

# Watery Sauces Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 64

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Newsletter of the Water Resources Retirees Association

## There's Nothing to be Scared of

Enclosed with this Newsletter is an invitation to you and your former colleagues to attend the AGM of the Water Resources Retirees Association on 28 April at the Public Services Club.

Naturally, elections will be held for office-bearers, but as all members of the present committee are prepared to continue in their present roles, you run no risk of being press-ganged into accepting a position. Of course, if you would like to join the committee, you are at perfect liberty to nominate.

Instead, we hope that you will avail yourself of the opportunity to meet up with and chew the fat with old workmates and to chew a meal paid for by the Association. These events are always enjoyable and, as the old adage would have it, the more the merrier.

In February, a number of us participated in a get together at the same venue (more details on the next page) and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. So do come along and bring your friends.

### From the Editor's Chair

*What an appalling Summer/Winter the world has just experienced. Blizzards disrupting traffic and freezing people to death in the northern hemisphere. Then floods, bushfires, cyclones and earthquakes causing havoc, death and destruction in the southern hemisphere and now Japan. And now unrest, uprisings and slaughter in the Middle East. Historically, the overthrow of any authoritarian regime has resulted, at least in the short term, in an even more repressive one e.g. the revolutions of France and Russia. One can only be apprehensive for the future for these nations and the world.*

*I have developed an ear-worm – an old song I learnt in my university days called A Merry Minuet which went “They’re rioting in Africa, there’s strife in Iran. What Nature doesn’t do to us, will be done by our fellow man.”*

*We can only hope that the rest of 2011 will bring a huge improvement in the world.*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## The Big News

The biggest news for this particular group of retirees obviously relates to the recent disasters of floods and cyclones. Inevitably there are recriminations and assertions that the Government could have done things in advance to alleviate the situation e.g. build more cyclone shelters, let water out of dams (particularly Wivenhoe) in advance of the rainfall event.

The Government has now set up a Commission of Inquiry into the operation of Wivenhoe. One member is Phil Cummins who was Brian Shannon's predecessor as Chairman of ANCOLD. No doubt he will prove a very worthy commissioner. The Commission will receive an enormous amount of input from many quarters and will also employ its own technical experts. Peter Allen, Manager of Dam Safety, has been taken off line to assist the Commission.

There are many claims about whether Wivenhoe was a “good thing” or a “bad thing”. I happened to hear Neal Ashkanasy on radio informing listeners that he had carried out the original hydrology for the dam and he was firmly of the view that without Wivenhoe, he would have been observing flood levels at least two metres higher near the university. On the other hand, the *Courier Mail* has carried articles asserting that if water had been released from the dam before the record rains, the flood levels would have been lower. No doubt the Commission will form a well-informed view in which we will all take a great interest. Now Seqwater has released a 5 volume 1000 page report on the operation of Wivenhoe during the flood event. It and a 12 page summary are available on the DERM website.

There has been a ministerial reshuffle by our now very popular Premier. As a result, Kate Jones is now the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment (no longer Sustainability) while Stephen Robertson is now Minister for Water Utilities. This means Ms Jones is in charge of DERM and the Queensland Water Commission while Mr Robertson has SunWater, Seqwater and the three utilities within his portfolio.

## Out and About

The customary February WRRRA get-together was held at the Public Services Club on the 24th day of that month and was attended by 23 members and spouses. It was particularly enjoyable because the management apparently confused this get together with our AGM and set tables for us separate from the normal patrons. Despite a general reluctance to provide me with gossip, I managed to elicit some information which I am happy to pass on to the many other members who were unable to attend. And just incidentally, I would recommend these occasions to you all.

Pat McCourt is hale and hearty. Recently retired, he was persuaded to undertake a part-time teaching role at TAFE instructing plumbers on standards and procedures. He is planning a trip with his wife to the UK (which the job will help to defray), their first venture to the old country.

Alan and Gwen Vizer have also travelled. They have sold up and moved to a unit which they claim has all the amenities and none of the disadvantages of a suburban home and is still close to Garden City, doctors, etc etc. Alan was also keen to keep secret the fact that he is now in his ninth decade, so please don't tell him I told you. Eric and Jan Davis are also planning a unit life – at Victoria Point.

Mick Garvey has recently returned from a trip to Vietnam – his first visit to Asia. He found the tour interesting and educational rather than enjoyable and does not envy the locals their way of life.

Jon Henry has retired and has become serious about brewing (and as a consequence, drinking) beer. Karla has taken extended leave on half pay to keep him company. Jon told me a delightful story about a former colleague (who will remain unnamed in this account) whose much-loved little granddaughter appeared in his bathroom while he was taking a shower. "Grandad," she said, "you've got a little tail." "Yes, darling. All men have them. Your daddy has a little tail." "Oh no, Grandad," she said. "He's got a big one."

John Connolly, and inevitably Laurel, are becoming increasingly busy with the looming barbershop convention later this year. They are about to launch the publicity campaign, so look out for more information in the media.

Dave Morwood has had the unfortunate experience of mowing a hearing aid. He started mowing with the aid in his ear and later put it in his pocket because you are not supposed to let them get all sweaty. It then fell through a hole in the pocket but was not missed until all the grass and aid mowing had been finished. He searched for an hour or so but failed to find any trace – not even little bits of the \$5K device. It is clearly all Judy's fault because she wasn't mowing and had failed to mend the hole in the pocket of his oldest shorts. The positive outcome is that he now has two new hearing aids of higher power and abilities. The only negative is the money!

The Pullars are heading off to Europe again, from mid-April to mid-June. The first month will be in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland before cruising the Danube-Rhine to Amsterdam. And then on to the UK for another month. As I will be travelling in the UK with Helen and her two sisters, it is appropriate that we are booked to see those other "three weird sisters" in "the Scottish play" in Stratford – the first season scheduled for the revamped Shakespeare theatre. There may be more to report later.

The committee was naturally concerned about what might have happened to members during the recent floods and cyclone. In particular, Bill Souter's address at Mission Beach caused us apprehension. So we asked our agent in the north, Kev Devlin, for news. He responded as follows. 'Yes, I did ring Bill S, and was glad I did so. Basically he and Marg, and the house (and I assume the dog) survived fine. I think the line that sums it up best was Bill saying, "It was the finest triumph of my engineering career, getting this house to survive that cyclone" (you have got to read that slowly, to get it to sound like Bill).

'Basically he put on the shutters, and for most of the night, he and Marg were leaning against doors, which held windows, which threatened to blow in. During the eye, he had to get up an extension ladder to re-fix a shutter that was starting to come loose. The story seemed to be of him up the high ladder, while watching the marvel of the circular wall of cloud with lightning down the inside, while Marg shouted at him to stop being a 'silly old bugger' and to come down off the ladder. I won't repeat Bill's response. Said he was doing mental arithmetic to predict which way the wind would come back from, and was quite surprised to be about 90deg out.

'Anyway, basically lots of tree damage, and some significant damage to houses adjacent, but he is fine. He was very pooped when I spoke to him as there had been hard working bees every day in the immediate district.'

The committee hasn't heard of any member who was significantly affected, which is good news. Obviously many were indirectly affected and many went out of their way to assist others through the donation of time and/or money. Trevor Tuesley notes that the banks of the Burnett River, for example, look dreadful with stripped trees leaning downstream etc. As he points out there are plenty of pictures available on the web of all affected areas.

## Mentioned in Despatches

Assiduous readers of the *Courier Mail* bridge notes will have noted on 23 February the following citation:- *Some congratulations are due. First to the Toowong Bridge Club that was able to reopen for play this week. Only five weeks ago its premises were flooded a metre and a half above floor level. Nothing was saved. President Lee Rogers and his committee rallied the members and a massive effort, aided by the wider bridge community, has Toowong back in action.*

And the *Courier Mail* of 28 February carried an article on health in which 65 year old Trevor Tuesley, himself a survivor of prostate cancer, exhorted men to visit their doctor regularly – at least once a year – to have a check-up. "We service our cars, bikes and outboard motors even though there are no mechanical problems evident; we should do the same for ourselves even though no medical problems are evident," urged Trevor.

## Answers to Terry's Trivia (page 9)

1. 89. 2. (ii) Mozambique. 3. (i) Jupiter. 4. (iii) Blood sausage.
5. (i) Viewed. 6. (i) Robin Soderling. 7. (ii) Gordon in Tasmania.
8. (iii) one. 9. (iii) Rennet. 10. (i) Ljubljana. 11. (iii) Pancreas.
12. (i) Alfred Deakin

**I regret to record the passing of Geoffrey James Ward. Several of our members were able to attend his funeral, so I hope to publish a tribute to him next edition.**

## **Memories of Emerald (continued)**

**– by Warren Hutton**

### **The Office**

Norm Rossi was Project Engineer at Fairbairn Dam, Trevor Sleep was head surveyor at Weemah camp while Peter Bevin was District Engineer in Emerald and also headed up the Irrigation Area design team. The Emerald office was always a hive of activity with all sorts of people coming and going but, best of all, it was a happy office occupied by people who wanted to be there and happy to be doing a job they enjoyed.

The office contained many larger than life characters all with their own stories to tell. Space does permit me to dwell on these people but suffice to say that as a very junior staff member of the Emerald office in those early days, I learnt many important lessons and gained a great deal of valuable experiences from these people.

When I look back, I am amazed at how well the staff got on together regardless of occupation or classification. I remember one time when one of the staff who will remain nameless was telling Bob McDonald and me that he could cut like a professional. Always wanting to save money, Bob and I asked this chap if he could cut our hair and he agreed. The next Saturday he duly turned up at Bob's place with his scissors and I jumped the fence ready for a haircut. Bob went first and I watched while this chap gave Bob the worst haircut in the world. Then it was my turn: he proceeded to give me an equally bad haircut. Both Bob and I thanked him and when he left, Bob and I agreed to patronise the town barber from then on.

### **The Sport**

In order to meet people, I joined the Apex club and being rather keen on rugby league I signed up to play with Emerald Rugby League club. In my first match I was selected at half back for the A grade side. Having played a few A Grade games in Toowoomba, I was quite impressed with the standard of play in the first half of the match. At half time I was amazed to see that instead of handing out oranges, the players started passing bottles of sweet sherry around. Needless to say, the second half had much more fire than the first.

The side contained a number of young policemen whom I soon came to know well. I recall that a strapping young labourer at the Dam turned up to play with the side midway through the season. This fellow, as well as being big and fit, had all the skills of the game and he was a world-beater to our team. Unfortunately he liked one or two or a hundred drinks on a Saturday night. The games were played on Sundays and after a big Saturday night the big fellow would turn up a lot worse for wear and would play accordingly. Just imagine my surprise when I learnt that before a few important matches he had spent the night in jail after being picked up early on Saturday night for being drunk and disorderly.

The region was in drought for much of my time in Emerald and the football fields in the small towns we played in were hard and dry. In the little township of Bluff not only was the playing surface hard and dry but it contained prickles (bull heads) in one corner. All teams agreed that when play reached this spot, tackle turned into touch.

### **The Brigalow Blocks**

The main focus of the Department in Emerald at this time was building Fairbairn Dam and its associated channel system and designing and opening up the irrigation area. Apart from the Engineers, Surveyors, Draftsmen, Administration people and others working on these tasks, there was a team of four in the office whose main focus was Farm Advisory. Tony Bucknell, Ricky Carrol, Graham Richardson and I made up that team and spent much of our time putting water storages into the soon to be opened up Brigalow Area Number 3.

The Government of the day had resumed a number of large properties north east of Clermont with the intention of developing them for closer settlement. These smaller blocks would then be put up for ballot and as part of this process some watering points for stock had to be found on many of these excised blocks.

The location of these blocks necessitated a lot of travel and we spent many nights away from Emerald. The roads were mainly gravel and full of bull dust. Our vehicle was a Holden panel van with faulty rubber seals in the doors resulting in a thick layer of dust over people, clothes, food and equipment. The van did not have a laminated windscreen and we regularly ended up driving around for many days with no windscreen until we could get back to town to have it fixed.

We eventually had fitted a chicken wire screen that came down when the driver pushed down on a lever beside the brake pedal. Many a time we saw the screen go down seconds after the windscreen had broken or a small stone go through the screen and still manage to break the glass.

A large portion of our work was performed on four properties, Pasha, May Downs, Langley and Batheaston. From Monday to Friday more or less every second week we camped in the old station houses when we were working on these properties. The Lands Department had made Langley its field headquarters and had fitted it out with a donkey for hot water, a generator for electricity, fridges, freezers and just about everything that opens and shuts.

The other station houses were not so well appointed and we were lucky to get a kerosene fridge and definitely no generator. The homestead at Batheaston was made out of split timber logs and, while it looked like it belonged in a picture post card, it turned out to be hot in summer and cold in winter and rather uncomfortable. We got by on gas or carbide lights and a lot of tinned food. After rain the mosquitoes gave us a hiding so we ordered some repellent from head office. We duly received a tin that contained about two litres of a white cream. When we put the cream on it attracted mosquitoes from as far away as the Northern Territory. The mossies loved it however it had one saving grace, we discovered that it would get grease off your hands remarkably well.

On one occasion we were working on a site about two hours drive away from the station house so we decided to place a caravan near the site while we did the investigation. Tony, Graham and I stayed in the van for two nights while we selected the site and pegged the site for the test hole to be dug using our brand new gemco drilling rig. We then left so that two drillers from Emerald could stay in the van while they drilled the test holes. We got back ten days later to find that the drillers had kept a joey kangaroo inside the van while they went off to work. These two knockabout drillers were not the tidiest individuals. Beside the mess the roo had made, there were half eaten food containers everywhere and the caravan was just about unliveable. We did not do this again.

## Memories of Emerald – continued from previous page

While we carried our own drinking water, the only way to have a bath was to go for a swim in a nearby excavated tank used for stock watering. There was only about a metre of water in the excavation and the water had the consistency of yellow treacle. You had to tread though knee deep mud to get to water and you emerged from your bath coated with yellow slime and dirtier than when you started, but at least it was cool.

### The Work

The work consisted mainly of identifying sites for raised earth stock water tanks, carrying out investigations including test boring for suitable building materials and surveying them. The dams would then mainly be designed in Rockhampton by Norm White and others and sent back to Emerald. We then set them out in the field and supervised their construction including soil compaction tests.

Because most of the blocks were covered with thick Brigalow scrub it was impossible to pick dam sites from the ground so we made use of Aerial Photos to select the sites. The hard part of this approach was to locate the site in a huge paddock of Brigalow scrub. Carrying all our surveying and test boring equipment, we would guide ourselves to what we thought was the site and then cut a sight line through the scrub and hope like mad that the ground rose on both sides of us.

The initial task was to prove that the site had suitable construction materials which meant that we had dig three to four 25 to 30 ft deep test holes in the proposed excavation area and shallower test holes around the perimeter of the embankment. This was done by using a hand auger consisting of a steel worm auger connected to 5 to 6 feet lengths of 1 inch galvanised water pipe. A handle in the shape of a T made of gal pipe was connected to the water pipe and you would then turn the handle until the worm auger was filled with earth then lift the auger out of the hole where the material would be released and classified.

The material in the dam sites was more often than not extremely hard and very dry. The only way of digging it out was for one person to sit on the handle while the other two people turned the handle. When the hole was over 20ft deep the auger became too unstable when we took it out of the hole so we had to take the handle off before lifting the auger out of the hole. Test boring these sites often became a long and gruelling task.

The clays in some of these sites were a brown CH clay which when wetted and compacted made a very good building material for the clay core. These were highly plastic clays and often when at the proper moisture content, the clay would come off the cutting edge of the non elevating D pull scrapers used to build these tanks in a 100mm thick continuous sheet and miss the scraper bowl completely.

The work could be hard but at the end of the days work we often went pig, roo or duck shooting, or fishing in some of the most glorious waterholes I have ever seen. The final task for the day was to de tick and de-leech each other using a bottle of dettol and a cigarette. Joan was aghast when I came home with scrub ticks all over me.

### The Partners

Our second daughter, Susan, was born there towards the end of our posting and when I look back at my time in Emerald it is like I was living a Boys' Own Adventure. I realise however that without the support of Joan who was uprooted from her family environment where she had a great deal of support and taken to a strange town where she knew no one and then had to bring up two very young daughters with me being away for weeks on end, this adventure could not have taken place.

*Thanks, Warren, for this fascinating account of "The good old days" and particularly for the tribute to Joan, as a representative of the wives who put up with so much - Ed.*

## Past On

*Trevor Tuesley has been kind enough to pass on some photos and memories of "The Good Old Days". Thanks, Trevor - Ed.*



*"Drinks before dinner at IWS on West" Jack Rasmussen, Boring Supervisor, is the person sitting on the deck in 1967*

Our shower was heated by a kero choofer when needed. I mention "when needed" because the town bore water supply was mostly warm to hot & we needed the choofer mainly in winter. Most houses in town had cooling tanks, probably still do. I remember going to the shower a few times during winter to find an icicle from the shower rose to the floor.

When in St George in 1974, I organised a mini bus full of golfers to go to Charleville for their Annual carnival. I let a holler go as we drove into town. Everyone said "What's up Doc?" There was my old home going down the road on the back of a truck. It had been put up for tender and was being shifted to its new home – true story, couldn't believe it. IWS staff Len Kennedy and Neville Peters were on the bus.



*Some office and field staff at Gooburrum Camp (1977). L to R - Ray Brown, Trevor Tuesley, Grant Sadler, Don Redmond (the boss), Kathy McNee (Des McNee's wife), Rod Kingston, Dave Irwin, Chris Walker, Len Fleming.*

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS??

by Eric Davis (with lots of help from Jan)

I commenced work in January 1954 at the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission straight from Junior at Industrial High School which was located at the end of Edward Street opposite the entrance to the Botanical Gardens. I began as a clerk, remuneration approximately £15 per fortnight. I was not able to get a cadetships as a draftsman at that time, but was advised that cadetships would be available the following year.

**OUR BUILDING:** The building I worked in back then was the old Courier Mail Building, in William Street. All the staff could not be accommodated in this building so some staff worked in the Commissariat Store Building, while others worked in the Executive Building (also in William Street).

In the early days the Courier Mail building had a corrugated iron roof, with no ceiling. This meant that in summer time, the building became extremely hot. Often the draftsmen would place a towel on their linen drawing sheet to prevent perspiration drops falling onto their drawing.

In 1979 we all moved into the new Mineral House building, and some of the Departments are still there to this day.

**OUR DRAWING PENCILS:** A little while back one of my grandchildren came across a tin box which I had kept when I retired. In the box was a drawing pencil that was about an inch long and had a metal extension on the end. I explained to her that when I started work we were allocated three different types of drawing pencils, HB, 2H and 4H. As we continued to use and sharpen them, the pencils reduced in size. When they were too small to hold in your hand, we were issued with the metal sleeve so we could use all the pencil. When all the pencil was used, we had to hand in the remainder, and ONLY then were we given a new one. What an environmentally friendly place we worked in!



*Can I have a new pencil now?*

**NAMES:** When I commenced work, the organisation was known as "Irrigation and Water Supply Commission". In 1979 the name was changed to "Queensland Water Resources Commission", then some time later changed again to just "Water Resources Commission". By the time I retired it was known as "Department of Primary Industries and Natural Resources". When I returned to the organisation on a consultancy basis, the commission had been divided. As well as the government section, there was a commercial enterprise known as "SunWater".

Since that time there have been other name changes. Perhaps your memory is better than mine, and you can recall them all.

**DRAWINGS:** When I first commenced work in a drafting section, most drawings were drawn with pencil on paper using a T Square and Drawing Board. These drawings were then traced onto linen or tracing paper sheets using ink pens. The ink printing was done using scratch nib pens, and for line work we used adjustable ruling pens. As you can imagine this was a messy method and often resulted in some unsightly ink spillages.

When copies or prints were required we were limited to either dyelines, photostats or blueprints. The blueprints were made by putting the original drawing sheet onto sensitised paper, which was then placed in a press with a glass front, and put out in the sun, which reacted with the sensitised paper bleaching out

everything except the lines. Our department did not have printing facilities, so we had to take our work to the Plan Printing Section at the Survey Office which was in the Executive Building. If the weather was cloudy the prints could not be done and we would have to wait many days for the copies of the drawings. It seems that there must have been a lot more clouds over the Executive Building, although we were only a few hundred metres apart.

**TIME KEEPER:** The moment you arrived at work you were required to sign a book. Our working hours were 9.00am to 5.00pm. On the dot of 9.00am the Clerk Industrial Time Keeper, (Jim Pill) drew a red line across the book, so if you arrived after that time, your signature appeared under the line and you may have been asked to "please explain".

**TEA BREAKS:** One of the jobs for the juniors in the organisation was to make the tea. Each person had to bring their own cup to work. The hot water came from the urn, poured into a huge teapot, using an appropriate amount of leaf tea, then placed on the table at the tea station of the work room. The tea boy had to speak to each person and ask what they would like for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. He would collect the money, go down to Billy Morris' shop to purchase the goodies, and deliver them to all the workers. Often they did not get what they thought they ordered, so the tea boy had to return to the shop for a change of order.

Billy Morris owned the hamburger shop next door to our building and must have done a roaring trade. He became a lifelong friend to many of us.

**BUZZER:** In the design section, the boss (Norm Butler) had a buzzer in his room, and all staff had a code, and if the boss wanted you he buzzed the appropriate code and you had to jump to attention. I think my code was two short and one long – can you remember yours?

**STAFF RELATIONSHIPS:** In the early days, the drafting section staff were not permitted to speak with the Engineers during working hours, unless they first requested permission from the drafting head (Ted Taylor), which was not always granted. Sometimes I was told to work it out myself, and not worry the engineers. Not a very convenient way of sorting out any perceived problems quickly.

**FURTHER EDUCATION:** After finishing work at 5.00pm, many of us had to attend college, which commenced at 6.00pm. So in this hour, we hopped down to Billy's snack bar for a pie and a bottle of milk for tea. After college at 9.00pm I caught a tram home, usually arriving at around 10.00pm ready for an evening meal. I did this for four nights a week for many years (all this irregular eating caused me to suffer from a stomach ulcer).

**RECREATION CLUB:** At the time I started work a very active recreation club was operating. Cricket matches and club picnics were organised, as well as the annual Christmas dinner, where we entertained the guests with skits. In those early days the commission had no lunch rooms. When the accommodation was upgraded some years later recreation and lunch rooms were provided and at lunch time, we played table tennis, darts, or cards.

Irrigation and State Stores combined to enter a Rugby League Team, which played in the Public Service RL Fixtures, cricket teams played in warehouse Fixtures, and a table tennis team was entered into the Public Service Table Tennis Fixtures. It was at our Table Tennis fixtures one night when I skipped college that I met a cute player, Jan, from the Education Department. The rest is history.

*Thanks, Eric, to responding to my plea for more stories of the Good Old days. Any more volunteers? - Ed.*



## Trek or Treat

Nev and Marilyn Caton and Eric Davis have returned from a trip up the Kimberley Coast. We booked for early May so that there would still be some waterfalls around but the wet season would be over. How wrong can you be!

We arrived in Broome via Sydney and spent a good part of the evening deciding what to take in the 6kg of luggage we were allowed then the next morning we were flown in a light plane to the Mitchell Plateau. A short helicopter flight over the Mitchell Falls then took us to Naturalist Beach where a tender was waiting to take us to "Discovery One".

We met the 16 other passengers and then sailed off to the Hunter River. The tenders took us up Porosus Creek, the main tributary, where we all became good crocodile spotters and the cameras worked non-stop taking in the magnificent red cliffs and clear blue water.

The boat would anchor each night and then we'd be ready to explore more spectacular scenery the next day. At Careening Bay, where Captain Philip Parker King stopped to repair his ship we saw the huge boab tree with "H.M.C. Mermaid 1820" carved on it. Whenever we had to wade ashore the crew kept a close lookout for crocodiles and there was one not far off the beach here so one of the tenders stayed close by to make sure it didn't move while we all hurried through the shallow water for our lift back to "Discovery One".

The 270km long Prince Regent River formed along one of Australia's largest geological faults was our next stop and although the clouds had gathered and we had a few showers, it was fine when we anchored right against the rock of the Kings Cascades and had a shower under the falls on the bow of the boat. This is where the American model, Ginger Meadows was taken by a crocodile in 1987. It is a beautiful spot but surrounded by mangroves and after seeing the croc in the pristine blue waters of Careening Bay it is easy to understand how easy it is to underestimate the likely presence of crocodiles.

The next morning we did tender trips up the gorge before heading off to Camden Harbour, site of one of the greatest land frauds to be inflicted on Australians. In 1864 a group of Australians were convinced that the area, promoted as being only 270 miles from Perth, held good grazing and agricultural potential. They lasted 6 months!

By this time we were having rain most nights and showers during the day. Luckily it wasn't cold and we soon became blasé about sitting in the tenders in the rain. The showers eased while we explored the strange rock formations on Langgi Beach and at Ruby Falls most people swam and got wet anyway. This was our first indication of how much rain there had been as the crew commented on how much water was coming over the falls – more than they had ever seen.

On to Raft Point and a trek up the hill to see the Wandjina rock paintings. Eric, with his camera wrapped in a plastic bag in his pocket, got out of the tender, slipped on a rock, and he and the camera slid into the salt water – end of camera! Luckily there were enough photos taken by the crew and everyone else to share.

Montgomery Reef was the next port of call. The 400 square km reef is fully submerged at full tide and then seems to rise from the water as the tide drops creating hundreds of small cascades. The showers were their most persistent that day but we were all used to it by then and took it in our stride. Of course some people were smart enough to bring rain jackets but that was one of the things we decided to leave back in Broome!

We passed Koolan Island on the way to Talbot Bay and there were waterfalls that the crew had never seen before. As soon as we anchored 5 or 6 sharks came up to the boat. They were Tawny Nurse sharks that are bottom feeders but were quite content to hang around the boat for 4 hours until the crew went down and fed them sausages. By that time there were 9 or 10 and they were happy to be patted.

The next morning it was our turn to go on a high powered ride through the massive tidal pinch they call the horizontal waterfalls. Some passengers loved it and others found it a bit too high powered for their liking. After all that excitement it was off in the tenders to explore Cyclone Creek. This was one of my favourite places. It didn't rain and the reflections and the towering cliffs, that showed all the signs of the tumultuous geological history of the area, were breathtaking.

Our next stop was Crocodile Creek where the waterfall was again much bigger than usual. Everyone enjoyed swimming and looking at all the mementos left by the many sailing ships that had come there. The recreation area had been built over 20 years ago by the workers on Koolan Island – steel posts and concrete. Luckily we took photos as it was all washed away a couple of days later.

We anchored in Myridi Bay that night and awoke to thunder, lightning and torrential rain. It had been raining all night and when it finally eased, the number of waterfalls we could see just from the boat was amazing. Apparently there had been a total of over 17 inches of rain so we were seeing the Kimberley in "The Wet". It was too good an opportunity to miss so the tenders took us all around the area to marvel at the amount of water roaring over the cliffs.

It had obviously been a clearing storm because the weather improved and our last day, as we made our way back to Derby, was fine and sunny and we were able to enjoy a swim at Silica Beach. We passed Cockatoo Island on the way. It had been mined by BHP and the highest percentage of ore ever mined was a whopping 98%. The average is 69%.

Despite the weather, or perhaps because of it, it was a great trip. The crew of 5 were fantastic, the food was great and everyone on board made the most of the 10 days.

After a tour of Derby we arrived back in Broome to do the touristy things for two days before farewelling Eric. Nev and I had been booked on a tour up the Gibb River Road and didn't know until the last minute if we would be going.

Broome at that time of year has tours leaving every day and we knew that three tours had been cancelled, one group had been caught on the Mitchell Plateau for 5 days and had to have food dropped to them, and most of the gorges plus the Bungle Bungles were closed.

Anyway, we set off on time and it was explained to us that we would be playing it by ear depending on the weather as we got further up the road. The showers continued but not enough to close everything so we were able to see other gorges but unfortunately not Tunnel Creek.

The roads were very wet and slippery in some places and on the fourth morning the bus just slid from one side of the road to the other and sank in the mud. It is a great way to get passengers bonding as the men took it in turns to dig the red mud away from the wheel and the women collected rocks to put in the hole. It rained the whole time and we were a sorry sight by the time the driver was able to contact a delivery truck that was in the area and we could be pulled out.

## **Trek or Treat** (continued)

We made our way on to our lunch spot at the King Edward River but it started to rain again just as we were finishing so we quickly packed up and headed out on the other side of the road to where we had come in – and we bogged again!! This time it was even worse!! Two other campers came to our aid and we all went though our digging and rock collecting routine but it was after 4 before we were finally out.

The tour before us had been the first to leave Broome after the rain but had been flown to the Mitchell Plateau because of the road conditions. The delivery truck had made it down from the Plateau that day so we were to be the first tour bus to tackle it. Our driver was a female with 10 years experience but it took 2 ½ hours to do the 76 km and after the day we'd had she must have been exhausted.

We were supposed to walk to the base of the Mitchell Falls the next day but as it involved a 20km bus trip first we were unable to go as the road was impassable. We all enjoyed a helicopter flight over the falls and the surrounding area and were more than happy to relax and swim in the creek pool .

From then on the weather was great and we were able to walk up Emma Gorge and El Questro gorge at El Questro, soak in Zebedee Springs, see the five Rivers from the lookout at Wyndham and cruise down the Ord River at Kununurra. We were very interested to hear they had ripped out 30,000 mango trees in the Ord and there were thousands of hectares being planted with Sandalwood. It is a parasite and needs a host tree beside it and another one in the next row to be used after the first one dies. It takes up to 12 years before it can be harvested and each tree is worth \$3000 with 500 trees to the hectare. Since we've been home we have heard that the first trees have been harvested and all of the crop has been sold.

We left the tour at the Bungle Bungles and flew back to Kununurra via the Bungle Bungles, the Argyle Diamond Mine and Lake Argyle then flew home via Darwin and Cairns.

*Thank you so much, Marilyn, for this fascinating account. It was held over from the last Newsletter because of space limitations, but is still relevant. - Ed.*

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## **The water world - International water activity and DERM**

Strategic Water Initiatives branch within Water and Ecosystem Outcomes Division of the department continues to provide a focal point for a range of international programs and visitors interested in Queensland water management actions.

### **Singapore:**

As part of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Singapore Public Utilities Board, Greg Claydon attended the Singapore International Water Week in June/July 2010, presenting a paper on Coal Seam Gas regulation and an update on the water security situation in south east Queensland. Two environmental scientists involved in riverine and reservoir ecology visited Singapore in December 2010 to discuss issues around nutrient pollution, monitoring and restoration work and environmental flow monitoring methodologies. A reciprocal visit will occur from Singapore in 2011, following their earlier training tour in April, 2010.

### **Canada:**

The Queensland and British Columbia governments signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2010. A component of this agreement is around water. A range of senior managers and officers within the Water Division participated in a webinar (online teleconference) with British Columbia Ministry of Environment on 30 September 2010 on a range of issues in water policy and legislation and groundwater management. Follow-up webinar workshops on groundwater, urban water management, and climate change and water are being planned as soon as practicable. The Department and others including the SEQ Catchments are scoping a potential twinning relationship between SEQ Catchments and the counterpart organisation in Vancouver, the Fraser Basin Council.

### **China:**

As part of the ongoing Australia-China Environment Development Partnership, funded by AusAid, Greg Claydon travelled to China in late 2010 to attend several training workshops and present a paper on environmental flow management within water resource planning. A group of senior Chinese water officials also visited Brisbane in February 2011 as part of a more extensive Australian visit under this project which aims to build Chinese capacity in river health and environmental flows.

### **Japan:**

The branch hosted a meeting with the Japanese science and investment organisation NEDO, Trade and Investment Queensland, and Queensland agencies to clarify project facilitation and regulatory arrangements in support of the Japanese Government's investment in rainwater recycling and reuse at Fitzgibbon Chase, a key ULDA priority area. This is an interesting project where the Japanese are using a Queensland site to prove a technology which can then be sold into other markets.

### **International Water Centre:**

The centre continues to coordinate international visits. One recent delegation was from the Netherlands Flood Resilience Group, a joint initiative associated with UNESCO, who were interested in exchanging information to support future flood management strategies in Queensland. This meeting had been planned before the Queensland floods of 2010-11 but proved very timely. Coming out of the meeting was interest in a collaborative research proposal to compare international experiences around flood resilience (e.g. Europe, USA and Queensland). As a first step, Queensland will be participating in a Building Resilience workshop in New Orleans 17-19 March, 2011.

### **Others:**

Several Queensland speakers were supported in attending the G'Day USA 2011 water forum in late January hosted in several US cities (Los Angeles, Sacramento, Denver, Houston and Washington DC). The branch has also supported trade visits from Israel and Saudi Arabia involving potential investments in the water sector.

**Greg Claydon**

<b>Did you notice the palindromically significant date in February – 11-02-2011?</b>
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# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Secrets of the marital bed

It is universally recognised that an essential element for health is a good night's sleep. It is for this reason that men fall asleep as soon as their heads hit the pillow.

New research has shown that watching her man act in this sensible (and healthy way) unleashes a sleeping beast (pun intended) in many women. Sleep envy, as it is known, can turn a lady into a less than likeable partner. (Could it be that she misunderstood his intentions when he suggested he sleep with her?).

A poll of 400 women found one in four admit to deliberately waking their partners because they're jealous they're able to nod off so easily. The most common revenge is simply to toss and turn until their bleary-eyed husband is awake. But some admitted using less subtle tactics like chatting till they get a response, making loud noises and even turning on the television. One in ten actually confessed to pinching the poor fellow.

## An interesting marriage

Did anyone notice the takeover of Jenny Craig by Nestlé? Maybe I'm being cynical, but the idea of slimming people down so that you can fatten them up again with chocolate seems like an interesting business proposition. It reminds me of the classic Cat and Rat Farm where cats, harvested for their pelts, are fed on rats which are in turn fed on the carcasses of the skinned cats. A kind of self-sustaining enterprise.

## Skin-deep beauty

For some extraordinary reason, contemporary culture has decided the ancient practice of tattooing enhances beauty and thousands of people are using (what one would hope is) their disposable income to endure pain and adorn their exposed and hidden skin with pictures and designs.

Nobody knows when the practice was first adopted, but Egyptian mummies from c. 1300 BC show the blue markings of tattoos. Europeans in the middle ages used tattoos to brand criminals and, despite the bible's express direction "you shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you", Christian cultures have seen the practice as fashionable, as have other cultures. The name itself is originally Polynesian and was introduced by Captain Cook from the Tahitian *tatau* to describe any mark on the skin.

Equally inexplicably to my mind, body piercings are also "in".

So ubiquitous are these signs of beauty, that one can foresee the time when an eyewitness description of a person without tattoos or body hardware will be seen as identifying distinguishing marks!

## Correct English

Our daughter Jean is an English teacher. Recently, one of her students wrote in a trial short story, "He went out and committed an illegal crime." Jean ringed and annotated this, *tautology; all crimes are illegal*. Back came the revised essay: "He went out and committed a tautology."

## Scientists discover new element

Oxford University researchers have discovered the heaviest element yet known to science. The new element, Governmentium (symbol=Gv), has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called pillocks. Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected, because it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

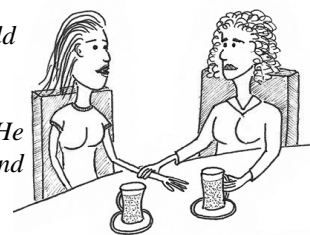
A tiny amount of Governmentium can cause a reaction that would normally take less than a second, to take from 4 days to 4 years to complete.

Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2 to 6 years. It does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places.

In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes. This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration.

This hypothetical quantity is referred to as a critical morass. When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium (symbol=Ad), an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium, since it has half as many pillocks but twice as many morons.

"All couples should share financial responsibility."  
"We certainly do. He earns the money and I spend it."



## Exercise those Brain Cells

Laugh and the world laughs with you; snore and you ...

$$\begin{array}{r} Z \\ SLE EP \\ + ALONE \\ \hline = ZZ ZZZ \end{array}$$

If A = 6 and the other letters represent the numbers 1,3,4,5,7,8 and 9, rewrite the sum in numbers.



## Solution to last edition's puzzle

If the answer was "yes" the maiden would not have known whether a knight had answered truthfully or one of two knaves had lied. Therefore the answer must have been, "No." A knight would have had to say, "Yes", so the reply must have come from a knave. As the answer from a knave must have been false, the other man must have been a knight.



## How Come – ?

### Tea for Tips

Although tea is produced from the tips of Camellia plant leaves, the habit of paying tips (gratuities), abominated by most Australians, for service whether it is good or indifferent, owes its origin to a different aspect of tea. In the British tea houses of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, proprietors placed on the tables boxes carrying the legend “To Insure Prompt Service” (T.I.P.S). If the tea order was delivered from a perhaps distant kitchen while still piping hot, the happy client would willingly deposit his shilling in the box.

### Hong Kong to a Tea

Surprisingly, Hong Kong owes its existence as a major commercial centre to tea. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the British population became passionate for tea, which is still the national drink. It was only produced at that time in China and, because of the monopoly, the price was ever increasing. To counter this, the British proceeded to cultivate opium in Bengal to trade for tea in China. The inevitable happened – the Chinese people became addicted to opium. The Chinese government attempted to control the situation which led inexorably to the “Opium Wars”. Because of its vastly superior firepower, Britain was victorious and the final peace treaty ceded the port of Hong Kong to the British for 100 years. In 1997, its sovereignty reverted to China, but in a somewhat uneasy arrangement because of the vast cultural differences between the traditional mainland and the product of the long lasting British milieu.

## Travellers Tales

### A goodly measure

Near Warwick is the partially restored Glengallan House which was constructed (but never completed) by a wealthy grazier in the 1860s. After changing hands many times, it fell into grave disrepair until its restoration was commenced in the 1990s. Michael Pospischil, who studied the house prior to the refurbishment, commented, “Measurements I had taken were puzzling. The length was quite clearly 80 feet and one would expect other dimensions to be equally rounded. However, the width is 23’4”. Convert these figures to inches and we get 960”x280”. The diagonal is then exactly 1000”. All measurements are multiples of 20”. The walls are 20” thick; the length is 48x20”; the breadth is 14x20”; the diagonal is 50x20” and internal measurements are typically 12x20”. These dimensions conveniently lay out the building in tens of inches; they perhaps offer an insight to how designers of the era coped with the shortcomings of the imperial measurement system, in effect decimalising it.”

### Fire protection

During the restoration of Glengallan House, a mummified cat was found below the floor. This was not the only C19<sup>th</sup> house in which a similar grisly find was made in Australia. An age-old East Anglian custom was that of burying a live cat in a building under construction. It would protect the house from all harm by witches, warlocks and fire.

### Knowing which witch is which

On the subject of witches, in the middle ages it was not all that uncommon for women (and very rarely men) to be accused of being witches and visiting evil on innocent citizens. It was not always easy to determine the truth of the accusation until an infallible test was devised. The accused was thrown into the local pond. If she drowned, she clearly had no supernatural powers and was therefore declared innocent. If she floated, it was obviously only possible through the intervention of the devil. She was therefore deemed guilty as charged and burned at the stake.

### A Sign of the Times

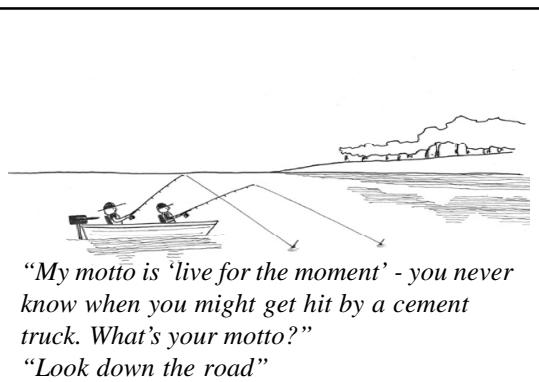
On the back of a motor home in outback SA:

## VIAGRA

Veterans Ignoring Age Going Round Australia

## Terry’s Trivia

1. The next number in the Fibonacci sequence is:  
13, 21, 34, 55, ....?
2. Zimbabwe has a border with four countries:  
South Africa; Zambia; Botswana and?  
(i) Rwanda; (ii) Mozambique; (iii) Namibia.
3. Mozart’s 41st Symphony is known as, The ...?  
(i) Jupiter; (ii) Paris; (iii) Prague.
4. Black Pudding is a:  
(i) Sweet Rice Dessert; (ii) Batter and dripping pudding; (iii) Blood sausage.
5. The horse that won the 2008 Melbourne Cup was?  
(i) Viewed; (ii) Makybe Diva; (iii) Delta Blues.
6. Who defeated Rafael Nadal in the 2009 French Open?  
(i) Robin Soderling; (ii) Fernando Gonzalez; (iii) Nikolay Davydenko.
7. Which is the largest dam storage in Australia?  
(i) Ord in WA; (ii) Gordon in Tasmania;  
(iii) Dartmouth in Vic.
8. What do you multiply ‘parts per million’ by to convert it to ‘milligrams per litre’?  
(i) ten; (ii) hundred; (iii) one.
9. What is added to coagulate milk in cheese-making?  
(i) Retsina; (ii) Ricotta; (iii) Rennet.
10. The capital of Slovenia is?  
(i) Ljubljana; (ii) Bratislava; (iii) Zagreb.
11. Which organ in the body produces insulin?  
(i) Kidney; (ii) Gall Bladder; (iii) Pancreas.
12. Who was Australia’s second Prime Minister?  
(i) Alfred Deakin; (ii) George Reid; (iii) Andrew Fisher.



“My motto is ‘live for the moment’ - you never know when you might get hit by a cement truck. What’s your motto?”  
“Look down the road”

## Book Club

*The Book Thief*, by Australian author Markus Zusak, is a most unusual book, not so much for its subject matter, but for its ingenious narrative device.

The book starts in 1939 in Nazi Germany. At her brother's graveside, a young Liesel discovers, partly buried in the snow, *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, and steals it. This is an unlikely start to a developing love of words, reading and learning, encouraged by her foster father. But in her impoverished state, she can only get books by stealing them – from Nazi book-burnings, the Mayor's wife or wherever there are books to be found. Danger, poverty and death are ever present in a country ruled with an iron fist by Hitler and his cronies who operate even at the level of her small village.

When Liesel's foster family hides a Jewish refugee in their cellar and the allies start bombing nearby Dresden, the danger becomes even greater and the struggle for survival almost overwhelming.

Apart from painting a graphic picture of the appalling living conditions of the poor and oppressed in Nazi Germany, the book is an excellent example of the story-telling craft. No wonder it has sold more than three million copies.

Set in the same time period is *Winter in Madrid* by CJ Sansom. Harry Brett, a survivor of Dunkirk, is sent to Madrid, ostensibly as an interpreter. In reality his mission is to ascertain the activities of a former schoolmate who appears to be influential in the Franco regime which Britain is trying desperately to keep out of the war. Previously another 'old boy' had fought as a communist in the international brigades and had been reported as "missing, presumed dead"; but perhaps he isn't. As well as being a well-plotted tale of manoeuvre and intrigue, the book vividly portrays the misery of life in Spain post revolution.

Samson is the author of a series of wonderful crime books set in the reign of Henry VIII featuring hunch-back lawyer Matthew Shardlake (I reviewed *Revelation* in Newsletter 59 and am now reading the fifth in the series).

**Ian Pullar**

## Wrong Gongs

The *SunHerald* of 20 February asked rhetorically if there had ever been a better correction than that run by Rockhampton's *Bulletin*, when it apologised for having written that 30,000 pigs had gone down the Dawson River in the floods, when "What Baralaba piggery owner Sid Everingham actually said was '30 sows and pigs'." Here are a couple that run it close. The late Graham Kennedy's favourite correction in a British broadsheet was "Due to a misunderstanding over the telephone we stated that the couple would live with the bridegroom's father. We have been asked to point out that they will in fact live at the Old Manse." Meanwhile the *Ely Standard* once ran this: "We apologise for the error in last week's paper in which we stated that Mr Arnold Dogbody was a defective in the police force. We meant, of course, that Mr Dogbody is a detective in the police farce. But to the winner. *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* corrigendum to an entry in one of its early volumes which ran like this, in reference to James Atkinson's daughter, Charlotte; "... for died in infancy read lived to a ripe old age at Orange."

*My personal favourite dates from years ago when a letter to the editor of The Australian pointed out a perceived error in an article that had alluded to that well-known peanut farmer, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, when obviously it should have read that well-known peanut, farmer Joh Bjelke-Petersen. - Ed.*



## Credits

*My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to Harvey Yates for his cartoons; to the contributors; to Graham Bauer who printed it; to Natasha Carson and Rebecca Wall who made it available to departmental staff; and to Jon Henry who placed it on our website – [www.waterysauces.org.au](http://www.waterysauces.org.au).*

## A Letter to the Editor

I was sick of being accused of being a Luddite, so I decided to break out at Christmas time. I gave my daughter an iPhone and she was in seventh heaven. I gave my son an iPad and he was tickled pink. I gave my grandson an iPod and he was over the moon. But when my wife opened her iRon, she nearly hurled it at me.

This new technology is totally beyond me.

*Name withheld by request*

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