

WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 62

July 2010

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Changing of the Guard (well some of them)

The AGM was duly held, as promised, on 22 April and was attended by just over 20 members and wives. We were also honoured to have as our guest, Peter Boettcher, CEO of SunWater and our co-patron. Peter gave a most interesting report on the activities of SunWater, a little of which is reproduced on page 6 of this newsletter.

Retiring President Lee Rogers presented his annual report, while Treasurer Bevin Faulkner was able to report that our finances remain very healthy. On the whole it was a good year, though support for activities continues to decline.

Elections were held as is the custom. Hein van der Heide graciously agreed to take on the Presidency (see page 3 for a biographical note). Geoff Eades agreed to another term as Vice President.

As a result, Lee became Past President and Eric Davis, after all this time, gracefully retired from the committee. Bevin Faulkner was reelected as Treasurer and I was reappointed as Editor. Peter Bevin also retired and the two vacancies as committee members were taken by Brian Shannon and Terry Loos (welcome aboard to both). Ray Sutherland agreed to continue as Auditor. (See contact details on page 10.)

So what is left? There were no nominations for the position of Secretary, perhaps the most important position of all. John Connolly has most graciously (and I'm sure very reluctantly) agreed to continue on as Acting Secretary while the Committee tries to find a replacement.

It is essential that we have a Secretary, so we are calling for a volunteer or a draftee. To misquote Lord Kitchener, "Your Association needs you."

The Website

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Jon Henry (and the sub-committee) our website has now gone live. The address is:

<http://www.waterysauces.org.au/>

Among the contents, visitors will find this newsletter and most of its predecessors.

They will also note that the site is still quite embryonic and in need of considerably more population. Your contribution will be welcomed by Jon. He (and others) can be contacted at the addresses given on the site.

It would be very useful to WRRRA if members would provide their email addresses so that we can make much swifter contact. So please oblige – it only takes a little more than a keystroke!

From the Editor's Chair

Yet another newsletter has gone to press. And another milestone as this is the first one that will be available on our very own web site. Apart from anything else this will give it, at least potentially, a wider audience.

But this newsletter is also significant for another reason, about which I am less happy. This is the first edition of mine in which there has not been a single tale of "the good old days". While I love the stories of travels and other trials (please keep up the good work), the one thing we members share in common is our employer and our work heritage. So please could we have some more tales gleaned from the memory banks of our readers?

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

Program for the Year

The incoming Committee has decided on the following program for the year:

Mid-year luncheon at CO-TAH on Tuesday 15 June (past)

Visit to Hydraulics Lab at Rocklea on Tuesday 13 July (past)

Annual Bowls Day – Friday 6 August (see enclosed flyer)

Bus trip to Wyaralong Dam site – October (date to be advised)

Christmas Luncheon at CO-TAH – November (date to be advised)

Lunch-time social at Public Service Club – February (date to be advised)

Annual General Meeting - Public Service Club – Thursday 28 April 2011.

Out and About

I guess it's my own fault. Just after I recounted Harry Stark's story about *per anum* in the last Newsletter, I was diagnosed with a fairly large colono-rectal tumour which was removed by precisely that method. This of course was much better than the alternative open-cut approach and, even more fortunately, the intruder turned out to be non-malignant. Which means that I'm again firing on all cylinders (just don't ask how many that is!). This has allowed me to return to part-time work – this time with the Queensland Water Commission, along with my old mate Ian Ferrier. We share a work area with Ian Hanks, which has led to the dubbing of the premises as the *I-pod*. I'm also very busy with theatre activities – e.g. see the advertisement opposite. Phone me for more information.

Lee Rogers and Peter Gilbey work part-time with DERM – Lee has recently returned from a trip to South Africa (but avoiding the World Cup) while Peter is currently tripping around Europe. Brian Shannon and Mike Marley are not long back from the ICOLD meeting in Cambodia with Brian expressing the view that he is “over ICOLD”.

Retirees must have itchy feet. Hein and Françoise van der Heide are going grey-nomad again in October. Ian and Judy Ferrier are not long back from a trip to South Australia, concentrating (not surprisingly) on the Barossa. Ed Donohue (not retired) has just returned from Alaska, overjoyed that he saw five grizzlies in one day. Howard Gibson has taken French leave.

Fortunately some members do stay at home and so are able to attend WRRRA functions. Just over 20 members and wives attended the AGM in April and enjoyed the usual chat over lunch. And our mid-year luncheon was attended by 35. Again, Terry Loos challenged the members with his trivia quiz. For those who were unable to attend on the day (and those who did but can't remember the answers) I've included some of his teasers on p 9.

Readers may have noticed in the Queen's Birthday honours that Peter Phillips was awarded an OAM for “service to the community through a range of education, conservation and social welfare organisations”. Congratulations, Peter.

Members may know that Joy Beattie was heavily involved in theatre work. I knew her in that capacity before I was aware that she was Don's wife. Members may also recall that about 18 years ago Bernie Credlin reported in a newsletter that Don and Joy had just become grandparents to triplets. Don has now informed me that one of these girls is now enrolled in a Theatre course at QUT. He and I agreed that she must have got those genes from Grandma and not Grandpa!

We welcome Peter Jones as a new member of WRRRA.

Very sadly we report the following deaths:

Graham Hunter, who was an engineer in various locations but finally in Dam Safety, in April at the age of only 63.

Carl Luppi, who was a construction supervisor of a number of projects in the north of the state, died in May.

Pam Bevin, wife of the last Commissioner, Peter, who was only 70 when she died in June.

John Way, who was an engineer at Clare, before leaving the Commission to join local government. He later retired to Ingham.

John (Jack) O'Shea who was an engineer in Groundwater Branch until he moved to the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba in the 1970s. He died in June at the age of 79.

Bernie McDonald who was Chief Surveyor in the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission from 1964 to 1976. He then became Director of Surveys with the Department of Mapping and Surveying.

Our sincere condolences to their relatives and friends.

(Advertisement)

Ipswich Little Theatre Society will be presenting the world premiere season of **Time and Time Again**

written and directed by

Ian and Helen Pullar

at the Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator Theatre, Ipswich

29 September - 16 October

Public Performances

8, 9, 15 October at 8 pm & Matinee 10 October at 2 pm

Bookings: Ipswich Visitor Information Centre Phone 32810555

We sought news of retirees in the Bundaberg area (through Trevor Tuesley) and are very grateful to have received tidings on folk who consider themselves privileged to have been associated with Water Resources, facing the many challenges over the years.

Bob Brydon and Marg. are in good health. Bob volunteers for St Vinnie's two days a week driving a truck picking up donations of furniture etc and clearing out bins. They enjoy travelling around Australia and recently went to Kakadu and Litchfield National Park, then on to the Ghan from Darwin to Adelaide and a Murray River cruise. Bob says they enjoyed seeing the Pandas at Adelaide Zoo and the Harbour Cruise in Darwin.

Roy Maxted and Iris are in reasonable health. Roy volunteers for St Vinnie's doing purchasing and other paperwork. He also volunteers for St Johns Ambulance as a driver helping our aged and incapacitated citizens in Bundaberg getting them around for their various medical, shopping etc. needs. Roy is a driver for Centacare Men's Group and also RSL Care in a similar capacity. He is also a member of the Nashos Bundaberg Group.

Max Riley and Jill are also in reasonable health. Max says he is “living the quiet life in the scrub.” They have about two acres at Burnett Downs close to Bundaberg. Max took up golf after retirement and got down to an 8 handicap. Max says he has “not recovered since Labor got into power”. His family has done very well with their lives, mainly working in the mining resource area. I am really sorry that I interrupted his viewing of *The Bold & The Beautiful*.

Trevor Tuesley spent five years as convener of the Bundaberg & District Prostate Cancer Support Group. His interests are all sports with fishing being currently at the top, having purchased a Quintrex Coast Runner when the Super Funds were steaming ahead. His highest Queensland keeps him busy with repairs and improvements. Trevor considers himself privileged to have experienced the operator connected phone calls and the 1 cent bank deposits for stamp duty in Charleville, the challenging work on the Construction Projects, through to the current Commercial environment.

Our New President

Hein van der Heide commenced with the Irrigation & Water Commission in 1964 as a Cadet Surveyor, articled to Graham Ledlie. Initially he undertook investigation surveys for Lockyer Valley & Upper Brisbane Valley dam and weir sites.

In 1967 he transferred to Mareeba to assist Trevor Sleep on cadastral surveys in the Paddys Green farms. He and Trevor moved to Emerald in 1968 to commence work on the EIA and Fairbairn Dam.

Called up for National Service in late 1969, Hein was selected to undertake Officer Training. He graduated as a 2nd Lt and was posted to the Army Survey Corps at Randwick. He was involved in mapping projects in NSW and spent three months on a joint mapping project in Sumatra.

He returned to Emerald after two years and undertook cadastral surveys for the Selma farms. He transferred to Bundaberg in 1974 as Surveyor in Charge for the BIA and Fred Haigh Dam, as well as surveys throughout the wider region.

He was promoted to Brisbane as Deputy Chief Surveyor in 1984 and then to Chief Surveyor on the departure of Trevor Sleep. Major technology advances during this period included the deployment of electronic surveying equipment to survey teams, the introduction of precise GPS equipment for control surveys and acquisition of GPS controlled aerial photography for topographic mapping.

He was assigned to SunWater on separation from DNR in 2000 and was appointed as Project Manager of the design engineers, drafters and surveyors. For the last 12 months prior to retirement in 2005, he was the Project Manager for the Gattonvale OSS project.

QWI, on its formation, sought his services to set up the surveying, mapping and GIS capabilities for the Traveston and Wyaralong Dam projects.

Hein served as a member of the Surveyors Board of Qld for a total of eight years. He was elected a member of the Divisional Committee of the Institution of Surveyors Qld and was also invited to be a member of the QUT Faculty Advisory Committee for Surveying. He was elected a Fellow of the Institution of Surveyors, Australia in 1995.

He met and married Francoise in Bundaberg in 1976. Their daughters were born in Bundaberg. Elizabeth is an Engineer with Main Roads and Catherine is an Interior Designer with Hassell. They became first time grandparents in May 2010.

Hein and Francoise bought a caravan and 4WD in retirement, with the major journey being a seven month trip around Australia in 2008. *(And we were privileged to share their trip vicariously.- Ed.)*

He became a member of the WRRRA Management Committee in 2009. *(And we are delighted that he has taken on the Presidency this year. - Ed.)*

Somerset Dam – a Landmark

On 8 June, the Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley AO, unveiled a plaque to denote Somerset Dam as a Heritage Landmark. Here is a much edited part of her speech. A longer version is available on the web, or I could supply it on request. - Ed.

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this ceremony to mark the recognition of Somerset Dam as a National Engineering Heritage Landmark. Engineering has been the profession of choice through four generations of my family, leaving me with a genuine awareness and appreciation of their contribution to our State. One of my forebears, Alf McCulloch, is featured in *Eminent Queensland Engineers* and he would have been immensely gratified by this Award (as would my late brother-in-law, John Ward who was passionate about ‘water engineering’).

Despite the fact that nine Queensland engineering works have been recognized through the Heritage Recognition Program run by Engineering Heritage Australia, I don’t think this Program has sufficient recognition outside the engineering community and I believe it needs greater promotion. On my next visit to Bundaberg, I plan to visit Buss Park and see the first Historic Engineering Plaque ever awarded in Australia – for Sugar Cane Harvesting Machines. I intend to work my way around all nine plaque location sites, to draw attention to the historic achievements they represent.

As the Bundaberg plaque was a ‘first’, so too is this Somerset Dam award – as the first time that a Queensland engineering work has received the premium award given by Engineers Australia and earned the designation of ‘Landmark’. This puts this dam in the company of such legendary engineering achievements as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric scheme and the Woomera Rocket Range.

This is distinguished company indeed and may come as a surprise to most Queensland citizens who have grown up with the

Somerset Dam as an accepted part of the landscape of South East Queensland, benefiting from its recreational features – its fishing, camping and watersports facilities – but oblivious to its history.

Among the engineers associated with the dam was Bill Nimmo, Designing Engineer, then Chief Engineer from 1934-1949 and later Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply.

Henry Plantagenet Somerset established “Caboonbah Station” at the junction of the Brisbane and Stanley rivers. In 1893, a freak climatic event – two cyclones within a fortnight – dropped heavy and extended rain over the Blackall Range, bringing 36 inches of rain and rapidly rising flood waters flowing down the Stanley River. Realising the flood’s potential danger to surrounding districts, Somerset dispatched a horse rider to Esk to telegraph advice to Brisbane of the danger. Two weeks later, when the river rose seriously again, and the telegraph line being down, again in an effort to warn Brisbane of the impending disaster, Henry himself rowed across the flooded Brisbane River, two horses swimming in tow, to send a rider across the d’Aguilar Range to Caboolture to telegraph Brisbane. (While the message somehow did not get through, either being misinterpreted or ignored, it was these efforts which inspired the establishment of “Caboonbah” as Queensland’s first flood warning station, manned by the Somersets – unpaid – for the 40 years between 1893 and 1933.)

It was Somerset who came up with the idea of a dam across the Stanley River to serve two purposes – flood mitigation and water storage. And this Somerset Dam achieved, saving Brisbane in 1955.

Today, dams are once again in the public eye. So the timing of this award could not be more apt or appropriate. Those who planned, designed and established the Somerset Dam –and who have maintained and operated it since for the benefit of the people of Queensland – are rightly honoured today through the conferring of this Landmark status. Their legacy was – and remains – a great one, to engineering, to our State and to our country.

Travelling Round

Concluding the trek of Hein and Françoise Van der Heide. - Ed.

On our way north we stopped in at Tumbly Bay, Port Neill and Arno Bay, before we over-nighted in Cowell – many historic buildings in all of these places. A scenic drive, with periodic views of the Spencer Gulf coastline. Just north of Cowell is Lucky Bay, which is the western terminal of a relative new ‘roll on - roll off’ ferry service from Wallaroo on the other side of Spencer Gulf – it provides a more direct route for travellers from Adelaide, who want to get over to the west side of SA.

Our next stop was the industrial town of Whyalla, with the iron ore mines 50 km to the west. Great views from the lookouts over the harbour and the old part of the city. We did a tour of the ship HMAS Whyalla, which was built in Whyalla in the early 1940s and it is now a tourist attraction. We then went on to Port Augusta at the head of Spencer Gulf – by now the Gulf was only a hundred metres wide and as far up as Flinders went in 1802. He didn’t find a navigable passage through to the Gulf of Carpentaria, as he had hoped! Port Augusta has two great sites to visit – the Australian Arid Land Botanic Garden, which has an expansive array of arid plants and the Wadlata Outback Centre, which is an interpretive centre covering the history of the region from 15 million years ago to the present.

We then went some 150 km north for a few days to Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges – a different world altogether. We did a scenic drive just to the north of the pound, where we visited a number of gorges carved through the Flinders Ranges. As it is hard to get an overall appreciation of the area from ground level, we did a half hour scenic flight over the pound and the surrounding area – the conditions were almost perfect and it was great to see where we had driven the previous day. We then did a 7 km hike into the pound to a lookout where you could see most of the internal rim of the pound. As is so often the case, a photo doesn’t seem to do it justice – you have to be there to experience it!

It was then time to leave SA and we headed across the NSW border to Broken Hill – the mining town that produced massive wealth from the 1880s onwards – this is evidenced by the vast number of significant public and private buildings in the town dating back to

that period. However the ore bodies of silver, lead and zinc are running out and currently the metal prices have been dropping sharply. More than 400 jobs have been lost in the last couple of months and many of the residents are facing an uncertain future – the increasing tourism industry may be beneficial to some. There are many art galleries in town and we visited the Pro Hart and Jack Absalom Galleries – well worth a look. Another interesting place we went to was the GeoCentre – an interactive mining museum and interpretive centre covering the geology, mineralogy and metallurgy of the region.

On our way east, we stopped briefly in Wilcannia to have a look at the Darling River – a mere shadow of its former glory, when it was navigable up to Wilcannia, and it was for a time the 3rd largest port in Australia – it is now barely flowing and you couldn’t get a tinny to go up the river at present. We over-nighted in Cobar – an old but now a thriving town, as copper and gold mining have recently been expanded in the area – then on to Dubbo. It was time again to arrange a service for the 4WD and a visit to the Western Plains Zoo. We were here some 27 years ago, but we didn’t notice any appreciable changes at the zoo.

Changing directions once again, we headed north to Coonabarabran for a look at the Warrumbungle National Park, which is some 30 km west of the town. Once again there were great views of massive volcanic plugs which were formed some 15 million years ago. We did a number of short walks at various locations in the park, with the best views being at the White Gums Lookout. Adjacent to the NP is the Siding Spring Observatory – an Anglo Australian Telescope facility with 11 telescopes, with the largest being a 3.9 m mirror telescope. Well worth a look.

From Coonabarabran we headed north to Goondiwindi and then via Warwick, to get back home to Brisbane a week before Christmas.

A few statistics – we spent 7 months (or 218 days) on the road, travelling 29,000 km in the 4WD while towing the caravan for 16,500 km (the side trips do add up!). We stayed in 77 different caravan parks.

What a trip! Thank you for sharing it with us. - Ed.

Disasters make Good Travel Stories

Brought to you by that intrepid globe trotter, Bernie Hillier

Anxiety attacks and sweaty palms – that’s always been me at an airport – even when only meeting someone. Evidently essential training for what was to occur

Few people over the age of 20 would greet an ‘0’ birthday with much glee. Determined to avoid Depression I organised that mine would occur on a luxury cruise ship one day’s sail out of Rio, bound for Barcelona. The American pals were geared to be with us.

We flew to Santiago and then Buenos Aires (*love that city!*). Several days later we toddled off to Ezeiza Airport to catch our flight to Rio.

The Check In Chick flicked through our Australian passports. She repeated the exercise. I tried to be helpful but could not distract her. My palms flooded. Finally she looked at us and announced, “No Brazilian visas.” “How many times did I ask if we needed any visas?” muttered frustrated John.

“You” – pointing at me and my second, E.U. passport, “can go. He” – indicating John, “cannot.”

Tempted as I was to grab my luggage and dash for the plane, I

followed through by asking what we should do and was told to go to the Brazilian Embassy to get a visa. I assumed (*never assume anything when travelling*) that an inconvenient trip back into town to the Embassy would only delay us until the evening flight. Check In Chick booked us onto it, shaking her head.

Our taxi driver had to be the best in Buenos Aires – he’d had this experience before. He spoke very limited English but went to great lengths to ensure that I understood his Spanish. Left out of this conversation, John went to sleep in the back seat (*sleep?!*) The driver told me that visas would not be issued in one day, we needed a hotel for the night, he would phone around to find one, check us in and unload our luggage, take us to the Embassy and wait for us.

At the Embassy we queued and tried to complete computerised forms in Portuguese, eventually helped by an American teenager from whom I learned that the Brazilians had instituted the visa system three months ago. Visas were issued and signed on Wednesday and could be collected on Thursday. Today was Friday – the ship sailed on Sunday.

Bye bye special birthday.

Our taxi driver popped up and we gave up. I now know the Spanish for “told you so”, and how to say it very nicely. We informed our hotel that we required an open line to make international calls and an unlimited supply of beer and wine. Thereupon we set out to call our travel agent – disregarding the time difference – it was midnight in Australia - and while the phone trilled, entertained ourselves with ways of improving and lavishing upon her the more severe Tortures of the Inquisition.

She answered the phone. She protested. She cried (*She* cried?). John expressed an adult desire to go home. In view of that I thought I may as well catch the night flight to Rio. We phoned our Yank mates, already in Rio, and begged them to let the ship’s purser know that we would try to join the ship at its first port of call – The Cape Verde Islands, off West Africa, a former Portuguese colony.

Our travel agent reciprocated our midnight call to her, advising that we were booked on Iberia that morning to Madrid, thence to Lisbon, the only place from where we could reach the Cape Verde Islands. In Lisbon, she had booked us into a five star hotel with an upgrade. She was still crying.

I won’t bore you with the hassles involved in trying to assure Iberia that the flight had been booked in Australia. It turned out that the silly dopes were assuming we held an Economy booking instead of Business. Anyway, we boarded the largest business class section I’ve ever seen (half a plane at least) and settled in for a dubious future.

We would have to book ourselves on from Lisbon to the Cape Verde Islands. We needed to discover at which island the ship would call. We had to find a Portuguese travel agent to organise flights from Lisbon and accommodation in Cape Verde plus, ourselves, clear with Florida that the ship would break its rules and permit us to board, half way through the cruise.

John settled in for a post-take off doze thus conceding that I truly was in charge, and I hauled out the lap top. A few key taps later he muttered, “I hope you’re making this account humorous.”

N.B. Contrary to popular belief, the Portuguese do not understand Spanish – nor French. This made our subsequent travails even more fun. The whole complexion of the exercise was enhanced when I broke my wrist and cracked a few ribs before departing Lisbon.

I had a miserable, cold, wet birthday – but never gave up. We made the ship – to a huge reception.

Glimpses of Vietnam

Continuing John Cantor’s fascinating comments. - Ed.

The most popular means of conveyance is the small motorcycle with about 80cc engine capacity. We’re all familiar with pictures of entire families onboard or mountains of live ducks, poultry, dogs, fully grown pigs, furniture or other produce enroute to local markets. With more than 3 million motorbikes in Ha Noi and 4 million in HCMC, traffic is often grid locked for long periods both morning and evening. As more motor cars enter the fray this congestion is becoming even more impossible. Long distance bus travel is cheap, uncomfortable and very dangerous while train travel is more comfortable and much safer. With increasing affluence, air travel has become very popular but is still beyond the means of the majority.

As expected, all travel to Vietnam requires advance approval and prior issue of a visa. However not all applications are successful. Veronica and I are still perplexed by the refusal of her application for a reunion visit to me during one of my early assignments. Travel to most of the provinces is unrestricted however the authorities maintain a detailed but discrete record of who goes where and why. Some provinces still require formal applications to visit, particularly those occupied by the 50 or so ethnic *minority* groups whose development is only reluctantly supported by the central government. Rescheduling and postponement of working visits is not uncommon notwithstanding the incredibly hospitable welcoming parties and their unbelievable drinking sessions. ‘Rice wine’ is actually distilled in the villages and is therefore a spirit with a dangerously high and sometimes suspect alcohol content.

Vietnamese food and Vietnamese cooking are legendary and each region, most provinces and many towns have their own signature dishes, which are recommended to visitors and discussed endlessly. Lesser known *delicacies* include embryo ducklings, fried spiders, hatchling birds, silkworm larvae and eight different snake dishes while dog-meat restaurants are very popular in the north particularly during the cold winter months. The most common dish is *pho* (pronounced fur), a noodle-based soup containing beef, pork or seafood with lettuce, bean sprouts and a variety of other ingredients. It is eaten throughout the country for all meals, is delicious, nutritious and extremely cheap.

The Vietnamese are an extraordinarily happy people with a delightful sense of humor. They enjoy simple pleasures like singing, dance, live theatre, feasting and many festivals. This seems incongruous considering they have been at war for almost 1000 years culminating in their recent turbulent history of occupation by the French colonials, the French abdication during WWII, the Japanese occupation which caused the death of 3 million from starvation, the subsequent looting by the Chinese before the French attempt to resume control leading to their defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the CIA subterfuge, the partition into North and South following the failed Paris peace initiative, the American War and the battles against Cambodian and Chinese forces in the 1980s under the leadership of the mysterious Ho Chi Minh.

Memories of the Chinese incursion into the north of Vietnam in the 1980s remain strong as evidenced by the spectacular victory memorials throughout the region and the lack of detail if one tries to Google Earth the areas close to the Chinese border. Every town throughout the nation has its war memorial cemetery in which reside the remains of the hundreds of thousands of casualties of the victorious forces of the ‘American War’. Tales of atrocities are told to trusted long-term visitors and the apparent on-going results of Agent Orange are evident in many rural areas. I have never found any information on the location of the remains of the supporters of the puppet regime in the south.

These glimpses of Vietnam are my own impressions and my understanding of the state of the Nation and some of its background. I have deliberately withheld my views on a number of controversial issues such as the effectiveness of development-aid programs, the economy, environmental degradation, morality, human rights and animal welfare as I do not believe this is an appropriate forum to initiate debate on such sensitive matters. Others will surely have different experiences and interpretations and are free to disagree with my opinions.

Many thanks, John, for this valuable contribution. - Ed.

Gallivanting Gilbo – the final episode

On leaving Moolooloo Outstation which by the way got a mention in the novel by Tom Cole – *Hell West and Crooked* – another good read for those interested in the early days of the Northern Territory – we resumed our travel across the Territory via the Buchanan “Highway” before rejoining the bitumen near Timber Creek. On the way we crossed the Victoria River which fortunately had a fine causeway – given my earlier tribulations with creek crossings. I managed to jag a nice black bream for lunch before moving on to Jasper Gorge which was renowned as one of the most difficult places for the early drovers driving cattle between Western Australia and Queensland. I could see why, as within the narrow confines of the gorge there was little protection if the local inhabitants turned nasty and the rugged track would have been most difficult to traverse. We stopped at the plunge pool to cast a lure and on returning to the vehicle, smelt something burning in the back.

It turned out the lead to my fridge had shorted and I was pleased to note that the Ford carpet did not catch light – although it was badly scorched. Lesley was not quite as sanguine given the gas bottle was in close proximity and had visions of us being plastered all over Jasper Gorge. With that we moved on to Timber Creek and headed for the WA border via the Victoria Highway which passes through the landscape of sandstone and major rivers which was captured in the film *Australia*. To our surprise at the border they had a very vigilant fruit fly and other agricultural goods inspection station – we even lost our honey which I replaced in Kununurra with exactly the same brand.

After crossing into WA we decided to stay out at the Lake Argyle camp which was the construction village site for the building of the Ord River Dam.

While we were there we picked up a CD showing the construction of the dam and spillway and I was very impressed with the detail with which the construction was captured – if we ever get to build another dam it would be a good training tool for future engineers.

In hindsight it is a shame we didn’t do more to capture Queensland’s dam building era.

One of the more significant aspects of the construction was the way they generated the rockfill for the embankment using a technique they referred to as “coyote blasting” in which charges were laid deep inside the side of a hill close to the site and the whole hill was virtually split into manageable sized rocks for cartage to the dam wall in two blasts. The seismic shock of the blasts was detected as far away as Melbourne.

SunWater Snippets

SunWater’s CEO, Peter Boettcher, reported to the AGM that Nathan Dam is back on the drawing board. Some time ago it was decreed that the dam threatened a rare boggomoss snail and SunWater, if it desired to continue, was required to try to relocate some snails to unthreatened boggomosses and to monitor whether they would reproduce for several generations. In the course of undertaking this work, it was discovered that not only were the snails not rare, they were abundant.

The designers are now looking at an alternative dam arrangement at an axis slightly upstream of the previously proposed one.

In the November 2009 edition of the Newsletter, SunWater’s “Smarter, Lighter, Faster” Initiative was reported. As a result of the

While at Kununurra we took the opportunity to fly over the Bungle Bungles and to see the famous honeycomb structures created by the south easterlies blowing in from the Tanami desert. The structures are formed from sedimentary rocks laid down some 20 million years ago which themselves were remnants from a range of mountains which were reportedly as high as the Himalayas.

While we were in the area we travelled by boat out into the Lake Argyle reservoir and it is truly magnificent, the sheer size of the lake dwarfs Lake Dalrymple created by our Burdekin Falls dam and the provision for flood capture during major flood events – where the flood surcharge can be up to 40 metres over the spillway is something to behold. While you don’t quite get out of sight of land in the middle of the lake you certainly can only see the hill tops. We also visited the Durack Homestead and after reading Mary Durack’s book the links between the family and Queensland were quite profound, that old Patsy Durack had the drive to construct a homestead to withstand the ages is testament to his long sighted vision for the region.

With that it was back up the Victoria highway to Katherine Gorge in the Northern Territory following the course of the mighty Victoria river for much of the way although lack of time to get Lesley back to Darwin to catch her plane meant we did not spend as much time visiting the spots in that area as we would have liked.

Katherine Gorge was certainly one of the more significant places we visited, with the rectangular blocks of sandstone which form the gorge reminiscent of the Gilbert River formations back in Queensland, the blocks are formed due to uplift of the overlying formations many millions of years ago. In some reaches the Katherine River is over 30 metres deep as it winds its way through the gorge and the cultural significance of the place is fully explained by the local guides.

After that it was back to Darwin to drop off Lesley – who had to get back to work – and back down the Stuart Highway.

Apart from nearly getting myself lost and getting a good touch of the sun while fishing just upstream of the Edith River bridge, there is little further to report on my way back, although after serving in western Queensland in the ’80s it was good to see the remainder of the Barkly Tableland and the extensive Mitchell Grass country in that part of the territory.

So now it is pack the bags for Europe and the UK where we have decided to be driven about on a coach which I am sure will be more relaxing than trying to find my way around their waterholes.

Cheers, Peter and Lesley.

... and many thanks to you both. -Ed.

investigation, the organisation was rationalised with a greater degree of centralisation. The net result was a reduction in staff numbers by around 100 personnel.

The Connors River dam project is now out for public scrutiny and comment. The dam is being proposed to provide more water for the coal fields of the Bowen and Galilee basins (presumably if the proposed mining industry profits tax doesn’t reduce the projected coal production and water demand).

Answers to Terry’s Trivia on page 9

1. (!) Spain 2. (!!!) South America 3. (!!) Hungary
4. (!!!) South Africa 5. (!) Treasurer 6. (!!) Jose Carreras
7. (!) Ghana 8. (!) Herrings 9. (!!) Horseradish
- 10 (!!!) Moustaches 11. (!) Archimedes

What's happening in Dam Safety?

With the commencement of the dam safety provisions of the *Water Act* in 2002, water dams were no longer regulated just because they exceeded certain height and size requirements. A failure impact assessment is the tool now used to determine whether there is 'population at risk' if the dam were to fail. If there is no population at risk, we don't take a dam safety interest but, if there is, we apply dam safety conditions which effectively require the dam owner to set up and maintain a dam safety management system for their dam.

We are now part of the Office of the Water Supply Regulator within the Environment and Natural Resources Regulation Division of DERM and the dam safety provision has been moved to the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

As it stands at the moment, dams over 8 metres in height and 500 ML or over 250 ML with a catchment area greater than three times the surface area at FSL need to be automatically failure impact assessed. If they don't exceed this size, and we believe there is population at risk, we have to issue the owner with a notice to do an assessment. If it turns out that there is no population at risk, we have to pay for it so we need to do our numbers beforehand and get it right.

Aside from the normal work of applying dam safety conditions and auditing compliance with these conditions, we have two major projects on hand at the moment.

The first of these is the farm dam assessment program. This program commenced in 2006 after inspections identified a significant number of dams that were previously unknown to the group and could potentially threaten life if they were to fail. The program is unique given the number of structures under consideration and it is understood to be the first widespread systematic search for dams with population at risk in the world. The Dam Safety (Farm Dams) team is ably led by John McKenna and he has recruited a number of ex farm advisory staff to undertake the inspections and associated survey work. He is supported by a team of GIS specialists and other engineering support staff to assist in the assessments.

Satellite imagery was used to identify around 97,000 water bodies with a surface area of greater than 0.25 hectares and this was pruned down to about 27,000 potential dams by eliminating natural water bodies, non-referable weirs, excavated storages, shade cloth, frost and cloud shadows. Where possible, desk top assessments are done to reduce the need for field inspections. If there is any doubt as to whether 'population at risk' is likely, field inspections and data gathering surveys are undertaken. It is anticipated 9,000 to 12,000 of these may ultimately require field inspections.

Owing to the high number of storages under consideration, the cost of the potential assessments and the time frames involved in obtaining external support, we have placed a lot of emphasis on in-house capability. This has been achieved by taking full advantage of the available technology and through appropriate simplification of analytical techniques. We purchased hand held laser measuring gear and RTK (Real Time Kinematic) surveying equipment to enable field surveys in a fraction of the time of traditional survey methods.

So far, the project is about 70% to 80% complete and it is tracking well to be completed by June 2011.

The other major project is our spillway adequacy assessment program. This arose out of the recent upgrade of Bureau of Meteorology estimates of Probable Maximum Precipitation and the ongoing development downstream of many dams throughout the State. This has meant that there are a number of major dams which may now have inadequate spillways and this program is designed to quantify the problem and initiate those upgrades that need to be done as soon as possible.

As part of this program, we developed a Departmental Guideline on Acceptable Flood Capacity for Dams which is largely consistent with the relevant ANCOLD guideline but which allows the use of risk assessments to determine spillway adequacy. It also nominates the required program to address the spillway adequacy issues.

A number of major dams have now been upgraded either using a staged process to comply with the program or using a single stage full upgrade to increase the discharge capacity in one step. The dams upgraded to date include: Gold Creek Dam, Lake Manchester, Tallebudgera Creek Dam, Ross River Dam, Fred Haigh Dam, Bjelke-Petersen Dam and Borumba Dam. Tinaroo Falls Dam is currently being upgraded through the installation of post stressed anchors and Hinze Dam is also being upgraded as part of the current dam raising project.

Both of these projects were the subject of technical papers at the last ANCOLD Conference on Dams in Adelaide. Further details of the dam safety program and our guidelines are available on the Departmental website at http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/water/regulation/referable_dams.html

Peter Allen

Many thanks, Peter. Readers will also be delighted to know that Peter is back on deck and much healthier. - Ed.

More DERM Doings

The Indooroopilly Sciences Centre will be moving to a new Science Precinct at the old Boggo Road gaol about the middle of next year. This was originally established in the early '60s by DPI. When the Water Resources Commission became part of DPI under the Goss government, lots of watery people moved there. Later, of course, DPI and DNR went their separate ways but the Indooroopilly complex stayed with DNR. Both Bill Eastgate and Frank van Schagen were officers in charge.

It has now been decided to record the history of the establishment before it is closed and DERM has engaged Margaret Cook to write it, largely because of her demonstrated ability with the People's History of Water Resources.

Margaret has been busily interviewing people who served there over the years. She is fascinated by the difference in outlook of scientists (who love research) and engineers (who just want to get the job done). I'm sure it will be a very interesting book.

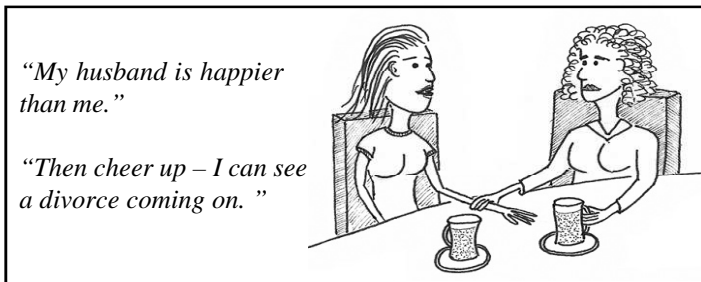
HEALTH *and beauty*

The Joys of Marriage

A number of studies (including one reported in Newsletter 47) have concluded that married men have a greatly increased life expectancy over their unmarried equivalents. This state has usually been attributed to the fact that love will ward off the inevitable effects of aging including degenerative diseases.

As it turns out this may not be the case. More recent studies suggest that the reason is more likely to be that women nag their husbands into going to the doctor! So not only do husbands live longer, they are fully aware of it.

On the other hand, a team of economists, using data from Australia, Germany and Britain, has found that if a wife is less happy than her husband, separation and divorce are likely. The higher the gap in happiness between the partners – even during the first year of marriage – the higher the risk of divorce. In all three countries, across married and de facto couples, women were generally happier than men. Men were only happier than women in marriages that ended in divorce.



Have you noticed that almost every day there are reports in the media on the results of health studies which, I expect, are meant to give us guidance on the life style we should adopt? But I also expect that you are all, like me, at a total loss as to what we should do.

For example, we are told to keep out of the sun because it leads to sun cancer, but if we don't go into the sun we'll suffer from Vitamin D deficiency. Butter is bad for us: butter is good for us. Red meat is good for us: red meat is bad for us. Red wine is good for us: red wine is bad for us (I find that hard to believe). Exercise is essential, but running wrecks your knees and ankles while walking doesn't boost your heart rate. And so on.

We're starting a collection of all these useful pieces of advice and one day I'm sure we'll have the answers which I'll be happy to share with you – provided I haven't expired from lack of proper advice in the meantime. All contributions from equally perplexed readers will be gratefully accepted.

A Sign of the Times:

On a T-shirt

One Tequila

Two Tequila

Three Tequila

Floor

Left Right Out

Modern society has taken up the cudgels on behalf of minorities. Well, many minorities. But it seems that there is one particular minority that has been left right out – the 10 to 20% of the population who are left handed.

Whereas right handers – those using the dexter limb – are considered dextrous, left handers are considered to be gauche or even sinister (from the French and Latin respectively). They even have to suffer pejorative terms such as cackhander, mollydooker, leftie, southpaw etc.

It may just be an unfortunate coincidence that “right” also means “correct” and that we all enjoy “human rights” and not “human lefts”.

Even religion comes down hard on the minority. The righteous are the ones who can expect to go to heaven while the sinister have no chance. Jesus sits on God's right hand while the devil tempts from the left.

People of our generation will recall teachers forcing children to use their right hands, often with awkward results. Even Margaret Court thinks she might have been a better tennis player if she had been allowed to continue serving left handed. Not that this compares with the treatment meted out by the Zulus who poured boiling water into a hole in the ground, placed a child's hand into it and packed earth around it. That guaranteed the child would throw right-handed.

Being a leftie can be plain dangerous. You can't buy left handed tools like chain-saws, circular saws and other power tools. Not to mention simple tools like scissors and pliers. There are claims on the internet that between 2000 and 5000 people a year die in accidents attributable to using right-handed equipment.

But there are some advantages. Have you noticed the over-representation of left-handers in hand-eye coordination sports such as tennis and cricket? Apparently the reason is that their reaction time is fractionally shorter because the message goes directly from the brain to the hand without having to be relayed. (This doesn't apply to hockey or polo where left-handed playing is illegal!)

And remember, 13 August has now been officially designated left-handers day.

Exercise those Brain Cells

If:

$$2 + 3 = 10$$

$$6 + 5 = 66$$

$$7 + 2 = 63$$

$$8 + 4 = 96$$

Then:

$$9 + 7 = \text{????}$$



Solution to last edition's puzzle

At the end of round 5, Barry has \$8, Garry \$9 and Harry \$10. Since 9 is the only odd number, Garry must have lost round 5. The holdings before this round must have been \$4, \$18 and \$5. Harry (the only odd holding) must have lost round 4. The holdings at the end of round 3, must have been \$2, \$9 and \$16. Similarly, the holdings at the end of round 2 were \$1, \$18 and \$8.

At the end of round 1, \$14, \$9 and \$4 and at the beginning \$7, \$18 and \$2.

Travellers Tales

Here are a few more tales from English history.

Getting Ahead

Godfrey Derrick (who gave his name to the crane that resembles a gallows) was a young soldier when he was convicted of rape. His Commanding Officer Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, pardoned him on the proviso that he became executioner at Tyburn Prison, outside London. Derrick went on to hang or behead 3,000 people. Ironically, in this role he beheaded the Earl of Essex when he was convicted of treason and condemned by Queen Elizabeth in 1601.

A Wicked Publication

In 1632 Robert Barker and his partner Martin Lucas, the king's printers in London, produced 1,000 copies of what became known as the Wicked Bible. They omitted the word *not* from the seventh commandment, making it read "Thou shalt commit adultery." The printers were prosecuted for their mistake and fined the enormous sum of £3,000.

It Depends How You Look at It

In a review of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the *Field and Stream* magazine's reviewer opined that Lawrence's account of the daily life of a gamekeeper "is full of considerable interest to outdoor-minded readers as it contains many passages on pheasant raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways to control vermin and other chores and duties of the professional gamekeeper. Unfortunately one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material to discover and savour these sidelights on the management of a midland shooting estate."

How Come – ?

In September 2010, Samoa officially changed from driving on the right hand side of the road to the left. The change was designed to bring Samoa in line with its Pacific neighbours, Australia and New Zealand and to encourage some of the 170,000 expatriate Samoans there to send used cars with right hand drive home to relatives.

But why do some countries adopt the left side and others the right? Since most people are right handed, it is logical for horse riders to grasp the reins and mane with the left hand and swing the right leg over. This naturally meant that the rider started from the left hand side of the "road". The introduction of the carriage reinforced the practice as coachmen used the whip in the right hand and needed plenty of room to swing it. The convention was universally adopted throughout Europe where the Pope made it mandatory. Scotland introduced a national law in 1772 and England in 1835. (Interestingly, Governor Macquarie decreed left hand travel in Australia in August 1820.)

Armies traditionally commenced battle with an attack from the left. Napoleon shrewdly reversed the sides with great success which meant his troops travelled on the right. Alternatively, the French revolutionary and atheist Robespierre was determined to break the power of the church and to show his contempt, it is suggested, he changed the law. Ironically, travel on the right became a state law in France in 1835 – the same year as England mandated the left.

But why did America, a British colony, adopt the right? Not as a gesture of defiance, but probably because of the vast distances that required large transports to carry goods. To maximise his control, the postillion was mounted on the front horse on the left with the team to the right of his whip hand. Thus mounted, his leg stuck out slightly and would easily collide with a fence, hedge or wall if the transport travelled on the left. So America's convention owes its existence to the postillion who has long been superseded.

Terry's Trivia

Some more trivia from Terry. The answers are on page 6. - Ed.

1. Which country's national anthem has no official lyrics ? (i) Portugal; (ii) Spain; (iii) Nicaragua.
2. Chinchillas are crepuscular rodents, slightly larger than ground squirrels, and are native to? (i) Africa; (ii) Asia; (iii) South America.
3. Which country did the Soviet Union invade in 1956? (i) Czechoslovakia; (ii) Hungary; (iii) Latvia.
4. J.R.R. Tolkein was born in? (i) Sweden; (ii) USA; (iii) South Africa.
5. Labor politician Ted Theodore was Premier of Queensland (1919–1925) and? (i) Treasurer of Australia; (ii) Prime Minister; (iii) Governor of Queensland.
6. Who was the youngest of the three tenors? (i) Luciano Pavarotti; (ii) Jose Carreras; (iii) Placido Domingo.
7. The southernmost inhabited country through which the Greenwich median line passes is? (i) Ghana; (ii) Senegal; (iii) Portugal.
8. What is the most widely eaten fish in the world? (i) Herrings; (ii) Tuna; (iii) Cod;
9. What was the first of H.J. Heinz' "57 varieties"? (i) Ketchup; (ii) Baked Beans; (iii) Horseradish.
10. What was made compulsory for European troops of the British East India Company in 1854? (i) Church attendance; (ii) Pith Helmets; (iii) Moustaches.
11. Which Greek mathematician calculated pi and first realized the uses of a lever? (i) Archimedes; (ii) Euclid; (iii) Pythagoras.

The rain it raineth on the just
And also on the unjust fella.
But chiefly on the just, because
The unjust steals the just's umbrella.
- Baron Charles Bowen



Book Club

Eating Up Italy by Matthew Fort.

Those of you with cable TV may have come across the Food Channel UK show *Market Kitchen* and its most affable, eloquent and knowledgeable co-host the quintessential English gentleman, Matthew Fort. Fort has also been the Food and Drink editor of *The Guardian* for over ten years. In 2004 he undertook a wondrous journey on a Vespa from the south to the north of Italy writing about the country through its food, its history, traditions and its people. It is one of the few books I've made the effort to read from cover to cover. I think ultimately it was his expansive and imaginative use of the English language in describing the wonder of Italy that had me hooked. On places: "*Reggio di Calabria was the urban equivalent to a veteran boxer, not without dignity and a sense of history, but scuffed, tatty and rather beaten up*". On people: "*His face had been sculpted by illness giving it a purified, intellectual asceticism*". On food: "*Next there was the primo piatto, tagliolini with tiny artichokes and fennel braised to an amber, emollient, vegetal softness. It had a sensuous sybaritic luxury, slithering down my throat*". "*It is not so much the historicity as the immense ingenuity the Italians have invested in it (spaghetti) that is truly interesting*", and on the economy: "*It is one of the abiding ironies of southern Italy that the beauty of the materials, the artisanal ricottas and pecorinos, extra-virgin olive oils, particular wheats, wild salads, pecorinos,*

extra-virgin olive oils, particular wheats, wild salads, mountain lamb and goat so appreciated by visitors passing through, so sought after by buyers for the chrome and plate-glass food emporia in London, New York and Tokyo, are sustained by a resolutely peasant underclass". The book has been seasoned with a few corresponding regional recipes at the end of each chapter.

In 2007 Matthew Fort repeated the adventure, this time travelling through Sicily, *Sweet Honey, Bitter Lemons* and I'm currently salivating my way through this.

Terry Loos

Continuing Terry's Italian theme, I find it very hard to believe that in all the time I have been recommending books, I have never even mentioned the Lindsey Davis chronicles of Marcus Didius Falco. Falco is an informer during the reign of Emperor Vespasian (C1st AD). He relates his stories in the first person in a style somewhat reminiscent of that used by Raymond Chandler. We were initially a little reticent about the first book, *The Silver Pigs*, because of the style, but by the end of that we were hooked. We are now up to Book 18, *Saturnalia*, and have awaited each one with bated breath.

We have listened to several of them on talking books and have revelled in Falco's vicissitudes in investigating crimes on behalf of Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian (both Emperors in turn) in all parts of the then known world: from Britain to Palmyra; from the Rhinelands to Egypt. We

have also enjoyed the developing relationship between this citizen of the third order and the Senator's daughter, Helena Justina who is the love of his life. His dysfunctional family is also a fascinating feature in this chronicle of Roman life in the first century AD.

Still in Italy, I can only repeat my previous recommendation of the Donna Leon novels set in contemporary Venice featuring Commissario Guido Brunetti. I note that she has now issued the nineteenth in the series, *A Question of Belief* and can hardly wait to enjoy the detection of crime as well as Brunetti's relationship with his wife Paola and especially Signorina Elettra. It's a joy in store for us and can be for you too.

Continuing the topic of Italian crime novels we have also enjoyed the works of Magdalen Nabb. Her Marshall Guarnaccia operates in the city of Florence. And then there is the novel by Australian author Marshall Browne, *The Wooden Leg of Inspector Anders* which presents an even more disquieting account of the tentacles of the Mafia and the consequent corruption in Italian society.

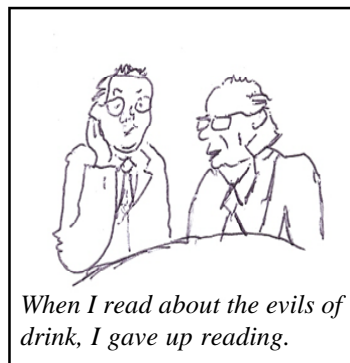
Yet another Italian crime story is *A Florentine Death*, by Michele Giuttari who was a real life police chief and who clearly drew on his own experiences to develop this "international best-selling" novel. Also set in Florence, the book deals with the investigation of a serial killer.

Members may also recall that in Newsletter 53 John (trump) Moreton highly recommended yet more crime novels set in Italy This series, written by English writer David Henson feature Nic Costa who works with (and against) the Italian Police Force in various locations including Venice, Rome and northern Italy. Titles include *A Season for the Dead, The Villa of Mysteries* and *The Seventh Sacrament*.

Ian Pullar

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to Graham Bauer who printed this; to the contributors ; to Natasha Carson and Rebecca Wall who made it available to departmental staff; and to Harvey Yates for his cartoons.



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