



WATERY SAUCES OLDIES and BOLDIES

Newsletter No 53

July 2007

Newsletter of the WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Retiring Retirees Retire

At the Annual General Meeting of WRRRA held on 19 April, both President Eric Davis and Vice President Col Hazel stepped down. This automatically resulted in the retirement of Past President Jim Uhlmann from the Committee. Eric will not be leaving as he has been translated to the position of Past President. The new President is Lee Rogers; a short biographical note can be found on page 3. The new Vice President is Heather Clarke who has previously served as Secretary. Welcome back Heather! Lee's elevation created a vacancy for the Treasurer's position which Bevan Faulkner has graciously taken on. Again, welcome!

The other positions remain unchanged – John Connolly remains Secretary (hurrah!), Dave Morwood has lined up for his 16th consecutive year on Committee, Tom Fenwick and Ray Sutherland have signed on again and I will continue to edit.

From the Editor's Chair

More than three decades ago, I sat at a desk adjacent to that of Ross Warren, a recent Engineering graduate who had grown up in St Lucia with the Haigh boys. I well remember the day Ross came back chastened from an interview with Fred Haigh at which he, Ross, had sought permission to defer his bond so that he could take up a scholarship that he had won to study Hydraulic Engineering in Holland.

Fred had refused his request, telling him that Australia was the best country on earth, Queensland was the best State and the Commission was the best place for an engineer to work. There was no point in going overseas because there was nothing to learn.

Fred may have been right about Australia being the best place etc, but he wasn't right about learning nothing by travelling – even if it's only that Australia is the best country etc. That's probably why so many of our members travel!

P.S. Ross broke his bond and never came back.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

Eric Davis presented the President's Report for the year ended 31 March 2007. The Committee arranged and successfully held five functions during the year under review. Membership of our Association continues to grow and currently stands at 207, comprising 116 ordinary members, 73 country members and 18 widowed spouse members. The Executive Committee convened for formal meetings on four occasions during the year and a number of informal meetings were held to perform mail outs etc. Eric expressed his appreciation to members of the outgoing committee for their active support and participation during the year and made special mention of the significant contribution made by our retiring Immediate Past President, Jim Uhlmann during his term of office. Eric also expressed gratitude to our Co-patrons Peter Noonan and Scott Spencer for their continued support throughout the year. We have been greatly assisted by the provision of facilities and general administration by officers of the Department of Natural Resources and Water. Our particular thanks go to Graham Bauer and Josie Alati who have provided that willing and cheerful support. Our thanks are also extended to SunWater who provided speakers at several functions to keep us up-to-date with developments on water issues.

Eric also paid tribute to those members who have in the past been active participants in the Association, but, because of the aging process, are now no longer able to attend our functions. "We miss you and wish you the best of health," he said.

Unfortunately, Patron Scott Spencer was unable to join us because of a hectic schedule that included the Senate Inquiry into the proposed Traveston Dam. Our other Patron, the faithful Peter Noonan of SunWater was with us and presented an enlightening address as usual. A summary of his contribution is provided on page 5. Thank you Peter for your company and continued support. It is very much appreciated.

In stepping into the President's shoes, Lee Rogers thanked Eric Davis for his laudable efforts as President and Vice President over the past four years.

Editor's Notes:

During the year, we were delighted to welcome 12 new members. Others of course are very welcome and we will attempt to persuade new retirees or those who are approaching retirement (we know of no one heading in the opposite direction) to join us.

Out and About

The Pullars have returned from their overseas trip to Britain, Turkey, Greece and Egypt, just in time to finish off this Newsletter. Yes, we had a wonderful time – thank you for asking – but, after many days of above 45° heat, will be happy to stay home for a while.

I hear on the grapevine that Graeme and Joyce Bertram have also been to Egypt and they will soon be approached for a report.

Also venturing overseas is Andy Winkler who informed me that he is going back to Germany, in part for a school reunion (he left there in 1948), but also to enjoy an eight month holiday in Walzbachtal. He especially asked that I forward the newsletter to him while he's away – a very nice compliment.

President Lee Rogers and Denise have booked to head for Italy again in early August.

Mike Marley attended the ICOLD meeting in Russia and extended his tour to other exotic venues including Portugal and the UK.

Brian Shannon (now Past Chairman of ANCOLD) also managed to go to the ICOLD meeting, despite suffering from two fractured wrists. While camping, he tripped and, to save his face, instinctively thrust out both hands to catch himself. Peter Noonan sympathetically suggested his face may have been less valuable! The word is out that Brian will be retiring in August. Best of wishes Brian.

Also venturing into retirement recently from SunWater are Paul Johnson, Grant Sadler, Tony Kent, Doug Houston and Nerida Bartlett. There mustn't have been enough chairs to go round when the music stopped or maybe they were anxious to join the ranks of WRRRA! They too go with our best wishes.

Des Foster (who just happens to be Jim Uhlmann's uncle) has celebrated a milestone of a different sort, having achieved four score years. As Jim reports, *they came from Mareeba, they came from Canberra, and he came from Warwick, to celebrate his 80th birthday with his clan in Brisbane. Des Foster had a knack of having to visit Head Office on official business when, by happenstance, the Queensland Golf Union was meeting, so it was no surprise that he traversed Cunningham's Gap once again for this special occasion. While he would now be hard-put to carry a theolodite twenty metres, it was good to see him mobile and in reasonably good health.*

Mid Year Luncheon

The regular mid year luncheon was duly held on 5 June at COTAH. It was gratifying to have more than 40 attendees who enjoyed each other's company and the cuisine prepared by the students.

Neither of WRRRA's co-patrons was able to attend but sent more than adequate substitutes. Daryl Brigden spoke of SunWater's activities (Daryl is acting as General Manager while Brian Shannon is overseas). NR&W was represented by Chris Robson who has recently been appointed an Assistant Director-General. Congratulations to Chris.

Members were, as usual, fascinated to hear news of a very different organisation from the one they knew.

Everybody should believe in something. I believe I'll have another drink. - Robert Benchley

Other retirees remain healthily mobile. I have it on good authority that Ernie Melville recently went to Perth to compete in a national croquet championship. On his return he competed as one of the top ten players in Queensland, but he had to be content with second place and pay suitable homage to the winner - Mrs Melville!

Bob and Una Dwyer have been through the trauma of selling their home of many years and transferring to a new address. No doubt they also had to face up to getting rid of accumulated goods now surplus to requirements.

Happy birthday to Norm Rossi who turned 80 in May.

Unfortunately, I have to report that Vince Lynch has suffered a stroke and at last report was in Caboolture hospital. We certainly hope he is on the road to recovery.

I regret to have to report the deaths of three of our members – John Ward, Peter Spierings and Colin Cornford. A tribute to John can be found on page 6. Peter served the Department with distinction in the area of photogrammetry, always obligingly responding to requests for mapping on the in-house equipment. He was always good for a discussion on religion and languages of which he was a student. I learned of the existence of the aorist tense from Peter.

Col Cornford was an invaluable Farm Advisory officer, heading the Field Section by the time of his retirement. Previously, he had worked in district offices such as Gympie where his future wife Verna also worked. He became officer-in-charge of Biloela District Office prior to his transfer to Head Office. He was a respected member of the Australian Plants Society with an encyclopedic knowledge of the subject. It was good to see Col recently at one of our functions.

Our sincere condolences to the families of these former officers.

Program for 2007-08

The following functions are planned for the forthcoming year:

Mid-year luncheon - Tuesday 5 June

Annual Bowls Day - Friday 10 August.

Luncheon and plays at Ipswich Little Theatre - Sunday 26

August at 12 noon

Movie and lunch at Portside Shipping Terminal - October (date to be finalised)

Christmas Luncheon at COTAH - late November

Lunchtime Social at Public Service Club - late January/early February

XXXX Brewery tour (possible) - March 2008

AGM - late April 2008

One Day After Another

Members are reminded that the Association has made a booking for the presentation by Ipswich Little Theatre of the world premiere season of two of my plays - *Anzac Day* and *D-Day*.

Places are still available for members and friends who would like to participate in what I personally guarantee will be an enjoyable outing. It will be even more enjoyable if the majority of the attendees are our members as this will make the lunch time chatter more animated.

Lunch, two plays and an optional guided tour constitute excellent value for a mere \$25.

A registration form is enclosed to allow you to respond through the secretary.

Meet the New President

My connection with water resources started in January 1960 when I accepted a state government fellowship with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to study civil engineering at the University of Queensland. This seemed like a very good arrangement whereby I was paid a small weekly allowance, £4 I think it was, had the offer of vacation employment and employment on graduation. Being “bonded” for 5 years after graduation didn’t seem to be much of an issue in those days. More than 47 years later I’m still “at it.”

I started work in Design Branch in January 1964. Norm Butler was the Chief Designing Engineer and Ted Taylor the Senior Draftsman. Slide rules and mechanical calculators, pen and ink for the draftsmen, not a computer in sight and very much a male dominated work force.

1969-71 I spent on construction at Atkinson Dam, Maroon Dam and mainly Beardmore Dam. This was great experience for a “designer” and I was lucky to meet so many construction guys who I continued to enjoy seeing at projects over many years.

Then it was back to the design area, marriage to Denise Mary, buying a house at St Lucia where we still live and starting a family. This was a time of an enormous water infrastructure development program with numerous dams, weirs and pipelines. Other highlights were my term as Secretary of ANCOLD thanks to Alan Wickham and a month long study tour in the US and Canada with Cliff McLeod. After a brief period in planning, I became the Director of Design although by then, the development program had started to slow.

1989 was the start of a period of continuing change and the name Water Resources Commission was soon to disappear. By then I was a “general manager” and became used to my title and responsibilities changing regularly over the next decade. The water reform agenda accelerated after 1994 and many long serving staff left on “packages.” Reorganisations, changes of Government, of Ministers and of direction seemed to be the norm but fortunately I continued to mostly enjoy the numerous challenges at work.

In August 2001, I was 59, Denise had retired from her nursing career, and so I retired – briefly that is. In between trips to the UK, France and Italy and to many destinations in Australia, I have been lucky to enjoy a good deal of part time work mostly with the Department of State Development and currently with Natural Resources and Water contributing to the Government’s high level of interest in water development across the state. I try to ensure that work doesn’t interfere too much with the competition bridge at the Toowong Club, golf, tennis, concerts and plays that Denise and I are involved in and of course, the enjoyment of our family and grandchildren.

For 5 years I was the Treasurer of the Retirees Association. Now it is my turn to serve as President and I trust, to enjoy a continuation of the privilege that it has been for me to have been connected with the people of water resources since 1960.

Lee Rogers

Travelling with Intrepid

(No this is not a paid advertisement)

The editor thought members contemplating an overseas trip might be interested in our experience with Intrepid Travel in Italy last year which we found to suit us down to the ground. We plan to use them again on a trip we hope to take later this year through Central Europe.

Intrepid Travel, started by two young Melbourne guys, initially with a focus on Asian travel, now offers a huge number of trips throughout Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Oceania as well as Asia.

What they offer is a good deal of independence for travellers without having to worry about some of the more stressful elements of travel, especially in non English speaking countries. For each of their trips, which vary in duration from 4 or 5 days up to 28 days, they provide a trip leader for the group which numbers no more than 12. Their tour prices include accommodation, generally in smallish 2 star hotels, travel costs by public transport, a walking tour in each new location and in our case, two wine tastings.

Here’s how it worked in Italy. The group met up with our leader at the nominated hotel in Rome which was close to the central train station. After an orientation walk around the city, we then found our way to the sights we particularly wanted to see over the rest of the day and then the next day. On the first night we all met for dinner at a place suggested by the leader but did our own thing the next night. This was the pattern for the whole trip basically.

On the third morning, we walked with our luggage from the hotel to the station, the leader bought tickets on the Eurostar and soon we were in Florence. Walked to a hotel near the Duomo, settled in and then off for a walk with the leader to get oriented A day and a half sightseeing mostly by ourselves, drinks and dinner with the

group one night. Next day by train to Lucca in Tuscany for three days and a little variety – a bike ride around the city walls and then into the countryside. This was optional but all of our group of 9 did the ride comfortably. On one of our days, we travelled into Pisa to see the marvellous leaning tower.

And then to the Cinque Terra where Denise and I walked in sharp time between the five villages set on a brilliant coastline. Our first wine tasting was in a village outside Asti further north which was followed by a wonderful lunch in a village restaurant.

We had a brief diversion into Milan to see the stunning cathedral and to visit the famous La Scala Opera House on our way to Lake Como where Intrepid provided the day ferry tickets that enabled us to visit some of the villages on both sides of the lake.

And then by train to Venice, surely one of the most enchanting cities on the planet- again travelling from place to place on the local ferries. Massive ocean liners cruising past St Mark’s Square looked decidedly out of place.

We travelled back towards Rome through Umbria staying two nights each in Gubbio and in Assisi where one does tend to hear a little of the story of St Francis. A wonderful tasting of local wines with some lunch was included in a visit to nearby Spello. And so back to Rome.

By this time we were familiar enough with train travel in Italy to take ourselves south to Naples, Pompeii and Mt Vesuvius and then further south to Sorrento to visit the Amalfi Coast and the Isle of Capri.

With Intrepid’s help we had a wonderful month in Italy, travelled with some delightful people and learnt enough to get around without hassle. And if you fill out their feedback questionnaire, you get a 5% discount on your next Intrepid trip. Have a look at their website www.intrepidtravel.com – if you’re interested in a particular trip, the trip notes are very detailed.

Lee Rogers

Tripping the Fantastic

Last Autumn, Joan and I decided to take a journey into the desert outback of our own old continent, so we set off from Sydney in our Subaru Forester for Dubbo, famous mainly for the Western Plains Zoo and its breeding of endangered species, especially the black rhino. Then on to Bourke through that dry, flat, dusty landscape so typically Australian, and whose remoteness is captured in the old phrase “back o’ Bourke”. We stayed at the Riverside Hotel set on 1.5 hectares on the left bank of the Darling River, not far from the old wharf used for the busy wool-loading onto riverboats of former days. The heritage hotel is furnished in the style of the 19th century and the walls are lined with pictures of the captains of the river boats and memorabilia from those booming times. The owner and his wife have established a superb rose garden, so the whole property has the air of an English country house. This ambience disappears when one realises an electric security fence encloses the whole property, necessary, according to the owner, to counter break-ins and theft by the local youth, a sad reflection on an historic town with a certain faded charm.

Next we travelled the 400 kilometres from Bourke to Tibooburra along a rough, dry and dusty road. Tibooburra means “heap of granite rock”, and is aptly named for the town sits on a gibber plain, flat and treeless to the horizon on the edge of the Sturt National Park. The population is 130; although it was a booming town in the 1800s, it now has two pubs, a few shops, a post office and the only hospital in the area which is linked to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The Family Hotel is fascinating for the paintings on its walls done by various friends of Clifton Pugh, the artist, who once owned the pub. Mine Host is a genial Serb, who seems surprisingly at ease in such a remote outback town.

The next leg from Tibooburra to Cameron Corner is 140 kilometres. There is only a roadhouse run by a population of two, but it attracts visitors for a number of reasons. It is the junction where three states meet – N.S.W., S.A. and Queensland; it has a plaque honouring Surveyor Cameron, who surveyed the area in 1880 in what must have been a very harsh environment; and there is the 5,320 kilometre long Dingo Fence, which is 1.8 metres high, beginning at Jimbour near Dalby and extending down the Eyre Peninsula to the Great Australian Bight. It is the longest fence in the world – comparable to the Great Wall of China, which according to Telstra was built to keep out hordes of rabbits instead of Mongols as the history books would have us believe.

From Cameron Corner to Innaminka is 280 kilometres through the “jump up” desert, an expression that aptly describes the 5-6 metre high sand dunes running roughly north-south and which, when viewed from the air, resemble the unending lines of ocean waves. As we climbed up and over the sand dunes we were soon to appreciate the simple warning given by oncoming vehicles fitted with 2 - 3 metre high whip aerials with an orange coloured pennant atop. We decided to take the old Strzelecki Track at the Merty Merty turn-off rather than the new heavily gravelled track through the Moomba gas field, in the hope of avoiding tyre damage, and we were successful.

Is New York the ‘City that Never Sleeps’ because there’s a Starbucks on every corner?

Innaminka with a population of 105 was once a thriving town, an oasis for overland drovers with a pub, a customs office, a police station and the Inland Mission nursing home, which is now a museum and an environmental centre. It is surprising to look at the old photos and realise the extent of the social life with well dressed Edwardian ladies carrying parasols, parades, dances and visits from the Governor. The town seems to be reviving with a new motel and expectations of a tourist “boom”, due to the history of Burke and Wills whose graves are nearby as is the Dig Tree, the place where a rescue team waited for 2 months for Burke and Wills on their return from the Gulf of Carpentaria. Unfortunately, they arrived nine hours after the rescue party left, and so perished from starvation among other causes. Only one of their number, King, survived, having accepted the help of the aborigines. Cooper Creek was flowing about 0.2 metres over the causeway at Innaminka, but flies spoilt our plans for a picnic on the creek bank, although Joan found to her surprise that despite the centimetre square mesh of her hat net, it worked. The locals insisted that the flies were nothing compared to what they were like in summer.

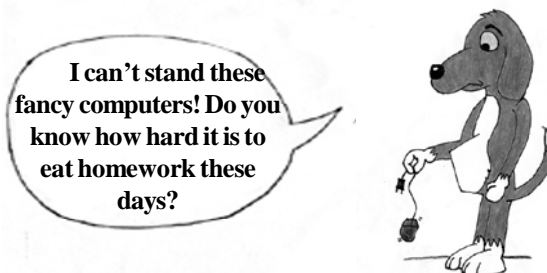
Another 475 kilometres took us to Lyndhurst and the end of the Strzelecki Track and the start of the bitumen road south. We congratulated ourselves that against all the warnings we had completed the ‘Track’ without tyre damage only to wake up next morning to find a flat tyre caused by a nail obviously picked up on the bitumen.

And so we headed away from the dirt roads, sand dunes, gibber country of the outback down through South Australia across into Victoria and on to Bonegilla near Albury, where Joan had done some English teaching to migrants in the late 1950s. There is a kind of museum there, which takes the form of a few remnant tin huts and some sculptures and pictures of all those expectant faces at the start of their new lives in Australia, and some have done very well, being now leading entrepreneurs and businessmen, even members of Parliament. The few humble huts on their original site beside Hume Weir made for nostalgic thinking. And so on to the great metropolis of Sydney, a far cry from the old dusty towns long past their heyday, the plains flat to the horizon, the rolling sand dunes and the red earth, the outback and the centre of this oldest of continents. But one is left with the memory, in Banjo Paterson’s words, of

“The vision splendid, of the sunlit plains extended,
And, at night, the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.”

Dick Wilson

Thank you, Dick, for this fascinating article - Ed.



Mt Mulligan

Back in the late 1980s, while we were doing a VE study in Mareeba, Bill Souter took us for a drive to Mt Mulligan, through the no-longer-existing towns of Thornborough and Kingsborough. An article in Australian Heritage, Autumn 2007 stirred a chord, so here is an abridged version.

When payable gold was discovered in 1872 on the York Peninsula, it began the greatest alluvial gold rush since the Victorian rush of the 1850s. The tough country challenged even the hardest of bushmen and many hopeful diggers succumbed to the climate, isolation, hunger, disease and violence of this frontier territory. However, the Palmer and Hodgkinson goldfields were to be the impetus for the founding of the coastal towns of Cairns, Port Douglas and Cooktown.

In 1872, squatter William Hann was appointed by the government to investigate the pastoral and mineral potential of Cape York Peninsula. Camped on the banks of the Palmer River (named for the Queensland Chief Secretary Arthur Palmer) the party found traces of gold and claimed Hann's reward of half a pound of tobacco. This was enough to spark interest.

Irish prospector James Venture Mulligan, with five others, investigated the Palmer River and five months later returned with 102 oz of alluvial gold. Mulligan collected £1000 and the rush was on. In a matter of days over 2000 men and women were camped along the banks of the Mitchell River. Hopeful prospectors were caught by a torrential wet season and diseases such as typhoid and dysentery. Miners also triggered hostilities with aborigines, but the Palmer River repaid those tough enough to survive it, yielding 100 tons of gold.

In 1876 Mulligan reported a new goldfield on the Hodgkinson River, but the warden ignored his request to keep it quiet. In no time, although Mulligan had predicted the field would be rough and tough, there were over 2000 men on the field, including outlaws who bashed,

robbed and murdered their fellow miners. Drunken sprees, brawls fistfights and gunfights were common and claim-jumping was rife.

The goldrush attracted an influx of Chinese diggers. By April 1875 there were more than 5000 Chinese on the goldfields. Some were involved in claim-jumping which led to hostilities. A white man was killed which resulted in open warfare in 1880. Five diggers were killed, 12 wounded and 57 Chinese were killed in the melee. The Chinese left the field, never to return.

As the field prospered, Thornborough became its 'capital' The town grew quickly with around 20 hotels and grog shanties. Kingsborough also boomed and faded. Other towns – Wellesley, Waterford, Watsonville, Stewart Town, Union Town, New, Old Northcote and Beaconsfield – blossomed, all to be forgotten.

In 1892 antimony mines opened at Thornborough but closed in 1908. There were revivals of gold mines in 1891, 1894 and 1907 (the year that James Venture Mulligan was killed during a pub fight at his hotel in Mt Molloy). Spasmodic mining continues today, but because of the high cost of extracting the gold, modern day miners have ignored the Hodgkinson.

In 1913, the township of Mulligan (later changed to Mt Mulligan) was laid out in the shadow of the huge sandstone slab that overlies the coal deposits found there in 1907.

A railway reached Mt Mulligan in 1914 from Dimbulah to take coal to Chillagoe for the State Copper Smelters. On 19 December 1921, coal dust in the State mine blew up, killing all but eight of the town's male population. In all, 75 men were killed, still the State's worst mine disaster. There was no cemetery and one was consecrated to take the bodies as they were brought out of the mine. (*Editor's note: when Bill took us there, the cemetery had just been refurbished by a gang of bikies.*) The mine reopened in 1923 but closed in 1957.

The KuKu Djungan people have reclaimed their beloved mountain, which they call Ngarrabullgan.

SunWater Snippets

At our AGM in April, Peter Noonan gave us a brief run-down on SunWater activities. Here is an even more abbreviated version of his report.

The major influence on the State is undoubtedly the drought. There have been good rains from Mackay north. For example, Eungella Dam which was extremely depleted, increased its volume in storage to 61%.

South of Mackay, the situation remains poor. Paradise Dam had a one-off inflow of 100,000 ML. Eidsvold Weir has had virtually no inflow since construction was completed. All other southern dams are very depleted and the prospects are very bleak unless there is substantial rainfall and inflow.

The Burdekin-Moranbah pipeline is progressing well with commissioning expected in June/July. The pipeline will also be extended from Moranbah to Coppabella. Fortunately, the works were commissioned before the spike in prices.

Projects "in the pipeline" include a new dam on the Connors River, Rookwood Weir on the Fitzroy and maybe Nathan Dam on the Dawson River by 2013. The long-planned water for Bowen from the Burdekin is much closer to realisation through a pipeline on the right bank to serve an identified area around Abbott Point and horticultural production around Bowen.

SunWater's involvement in the new infrastructure in south-east Queensland is still to be determined.

Parliamentary Questions

Many of us, during our careers, were called upon to prepare answers to parliamentary questions or to ministerial correspondence. (Spare a thought for those attending to the avalanche of letters concerning the Regional Water Supply Strategy.)

The story goes that one public servant, who was an expert at parliamentary answers, was once on a field trip to the outback when he became aware of a hot air balloonist hovering overhead and who called out in desperation, "Where am I?"

Quick as a flash, the public servant responded, "In a balloon."

This answer meets all the criteria for parliamentary questions – it is brief, absolutely accurate and conveys no useful information whatsoever.

It's called question time, not question and answer time. - Stephen Conroy

VALE John Kenneth Gibson Ward 20.02.36 – 30.03.07

John Ward was born in Cairns during a cyclone, the son of a dentist. The family moved to Brisbane where John attended Ascot State School, Brisbane Grammar and Brisbane State High before attending the University of Queensland whence he graduated as a Civil Engineer in 1959.

Having attended university on a scholarship for the previous two years, he joined the then Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. He immediately displayed a great aptitude for hydrology. These were the days before computers, so calculations were very tediously done manually with mechanical adding machines (if you were lucky). In 1960, his boss Arthur McCutchan recommended that John undertake a post-graduate hydrology course at the University of NSW.

Not long after, IBM set up a computer in Melbourne and even though the sceptics in the Commission thought it would be of no use, John spent considerable time commuting to Melbourne to embrace the new technology. He travelled with piles of punch cards which revolutionised the hydrology calculations. The yield studies for Ross River Dam were completed in a week – manually it would have taken roughly three months. But technology continued apace and John's punch cards were stored at Rocklea until they were engulfed by the 1974 floods.

McCutchan subsequently recommended that John apply for a scholarship in Water Engineering in France. His application was successful and John and his new wife set off in 1963, living solely off his scholarship. They spent time in Paris, Nimes, Perpignan and Toulouse having at last been placed on the permanent staff of SOGREAHH. He then moved to Grenoble, the centre of white energy (hydro) and worked on a scheme for Ethiopia. The French were very keen to retain his services and offered him a job in Bangladesh. But the call of home and the impending birth of a child proved too great and they returned home in 1965.

He returned to his hydrological roots and became a fixture. He was 2IC to Harry Stark for years and always seemed to accompany him to meetings to provide the technical knowledge. Not only did he continue his innovative work in hydrology, he very actively sponsored and encouraged the team of hydrographers who intrepidly went out and risked their lives to measure floods. Many of these were migrants as the names Wally Baturo, Karol Netzel, and many others attest. John became their mentor, often travelling

with them to out of the way places. It was commonly believed in IWSC that if you wanted to know where somewhere in Queensland was you could ask John Ward because he'd probably been there.

John was active on a wider professional stage. He established the Water Panel within the Qld Branch of the Institution of Engineers and represented the state nationally. His contribution was belatedly recognised in 2003 when he was awarded the inaugural Institution Water Panel's Chairman's Award for his outstanding contribution to hydrology and water engineering.

He also served for many years on the Australian Water Resources Council with terms as Chairman of both the Technical Committee on Surface Water and the Planning Technical Committee.

Seeking to broaden his horizons, John later moved to Planning; firstly as John Morse's deputy and later as Branch Head in his own right. A number of reorganisations of the Department saw him redeployed in planning until his eventual retirement. But his career did not finish there. Post retirement, he returned to assist with more planning studies, particularly in the Burnett basin.

In private life, John was heavily involved in the community as a Sunday School Teacher, a Scout Master, a Rotarian, a member of Probus and a church office bearer. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Margaret, his four sons, their wives and three grandchildren.

Towards the end of John's career, we were both involved in investigations for the proposed Nathan Dam and met regularly with locals who were opposed to the dam. We were told that we played "Good Cop, Bad Cop". Although this was not intentional, no one will need to think long to identify which was the "Good Cop". This was typical of John who never displayed any malice but devoted his life to getting on with people.

Those of us who were lucky enough to work in the Water Resources Department are very proud of the contribution we have made to the well-being and prosperity of the State. And high on the list of contributors, for his innovative work in hydrology and planning, is the name John Ward.

- adapted from my address at John's funeral plus supplementary material - Ed.

Some Corner of a Foreign Field

Australia's real estate is not by any means restricted to the Australian continent. One small piece of Australian territory of significance in Australian history can be found on the Isle of Mull. This is the site of the mausoleum (pictured) in which General Lachlan Macquarie, his (second) wife Elizabeth Campbell and two of his children – a daughter Jane who died very young and his son Lachlan who died in his thirties – are buried. Macquarie was born on the adjacent island of Ulva but acquired property on Mull. The site is Australian owned and locally administered on behalf of the National Trust of Australia.

Another former Governor of New South Wales, Thomas Brisbane after whom our fair capital was named, is buried in Scotland – at Largs. (A piece of trivia – Brisbane is Scots for "breast bone".)

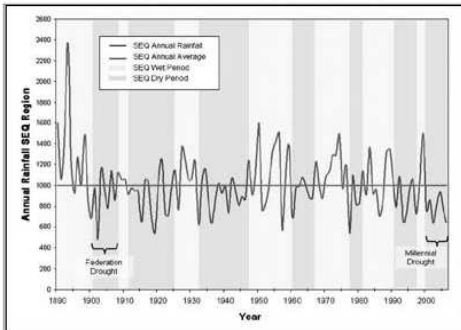


As Variable as the Weather

As no doubt everyone knows, we are currently experiencing the worst drought on record. But what controls our weather? Here is some information provided by the Queensland Water Commission.

South East Queensland has a very variable climate. The region's climate is affected by a number of major global tropical and subtropical climate systems including the tropical maritime Pacific, Tasman and Indian systems and the equatorial and southern maritime systems. The Southern Oscillation Index is only one of the factors directly affecting our climate. As a result, south-east Queensland is a region of maximum variability.

These climate systems generate high inter-annual rainfall variability in SEQ. The figure below presents the annual rainfall record for SEQ since 1890 and reveals that these systems create clusters of wet years followed by dry years. The current drought is one such period of dry years.



Annual Rainfall for the SEQ Region from 1890 to 2006

It is worth noting that there have been other periods in the record of prolonged low rainfall. Coral cores indicate that in the past there may have been even more protracted periods. Climate change may produce more.

Global climate systems appear to be changing in response to human impacts on them:

- equatorial and tropical systems are being affected by global warming and air pollution from Asia
- southern and Antarctic systems

are also being altered by global warming, as well as by the impact of CFCs via the effects of the hole in the Ozone Layer.

As a result, the climate of SEQ is changing.

Current thinking regarding climate change is that:

- SEQ will experience higher temperatures

- the frequency of El Niños (very dry years) will increase, while the frequency of La Niñas (very wet years) will decrease

If these changes do occur it is likely that SEQ will experience:

- increased variability in rainfall and reduced runoff into storages

- decreased reliability and yields of storages.

The topographic and geographic characteristics of SEQ mean that effects of climate change will not be uniform across the region. It is anticipated that the western and central areas of SEQ will be most adversely affected by climate change. The region's two major storages lie in these parts of SEQ. Other areas will also be affected but:

- southern and northern catchments, such as the Nerang and Mary, should still receive higher and more reliable rainfall than the western and central areas of SEQ

- coastal areas should receive higher and more reliable rainfall than central and western parts of the region.

It is currently expected that the overall impact of climate change will be to increase the region's susceptibility to drought. As a result of climate change, new large storages are preferable to smaller ones because they can:

- make up for reductions of the reliability of yields of existing storages

- capture as much water as possible in wet years when they occur

- supply water during protracted dry periods by smoothing out the variability.

There is only one dam site left in SEQ capable of supporting a large and reliable storage. This site is Traveston Crossing in the Mary Catchment.

Forecasting the Weather

Humankind has long attempted to forecast the weather. The ancients used to do it by such dubious means as studying animal entrails.

Modern soothsayers use more scientific techniques. I have in my possession a Courier Mail news item of last August stating that a New Zealand expert, Ken Ring, who tracks the movements of the moon, forecast storms will dump more than three times the usual amount of rain in south-east Queensland in April and May (2007) starting about Easter.

DNRW has had a CINRS (Climate Impacts and Natural Resource Systems pronounced sinners) Unit at Indooroopilly (now superseded) which specialised in climate analysis (see info adjacent) and providing useful forecasting data to farmers. DPI had a unit under Roger Stone (who has now moved to a chair at the University) which has been amalgamated with CINRS.

I am assured that if you always predict that tomorrow will have exactly the same weather as today, you will be right far, far more often than wrong.

Controlling the Weather

The ancient Romans appealed to Jupiter Pluvius when they wanted particular weather. The name survives in Pluvius Insurance and I'm told through its corruption to 'Hughie' as in 'send it down, Hughie'.

More recently both the Premier and the Prime Minister have suggested we pray for rain to a different god. Alison Cotes, a fervent Christian, criticised this approach as inappropriate.

In 1902 Clement Wragge, the Government Meteorologist, went to Charleville. (His son Bert worked for the Commission as a hydrographer.) Wragge bragged to residents that he would break a crippling drought by firing several Steiger Vortex Rainmaking Guns in unison, creating an explosion that would cause the clouds to burst with rain. The guns roared, the clouds remained unmoved and Wragge quietly went home to Brisbane.

The Government has committed more than \$2 million for cloud seeding trials commencing mid-year. While this technique has had some success in Tasmania and the Snowy Mountains, it is unproven here. As Peter Noonan points out, success is likely to cause strong reactions from those whose fete is rained out (without Pluvius insurance) or those who believe their rain was 'stolen'!

HEALTH *and beauty*

Nessun Dorma (None Shall Sleep)

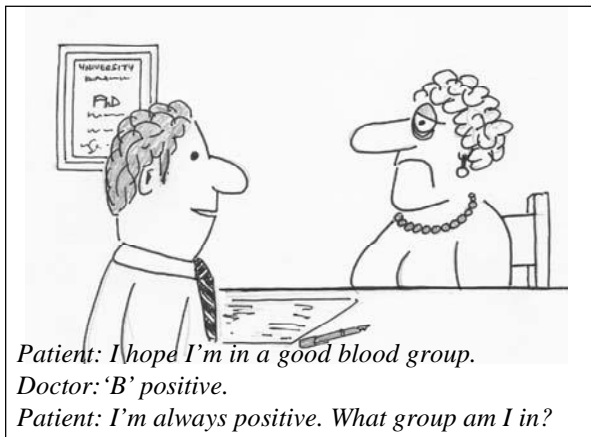
Sharing a bed with someone could temporarily reduce your brainpower – at least if you are a man. When men spend their night with a bedmate, their sleep is disturbed, whether they make love or not, and this impairs their mental ability the next day. The lack of sleep also increases a man's stress hormone levels.

These findings are based on a *New Scientist* study that shows women who share a bed fare better because they sleep more soundly.

Sharing the bed with someone who is making noises or who is fighting for the doona is not sensible. Although men reported that they slept better with a partner, results suggested that they fared worse. But women apparently slept more deeply when they did eventually drop off. And they claimed to be more refreshed!

- from the Courier Mail 29-03-07

One of the least appropriate euphemisms I know is the expression "sleeping with" someone when sleeping is farthest from the intent of the participants. As a character in a play once described his previous night's activities, "We barely slept – and vice versa." - Ed.



Exercise those Brain Cells

In Transylvania, about half the population are vampires (liars) and the rest human beings (truth tellers). Half the inhabitants are also insane. The insane believe all true propositions are false and all false propositions are true. Anything a sane human being says is, of course, true and everything an insane human being says is false. Conversely, sane vampires always lie and insane vampires tell the truth.

How can you determine in one yes-or-no question whether a Transylvanian is a vampire? How can you find out in one yes-or-no question whether he is sane?



The Darwin Awards

A Darwin Award is a tongue-in-cheek "honour" named after evolutionary theorist Charles Darwin, given to people who have contributed to the "improvement of the human genome by accidentally removing themselves from it".

Examples of Darwin award winners would be: Juggling active hand grenades (Croatia, 2001), jumping out of a plane to film skydivers while forgetting to wear a parachute (USA, 1987), trying to get enough light to look down the barrel of a loaded gun using a cigarette lighter (USA, 1996), using a lighter to illuminate a fuel tank to make sure it contains nothing inflammable (Brazil, 2003), the man who attempted to play Russian Roulette with a semi-automatic pistol that automatically reloads the next round direct into the chamber, and the man who had sexual intercourse with a vacuum cleaner (USA, 2000).

Two Florida adventurers who decided it was a bright idea to climb inside a helium balloon have secured the 2006 Darwin Award. The feet of Jason and Sara, both 21, were found protruding from a deflated, helium advertising balloon. Jason was a college student, and Sara attended community college, but apparently their education had glossed over the importance of oxygen. When one breathes helium, the lack of oxygen in the bloodstream causes a rapid loss of consciousness. Some euthanasia experts advocate the use of helium to painlessly end one's life. The pair pulled down the 8' balloon, and climbed inside. Their last words consisted of high-pitched, incoherent giggling as they slowly passed out and passed into the hereafter.

Also honoured is a chap from Belize. Benjamin Franklin reputedly flew his kite in a lightning storm, going on to discover that lightning equals electricity. Kennon, 26, replicated the conditions of Ben Franklin's experiment, but without Ben's sensible safety precautions. Kennon was flying a kite with a short string that he had extended with a length of thin copper wire. The copper made contact with a high-tension line, sending a bolt of electrical lightning towards the man. Just bad luck? Kennon's father told listeners his son was an electrician, and "should have known better."

And finally, a round of applause for the Brazilian who "tried to disassemble a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) by driving back and forth over it with a car". The citation continues: "This technique was ineffective, so he escalated to pounding the RPG with a sledgehammer. The second try worked – in a sense. The explosion proved fatal to one man, six cars, and the repair shop wherein the efforts took place.

Solution to last edition's puzzle

The gamekeeper has to travel πR to reach a point on the shore opposite his starting point. As he can travel at 4 times the speed of the poacher, the poacher can only escape if he has to travel less than $\frac{1}{4}\pi R$ i.e. he must start at a distance greater than $R - \frac{1}{4}\pi R$ from the centre, on the opposite side from the keeper.

Provided the poacher can travel in a circular arc of radius less than $\frac{1}{4}R$, he can maintain a greater angular velocity than the keeper. He therefore rows out to a distance from the edge between $\frac{1}{4}\pi R$ and $\frac{3}{4}R$, circles around until he and the gamekeeper are on the same diameter on opposite sides of the island, then takes off directly for the shore. (His window of opportunity lies in the difference between π and 3.)

At my age, I do what Mark Twain did. I get my daily paper, look at the obituaries page and if I'm not there I carry on as usual.

- Patrick Moore, English astronomer.

How Come - ?

We are currently in rehearsal for the plays which some of you are going to come to view presently. 'Rehearsal' sounds a bit like 'hearse' and indeed it is connected, though not in any way with funerals (except, I suppose, if the play is really bad.)

Originally a hearse was not a vehicle to transport the dead to their final resting place, but an agricultural implement. 'Hearse' is French word signifying a harrow and that is exactly what it was: a triangular iron frame with spikes attached. The French adopted it from the Roman peasants who were the first to use it for harrowing (not to be confused with the grievous connotation of that word). Like the farmers, actors harrow or plough over their memories until their part is so deeply ingrained that they won't stumble over their words.

In the C13th ingenious peasants discovered that their harrow, when not raking the fields, could be turned upside down to become a multiple candlestick. The rake's spikes were just right to impale the tapers. This chandelier was found to be particularly useful at religious festivals including funerals in providing illumination and decoration.

Over time, it grew ever larger, becoming a masterpiece of fine workmanship fit to grace the funeral services of even the most noble. From each of the hearse's three corners, supports were erected and joined to form a framework on which black cloth was draped. Mourners pinned poems and epitaphs and other ornaments. The number of candles impaled grew so large that the flickering lights were compared to the stars.

What followed was probably inevitable. The width and height of the hearse suggested that the coffin be put on top during the service. After the coffin had been transported to the grave, the hearse remained as a shrine to honour the dead with the bereaved continuing to light candles long after the interment. The next development was for the hearse to be used like a litter to carry the bier. Soon wheels were added to lighten the load and mourners pulled it like a cart. Later, horses provided more effective motive power and with the invention of the internal combustion engine, the motorised hearse arrived, still embodying many remnants and traces of its thousand years growth. The hearse has certainly travelled a long way since the ancient Roman days when it was but a crude rake.

The reason for rehearsal is, of course, to polish the production to the greatest possible extent. Even amateurs want to avoid being described as ham actors. But where does that expression come from? Traditionally, actors in minstrel shows blackened their faces by putting on ham fat which they blackened with burnt cork. They were thus referred to as 'ham-fatters'. Minstrels had a very low rating among their fellow actors so the shortened version of 'ham' got applied to poor, amateurish performers.

Others believe that the ham is all that is left of Hamlet, a role that any aspiring actor would want to play, but was poorly done by incompetents. *My guess would have been that it is a corruption of 'amateur'.*

Tempus Keeps Fugiting

Remember the presents you got for your wedding so completely in vogue, the way fashions were heading, which you added with pride to your well-chosen trousseau and have served you so well and continue to do so? Well, it seems slightly galling when you happen to see 'em all so quaintly displayed in an 'Old Days' museum.

Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former. - Albert Einstein

A Sign of the Times

On a Southside car:

My husband went fishing on my birthday, so now I'm selling his rods on eBay.

Sunday Mail 8-04-07

Groundwater Advisory

This article was anonymously submitted to (probably an August edition of) "Aquarius" 1974 by Peter Cochrane.

"Good morning Mr Logan. Take a seat. I have here the results of the analysis of the test on your bore"

"That's what I came to see you about. Now"

"..... all done by a computer, hooked up via three satellites to the International Hydrology Data Bank in London. Now certain irregularities have revealed themselves, which to the trained observer suggest certain possibilities, firstly"

"..... we first missed it about a week ago."

"..... the erratic time drawdown relationship can be isolated and compared to some of the ten million special case formulae held in London. This is a rather time consuming process and the results would not become known until the year 2000. So instead we have drawn up a programme of hit and miss Gaussian Series seekers which may give us the answer in ten minutes. Also"

"..... the kids were upset of course. But after all"

"..... the rather unusual water quality leads us to believe that ionic deposition may be occurring as a result of macro/micro series geo/bio-cells, occasionally found in the Pre-Cambrian of Abyssinia, but never before located in Australia. This could be a first for us"

"..... that's life. We got them another one."

"Another what?"

"Cat. Poor old Smokey drowned in the bore. Only found him yesterday."

"Oh. I see."

A Modern Education

A mother was listening to her small son as he did his homework. He said to himself, "Two plus five, that son of a bitch is seven. Three plus six, that son of a bitch is nine."

She was appalled and next day accosted his teacher. "What are you teaching my son!"

"Right now he's learning addition."

"Did you teach him two plus two, that son of a bitch is four?"

Once the teacher had stopped laughing, she answered, "What I taught them was two plus two, the sum of which is four."

It's easy to be mistaken – our four year old grandson thought the line in Advance Australia Fair is "and wealth for toys". - Ed.

Book Club

Detective stories with a difference! Based in Italy and featuring an Italian policeman, these mysteries are great reading.

The hero is Nic Costa who works with (and against) the Italian Police Force and their Administration; all very similar to their Australian equivalents.

The books are written by David Henson, who lives in Kent, but knows the Italian scenario extremely well. He has written *A Season for the Dead*; *The Villa of Mysteries*; *The Sacred Cut*; and *The Seventh Sacrament* (his latest). To keep up the interest, the locations vary from Venice, to Northern Italy, to Rome.

The stories keep you 'on your toes' and the subtle changes in location help build the mystery as do the awesome and mind boggling problems he handles – all this outside our normal experiences.

A good read, definitely recommended.

John Moreton

An assiduous shop assistant in Perth recommended *Wild Lavender* by Australian author Belinda Alexandra to me.

Simone Fleurier, who grew up on a Provencale lavender farm had dreamt of a career as a singer. At fourteen she left for Marseilles to follow her dream. Through great difficulties, poverty and considerable good fortune, she achieved success in Paris as a singer and dancer.

But the German invasion of France and the occupation of Paris during World War II presented a whole new set of challenges and dangers.

Wild Lavender is a wonderful saga, evocative of its times. As I read it, I became ever more convinced that it would make a most wonderful television series. Thoroughly recommended for those who like racy yarns with an historical flavour.

Ian Pullar

So many books:

So little time.

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The Gospel of Gods and Crocodiles, was written by Elizabeth Stead, the niece of famous author Christina Stead.

When Evan Morley arrives on a small tropical island one degree south of the equator, his aim is to bring Christianity and civilisation to the natives. The villagers are initially bemused by him and his ways and distinctly amused by his attempts to speak their language. He, in turn, delights in the theatrics of converting his audience and goes about his task with strong missionary zeal, earning himself the nickname 'Amen' – the word the natives hear most frequently and loudly from his tongue. *And so it happened that this island, that had once floated small and free and untroubled on its ocean, with its own people of sweet spirits made sweeter by the laughter of children and the devoted innocence of their parents, became tied to another world by strange loud talk that was not their own, by another man's spirit they could neither*

see nor understand, by a preacher's cloth and fatbelly sash as long as a serpent.

Before long, Amen is joined by missionaries of other denominations along with an eclectic and colourful collection of white settlers, many of whom have arrived on the island to escape their pasts.

As the natives and the newcomers interact, the island works its magic on them all, merging the barriers between cultures, customs and beliefs. As each group's behaviour, justice system and spirituality is exposed, each is shown to be flawed and notions of cultural superiority are reassessed. Far from saving the natives' souls and bringing knowledge and civilisation, the whites' presence threatens to destroy the community while, ultimately, it is the preachers and the white settlers who aimed to convert the natives who are themselves transformed.

Jean Yates



Mummy, did Bo-Peep's sheep ever make it home?

No, because the ram wouldn't ask directions.

Credits

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