

WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 52 March 2007

Newsletter of the Water Resource Retirees Association

Positions Vacant

It's Annual General Meeting time again. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a Notice of Meeting for April 19. Members are once again invited to the Public Service Club to participate in the democratic process and to engage in social intercourse with fellow retirees. And remember, the Association will shout you lunch! So do come along and bring as many of your former colleagues with you as you can.

Eric Davis, having served two years as President (and two years as Vice President before that), is anxious to graduate to the position of Immediate Past President.

Col Hazel has completed a second term as Vice President and is now coming out of professional retirement to give Queensland the benefit of his expertise in groundwater hydrology. Accordingly, Col is not available for the office of President or Vice President. Both these offices become available for any ambitious or altruistic member.

All other positions on the Committee are also available for anyone who would like to be involved. Tom Fenwick describes the duties as "not exactly onerous" while Dave Morwood is positively enthusiastic about the pleasures of being part of it.

The Committee would also appreciate any suggestions for activities in the coming year. It is anticipated that the usual luncheons, socials and traditional Bowls Day will again feature. Page 7 also offers members the opportunity to participate in another outing. But it may be that there are other suggestions of activities that could appeal to our membership at large.

Country members, please remember that the offer of sponsorship remains open if you have a proposition to put to us.

It is pleasing to note that our membership continues to grow, but we are not limited in numbers so feel free to cajole your former colleagues into joining.

Christmas Luncheon

COTAH was once again the venue for the Christmas luncheon, held in November. The students did a particularly fine job, with the meal being among the best of the many served at that venue.

Director-General Scott Spencer was represented on this occasion by Greg Claydon who provided good company and an amazing story of the activities of the Department. Anyone who wants to be recruited need only apply.

Our other patron, Peter Noonan, was represented by Brian Shannon who once again kept us entertained and enthralled by the scope of current activities.

Brian has now completed his term as Chairman of ANCOLD – doesn't time fly?

Our thanks to both gentlemen for giving their time so graciously.

From the Editor's Chair

Once upon a time there was a little red hen who wanted to make some bread. There was no one willing to help her plant the wheat, water the wheat, harvest the wheat, mill the wheat, knead the dough or bake the bread. But there were plenty who wanted to eat the bread when it was cooked.

Once upon a time there was an editor whose readers loved to hear stories about their fellow members, but who wouldn't provide any help in acquiring those stories.

But now you're all on notice – the Committee members and I plan to contact some of you personally before each edition goes to print to give us your news or report on your friends. Be warned!

The fruits of this new policy are already evident in this edition.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

Lunch Time Social

Eighteen members and four wives joined in the lunch time social at the Public Service Club on 21 February. There was certainly plenty of animated conversation and it was great to catch up with colleagues whom we see only occasionally.

As editor, I was particularly pleased to gather some news of members which I can pass on (see page 2).

We know that members lead very busy lives with too many activities to fit into them, but these occasions are an excellent opportunity to catch up. And you can usually pick up a few tips about investments, holiday venues, computers or the many challenges and interests of active minds and bodies.

Out and About

WRRRA welcomed four new members recently. John Palmer was good enough to provide us with the article on page 3.

Mike Marley worked for the Commission from 1967 to 1980 when he left to join the private sector, initially with Peter Hollingsworth. In due course, he acquired *Earthtech* which was in turn acquired by Golders. Mike is now a Director in that firm.

Richard Duczmal was with the Commissions from 1969 to 1985 in Hydrology and Designs sections. He is now Principal Structural Engineer with Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Terry Loos was in the Department of Local Government when that was incorporated into the Commission. Another mid-'90s reorganisation saw him posted to EPA. He is now on leave from there, working part-time for the Australian Water Association. He reported *I fluked a trip to Athens for a week recently as part of this AWA job – three days work and three days off to look around. Explored thoroughly. Terrific city. 200 photos.*

Took a day cruise to three islands in the Aegean and noted the extraordinary colour variations of the water – multiple shades of blue, green and arguably even wine dark. Never sailed on an odder sea, I say.

In the suburb of Anafiotika I came across 'The Church of the Metamorphosis'. It was totally enclosed in scaffolding and plastic sheeting. Looked like it was changing form.

The Greek food was wonderful, not least the sweets. At first, had trouble pronouncing 'baklava'. It was highly calorific. Ended up deciding the safest thing for my waistline would have been to eat it through a balaclava.

On the spectacular Acropolis went looking for the site of the original Parthenon Milk Bar, and I think I might have found it.

At the lunchtime social, I caught up with a few members. Cuddly Dudley McIntosh told me that he and 'Mudguts' Mike McKenna are setting off for Karumba in May and June as a sequel to their expedition to Cooktown and environs last year. They expect to do a bit of fishing.

Judy Morwood is "back" to her best and only regrets that she didn't have the operation on her spine much earlier.

Warren Lane is once again resident in Brisbane after his spell of teaching English in Korea. He has 14 grandchildren (though not all of them are local) and a number of properties to manage, maintain etc. He was in fine form.

Tony Horn is one of those "retirees" in harness in the Department. Yet he managed to escape for a short spell of conviviality.

Ross Stewart's daughter, Alison, last year won the RSL Golden Girl Award for raising the greatest amount in the competition. What an achievement! She is now enjoying the results of her efforts through her prizes. Ross and Marjorie will set off for USA in April. They have a modest tour arranged which includes Los Angeles, the Grand Canyon, Salt Lake City, Zion Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Las Vegas, San Francisco and Yosemite Park. I guess someone has to do it.

The Pullars, by contrast, are going to England to meet grandchild No 5, then to the Isle of Mull in Scotland, Turkey, Greece and Egypt. It's just possible I'll have something to report on.

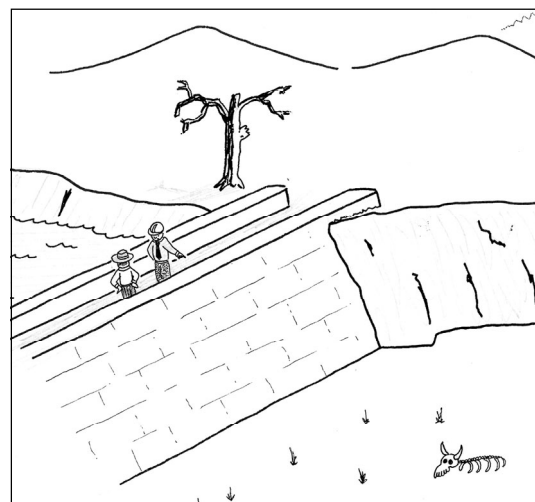
As part of our new policy, we have been twisting arms. Phil Whitmee responded with the contribution on page 4. Ernie Melville, in retirement, has become an addict of croquet and at the crucial time has been embroiled in activities which have precluded him from meeting the deadline for this edition. But good things come to those who wait and we look forward to Ernie's words next time.

At least two other members have promised contributions which didn't quite make it for this edition. Other members should prepare themselves for the requesting phonecall from a Committee member.

John 'Trump' Moreton was at the lunchtime social, bracing himself for surgery (see page 8) the following Monday. He is now recovering well from his op. for colon cancer – no further treatment required – and has now even been allowed a "trifle of alcohol"!

Gordon Wilson, our erstwhile President, reports that his health has improved considerably after his kidney transplant, even though he still has his highs and lows. In particular, he reports a much more rosy outlook on life and certainly, when I spoke to him, he was in cheerful form.

Much more sombrely, my friend and colleague John Ward is "going downhill" after fairly encouraging earlier signs. The medication he requires for pain control results in bouts of exhaustion. He is, nevertheless, stoical about his condition and grateful for his 45 years of happy marriage and his loving and caring family.



It's good to see water in the dam again!

Erm... This is the dam. That's the rising sea level.

Gwen Vizer's nephew, David Wilson, when making his first tour as a Wallaby, was playing against a French provincial side which contained the National front row – three hard, tough men complete with broken noses, cauliflower ears etc.

During the match Dave was buried at the bottom of a ruck, nose to nose with one of the formidable three, who snarled and demanded, "Don't ever do zat again!"

When Alan heard the story, he enquired what Dave had done. He replied, "I haven't the faintest idea, but I will never, ever, ever do it again!"

Can you imagine a world with no hypotheticals?

Masters Games in “The Alice”

Eric and Jan Davis again defied all arthritic joints to compete in the 2006 Alice Springs Masters Games, held from 20 to 30 October, 2006. Eric played Tennis - Singles, Mixed and Men's Doubles - and Jan played Netball.

Initially it was feared they would not be able to attend as all the accommodation in the town was booked out, with over 4000 people flooding into Alice for this event which included 32 different sports. After asking around at Church, we were offered home stay accommodation with Mac and Robyn. This proved a wonderful arrangement with a delightful family. Robyn was also involved in the games, playing Netball and Basketball. This was a great help with transport as Robyn and Jan were at the Netball Courts at the same time.

The tennis was played in the morning and at night as it became very hot in the middle of the day. All the Netball was at night.

Eric and Jan visited the courts the day after they arrived, and Eric met the chap who had been allocated as his doubles partner, Tig. They were playing in the 125 to 138 years age bracket. Tig came from Katherine, and had participated in quite a few Alice Springs Masters. Although he had a gammy leg, his endurance was amazing. When Eric met Tig at the Courts they decided to have a hit. After an

hour Eric said, “I think that's enough” (it was pretty hot). Tig came off and immediately grabbed a younger woman for another hit. After an hour, she had enough, and Tig found another chap to play. When we left the courts he was still hitting the ball. Eric and Tig ended up winning a Silver Medal in their age group.

The singles 65 to 69 years was a very good standard. Eric felt he was playing his best tennis in the match which he lost to the eventual Gold Medalist. Eric played Mixed Doubles with one of Jan's Netball Players, also called Jan. They had a lot of fun and won a few/lost a few.

Jan's Netball Team were awarded a Gold Medal, because they were so old there wasn't any competition for them. (Most of their players were late 50's to late 60's). They played in a Social Golden Oldies Group, but most of these players were 35+, (younger than our children). We had a number of wins, and some close losses playing about 10 full games of 1 hour over the week of competition. A good result, with no injuries.

Alice is a beautiful place, the gorges close to town are certainly worth a visit, and certainly a good place for a cooling dip during the day.

We recommend Masters Games to all who are “game”, it is a good way to travel and meet new people.

Jan Davis

Pioneering Activities

After spending just over 24 years in the Water Department under its many titles, I left and joined the Pioneer Valley Water Board at Mackay as its inaugural manager. That was in June 1997 and I am still there almost ten years on.

The Board was established as part of the Teemburra Dam Project to construct and operate the irrigation scheme as part of the overall project. The Teemburra Dam Project received Government sugar industry restructuring funding and was also required to have part funding from the Mackay sugar industry. Under the final funding arrangements, the locals (irrigators and Mackay Sugar Co-operative Mill) were responsible for financing the construction of the irrigation reticulation works and for all ongoing costs.

We have our own web site at www.pvwwater.com.au which provides more information about the Board and our activities.

Construction of the scheme was completed during 1997 and 1998 which also saw Teemburra Dam receive significant inflow to allow us to commence the scheme with ample water available in the early years. The drought has seen the dam get down recently to 15% and, as a result, our irrigation

scheme has had very little water available over the last three years.

Part of the irrigation scheme involves high pressure supply under gravity from the dam and this section was constructed in polyethylene pipe. Large diameter polyethylene pipe under high pressure was new to me (and many others around me) and we encountered some major problems with getting that part of the scheme operational.

Our first teething problems occurred with failure of fittings in the pipe (tees and bends) where the installed fittings were found to be unsuitable for high pressure installations. We undertook a major project to replace all fittings in some eight kilometres of pipeline. The next problem occurred with brittle failure of sections of polyethylene pipe due to what appears to be problems with manufacture of the pipe. We have replaced just over two kilometres of pipe to date with other sections pending the outcomes of claim processes.

The new *Water Act* in 2000 presented an avenue for statutory water authorities to convert into more appropriate business structures. Pioneer Valley Water Board, with very high support from the irrigators in the scheme, has made a formal request for conversion into an irrigator owned co-operative. This would give full ownership

of the scheme to the local community who have financed the establishment of the scheme. We are currently working with DG Scott Spencer and the Department on the conversion proposal.

I have had a very challenging but rewarding time since leaving the Department and it has been a different experience working under a board structure compared to my government days. Coral and I are very proud of our two daughters who are now both graduated – one as a solicitor and the other as a physiotherapist. They both work in Brisbane which means fairly regular trips down south for us.

John Palmer



Do you want to talk to the man in charge or the woman who knows what's going on?

A Voice from the Past - Phil Whitmee

I don't know now who or what it was that caused me to apply for a job with the IWS Commission, but it was definitely a good thing (I think Mike McEniery must take some of the blame). In 1959, I had completed my third year of Geology at U of Q, but due to a severe misunderstanding with Organic Chemistry on the way, I needed a couple more units to graduate. Arthur McCutcheon offered me a position as a Foreman (no point in starting at the bottom if you don't have to), and I began in Feb 1960 in the Groundwater Section of Water Resources Branch in the old State Stores Building next to the Library in William Street. There was no room on the palatial top floor (street level) so I had a desk on one of the lower floors surrounded by much of the State Archives. When not describing drilling samples (just when does a sandy clay become a clayey sand?), I was able to review the more juicy evidence in the major murder and rape cases of the 1870's.

After many months of this monk-like existence, I was elevated to a desk on the top floor with the rest of the Section – Ron Belcher and Mike McEniery were the hydrologists, Nev McTaggart and I were the undergraduates (we both became hydrologists at the end of the year) and Jim White kept the files and the tea club money. At the other end of the large room were Jack O'Shea and Don Macpherson together with the drilling supervisors, Tommy Lord and Matt Tallon, and Graham Bertram kept the books. Draftsmen came and went, but I recall Reg O'Reilly, Peter Evans, Jim Uhlmann and Warren Lane amongst others. After a few years in this historically significant but otherwise awful accommodation, we moved down William Street to join the rest of Head Office, just above the sandwich shop, and later into the main building.

I was gradually indoctrinated into the business of giving advice to farmers on the prospects of obtaining underground water. Very early on, this newly found skill was put to the test when one Friday afternoon, I was directed to report Harry Hiley, Asst Commr, Engineering at Lang Park. Having first looked in the Members' Bar, I found him and another tall thin man standing in the middle of the ground. He asked "Do you know bloody Learmonth?" I confessed I did not. "Well," he said, "this is bloody Learmonth." My relationship with the Chief Construction Engineer continued on that basis for the rest of my time at the Commission! (and there was no prospect of a successful bore either!)

By 1963, Ron Belcher had resigned, Mike McEniery had moved off as OIC Bundaberg and Wally Roman had been tragically killed in a car accident. I was left in charge of the geological side of the Groundwater Section. Col Hazel, Hector Macdonald, Peter Cochrane and the inimitable Henry Shannon joined the Section, and we had an altogether very pleasant working environment, enhanced a little later by the arrival from St George of Bernie Credlin to be Executive Engineer. All of you who have worked with Bernie will know of his remarkable ability to get the best out of his staff while having fun and beer at the same time. The tempo of work built up, with a drought over much of Queensland adding to the load on the Groundwater Advisory Service, and the Commonwealth Government pumping funds into investigation drilling through the newly formed Water Resources Council. The day to day business was supplemented by interesting projects from time to time – like a visit to Cape York to lay

out a drilling program for a groundwater supply for the proposed Weipa mine and town, with diversions to Aurukun Mission and Bamaga – and two winters in the Burdekin Delta working with the Bureau of Mineral Resources on the geophysical investigations that led to the recharge scheme.

Expansion of the groundwater business led to the creation of a senior hydrologist position, and an external applicant was appointed. That was fine, as I was still a lad, but the decision to employ the applicant at a District Office while I continued to manage the section at Head Office was a bit hard to take. Fortunately, I had another string to my bow. I had joined the CMF while at University (where Jim Pashen was one of my mentors), and by this time was an officer with the Army's Supply Service. It was 1966, the Australian commitment to the Vietnam War was expanding, National Service had started, and there was a shortage of officers. I decided to take the plunge and apply for a commission in the Regular Army. Because there were not many officers with degrees in those days, I was offered a good deal, which I accepted. (George Pearce, thank you for not giving me that job and causing me to make the change that led to an entirely different career).

My first posting in the Army was to Army Headquarters in Melbourne – a little unusual for a new boy – but it was the place to become known to all the senior officers, and this paid off nine months later when I was sent at short notice to South Vietnam as a project officer at the logistic base at Vung Tau for a year. The move also accelerated the relationship with a delightful Brisbane nurse who was working in Melbourne at the time and we became engaged, and married in Singapore during my R&R leave. After a year in Vietnam, I returned to AHQ and was promoted Major as the supply manager for radios, radar and electronic things. The rationale was that anyone with a science degree would know all about electronics!

After a couple of years at this, (and just 10 weeks after we produced twins), we moved to Singapore where I was the Supply Manager for the British Commonwealth Brigade, and later the Aust/NZ Army force after the UK withdrew from east of Suez. Fascinating environment, and still enough of the old Orient to make the place interesting. My only home posting to Gaythorne followed for 15 months, and then, with another ten week old baby, we were off to UK where I had an exchange posting with the British Army working on the development of large computerised supply systems. Back to Melbourne, I worked in our supply systems development area for three years, being promoted to Lt Col to head the group in 1976. After this, I was lucky enough to be given a command posting as CO of the supply battalion at Broadmeadows on the outskirts of Melbourne for three years. After this enjoyable interlude, I had to pay for it when I was made the Budget Manager for Army Supply at the time of the Razor Gang making huge cuts in funds, while simultaneously, the Government was pumping money into different buckets to fund a Defence expansion in response to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. This was hard work, but I must have kept the buckets in line because in 1982 I was posted to our Embassy in Washington as the Commonwealth's Chief Procurement Officer (responsible for all government purchasing in North America, except for Navy and RAAF who did their own). *Continued on page 5*

A grandfather is an antique small boy.

The Ubiquitous Bradfield

The Bradfield Scheme, or variations on it, has lately been in the news. But who was Bradfield?

John Job Crew Bradfield was born on 26 December 1867 at Sandgate, Queensland. He attended North Ipswich State School and Ipswich Grammar School. He passed the Sydney senior public examination in 1885 gaining the medal for chemistry. Dux of his school, he won a Queensland government exhibition and in 1886 matriculated at the University of Sydney. He graduated BE with the University Gold Medal in 1889.

Bradfield worked as a draftsman under the Chief Engineer Railways in Brisbane before joining the NSW Department of Public Works in 1891 as a temporary draftsman. He graduated ME with first class honours and the University Medal in 1896.

He was associated with a great range of engineering works including Cataract Dam near Sydney and Burrinjuck Dam in the MIA. He became assistant engineer in 1909. In 1912 he proposed a suspension bridge to connect Sydney and North Sydney but later that year also submitted a cantilever design. The latter scheme was accepted in 1913 and in the same year he became chief engineer for metropolitan railway construction. In 1914 he went overseas to investigate new approaches to metropolitan railway construction. Early the next year he reported on the proposed electric lines for Sydney.

In 1924 he received the first doctorate of science in engineering for a thesis entitled 'The city and suburban electric railways and the Sydney Harbour Bridge'. The opening of the St James and Museum stations in 1926 marked his plan's first result.

In February 1930 he was retired by the railway commissioners but he continued to represent the government in dealings with contractors and to supervise construction of the bridge which was opened officially (and unofficially by Captain de Groot) on 19 March 1932 when the Bradfield Highway was named in his honour. In 1933, he was appointed CMG and he retired from the public service in July.

In 1934 he was appointed consulting engineer for the design, fabrication and construction of a bridge across the Brisbane River from Kangaroo Point to Bowen Terrace. Construction of the Story Bridge commenced in 1935 and it was opened in 1940. Bradfield was also technical adviser to the constructors of the Hornibrook Highway and helped to plan and design the University of Queensland's new site at St Lucia.

In his early seventies, he put considerable effort into publicising a plan to divert water from a series of dams on coastal streams in northern Queensland and to divert water inland. His proposals were criticised by several including Dr W. Nimmo (who you will all know as a former Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply).

Bradfield had wide interests in his profession. In 1916 he was appointed to a committee to establish a school of aviation. In 1919 he was a founder of the Institution of Engineers. He served on the Standards Association and the Australian National Research Council. He was a member of the senate of the University of Sydney (1913-43), a trustee of Wesley College (1917-43) a councillor of Women's College from 1931 and Deputy Chancellor from 1942.

He died on 23 September 1943 and was survived by his wife, five sons and a daughter. James Bradfield Moody (whom you can see on 'The New Inventors') is his great-grandson.

His vision of Sydney captured the imagination of many, including J.T. Lang who later wrote, 'Bradfield wanted to be the Napoleon III of Sydney. He wanted to pull down everything in the way of his grandiose schemes. He was always thinking of the future. He was probably the first man to plan for Sydney as a city of two million people.'

Information from The Australian Dictionary of Biography



Burdekin Falls Dam (featured in the Bradfield/Beattie Scheme) overflowing while the southern worst drought on record continues.

A Voice from the Past

- continued from page 4

It was fascinating to watch the internal workings of the Embassy under Sir Robert Cotton as Ambassador, and also being accredited for access to the Pentagon. Fortunately Australia won the Americas Cup while we were there making it a bit easier to keep the Yanks in their place. After a couple of years, it was back to Melbourne with promotion to Colonel, to set up and run a new organisation to do all of the Army's procurement of new capital equipment.

After a very enjoyable five years as Director of Capital Procurement, I resigned in 1990 and took up a position as Director of Supply with Monash Medical Centre, a new 600 bed hospital – a useful supplement to the military pension, and just 8 km from home. Through a series of hospital closures, amalgamations, and restructures, the organisation turned into the largest public health service in Victoria, and kept me busy and interested for the next 11 years. I thought I had retired in 2001, but since then, I have worked on and off as a consultant in hospital supply in Dubai, New Zealand and all around Victoria. This included a period with the Victorian Auditor General's Office, which really showed me how the other half operates!

Having failed retirement once, I think I have got it right this time. With our family firmly established in Melbourne, there is now little prospect of moving back to Queensland. Although we have no immediate family in Brisbane, we still have friends and relatives there, and visit fairly regularly. None of these visits has coincided with an Association activity so far, but I look forward to redressing this omission soon, and to meeting up again with the friends and colleagues of the 1960s.

Many thanks, Phil, for this fascinating contribution - Ed.

Schooldays are the best days of your life – provided the kids are old enough to go.

The Coal Hard Truth

All the new water supply options will require vastly increased power consumption, both for reverse osmosis plants purifying seawater or waste water and for pumping water over long distances. This will require – at least in the short term – burning a lot more coal. I thought this article might interest members. – Ed.

For a long time, coal was little more than a curiosity in Australia. It was an accident, and an escape, that led to its discovery here.

Under cover of darkness, two convicts, Mary and William Bryant, bundled their children and a small crew into a stolen boat on the shores of Sydney Harbour. They had cajoled some supplies out of a ship's captain – a compass, perhaps a map – and food. It was March 28, 1791.

The Bryants started concocting their plan to sail to the Dutch colony of Batavia, on the island of Java. The journey would ultimately take them up the east coast ... ending at Timor, 5000 km from Sydney where they would be betrayed by William's loose tongue and shipped back to England. (William and the children died on the way; Mary became a minor celebrity before dying in obscurity.) Not long after they set out, they stumbled across something that would eventually change Australia for ever.

They put to shore in a hidden bay that was richly forested in cabbage tree palms. They gathered food and, searching for fuel, found coal and became the first people on the continent to light a coal fire. They used the heat to dry their clothes before continuing their journey north.

This coal was at Lake Macquarie where the huge coalfields to the north in the Hunter Valley are part of the Sydney basin.

Six years after the Bryants' escape, Lieutenant John Shortland was sailing north in pursuit of other escaped convicts. He noticed coal seams in the cliffs on the approaches to what would become Newcastle Harbour and found tidal coal in the estuary of a river first called the Coal River – eventually the Hunter.

The same year, a ship called the *Sydney Cove* was wrecked in Bass Strait. A longboat was sent north, eventually foundering at Point Hicks,

the first piece of Australia sighted by Captain Cook, in that former coal ship, the *Endeavour*. Three men continued on foot, walking more than 1000 km and reaching Coalcliff, north of present day Wollongong on the NSW south coast. They also noticed the extensive coal formations and when they were rescued, reported their findings.

The question for the young colony was what to do with its resource. It hadn't occurred to anyone that perhaps the coal to the north of Sydney was part of the same coalfield discovered at Coalcliff; it didn't even register that the deposits within easy access of the colony, at Georges River, in between the two spots at Botany Bay, were also connected. They had to wait until 1843, when a naturalist, the Rev. W.B. Clarke suggested the extent.

"If my deductions be correct, Australia contains an inexhaustible supply of coal – in short, its sedimentary deposits are all parts of one great carboniferous system."

Until the middle of the 20th century, coal-mining required back-breaking labour, initially by convicts. One convict's letter described the unspeakable conditions. Hand-drawn wagons full of coal were dragged to the mine entrance: "We worked without rest under the blows and curses of the taskmaster." Sleeping naked in the mines because of the heat, some of them piled coal dust into makeshift beds. Allowed one meal a day, they were let out to wash once a week.

Conditions were not much better after the end of the convict days. The miners still worked under appalling conditions and they were paid by the amount of coal they mined. "We were always bustling. It was terrific the speed you had to do. Some of the miners were shoving a skip, having a leak and eating a sandwich all at the same time!"

Coal is now Australia's greatest export commodity. We sell about \$2bn worth a month with Japan taking the lion's share. The value of our coal exports has risen 43% in the past two years. With sales of more than 233 million tonnes during 2004-05 alone, that's more than double our nearest rival, Indonesia and five times the amount exported by the United States.

– from an article by Joshua Gliddon in The Bulletin Dec. 19 2006 – Jan 9 2007

SunWater Snippets

Construction of the new Burdekin-Moranbah pipeline has passed the halfway point. The \$270 million 215 km pipeline will secure supplies to the booming Bowen Basin mining operations. As part of the management of the construction, SunWater is taking special care of the creatures such as snakes and lizards that become trapped in the excavation. Two experts place moistened, sawdust-filled Hessian bags in the trenches which create ideal refuges for the creatures which are then relocated. Over 1000 animals have so far been relocated.

SunWater is working with the Queensland Gas Corporation on a project to collect and treat groundwater produced as a by-product of a coal seam gas project and supply it to Chinchilla.

In the Burnett, water is now available for sale from Paradise Dam and Kirar Weir. The fishway on Claude Wharton Weir has been upgraded (as has the one on Dumbleton Weir).

The 2005-06 Price Review has been finished after extensive negotiations with customers and peak industry groups.

Strategy

The SE Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy is still being developed under the auspices of the Queensland Water Commission. It is now due for completion by mid-year, but many of its elements are already in the public arena with contingency works to meet the current drought emergency under construction. The government has abandoned the proposed plebiscite on purified recycled water as, if the drought continues, there will be no other options available.

It is interesting to note that, according to AWA, there are about 350 sewage treatment plants discharging into the Thames. This unplanned indirect potable reuse accounts for about 12% of the water resource downstream – at some points in dry periods this can rise to 70%.

A Senate inquiry into Traveston Dam and its possible alternatives has been announced. The new federal Water Minister is also pursuing options for diversions from interstate and the Bradfield Scheme may also be back on the table. The Prime Minister's proposals for the Murray-Darling have been agreed to by three of the four states.

With QWC's bailiwick being confined to SEQ, NRW is proceeding with the development of similar regional strategies for other parts of the state.

Entertainment

An Opportunity to Play

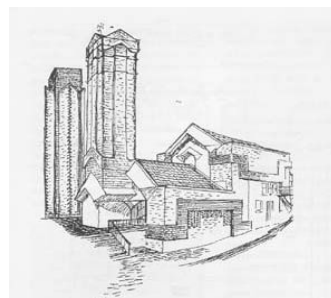
In August 2007, Ipswich Little Theatre will be presenting a season of plays titled *One Day After Another*, comprising two one-act plays by Ian Pullar – *ANZAC Day* and *D-Day*.

By special arrangement, we are offering members of WRRRA, their friends and other potential patrons, the unique opportunity to view this presentation in conjunction with luncheon at the historic Incinerator Theatre in Ipswich on Sunday, 26 August. An inspection of the premises will also be available.

Both plays are best described as light dramas. *ANZAC Day* is set in rural Queensland in 1954 and deals with events connected with that iconic day. *D-Day* concerns a British airman shot down over Normandy shortly before D-Day, 6th June 1944 who seeks shelter in a farmhouse occupied by two women.

The plays will be interspersed with lunch. The Incinerator is licensed. Details are yet to be finalised, but it is likely that the bar will be open from about midday with first course around 12.30, followed by *ANZAC Day*, main course, sweets and coffee and *D-Day*. The cost will probably be \$25 per head.

If you are interested in attending, please fill in the enclosed Expression of Interest Form and return it to John Connolly by 2 April. Later, those interested in participating will be asked to confirm their attendance and will be given more information including route directions.



Heritage Touring

In this era of the grey nomad, more and more retirees are hitting the road. No doubt some of these have a particular interest in our heritage but are not aware of all the delights that are available for their enjoyment.

The (*highly recommended* - **Ed.**) magazine *Australian Heritage* has launched an online *Guide to Heritage Touring and Accommodation* to help travellers make the most of their heritage touring experience.

Every region and town in Australia has its own stories to tell, and if you take the time to listen, they are all full of human interest.

For example, a visit to Taabinga Station near Kingaroy transports the heritage traveller to the time of the first settlers of the region in the early 1840s. Taabinga, a run which at the time covered 305 square miles, was taken up by Charles Haly and his brother, W. O'Grady Haly, for sheep grazing. They built a homestead of timber slab and sandstone – the stone walls 60 centimetres thick and quarried on the site.

In 1875, the property was sold to the owners of Coochin Coochin Station who used it to breed cattle, and then in 1887 it was purchased by Arthur Youngman, previously of South Yarra in Melbourne. It has stayed in the Youngman family ever since and is still a working cattle property now managed by Youngman's granddaughter, Libby Leu and her partner Colin Marshall.

The original Taabinga homestead still exists as a reminder of the endeavours of the first settlers and is listed on the National Estate. The magnificent garden that surrounds the homestead was established in Arthur Youngman's time.

Visitors can stay in cottages converted from their original uses as workers' quarters or stores, or in a cottage that was once part of the homestead complex.

This is just one of the many regions profiled in the guide. You can explore more of Australia's heritage delights at www.heritagetouring.com.au.

**What did the fish say
when it hit the wall?
Dam!**

A Site to Suit Many Tastes

If you happen to venture up Stanthorpe way, there is a new venture which may appeal to a wide range of tastes.

Under the auspices of the University of Southern Queensland and sponsored by the Queensland Government and the Queensland wine industry, Stage A of the Qld College of Wine Tourism has recently opened. Stage A comprises a teaching winery, cellar door, bistro cafe and interpretive centre. The complete facility will be operational later this year.

The College will be a showcase for the Queensland wine industry (did you know this is the only State with a Ministry for Wine?), the only Wine Tourism training institution in northern Australia. It will attract students wishing to pursue a career in wine tourism from all over Queensland, northern NSW and overseas. It provides education and training at secondary, diploma and university levels.

It is beautifully appointed and a very pleasant place to visit for education and a bistro meal. And there is plenty of wine to sample (much of it produced on site) as well as learn about!

The establishment, in an endeavour to appeal to even wider tastes, will soon be establishing its own brewery for those who are ale and arty!

To me, old age is always fifteen years older than I am. - Bernard Baruch

HEALTH *and beauty*

Scientists have discovered that regular napping cuts the risk of dying from a heart attack, according to a team of American and Greek researchers. People who take at least three daytime naps a week lasting at least 30 minutes reduce their risk of heart attack by 37%. "An afternoon siesta may act as a stress-relieving process," Harvard epidemiologist Dimitrios Trichopoulos said. So sleeping on the job could be a good thing, bosses.

"Mummy, I found your driver's licence in your purse so I know how old you are. I also know why Daddy's going to divorce you."
"Oh? Why is that?"
"You got an F for sex."

Elderly Gentleman: "I have so much trouble remembering my registration number, could I have the same number plate on my new car?"

Registration Clerk: "Certainly, sir. What is your current number?"

Elderly Gentleman: "I'll just duck outside and find out."

In a philosophical mood, he opined, "I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug." So his wife got up, unplugged the TV and threw out his beer.



Exercise those Brain Cells

I'm afraid this puzzle requires a bit of Maths. Ed

A gamekeeper has trapped a poacher in a dinghy in the middle of a circular lake. The gamekeeper can run four times as fast as the poacher can row, but on land the poacher is much faster than the gamekeeper. Can the poacher row to the shore and escape the gamekeeper's clutches?



A Hell of an Exam Question

The following is supposedly an actual question given on a University of Washington chemistry mid-term. The answer by one student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via the Internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well!

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed) or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following.

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving.

As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different Religions that exist in the world today. Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell.

With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially. Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.

2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Teresa during my Freshman year that, "it will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you", and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number 2 must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over. The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls and is therefore, extinct... leaving only Heaven thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Teresa kept shouting "Oh my God."

THIS STUDENT RECEIVED THE ONLY "A"

Solution to last edition's puzzle

Obviously the area must have more than two factors and, because knowing whether the width is greater or less than half the length is significant, the area must be unique by virtue of being the only number with this distinguishing characteristic.

Many numbers such as 12, 18, 24, 36 and 48 have three sets of factors where two have widths less than half the width and one is greater. Therefore we are looking for a number with three sets of factors where only one width is less than half the width. The only number which fits this criterion is 120 (20x6, 15x8, 12x10). Therefore the property measures 20x6 km with an area of 120 km².

The clue lies in the 23 km maximum dimension since 24x5 = 120 is excluded.

I never exercise except to follow the corteges of those who do. - Peter O'Toole

Words, Words, Words

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

The winners are:

1. *Coffee* (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.
2. *Flabbergasted* (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. *Abdicate* (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. *Esplanade* (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. *Willy-nilly* (adj.), impotent.
6. *Negligent* (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
7. *Lymph* (v.), to walk with a lisp.
8. *Gargoyle* (n.), olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. *Flatulence* (n.) emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
10. *Balderdash* (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
11. *Testicle* (n.), a humorous question on an exam.
12. *Rectitude* (n.), the formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. *Pokemon* (n.), a Rastafarian proctologist.
14. *Oyster* (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.
15. *Frisbeetarianism* (n.), (back by popular demand): The belief that, when you die, your Soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
16. *Circumvent* (n.), an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Here are this year's winners:

1. *Bozone* (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
 2. *Foreploy* (v): Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
 3. *Cashtration* (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.
 4. *Giraffiti* (n): Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
 5. *Sarchasm* (n): The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
 6. *Inoculatte* (v): To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
 7. *Hipatitis* (n): Terminal coolness.
 8. *Osteopornosis* (n): A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
 9. *Karmageddon* (n): It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
 10. *Decafalon* (n.): The gruelling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
 11. *Glibido* (v): All talk and no action.
 12. *Dopeler effect* (n): The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
 13. *Caterpallor* (n.): The colour you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.
- And the pick of the literature:
14. *Ignoramus* (n): A person who's both stupid and an asshole.

How Desperate Can You Get?

I recently received the following email -

I was writing something about the position of some Queensland shires wrt drought and looked up my (web-based) dictionary and noticed:

Plight: (noun) "A situation from which extrication is difficult especially an unpleasant or trying one"

Plight: (verb) "Give in in marriage"

I wonder if it refers to the Plight-or or Plight-ee?

- Graeme Lacey

A Sign of the Times

On a Perth Shop

Tattoos while you wait.

Up to Date

It's ultra-new, it's freshly dated gleaming with modernity;

it far excels those antiquated things from past eternity.

Those customs of dear Grandpapa we treat with tolerance and tact,

but how much sensibler **we** are – provided **we** ignore the fact

that fads we chase with zeal impassioned

tomorrow will be just old-fashioned.

Scam

A retiree, who wishes to remain anonymous, has issued this warning to members.

Over the last month, I became the victim of a very clever scam at my local Bunnings. Don't think it couldn't happen to you.

I was loading my car when these two absolutely gorgeous young women came over and cleaned my windscreen. They wouldn't accept a tip but asked if I would drive them to another Bunnings. Of course I agreed and they got into the back seat.

A short distance down the road, one climbed into the front seat, got me to pull over and started to make mad, passionate love while the other stole my wallet.

I had my wallet stolen on January 4th, 9th, 10th, twice on 15th, 17th, 20th, three times yesterday and very likely again next weekend – just as soon as I can buy some more wallets.

Be careful out there!

Book Club

If you like thought-provoking books that are considered heresy among academics then *1421: the Year China Discovered the World* by Gavin Menzies is a book for you. Academic historians are resistant to the views of this retired submarine commander.

The book proposes two major rewrites of history. The first radical claim is that around 1420 the Chinese Emperor decided to bring all the trading societies of the Pacific and Indian Oceans under the umbrella of his empire and built two enormous fleets. The fleets had two missions: 1) to return all the high officials who had attended his coronation to their homes and formalise their relationship to China; 2) map the world and take measurements to enable the correct calculation of longitude.

If the two fleets did exist and fulfil their missions then this truly was an amazing piece of lost history and a spectacular achievement. But the book is worth reading irrespective of whether the fleets existed or not. Menzies reveals the richness of the world that was the Pacific and Indian Oceans prior to the coming of the Europeans, from his maritime perspective: this alone makes the book worth reading.

Even if the fleets never existed I am inclined to believe that Menzies has enough evidence to indicate that China in the early 1400s had a wide economic and political reach, and considerable knowledge of the world. Indeed, given China's, and other Asian societies', technological capabilities in the early 1400s, this is how it should have been and I would have thought not controversial at all.

What the second supposedly radical claim is I won't let on here. To do so would be like revealing the end of a good murder mystery. However, I came away convinced that the second claim is also largely true, and more plausible than the existence of the fleets. Importantly, this claim does not depend on the existence of the fleets. All that it relies on is that China did manage to explore much of the world by the first quarter of the 15th century.

Read this book, you will enjoy it.

Mark Carden

Can you imagine setting out to write a dictionary from scratch? Almost every dictionary has built on the work of previous lexicographers. But not so with Samuel Johnson who wrote the definitive English dictionary, virtually single handed. *Dr Johnson's Dictionary: The Extraordinary Story of the Book that Defined the World* by Henry Hitchings is an amazing tale, complete with Johnson's idiosyncratic approach to definitions.

Simon Winchester's equally fascinating *The Meaning of Everything* tells of the writing of the first Oxford English Dictionary. James Murray was the editor-in-chief who devoted years of his life to this task along with his army of devoted helpers, some paid (including one J.R.R. Tolkien) and many volunteers who read thousands of books, noting down words and their contexts. Among these was *The Surgeon of Crowsthorpe* whose tale is told in another of Simon Winchester's well researched and well told books.

The task of keeping track of mountains of information many years before computers lightened the load is mind-boggling. No wonder the University of Oxford sponsors could never quite accept how long the production of the dictionary, in multiple volumes, actually took.

A fascinating read.

Ian Pullar

I very much regret to report the passing, due to cancer, of Trevor Lynam who printed a number of editions of this Newsletter. Our condolences to his family and colleagues.



Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen; to my proof-reader daughter Jean Yates; to Graham Bauer who printed this; to the contributors; to Scott Spencer; Peter Noonan, Natasha Gajda and Katrina Mack who made it available to departmental staff; and to Harvey Yates for his cartoons.

Kirsten Harte of the Departmental Library has undertaken to preserve our Newsletters for posterity!

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