innisfail where he was so highly regarded by his peers and local community as he put into practice the principles of catchment management. What was perhaps less known was the lasting friendships he created with members of the local community who also became lifelong friends.

One story I would like to share is how Mike used to play the role of taxi driver in his brand new Mini Cooper S, despite the space limitations he would manage to fit all of us who couldn't afford a car in to take us to work or the local dance.

One of his mates also recalls the occasional trip back to Brisbane for the weekend!

This also brings to mind the legendary Friday nights after work when Sam McCall held the floor, his Irish accent would become so broad we couldn't always follow the story and woe betide if you nodded your head at the conclusion, when you should have shaken it.

So now as we all get a bit older, we have to say farewell to our dear friend but as Bernard so eloquently reminds us, they can never take away our memory of our good mate Mike. RIP.

**Peter Gilbey**

A funeral was held for **Steve Ilic** in the Serbian Orthodox Church, Woolloongabba on 2 November. Steve was a long-serving member of the Hydrology Group.

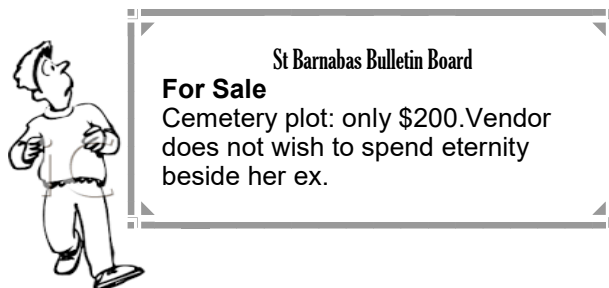
## Whither Goest WRRRA?

The Association of which we are proud members was created in 1985 as a vehicle for keeping former employees of the Water Resources Commission (and Irrigation and Water Supply Commission) in touch with each other and developments in their industry. Over the intervening period the Association has had 19 Presidents, 11 Secretaries, 8 Treasurers (and three Newsletter editors). Interestingly, the number of members has remained remarkably constant at around 200.

But the time gap between now and the end of the Water Resources Commission (1995) is becoming quite long and the connection between members and it perhaps more tenuous.

Spurred on by the highly successful centenary celebrations that brought so many other 'Wateries' out of the woodwork, the Committee has started to take an introspective look at the role of the Association. Is it simply a social body where former employees can get together occasionally or read news of former colleagues through the newsletter and correspondence or does it have other potential functions as the patron of historical information and artefacts? Or something else again?

We will be canvassing the views of members and other associates in the near future and would greatly value your input.



St Barnabas Bulletin Board

### For Sale

Cemetery plot: only \$200. Vendor does not wish to spend eternity beside her ex.

## Departmental News

*Items provided by Kathryn Clear, Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water*  
**New Water Strategy**

In October, the Minister launched the new *Queensland Water Strategy* in Gladstone at the Local Government Association of Queensland conference. The new strategy outlines the current status and future priorities in four broad areas: healthy waterways, First Nations partnerships, regional economic prosperity, and safe and secure water supply.

### **Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline**

On the same day, Minister Butcher went on to nearby Yarwun with the Premier for the sod-turning for the \$983 million, 117km Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline, which will deliver long-term water security to Gladstone residents and industry, and support emerging industries such as green hydrogen.

### **Borumba Dam Pumped Hydro**

Now that the Borumba Dam Pumped Hydro project had been declared a 'coordinated project' social, economic and environmental assessments can begin. This project is a 2,000MW pumped hydro energy-storage facility at Lake Borumba near Gympie, using the flow of water between two reservoirs to spin a turbine and generate electricity. It is a cornerstone of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, designed to accelerate decarbonisation and provide the long-duration storage needed for reliable renewable energy.

### **Mount Morgan Pipeline Project.**

All three levels of government have announced that they would fund the \$88.2 million Mount Morgan pipeline project. This 28km pipeline from Gracemere to Mount Morgan will provide water security for the Mount Morgan community, who have been on Level 6 water restrictions and using water carting for more than 2.5 years.

### **Water for the Quandamooka People**

With the end of sand mining on Minjerribah in 2019, water licences for mining operations have progressively expired and this has created an opportunity to transition water to the Quandamooka People. The Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation will permanently set aside half of the water previously held for sand mining to support the environment and for cultural values. The other half will be available for a range of purposes, including land rehabilitation and economic opportunities.

### **Paradise Dam**

While Sunwater will lead the project to entirely replace Paradise Dam, the department will provide governance oversight on behalf of the Queensland Government and facilitate the administration of funding to ensure the project's effective and efficient delivery.

## Sunwater Snippets

Julian Murphy

*Julian is a Senior Media and Communications Adviser*  
**Rookwood Weir**

Construction of Rookwood Weir, on the Fitzroy River 66 km south-west of Rockhampton, was completed in November 2023. The following month the weir filled and began spilling for the first time, allowing Sunwater to progress important activities required to allow customers to access water. These include testing of new weir infrastructure (wet commissioning), and finalising environmental approvals. Landholders who were successful in water sales are completing contractual requirements to finalise access to their water entitlement. Once these activities are complete, water will be available for use, hopefully before the end of the wet season.

### **Paradise Dam**

After serious concerns were raised about the long-term viability of Paradise Dam, extensive testing identified new issues regarding the long-term strength and quality of the dam's concrete in its original construction. Sunwater advised government that, in light of these results, no amount of improvement work would fix the existing dam wall. A new dam wall is planned.

Sunwater has recently appointed CPB Contractors / Georgiou as its major construction partner and GHD as the ongoing design partner for the project, which will ensure design and construction challenges for the new dam wall are considered and addressed early.

### **Mareeba Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme Efficiency Improvement Project**

New water will soon be available to growers in the Mareeba-Dimbulah region following the completion of an efficiency improvement project to improve water delivery. It was confirmed in February 2024 that the project has generated more than 11,500ML in annual savings, exceeding the expected 8,500ML originally forecast.

It has been more than 25 years since new water allocations have been available in the scheme and new water allocations will be auctioned in the coming months.

The improvement work included the replacement and installation of 14 km of pipeline, the installation of 125 automated control gates in irrigation channels and the upgrade of 157 water offtakes.

### **Engineering partnership**

Sunwater is focused on strengthening its position as an experienced and reliable water infrastructure business.

As the organisation continues to undertake a variety of complex and often interdependent projects, it announced a new partnership with Prosperity, a joint venture between AECOM and Jacobs, in late 2023.

This arrangement will ensure Sunwater can access a broad range of engineering capability to support its work and, in turn, build internal proficiency. Through the collaboration, Sunwater and its customers will benefit from increased efficiencies, improved engineering outcomes and knowledge sharing, economies of scale and new career path opportunities.

## Unpacking Our Past

Gary Corbett

### In Short

On 29 June this year, **Theodore** will be celebrating exactly 100 years since Mrs Partridge (wife of our first Irrigation Commissioner) turned on the electric lighting system for the then township of Castle Creek. In acknowledgment of the significant role which the IWSC played in the development of Castle Ck/Theodore, the Chamber of Commerce has invited the WRRRA to be part of an Official Party for the celebrations which, amongst other dignitaries, will include the Governor (Dr Janette Young, accompanied by husband Professor Nimmo) and Steven Theodore (the grand-nephew of Edward 'Red-Ted' Theodore, past Premier of Qld - staunch supporter of opening up 'The Dawson'; and driving force behind the passage of the *Irrigation Act of 1922*).

And if that is not enough, we are told that there is a chance that 'ABC Back Roads' may also be in town to cover the celebrations by 'The Town That Water Built', which run from Friday 28 to Sunday 30 June.

So this is a short story about how, by unpacking our past by researching public-domain sources seeking out historical material (initially for our Q100 celebrations), an almanac of sorts has been able to be built on that earlier research to cover the unique involvement of the IWSC in the growing of the Theodore community. The link to '**Collections and Recollections**' was circulated initially to WRRRA members and subsequently to the organising committee for Theodore's 100<sup>th</sup> for use as they best see fit. And Jon Henry tells us there have been a few hits on the [History Page](#).

### How the Unpacking Started

Around three years ago, a sub-committee of Bruce Pearce and I started planning our Q100 events and embraced an invitation by Newsletter Editor Ian to write a

Special Edition. In the absence of any 'organic' content being available, I started searching 'the net' and stumbled across an item which, although non-IWSC, I considered could be of interest to our community anyway, albeit possibly not widely known: 'The Oldest Concrete Arch Dam in the World' – an old Queensland Rail dam on a hillside south of Warwick. (It is proposed that an opportunity to visit the site may be included in the proposed Granite Belt trip in October. Interested parties can also do their own investigation at) [https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-01/EHA%20No\\_9-Oct99\\_1\\_1.pdf](https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-01/EHA%20No_9-Oct99_1_1.pdf)

This discovery lit a fuse and sent my research into over-drive, to find out what else of significance could be buried out there somewhere and easily discoverable simply by tying a few search words into a web browser. What followed has been the recent 'unpacking' of a significant amount of material off 'the net' to build a story around the unique involvement of the IWSC with the DVIA and Theodore – what a proud heritage is buried on 'the net'. Research has been further supplemented from the State Library; State Archives and the Dawson Folk Museum 'Collections'.

### THE COMMITTEE IS NOW SEEKING 'RECOLLECTIONS' YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THEODORE/DVIA

#### How You Can Make a Contribution

'**Collections and Recollections**' is a living document – it is the first time that we have engaged with members this way. If successful, it may not be the last as there is so much more out there to 'unpack' while we are all still standing. So if you have any '**Recollections**' about Theodore / DVIA that you may wish to share with others, please forward them to Peter McMahon at [secretary@watersauces.org.au](mailto:secretary@watersauces.org.au) for inclusion in the document.



The Theodore Chamber of Commerce is organising a wonderful centenary celebration of their vibrant town, commemorating the historic moment when Mrs Partridge and Governor Nathan initiated Theodore's essential services in 1924. The weekend of 28 & 29 June will be filled with events, special guests, and an opportunity to showcase the spirit of the community to a wider audience. Her Excellency, the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM, and Professor Nimmo will be in attendance on Saturday, 29 June for an official ceremony.

Apart from the official proceedings, events will include a Dance function, School tours for former pupils and teachers, School Roll Call, museum visits, entertainment, markets, and food vans, bar, local cafes and a Lights ceremony at 7.00 pm on Saturday.

WRRRA is delighted to be included as honoured guests as we are conscious of our role in the creation of *The Town that Water Built*.

For more details, contact Anne Chater or email [theodorechamber@outlook.com](mailto:theodorechamber@outlook.com).



## Fred Haigh

*This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fred Haigh's death, literally in office. The Committee therefore thought it appropriate to mark this occasion with a brief biographical feature on the man who had such an influence on our industry and our careers. The information is drawn from a number of sources - Ed.*

Frederick Bruce Haigh was born in Melbourne, Victoria in 1912. Frederick received his education at Coburg High School before beginning his career in 1928 as a Survey Assistant and Draftsman for Victoria's State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, earning his stripes as an engineer of the First Mildura Irrigation Trust through experience on the Western District Towns Water Supply and Mildura District Sub Surface Drainage Schemes. During World War II he served in 17th Field Company Royal Australian Engineers, rising to the rank of Major. He saw service in New Guinea and New Britain, as a Major commanding a field company constructing roads, airstrips, bridges, wharves, water supplies and buildings, and was mentioned in dispatches. At the end of World War II, he was discharged from active duty in 1946, but he retained his interest in the RAE. He continued service in the Citizen Military Forces and in 1956 he became a Member of the Order of the British Empire - Military Division.



He joined the Queensland Irrigation Commission in 1948 and in 1949 became Deputy Chief Engineer. He then served as Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply from 1955 until his death in 1974.

Frederick's work with the Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission saw him rise to the rank of Commissioner, a career-headlining role that saw him completely reshape and reinvigorate the development of irrigation within the State. Often described as efficient and innovative, Frederick employed the latest technologies to his projects and was responsible for the construction of 14 large dams and the increased number of weirs from 16 to 65.

Frederick became the President of the Institution of Engineers in 1970 after serving on the Brisbane Divisional Committee from 1952 as a Chairman and a member of the Council of the Institution.

On 15 July 1974, the unthinkable happened when 61-year-old Fred died. No doubt a regimen of long days of work and smoking had contributed to his demise. Ironically, his clerk, 'Nobby' Clark had always reckoned that Fred's lifestyle would kill him, but had himself predeceased Fred. For over 20 years Fred had given himself unstintingly to the state, working day and night and weekend after weekend. Fred has been described by those who knew him as an outstanding public servant, widely regarded in his profession as an irrigation expert.

The Monduran Dam, under construction at the time of his death, was named the Fred Haigh Dam upon completion.



## Floods and Fred

Not only does 2024 mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Fred Haigh, it also marks half a century since the catastrophic 1974 Australia Day flood.

To quote from *A People's History* "Unprecedented rain due to a cyclonic disturbance began to fall just before the weekend and continued. Local creek flooding occurred and Commission volunteers moved into Rocklea to protect the stores, equipment and records stored there. About a score of people ( *I was one of them* -Ed.) lifted the gear above flood level. Fred Haigh was so grateful he shouted hamburgers all round. Overnight the rain continued, the Brisbane River rose and the Rocklea complex was flooded, right over the relocated material. The files were a soggy mess and not much could be retrieved.

"Fred Haigh was very upset about the severity of the flood and his inability to do anything about it. He rang Alan Wickham on the Saturday to see if he could check out the situation – Fred himself was floodbound. Alan made it round the ridges from Balmoral to the Rocklea Overpass where he explained to the police why he wanted to get as close as possible to the complex. From the water's edge he could see only the roofs of buildings. Alan reported this back to Fred, who took it very badly. Alan suspected that the after-effects contributed significantly to his demise only six months later."

# Chappos Big Lap

**Jon Chapman**

*Readers may well recall that in previous articles, Jon Chapman had threatened to undertake a great trip and to share his experiences with us. So here we go – Ed.*

On 1 April 2022, we set off on our Big Lap, our trip of a lifetime around Australia.

## ***Before we left***

The trip of a lifetime was planned to start in June then September 2021. The dreaded COVID interfered in so many ways and eventually the trip actually didn't start until 2022.

The new van contract was signed June 2020 for delivery March 2021. That dragged out and the delivery date was changed to June, then August, then we were 12<sup>th</sup> in line and then on Xmas Eve 2021 it arrived.

Once we had the van, the fun began. It towed like a dog; the culprit was found to be loose axles! We had weight issues with both the van and the car (Isuzu MUX). Several trips over the Gympie weighbridge, a GVM upgrade for the MUX, add a weight distribution hitch and we were ready to go.

Before we left, we had a trip to Brisbane in January and it rained constantly for four days, so we knew it didn't leak!!

## ***Leg 1 Queensland***

The planned first stop was Nindigully, a bit of bucket list thing for Jon, but when we got to Dalby it was an island in the sea. After four years in Charleville the Warrego Highway was our least preferred option but.... Warra first night, then Dulacca and our first bit of fun, bogged behind the pub after an overnight shower. Great decomposed granite sites but the spoon drains were black soil gullies!!

Roma, Bollon and then Charlotte Plains Station (near Cunnamulla) and another bucket list ticked with the cast iron baths on the bore drain. They run an open drain with permission from the govt for their tourism enterprise, but it is actually pumped from a controlled bore. Anyway it rained again, the camp is 4km off the highway and yep bogged again!!

Onto Yowah, Quilpie (incl Eromanga and a beer at the Royal where Bob Whittington and I were entertained by Johnny Walker in 1988) before a few days in Charleville. Caught up with some of the few left in the Ville, and did the tourist things, the Bilbies, the Cosmos Centre and the new WWII Base attraction.

Off to Tambo and Blackall before the stop from hell at Ilfracombe. It rained and rained and rained; flooded in for 7 days! Ilfracombe has just a pub and a CP these days, so it was lucky we stocked up on bread and UHT milk at Blackall. We weren't alone, the CP people were great, the pub was pumping, and everyone made good from a bad situation. Incidentally this was the last time we saw rain until we got to Carnarvon in WA in July.

Next stop was Winton and we did the dinosaur and outback centres. Alas the trip had to be changed yet again

due to flooding. Visits to Old Cork Station on the Diamantina, Boulia and Dajarra to Mt Isa were not possible.

A stop at McKinlay and the Walkabout Creek Hotel was followed by Mt Isa. Leanne had been a bit off at McKinlay and at Mt Isa tested positive for COVID. She was "house" bound for five days, while Jon did all the chores and fingers crossed dodged the plague. Our last stop in Queensland was Camooweal on 8 May.

Along the way water stories were everywhere; in particular the stories of how the GAB keeps the country alive, but also the tales of the drovers on the Outer Barcoo, the Thomson, and the Diamantina in flood made good reading.

## ***Leg 2 Northern Territory***

The Barkly was in its prime after a good wet season. We had stops at Barkly Homestead, Banka Banka Station before we hit Daly Waters – another bucket list spot and it didn't disappoint. The sign out front of the pub that says ". wind your watch back 7 years and 15 mins ..." sums it up fairly well. The wild west is alive and well. COVID was impacting as businesses struggled to keep up the staffing levels required as the caravan park turned over 130 per day. Across the road from the pub is Tim's Junk Yard, a museum of sorts. It looked like a tip from the outside, but inside was about \$3M worth of restored cars, bikes and trucks.

As we pushed up the track, we realised how much of the WWII story was never told in school. The bases that were established as far south as Daly Waters and areas that were bombed other than Darwin were a big surprise.

Stops at Mataranka (hot springs) and Katherine (the gorge) were followed by Big Horse Creek near the Victoria River before we crossed into WA on 22 May.

We had never planned to go to Darwin, having been there in the 80s and anyway the aim was to get to WA and the expanses of the Kimberley.

## ***Leg 3 Western Australia (Kimberley)***

First stop Kununurra and the mighty Ord. As we all know access to water makes such a difference, beautiful parks, channels thru town but other than sandalwood it seems like the promise is just that, for now anyway. Big plans are being talked for cotton (again) and lots of others, the water is there the markets are just too far away and the cost to develop infrastructure too great.

We did a day trip to Wyndham, so much used to happen there. There were majestic views from the Five Rivers (Ord, King, Pentecost, Durack, Forrest) Lookout converging on the Cambridge Gulf. It's rugged, it's harsh, and the people who live here are tough. The wet would be so good to see.

We also took a day cruise on Lake Argyl. The dam wall is so small for the body of water it holds back. The ponded storage is massive, we spent about 6 hours on the water and often could barely see the banks. We did just over 115 kms on the water, at times I said to Leanne we could be in the Whitsundays. To finish off a magic day, we got to see a sunset whilst still out on the water, hard to describe, fairly magical.

*Continued next page*

## Chappos Big Lap *continued*

Before going much further I'll make a comment on the most talked about issue on a trip like this. From as early as Roma the word amongst travellers was, do you feel safe? Do you lock up? How do you deal with the indigenous people? The issues just gets far more obvious from Queensland to the NT and then much bigger in this part of WA. Some would have us believe there is no issue, but that's putting your head in the sand stuff, there is an issue but in the main its common sense and respect other people's differences. The criminal element isn't confined to the indigenous, so yes you lock up and only leave out what you're prepared to lose. In the streets if they talk to you, talk to them like anyone else. Some advice we got was camp in caravan parks on the edge of town; not in town if you can. Thieves are lazy generally.

Another piece of advice was go with your gut, if a place makes you feel unsafe move on. This was the case with both Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing but nowhere else. Both these places have serious issues with alcoholism and now drugs, just like a few places along the Queensland coast. However it's serious when ice is part of the day to day life of 10 to 15 year olds.

After Kununurra we ticked another bucket list item with a visit to the Bungle Bungles. We did a full day tour in a 4x4 bus, the road in is horrendous! We got to see all the sites and did two long walks. It's a truly stunning part of Australia everyone should see. An interesting fact, the Bungle Bungles are surrounded by five properties which had just been acquired by Twiggy Forrest for \$75M and one has just had a monstrous amount of platinum found under it!!

To avoid Halls Creek, we stayed on a farm stay, Larrawa Station and then a place called Mimbi Caves. Both shared horror stories about Fitzroy Crossing. Larrawa runs 6000 head of Brahmans, has 450kms fencing and has 40 water points. They use artesian and river water. They also have a property near Perth where cattle are sent for finishing before sale. Mimbi is an indigenous run tourist and cattle enterprise and they also have Mount Pierre Station in their holding. Larrawa are helping Ronnie the elder train up young indigenous to become ringers etc and hopefully get the property back ship shape in coming years. Ronnie took us on a tour of the Mimbi Caves, where aborigines hid out during WWII once bombing started at Darwin. Some 10 tribes lived in the caves for almost three years. Ronnie was one of the most level headed people I have ever met, not into blaming the world for his peoples' woes, just looking forward. Some German archaeologists stole fossils and artefacts at the turn of the century. As Ronnie said the old ladies approved it all, they didn't know any better. He shared his concern about getting the dreamtime story of the Kimberley written because places like Fitzroy Crossing, where four tribes' stories are lost to alcoholism and drugs. There are over 150 tribes (language groups he calls them) in the Kimberley, so if he can get all bar four stories written he'll be a very happy man.

We did the Geike Gorge tour at Fitzroy Crossing and

fuelled up there. It is a scary place when everything is encased in 25mm mesh. The local kids while on ice are also into Tik Toc, and they have a dare system in place where it started at stoning a car, then stealing a car, burning it etc. The current dare when we went through was stealing and burning a truck!

Onto Derby (dirty Derby according to some) where the red dirt invades everything and then Broome. \$10 for a dozen eggs in Derby! Broome is an odd place, beautiful and raw, very touristy and man-made in others. We toured a pearl farm, did the Cable Beach sunset. Glad we missed the rush though. Since COVID the town swells from 35000 residents to 75000 people in the tourist season. It struggles to cope but the money is good. There is a prison smack bang in the middle of town with a large indigenous population; causes a few issues...

### **Leg 4 Western Australia (Pilbara)**

South into the Pilbara with stops at Sandfire Roadhouse, Pardoo Roadhouse and a trip into Marble Bar. We're into mining country, lots of quad trucks and either holes in the ground or tailings mounds. By the way the roads are first class.

First major stop was Port Hedland. People questioned why we would go here, its dirty, noisy and generally ugly. Well, you have to experience it! We did a Rio Tinto salt mine tour, 4000 hectares of salt farm, 98% pure salt, nearly all exported. They buy D10s for \$1M, spend \$1M rustproofing it and repeat every 10K hours. We also did what they call the Industry Tour through the port facilities of BHP, FMG and Reinharts. Conveyor belts that run for kilometres, reclaimer machines run from a desk in Perth, everything measured in billions\$\$\$. The trains are made up of 264 cars each and carry 35000 tonnes each. 70 trains and 300 road trains (quads) per day move in and out of PH. The ships are varied in size, but the big ones are 360 metres long and 60 metres wide. There were 14 in port, either being loaded or unloaded as supplies of all kinds also come into Port to supply the Pilbara and Kimberley. There were 46 ships off shore waiting their turn! The channel into Port is artificial and all ships are guided in by tugs and a marine Pilot (they get upwards of \$300K per annum). A recent innovation in the Port itself has reaped savings of approximately \$1M a year, using robotics and telemetry to better (quicker) get ships in and out of the Port. Approximately \$120B p a leaves the Port and that will improve as more berths are being built. Manganese, Lithium, salt and scrap metal (Sims Metal has a huge depot) are also exported from here. 10M litres of diesel per day is distributing from Port Hedland. WA is looking to start manufacturing Lithium batteries in the near future. Customers are mainly China, Japan, Korea & India. While 15K people live here, the airport had 360K movements last year (2020) mainly FIFO for the mines, ports & railways. A footnote from the tour guide, "we had to FIFO Maccas staff in the last boom".

*To be continued...*

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Specialisation

There is an old joke about the girl at the ball who asked her dance partner what he did for a living. "I'm a Naval Surgeon," he replied. "My, how you doctors specialize," said she.

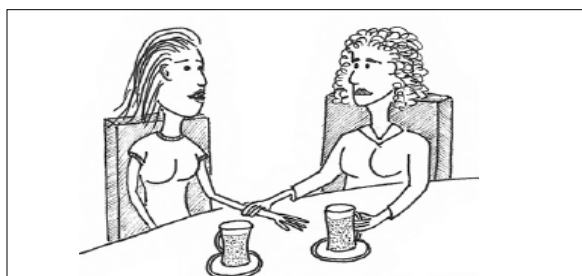
Helen has recently had an operation to lift her drooping eyelids because her peripheral vision had been reduced to 40% and without treatment, she could have lost her driver's licence. She was treated by a doctor on the Terrace who only does this operation – 30 per week. But he has a colleague who is even more specialized as he only operates on Asian eyes!

P.S. Why anyone would endure that pain and discomfort for purely cosmetic reasons is beyond me.

## Ex-Plosives

Margaret's friend Richard has returned to Australia bringing his Polish wife and two bilingual children. After living in Dubai, the young daughter is struggling at school because of years of mask wearing. She was not able to see the faces of speakers and so struggles to hear the difference between plosives p, t, b, etc.

Children in her class who have moved from Covid-riddled Victoria have the same problem. Fortunately, this defect can be cured quite readily by a speech therapist.



*"Why is a man playing the nineteenth with his mates kosher, but his wife lunching with her female friends nothing but useless gossip and a complete waste of time?"*

## Exercise those Brain Cells

. "If I write my age today from right to left, it will be the same as yours," said John to his son Ben. "A year ago, you were exactly half my age. At other times you have been exactly one third of my age and one quarter of it."

How old is John now? And how old was Ben when he was  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of his father's age?



## The Gleaners

Jean-François Millet 1814– 1875



*That's the entire haystack gone and we still haven't found the blasted needle.*

## Christmas Presence

Helen's friend was helping her seven year old grandson buy Christmas presents for his parents. In a novelty shop he found just the thing – a stubby cooler that read **FUCK**. "My Daddy says that all the time." Grandma, in the interests of propriety, was about to try to dissuade him from buying it, but then the thought of her son-in-law's discomfort on Christmas Day made her think better of it and she let him proceed with the purchase.

## Good King Charles

How gratifying it was that King Charles told the world that he was undergoing an operation for an enlarged prostate. We aging men need all the encouragement we can get to be aware of potential health dangers and to have regular check-ups. And our partners will also become more emboldened in 'encouraging' us..

And I'm sure we all – monarchists or republicans – wish him well in his recovery from a subsequent diagnosis of cancer of an unknown variety.

## Date Claimer

Wedding organisers in the USA have reported a huge upsurge in weddings on the last day of 2023. Using their system of nomenclature, the date becomes 123123 – so a lucky day. Even very successful marriages may need a bit of luck!.

## Answer to last Issue's Teaser

7 2 14 11 5 4 12 13 3 6 10 15 1 8

The missing number is 9 and it has to be placed at the start of the list. Then every pair of numbers in turn will add to a square number (4, 9, 16 or 25).

## Participation

Almost every day when I read the newspaper, I am amused/appalled by the inability of reporters to understand the relationship on participles and their subject matter. Here are just a few examples of the ludicrous results:

- Dressed in a chic French trench coat, Ms Higgins and Mr Sharaz were reunited with their dog...
- Growing up in Mt Isa, January 26 is a day that has meaning ...
- Being the first Australia Day since the failed referendum..., he knows he has to strike the tight chord
- Having been on the throne 16 months, I'm surprised how few changes he's made.
- Tributes have flowed for the South Australian woman who held the title of Australia's oldest person after she died, aged 111.
- As someone who once worked for a defence minister, something is seriously wrong with Australia's defences ...

The frightening thing is these are just so easily fixed.

## Wives of Henry VIII

Everybody knows the answer to question 11 in Terry's Trivia. Henry VIII had six wives (divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived). But this is not true. His marriage to his first wife Katherine of Aragon was annulled (i.e. there had been no legal marriage with his brother's widow). He then married Anne Boleyn while Katherine was still alive, so if he really was legally married to Katherine, his marriage to Anne was bigamous and illegal. So we can count one but not both of these women as a wife.

His contract to Jane Seymour was legal because both Katherine and Anne were dead by then. His marriage to Anne of Cleves was annulled on the grounds of non-consummation (i.e. she was never married). Catherine Howard was condemned to death on a number of grounds which included prior sexual activity which should have made her subsequent marriage to a king illegal.

By the time he married Catherine Parr his health was such that consummation may well have been out of the question.

So, two, three or four wives; but definitely not six.

A homophonic limerick

### Just Cruising

On the liner, the quiz's emcee  
said, "Look at Team A and you'll see  
their pure ecstasy  
for they've thrashed B and C  
whose members were simply at sea."

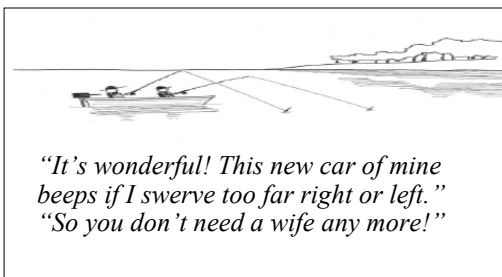
### A Sign of the Times

On a church in Ipswich

**One good thing about being wrong is  
the joy it gives others.**

**Terry's Trivia** (from the Mid-year luncheon.  
- Answers on page 3.)

1. What does LG in LG electronics stand for?  
(i) Let's Go; (ii) Lean and Green; (iii) Lucky Goldstar; (iv) Like Google.
2. Which is the only country that ends in 'g'?
3. Which two ARL teams have won the premiership three years in a row? (i) Penrith; (ii) St George; (iii) Souths; (iv) Parramatta, (v) Manly.
4. In Australia a standard tablespoon is equal to how many teaspoons? (i) 1; (ii) 2; (iii) 3; (iv) 4; (v) 5. (vi) 6; (vii) 7.
5. In a 1982 TV advert Jack Thompson orders a Clayton's for himself and a double scotch for whom? His (i) Dog; (ii) Horse; (iii) Partner; (iv) Parrot.
6. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean? : (i) Corsica; (ii) Sardinia; (iii) Cyprus; (iv) Sicily; (v) Crete; (vi) Malta; (vii) Capri; (viii) Levanzo.
7. Who is the only Spanish Golfer to win the US Open Golf? : (i) Sergio Garcia; (ii) Seve Ballesteros; (iii) Jose Olazabal; (iv) Miguel Jimenez; (v) Jon Rahm.
8. Which country grows the most lentils? (i) Canada; (ii) India; (iii) Iran; (iv) Russia; (v) Malaysia; (vi) Australia.
9. Rupert Murdoch's (92) new girlfriend Elena Zhukova is a Russian-born molecular biologist and is how old?: (i) 46; (ii) 56; (iii) 66; (iv) 76; (v) 86.
10. Superman's cape is? (i) Blue; (ii) Red; (iii) Black; (iv) Yellow; (v) White.
11. Henry VIII had how many wives? (i) 4; (ii) 5; (iii) 6; (iv) 7; (v) 8.
12. Arnold Schwarzenegger was Governor of which US State?:



*"It's wonderful! This new car of mine  
beeps if I swerve too far right or left."  
"So you don't need a wife any more!"*



## Book Club

I enjoyed *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles (Newsletter 87) so much that when I came across his *Lincoln Highway* in a second hand shop, I leapt at the chance to buy it. And I'm so glad I did.

Set in 1954, *The Lincoln Highway* (2021) chronicles the adventures of two young Nebraskan brothers, Emmett and Billy, as they travel across America. Emmett is just back from juvie planning to take his younger brother Billy to find their absconding mother in San Francisco, when two boys from the prison show up at his home with a wild tale of treasure in New York City.

Emmett agrees to take the pair of escapees as far as Omaha, but they steal his Studebaker along the way. Emmett and Billy set off to find them in New York, travelling along the Lincoln Highway, America's first coast-to-coast roadway. Their journey is a classic American road trip, filled with twists and turns – and ending in self-discovery.

With echoes of John Steinbeck, the book is beautifully crafted and enjoyable.

**Ian Pullar**

According to David Mitchell, in his wonderful book *Unruly, a History of England's Kings and Queens*, "it is much more likely that any given book is being read by a woman than a man. Men read less than women and instead commit more crime and listen to more audiobooks. These aren't necessarily the same men, I should add."



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*The Seven* is Chris Hammer's sixth crime fiction book. Released last year, it is a highly engaging story of wealth, greed, deceit and corruption over a century in the privately developed Yuwonderie irrigation scheme and community beside the Murrumbidgee River in mid-western New South Wales. Some of the physical characteristics of Yuwonderie are borrowed from Leeton.

The novel interlaces three periods, around the scheme's creation in the 1915/16 by a group of eleven pastoralist families, and its operation by descendants of the seven remaining founding families in the 1990s and now. This history has secrets that the seven founding families want kept hidden, and not all for the same reasons.

The story revolves around power, intimidation, and political influence used by the seven families over the century to grow their wealth, up to current day manipulation of produce, water and land trading markets and money laundering of political donations and mafia money. Interestingly the current day period reveals some of the intricacies of water trading and its manipulation by water barons, hedge funds and screen traders, as well as the opacity of political donations.

I think this book will be of great interest to the Association's members, touching on many aspects of life in an irrigation scheme community. This is the second Chris Hammer book I have read, the first being the exceptional *Scrublands*. The author's 30 plus years as a journalist covering federal politics and international affairs has provided him with a strong basis on which he draws his authentic characters and story.

**Chris Robson**

