



# WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 14

### NOVEMBER 1994 EDITION - THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY

#### REST IN PEACE

**Fred Holden** died in Bundaberg and was cremated on 15th July. Fred was a painter by trade and worked on many Commission jobs. He was 74 and had been living at Bargara.

**Harry Orr** passed away on 21st June at the Bundaberg Base Hospital at the age of 69 years. He was cremated on 25th June. Harry was a construction foreman. He is survived by three sisters in the U.K.

**Arthur Walsgrove Payne** passed away suddenly on 17th August aged 78 years. Arthur was born in Brisbane and educated at Woolloowin Primary School and State High. He joined the Public Service in 1933 as a Driver/Mechanic and in 1938 was appointed a Clerk after completing Entrance exams and later served in the Hydrographic Section.

Arthur joined the A.I.F. during the War and transferred to the R.A.A.F. as a Wireless/Air Gunner. He saw active service in New Guinea and attained the rank of Warrant Officer.

With peace, Arthur returned to the Commission and for the next 30 years he strove, with his staff, to provide courteous and efficient service to the Commission and its clients. Many administration staff acknowledge the training he gave them. Likewise professional and sub-professional are grateful for the assistance he provided to them in fields as diverse as Records and as Secretary to the Mount Isa Water Board. Arthur retired in 1978 as Senior Clerk - Administration.

In retirement Arthur devoted his time to his wife Mavis and to his family. He was a member of the Wavell Heights Bowling Club, Treasurer of a social bowling club and a founding member of North Brisbane Probus Club. We extend our sympathy to Mavis, daughters Geraldine and Roslyn and their families.

**Geoffrey Mazzer**, one of the miners killed in the Moura disaster of 6th August is well known to many Commission people. Geoff, a nephew of Ron and Ailsa Afflick, did his electricians apprenticeship at Leslie and Wuruma Dam. He then worked at Clare and in the Central Queensland Region before leaving the Commission to work at the Moura Mine 18 years ago. His father Anzo worked on Tinaroo Dam.

Geoff is survived by wife Jenny (Biloela) and sons Lance and Rodney. We extend our sympathy to them on their tragic loss.

**Bob Dunlop** is well known to many Oldies. Bob died suddenly and unexpectedly on 25th August 1994 at the age of 62. After graduation in 1954 Bob worked first for the Bureau of Mineral Resources on the sand islands of Moreton Bay before joining the Commission at Tinaroo Falls Dam where he was engaged in assessing foundation conditions and construction materials. He later gave similar advice on numerous other projects under investigation and construction. Bob left the Commission in 1977 to become semi-retired.

Two of Bob's brothers also worked for the Commission, John was a heavy plant foreman at Tinaroo and Ted is in the Electrical and Mechanical support unit in the Water Production Group.

**Doug Kelly** passed away at Gatton and was buried there on 7th April. Doug was born in 1913 and began work with the old Department before the War. He rejoined the Commission at Rocklea in 1946 and was transferred to Clare in 1949 as a foreman mechanic before moving on to Tinaroo, Moogerah, Leslie, Maroon, Wuruma and Monduran Dams and finally Woongarra from where he retired in 1978.

**Keith Smythe** died on 5th October. Keith was born in Ingham 66 years ago. He began work with the Commission on wages in 1948 and moved to staff on 14th January 1949 as a Hydrographic Assistant in Brisbane but was required to work anywhere in the State. Keith was posted to Rockhampton in 1954. After moving back to Head Office he became very active in the electronic processing of hydrographic data and in 1978 he succeeded Len Ezzy as Supervising (later Principal) Hydrographer. In 1980 the Commission sent Keith to the United States and Canada to observe hydrographic practices there. He subsequently introduced some of the better ideas and equipment to Queensland. Keith retired at the beginning of 1988.

Keith was active in selecting and training young hydrographic personnel and was constantly trying to improve the conditions of his staff in the bush and the vehicles and facilities with which they did their work.

One of Keith's colleagues when asked for a word to describe him replied "unflappable". Many of us would agree.

The large crowd of present and former Commission staff, particularly hydrographers, who attended his cremation service at Mt Thomson showed the very high regard they had for Keith.

Our sympathy goes out to wife Sally, daughter Susan and son-in-law Greg and brother Norman. An elder daughter, Robyn, predeceased Keith.

**Alfred Castles** died in Bundaberg on 10th October aged 83 years. Alf was a Commission identity in Western Queensland and served for many years in Charleville. Before that he drilled artesian and shallow bores for his father who was a boring contractor based in Quilpie. Alf was transferred to Bundaberg in the latter part of his working life and retired there in 1976.

Alf is survived by sons Brian and Lester and their wives and families.

## RELAXATION

**Judy and David Morwood** have returned from their visit to China, Mongolia, Siberia and part of Russia. An account of their travels appears later in the Newsletter.

**Roy and Heather Mincher** have enjoyed a lengthy holiday in Europe.

## REGIONAL NEWS

### Bundaberg

**Iris and Roy Maxted** have returned from a trip around the centre of Australia. They travelled through Broken Hill, Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Ayers Rock and returned to Bundaberg through Mount Isa, Longreach and Rockhampton.

**Honk Morrison** has had another spell in hospital. We hope he recovered in time to make his planned visit to Innisfail with Daphne.

**Judy and Rod Kingston** advise that their new address is 5 Dunk Street Bargara and their telephone number is (071) 592999.

### Please Note

Bundaberg members are urged to contact Roy or Iris Maxted on (071) 534227 with any items that might interest other Oldies.

### Mareeba

Not much from Mareeba this time. Keith and Sheila Turner are planning a trip to the U.K. where Keith intends to renew war-time acquaintances with Navy friends. In a hurried visit through Mareeba we called at Keith's Trainland and were greatly impressed by this very large collection of model trains moving through alpine regions and towns and hamlets. Within these scenes are innumerable miniature working models ranging from a man cutting wood to a merry-go-round to a fire crew extinguishing a blaze in a house. A trip to Mareeba Trainland is great value.

## RECOVERIES

**Sherry Credlin** is no longer one-eyed, at least optically. Sherry had a cataract removed from her right eye and an artificial lens implanted. She is looking (?) forward to test driving the new optic on the Tasmanian landscape in November.

## ROBBO'S REVENGE REVISITED

The annual **Stewie Robinson** golf benefit was held at Nudgee Golf Course on 29th June 1994. A total of 16 players were despatched at precise intervals by Marshall **Norm White**. All survived.

It was good to see **Phyl Taylor** and **Ron Afflick** take part.

Back at the Clubhouse the score cards were counted and recounted in the presence of scrutineers before prizes were awarded to **Stewie, Phyl Taylor, Jim Walls** and **Neil Afflick**. Then followed the more serious activities including pokie playing.

All players voted the day a great success and look forward to the next outing. Norm is to be thanked for the smooth organisation of the day.

## RESULTS-MASTERS GAMES

**Eric Davis, Nev Caton, Col Cooney and Bill Morris** finished fourth in the Games Tennis after Japan, Tewanin and Bulgaria. Coach, manager and mentor **Harry Stark** is ecstatic. Congratulations all.

## REJOINDERS

After a particularly acrimonious argument he offered an olive branch to his wife. "What would you like for Christmas dear?" he said. "A widow's pension" was the frosty answer.

## LETTERS TO EDITOR

Sir,

Your summary dismissal of my query about the order in which we read our "Newletters" affronts me. You quote the results of your research. How big was your sample? Was it gender balanced? Was it politically neutral? Did it consider religious groupings? Etc. Etc. And so on.

I conducted my own poll. It clearly showed that ALL read only the front page first, then the comics followed by the obituaries. About the only thing we agree on is that the death notices are read before births and marriages.

Yours etc.

P.E. Dantic,  
Carseldine.  
P.O. P.E (Ed)

## RECHARGING THE RETIREE

**Noel Ullman** reached 70 in June and was immediately plugged into the charger to have the batteries topped up at a surprise party at his home at Helensvale. Noel's career is worth recounting. After graduation at the University of Queensland he worked for the Main Roads Commission from 1946-53 on the Burdekin Bridge, one of the State's top public projects at that time. He left WRC in 1958 to join Consulting Engineers Pollock and Barton which later became Ullman and Nolan. He joined the Irrigation Commission in 1972 in Construction Branch and remained there until his retirement in 1984. Since retirement Noel has been very active in our Association and was made Life Member in 1992.

Noel has been helped greatly in his career by his wife of 45 years, Rhonda.

## WRETCHED RHYMES

David Morwood's talents are spread much wider than writing travelogues. He sent this masterpiece:

### THE SPARE LINK CHEQUER

I have a spelling chequer,  
It came with my Pea Sea,  
It plainly marques for my revue,  
Me steaks I did not sea.

I've run this poem threw it,  
I'm shore your pleased too no,  
It's let a perfect awl the weigh,  
My checker tolled me sew.

## RUSSIAN RAMBLINGS by Marco Morwood

Judy and I went on an RACQ/Sundowners tour in June, to China, Mongolia, Siberia and European Russia. My supervisory inspection report follows.

First, a Geography Lesson. I found the comparative latitudes of places we visited amazing, especially when experiencing the warm pleasant weather. So Hong Kong = Rockhampton: Xian (China) = Broken Hill: Beijing = Melbourne: Mongolia = South Is. NZ: Moscow = MacQuarie Is.: St Petersburg = Northern part of Antarctica. And half of Russia, all of Finland, most of Sweden, most of Norway, are north of St Petersburg. Most of the Trans-Siberian railway is at about the latitude of MacQuarie Island (55°).

We went to Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Guilin, Xian, Beijing, Gobi Desert, Irkutsk (Lake Baikal), and by the Trans-Siberian Express to Moscow and St Petersburg. We came home via 2 weeks driving around England, Scotland and Ireland (South and North). I heard no confirmation in Ireland that they are going to PROGRESSIVELY change to driving on the right.

Some really magic places we saw were;

**Guilin:** This is an agricultural and industrial city on the Li River, with wonderful scenery. You may have seen a picture of many small steep-sided peaks rising from the rice paddies of the flood plain. I did, and in Aussie Rules style said "I'd like to see that!". Then you realise that there are about 100 km by 30 km of these peaks with endless variations of shape combinations. It has to be seen to be believed. The 40,000 peaks are all limestone, most of them are hollow, and most are about 300 m high. They are old coral reefs, from where sea level was much higher. The Li River winds between them and has cut vertical cliffs from many of them. Our 50 km cruise down the river was an awesome experience, in spite of steady rain.

***Xian and the Terracotta Warriors:*** Most people will have seen the Terracotta Warriors exhibition, or at least photos of it. We went to the excavation site, and saw hundreds of them in various stages of excavation and restoration. Most are broken to some extent, because the timber beams supporting the earth cover over their cellars were burnt out about 2000 years ago. This was long enough ago that there was no sign of subsidence on the surface, just a level wheat field on the loess soil. The warriors were found in 1974 by farmers digging a well, annoyed because there were hard bits in the earth. I guess the highlight was to actually be there. The most impressive features were the bronze chariots, half scale, complete with harness, reins and working wheels, decorated with gold and silver, driver and terracotta horses, and the sheer numbers of individual sculptures, all with different faces and expressions.

Xian itself is a major city, and was capital of all China for 1100 years. It was the Chinese end of the "Silk Road". It has the history of China, (ie. the longest continuous history of civilisation?) on display in the magnificent Shaanxi Provincial Museum. And lots more history throughout the city of course.

And millions of pushbikes, including 3-wheelers used to cart produce.

***Beijing and the Great Wall:*** We spent the morning going to and walking on a restored section of the Great Wall. That was long enough; we covered about 3 km of the 3500 km. It was hot, steep, and had uneven steps which would never satisfy the relevant Australian Code. Ernie Melville could probably tell you which Code. We also saw an "As Is" part which has been fretting away for 200 years. It is still a quite effective barrier except to aircraft.

Beijing itself is big (9 million) thriving with lots of new buildings, including facilities for the Sydney Olympics, a great big Tian'An Men Square, where our guide was scared to walk around but we weren't, and a Forbidden City, which is now only forbidden if you don't pay your entrance fee (plus more for your camera). One of the more attractive of "The former Imperial Palaces" is the Summer Palace, which is a number of buildings grouped around a large lake (Kunming Lake) connected by covered walkways, all decorated with finely detailed artwork. It has been magnificently preserved. The Chinese, even the communist ones, are immensely proud of their heritage, and aware of its value to attract tourist dollars.

Shopping is good, with clothes especially cheap by our standards. Food is pretty awful. I'd heard that Australian Chinese food is not the same as real Chinese. For that may the Lord make us truly grateful. Our guide told us "we eat everything that swims, except boats, and everything that flies except aeroplanes".

Some other telling comments from our Chinese guide.

*"There is no feeling of animosity because you spend a lot and eat a lot. People near you just watch, and wonder what it must be like to live like a god in paradise."*

*"They used to tell us that China was the best country in the world. Now we know that was all lies, and we have to try to catch up."*

*"I can tell you these things because the driver can't speak any English."*

**Mongolia and the Gobi Desert:** Mongolia is different. It is small, about 3 million total population.

Its capital Ulan Bator has some modern Russian style buildings including apartments, and some very dilapidated timber village style slum suburbs. It would be very cold and miserable indeed in winter. They took the opportunity in 1991 for independence from Russia, who promptly cut off all assistance. They are very poor. I met an old friend, Hugh Barrett there. His plane fare was one third of the Mongolian Agriculture Department's budget for the year. The World Bank paid it.

The Gobi is the home of nomadic family groups who still live in their traditional "Gerra" (Yurts in Russian) which are circular timber framed tents, made strongly to resist winter gales and sub-zero temperatures. Even on the warm summer days when we were there, the locals wore their heavy clothes, boots to the knee, and big leather overcoats. They obviously don't trust the weather forecasts any more than we do. The main concession to modern life is a series of Government wells, which allow them to move to fresh pasture areas every so often and know there's a water supply waiting. They use their stock to power simple pumps. The pasture is sparse, one 2 inch blade of grass to every 20 gravel stones on average. They are used as natural roads and airstrips and seem to be much better for those than for pasture.

We were treated to barbequed goat, Mongolian style.

**Recipe:** Catch a young goat and cut off its head, then remove all the innards AND ALL THE BONES, through the neck opening. (Don't allow your tourist guest to watch the above steps; tends to spoil their meal). Meanwhile, heat about 30 rounded stones red hot in a fire, wire an open - both-ends jam time into the goat's neck hole, and insert the red hot stones one by one into all the body cavities, legs, belly, chest and all. This is fairly difficult. You need tongs, leather gloves etc. You've taken out the bones, so the goat can be distorted in all directions to help manoeuvre the stones into place. The stones are better than a microwave; they really do heat from the inside. Then you also roast the goat from the outside. This should be over the fire, but if the fire has died down, the roasting is done by traditional Mongolian kerosene blowtorch. A traditional OZ one will do, it looks exactly the same. When golden brown on the outside, and well bloated with steam pressure on the inside, carve the goat into thin slices and persuade your guests to eat it. They are hungry, because the process takes several hours, but even so they don't seem too keen. Many are converted to Vegetarians. The stones are not eaten, (as in boiled Galah), but are held in the hands until they cool. This cures arthritis for all time. It also keeps away evil spirits, which is a pity, because a bit of evil spirit would help you to eat the meat. Beer is available.

**Lake Baikal:** This is the big lake at Siberia, just north of Mongolia. It really is big, the biggest volume of fresh water after the polar ice caps. It is 23,000 million Megalitres, of which 40 million megalitres came from raising it 2 m when a hydro station was built on its sole outlet. (Compare with Burdekin Falls dam at 1.9 million Megalitres). We didn't see the whole 650 km of it, just the southern end near the city of Irkutsk and the railway. The lake is very clean, light penetrates to 200 m of its 1600 m depth. It is used for city water supply with no treatment at all and we drank it with no ill effects. You would get ill from swimming; even in summer it was 4°C, and in winter it freezes so hard that at one time they ran the trains on temporary tracks over the surface. They gave that away when they lost a train, which would have caused minor local pollution.

**The Trans Siberian:** This was relative luxury. We had a four berth compartment for the two of us (for extra payment). Toilets and wash basins only at the end of each carriage, locked when in stations, sometimes for hours. Food OK, especially if you like a plate of cucumber for every meal. Beer on sale in the dining car (PECTOPAH). The line is twin track electric, all the way. The part we did is about as far as Brisbane to Perth. Towards the west there's a train, mostly freight, about every five minutes, so it is really used. There's virtually no long distance truck transport. Maybe we could benefit from that system.

**Moscow:** In Russian this is МОСКВА, which means Black Water. Maybe our Blackwater could try for sister city status. Moscow is a big, beautiful city, with lots of big forested parks and wide avenues, lined with beautiful historical buildings in places. Other places have the standard bit-city blight of rows and rows of ugly tight packed apartments, but in Moscow at least there are often nearby parks. The kremlin is open to Tourists, for a fee of course. They rang the cathedral bells while we were there, for the first time for 72 years, according to our guide, who was quite impressed by that. So were we.

Lots of things have changed since the coup in 1991. As one small example, there was a large red church at one end of Red Square. It was removed by USSR to make more room for big parades, and has been completely rebuilt to the original plans since 1991. Lenin still on display in his mausoleum, but the long queues of Russians have gone. Some of the other changes are less impressive. There's a lot more petty crime, you watch out for pickpockets all the time, and you are pestered by street and small shop souvenir sellers wherever you go. That is FREE TRADING, and can't be interfered with, even though Moscow itself still has a communist city government. The traders say they just say "PERESTROIKA/GLASNOST" and the police back off. Lots of things have been privatised, mostly by issuing shares to the employees, which they can market after two years. The whole set-up seems chaotic, maybe by design to see how much freedom people really want. Maybe order will come out of the chaos.

**St Petersburg:** The really big impression here is the true greatness of Peter The Great. He was a big bloke, nearly 7 ft tall, but is greater for other reasons. In a sense, St Petersburg is like Canberra in that it was planned from the beginning, about 1700, and the centre is still being kept to the plan. The concept was originally Peter's, although he and subsequent Czars and Empresses hired the best architects and planners from wherever. There weren't many Russians on the design team! Czar Peter started from scratch, literally. He scratched a cross on a bit of ground in the big swamp and said "this is the site for a new city". Then he manually helped his army to build a fortress with picks and shovels, to keep out the Swedes. Then he got started on the city, and persuaded the royal courtiers to move there. I guess they didn't have a lot of choice if they wanted promotion.

**THEN HE TOOK A YEAR OFF, LEFT RUSSIA FOR HIS MATES TO LOOK AFTER, AND APPRENTICED HIMSELF, INCOGNITO, TO SHIPBUILDERS IN HOLLAND AND ENGLAND, BECAUSE HE WANTED RUSSIA TO KNOW HOW TO BUILD REALLY GOOD SHIPS.** Then he came home and organised building the best fleet in Europe, and Russia never looked back (until 1917).

Also impressive is the evidence of the toughness of the Russian people. This sinks in at the Piskarov War Cemetery, near St Petersburg, where the dead from the World War II, 3 year siege are buried. They didn't have time to sort out who was who, or to dig graves. The death rate averaged 7000 per week for the whole siege. They used big pits, put up to 10,000 bodies in each, no-one knows how many or who. The cemetery was chosen because it was the furthestmost from the Germans, but the shelling reached there. It's now a memorial, the pits are indicated by grassy mounds covering them and they go on and on and on. They think there's about 600,000 bodies.



And they've rebuilt the 20% of the buildings destroyed in the siege.

And they'll get over their present problems too, and they know they will. At least St Petersburg got its name back, (by referendum after the 1991 coup).

Maybe Water Resources could try that, in years to come???

David Morwood

**REMINDER** 1997 has been designated as The year of the Elderly. Don't miss it.

Cheers

Bernie Credlin  
**EDITOR**