

WATERY SAUCES Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 69

November 2012

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Our Co-Patrons

As previously reported, with the reorganisation within government of the agencies responsible for water, WRRRA now has two co-patrons - the CEOs of SunWater and the Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS).

Many of our members will be familiar with Peter Boettcher who has held his position for five years already (doesn't time fly?) but Jon Black is as new as his new department. Jon graciously consented to be a co-patron and in meeting with our President and Secretary, offered his support and good wishes. He immediately demonstrated his attitude by attending our Christmas



Jon Black,
CEO of DEWS

luncheon where he proved an affable companion and an entertaining and informative speaker. Members were very interested to hear of developments in his department, even if they were somewhat nonplussed by the changes.

Peter Boettcher was as welcome a guest at our luncheon as he has been on the other occasions when pressure of business has allowed him to attend. Peter also spoke to us about changes in his organisation and the challenges confronting him and his staff.

It is always good to hear the news of today - even if it only makes members glad they're no longer involved!

We are very grateful to both patrons for their support.



Peter Boettcher,
CEO of SunWater

From the Editor's Chair

During August, Helen and I were lucky enough to go on a bus tour in France with what turned out to be a very congenial group of people - mostly Australians, but there were a number of American couples. It was interesting to hear their views on the upcoming US elections with one couple in particular being staunch Republican supporters and another equally committed Democrats. No doubt they had very different reactions to the election results.

One very energetic retired US couple were continuing to travel widely. Their philosophy was retirement comes in three phases - the GO GO phase, the GO SLOW phase and the NO GO phase. They were determined to make the most of their first phase.

I'm sure many of our members embrace this philosophy too.

It's time for me to go go, so

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

A Well-deserved Honour

The Journal of the AWA, August 2012 edition, announced on page 36 "awa news" the Category Winners for the 2012 Queensland Water Awards. In the category: Distinguished Service Award (Queensland Government), the well-deserved winner was - Terry Loos! Congratulations to Terry.

A HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON TO ALL!

The Committee wishes all our members a wonderful Festive Season and a great New Year

**I'm dreaming of a
white Christmas**

... but if the white runs
out, there's always the red.



Out and About

After a one year break, it was great to get back to Aspley Bowls Club on Exhibition Friday with Norm and Lindsay White for a morning of bowls followed by a barbecue lunch.

A number of late withdrawals meant that we only had two rinks of players in action but it was great to see president Hein and Vice President Geoff on rink one. John Morse looked very much the part in regulation whites coming equipped with a measure to separate the close bowls – it was used surprisingly often as was the chalk to mark the “touchers.”

Norm tried his form later in the morning getting his chair onto the green and rolling a few up with a smooth delivery – good to see.

Don Beattie joined the players for lunch and a few drinks were had to relieve the thirst generated from the morning’s sport.

Looking forward to next year – hopefully with a few more players. No equipment or previous experience needed – in fact a lack of previous experience probably helps!

Lee Rogers

WRRRA welcomes a number of new members – Darlene Newlove (formerly Frankish), Aneurin Hughes, David Paice, Mick Merrin and Tony Cleary.

Trevor Ryan has expressed interest in joining and has also provided the very interesting news that his wife, Susan Ryan, is now Deputy Director-General of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

We could also reasonably expect that our numbers may swell in the future as many former officers are leaving or have left their former employment as part of the government’s down-sizing of the Public Service. Our list, which may not be complete, comprises the following officers:

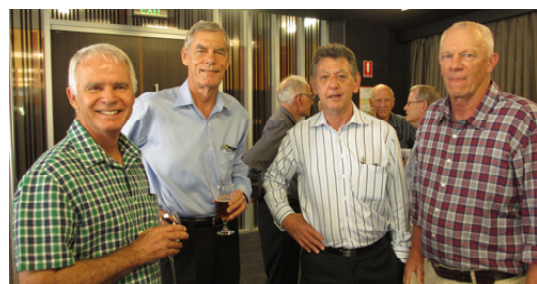
Ken Aitken, Peter Artemieff, Graham Bauer, Ali Cameron, Greg Claydon, Maurice Clewley, Gary Corbett, Richard Croft, Ed Donohue, Karla Henry, Peter Hill, Bill Huxley, Alan Lievesley, Kerry Marler, Allan Mayne, Russ McConnell, John McKenna, Mick Merrin, Laurie Paterson, Geoff Pocock, Peter Richardson, Chris Robson, Rolf Rose, Ross Walduck, Ian White and Tony Wolff. We wish them all well in their respective retirements.

To those soldiering on in the smaller departments, we also offer our best wishes.

WRRRA held its Christmas luncheon on Tuesday 13 November, once again at COTAH, on virtually the last available date. The function was well attended, with 44 participants, although a number of our regulars were unable to make it. As usual, we all had “a real good time”.

We were honoured, as noted on page 1, to have both our co-patrons in attendance and to be able to hear from their own lips news of the developments in the management of water in this state. Some of this information can be found on page 7.

As has now become customary, Terry Loos presented us with a set of 20 trivia questions which must have been quite difficult (even if Quite Interesting in the QI style) because even with the collective knowledge of all the assembled brilliant minds, the best score was a mere 13. Some of his teasers can be found on page 11.



Vice President Geoff Eades, President Hein van der Heide, new retiree Mick Merrin and Ian Ferrier at lunch

Among the attendees was Hector Macdonald who claims that, as he left IWSC 41 years ago, he probably holds the record for the longest post “retirement” of all our members – anyone retiring at “normal” age would have to be over 100.

Again we welcomed Don and Vera Best, some of whose story appears on page 5.

In That Case ...

Just in case you missed it, you may recall that the Commission of Inquiry into the floods referred engineers Robert Ayre, John Tibaldi and Terry Malone to the CMC. That body found that the engineers had no case to answer.

And the US Corps of Engineers found that the operation of Wivenhoe Dam had been close to optimal.



At John Amprimo’s farewell are John, Bill Huxley, John McKenna and Gary Burgess



Saji Joseph, Peter Allen, Mick Merrin, Russell Holland, Greg Claydon and Leon Leach with Lyall Hinrichsen in the background at Greg’s farewell



Old friends at the 50th Anniversary Dinner of AWA - Aneurin Hughes, Terry Loos and Brian Davis with Norm Whyte seated

Sad news

It must be reported with great regret that Brian Davis died recently. One of the former DLG engineers who were absorbed into Water Resources, Brian took an early separation last year and was diagnosed shortly after with cancer. As Terry Loos so eloquently put it, “Bugger!”

Vale Norman Julius Rossi 17-05-1927 – 16-07-2012

Norman Julius Rossi was born in Ivanhoe in Melbourne in 1927 the second youngest of five children. His father ran the family-owned rose nursery established by his father, Norm's grandfather.

Norm was dux of Northcote High School and won an academic scholarship to Melbourne Boys' High, a selective school, for matriculation. From Melbourne Boys' High he won two scholarships to attend Melbourne University, a government scholarship and a more valuable privately endowed scholarship, which he accepted. He was able to enter the faculty of his choice and he selected engineering. It was the beginning of a long and successful career as a civil engineer. While completing his degree he worked in many career-related jobs including in the lab and on the tunnels for the (Kiewa) Hydro-Electric scheme in Victoria, and for the Department of Civil Aviation, surveying aerodromes at Warrnambool and Bega. He also worked as a draftsman for Victoria's State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It was during this time that the Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply in Queensland was recruiting civil engineers and he was selected.

Norm moved to Queensland to start his new job as a civil engineer with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission where he embarked on a career of dam building. He was also in the Engineering Corps of the Citizen's Military Forces. He first worked on the design of the Burdekin Dam, then on the design and construction of the Tinaroo Dam in Atherton as a junior engineer, followed by the design of the Moogerah Dam in Esk. He was appointed Project Engineer of Callide Dam near Biloela, followed by Coolmunda Dam near Inglewood. As a senior engineer, his most satisfying challenge was his role as project Engineer for Fairbairn Dam at Emerald, the largest dam in Queensland. On his return from Fairbairn, Norm worked as the Dam Surveillance Engineer for Queensland. He watched the recent Wivenhoe Dam Inquiry with great interest.

In the very early weeks of his employment with IWS, Eileen Rose, who worked as a stenographer with the Irrigation Commission, got her first glimpse of him while he was playing in a football match. She said he looked like a "Greek God" and she was absolutely smitten. Norm was oblivious to all this and didn't realise that he was a marked man. The course of true love didn't go that smoothly at first but eventually he invited her out. Unfortunately, he was then transferred to Tinaroo Dam and didn't return for several years. When he did return, the courting began in earnest. Norm asked Eileen to marry him on St Patrick's Day in 1958 and they were married on 14th June 1958. Norm later confided that he most certainly noticed her straight off, but that he thought that she was too young as she was only 17 and he was 23. Considering they married when she was 25 and he was 31, it was certainly a long romance. They celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary in June 2012.

It nearly all ended at Coolmunda Dam in 1964 when Norm and some visiting engineers went out in a boat to measure the water levels and ended up being swept over the spillway. The other two engineers were quickly found, but Norm was still missing. Eileen was driven down to the dam and was calling out, "Norm, Norm!" His voice was heard in the distance calling, "What's the matter?" He was found clinging to a tree branch, only peeved that he'd lost his pipe.

For the most part of his life, Norm was active and vital. His general knowledge was remarkable. Very well read in science as well as history, he was also interested in classical music. He was the family's "google" before "google" existed. He built his career as a civil engineer, participated in the community as a member of Rotary and schools' committees, and in his retirement from the age of 60, continued to enjoy the fellowship of Rotary as well as the Aspley Bowls Club and Probus.

His greatest joy was being surrounded by his family. He loved to hear everyone laughing and chatting. Despite his numerous health woes at the end of his life, including bladder cancer, two heart attacks and total renal failure, amongst other things, Norm was always optimistic that he would "come good" – especially if it was a sunny day. "I think I'll be okay to do my tax tomorrow," he said only a week before he died.

On his 85th birthday in May, he was confined to bed. He said that he wouldn't be able to join the family but would be "happy to receive visitors". At the end of the evening he said, "What a lovely party" and that is an apt metaphor for his life.

- Compiled from the Eulogy delivered by his children Linda, David and Susan.

Through the last edition of the newsletter, the Secretary sought information on the whereabouts of members with whom we had lost contact. Doris Beutel responded to inform us that sadly Bruno Schumann passed away in February 2010, just a few months after the Tinaroo Dam 50th celebrations.

The adjacent photo was taken of Bruno and Charlie Paolucci at that reunion.



Answers to Terry's Trivia (on page 11)

1. (iv) Firenze 2. (iii) Eleanor Roosevelt
3. (iii) 1968-1975 4. (i) Sicily 5. (iv) Swans
6. (i) Mozambique 7. (iv) Engineers
8. (iii) Rossiter 9. Mt Kosciuszko
10. (ii) Thunderball

Vale James Richard Chamberlain 7-2-1925 – 15-7-2012

Jim was born in Brisbane on 7 February 1925, the first of two sons born to Bess and Robert Chamberlain.

The chapters of his life can be summarised as follows:-

- As a child growing up on the family farm at Black Mountain near Cooroy.
- As a young man staying with his aunt Ethel at West End in Brisbane going to high school at Brisbane State High.
- Joining the navy in 1942 at age 17, serving on Corvettes and troop carriers throughout the Pacific until war's end.
- Returning to school to complete his education, condensing two years into one.
- Commencing his working career as a surveyor with Len Thurecht in Gympie.
- Batching with Don Stead, his future wife's brother in Gympie.
- Marriage in 1952 to Win and taking on her young family as his own. (Robyn and Ross's father had died in 1948 after serving with the army in the Middle East.)
- Returning to Brisbane and commencing work as a surveyor with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.
- A career as a Surveyor working on the Burdekin irrigation channels at Clare, Tinaroo irrigation channels at Walkamin, Callide Dam at Biloela, Wuruma Dam near Eidsvold, Maroon Dam near Boonah, returning to Brisbane in 1973 to work at head office.
- The birth in 1960 of daughter Ruth Ann at the Atherton hospital while the family was living at Walkamin.
- Retirement in 1985. Following retirement he devoted his life to his family, his boat, his books - he loved to read books and recite poetry, restoring furniture and other things for his children to cherish, travel and his daily walks.
- Suffering a stroke in 2009 and since then struggling to reconcile his situation with loss of memory.
- Being a resident at Woombye Care for his final 12 months where he received loving care.

These dot points, prepared by Jim's children, Robyn, Ross and Ruth Ann, were amplified in the address given at his funeral. -Ed

Vale Stuart Hamilton Robinson

Stuart Robinson (popularly known as 'Stewy'), formerly long-serving Supervising Draftsman in Irrigation Branch in the old IWSC, passed away at the age of 95. His funeral was a private affair so there was no eulogy available for inclusion in this edition of the Newsletter.

However a number of his former colleagues took it upon themselves to write a tribute to this much admired officer. It is far too voluminous to fit within the limited number of pages available here, so it will be published on our website. The link is

<http://www.waterysauces.org.au/history/tributes/stewierobinson.pdf>

Many thanks to the contributors to the tribute - Gary Corbett, Bob McDonald, Phil Sternes, John Amprimo, Eric Davis, Mick Garvey, Vince Folkman and perhaps others.

Bob sent it to Stewy's widow, Doris, who gave it her seal of approval (see adjacent). Her description of Stewy as "a bit of a cross between a sergeant major and a marshmallow" will resonate with many who knew him.

Our condolences to Doris and their sons and families.

13-9-12,

Dear Bob,

Sorry about the short note but can't find my writing pad. Bob?

Anyway, I do appreciate your kindness in sending me copy of the obit. I know the old boy would have also appreciated you doing that for him. Its great.

He was a bit of a cross between a sgt major & a marshmallow, wasn't he? Its very quiet without him. Regards Doris Rob.

The Best Years -Brisbane to Theodore

by Don Best

In the July edition of the Newsletter, I promised a contribution from Don Best. Here is the first instalment. - Ed

In September 1930 I was born as the first child of Cyril and Mary Best in Nurse Colburn's Private Hospital on Shafston Avenue, Kangaroo Point. I was named Cyril John McDonald Best. However I have generally been "Don" to family and friends from birth. We lived in Kangaroo Point and then Alderley where I got a younger brother, Baden, before Dad got a job with the Queensland Forestry Department and we moved to Beerwah. We lived in three tents by a small creek. Water was obtained from a well dug in the sandy soil near the creek. Our father added a bark kitchen to make it easier to cook and eat meals. I started school at the Beerwah Primary School and I rode my bike some five miles each way to school every day.

In 1935, soon after my sister was born, our father was appointed as Overseer on the Marys Creek Forestry Reserve some twelve miles west of Gympie. Here we lived in a house but our nearest neighbours were over a mile away where our mail box was. My brother and I enrolled at the Queensland Correspondence School.

In 1940 Dad enlisted in the army in the Forestry Unit and we moved to Brisbane where Dad did his initial training before leaving for Sydney. There the unit embarked with destination North Africa. However Rommel took over North Africa and the ship was diverted to Southampton. Dad was finally repatriated home due to illness and spent a lot of time in Greenslopes Military Hospital. When the war finished he did not return to the Forestry Department.

We children were enrolled at the East Brisbane State School which was soon taken over by the American Army for several months. As a result the East Brisbane School children had to go to Buranda State School and share with its students. East Brisbane students would go to school in the morning and Buranda students in the afternoon for part of the year and swap over for the rest of the year.

At the end of seventh grade and the State Scholarship Examination I moved on to Industrial High. I played cricket and soccer for the school and became an officer in the Army Cadet Unit. I was very good at rifle shooting and was part of the school's successful Chelmsford Cup rifle team. I represented the school in inter-school sports in high and long jumping. In my senior year I was Chairman of the School Committee - equivalent to School Captain.

From Senior, I was offered a scholarship with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission to study Civil Engineering at the University of Queensland. As a scholarship holder I was required to work with the department during vacations. Together with other scholarship holders Keith Nutt, Dave Morwood, Glen Sanderson and Kevin Tibbits we spent the first Christmas -New Year vacation at the Rocklea Mechanical Workshops. During one midyear vacation I worked with Peter Dirkis in the then Executive Building adjacent to the Queens Gardens.

I spent the 1947/48 Christmas-New Year vacation at Emerald with Pat McMahon doing soil testing at the then site for the proposed Maraboon (later Fairbairn) Dam. The Selma Weir was opened while I was there. I met Sam Baxter who was doing surveying around the site. A large flood of the Nogoa River occurred before Christmas and Stream Gauger Harold Scholz arrived to record the event. I assisted him in taking and recording his measurements across the river which was then a raging torrent with large trees and branches floating down. The flood cut off our access into Emerald to get supplies and much of the contents of the refrigerator had to be destroyed. As a result our Christmas lunch was very simple.

After graduating, I was appointed Engineer Division III with IWSC. I began work initially in Irrigation Branch under Gordon McDowell, mainly with Don Beattie on the investigations and design of the inverted siphons and bench flumes for the South Walsh Main Channel and the West Barron Main Channel. The first seven siphons were constructed under contract by T J Watkins of Cairns while the Rocky Creek siphon was constructed under contract by Transfield Pty Ltd.

In January 1955 I asked Vera Dyer, a long time girl friend, if she would marry me. She accepted and we set September as the month that we would marry. Shortly after this I was told by Gordon McDowell that I was being transferred to Theodore to supervise construction of the Gibber Gunyah Irrigation Area. I was to work under the District Engineer Len Redmond. I was told a house was available, so we had a frantic time deciding what we wanted to take and what we could afford to buy.

The only people I can now remember were in the office are Cec Lovett, Flynn Bodman and Col Anderson. Other IWS staff I can remember are Port (in charge of the mechanical workshop) and in the field Gus Hinder, Jack Keihl and Bert Gook. Carter Brothers had the contract for the land clearing of the Gibber Gunyah Irrigation Area. Jack Carter lent me his modern surveying level to use while I was there. It was much better than the departmental one. Jack was later shot and killed by his brother in the room in South Brisbane where Jack was staying.

When I first arrived in Theodore the Gibber Gunyah Irrigation Area had been partially completed and clearing of the proposed farms was in progress. The most interesting construction project I had at Theodore was the Gibber Gunyah pump well. Several rises of the Dawson River occurred during the construction. The aggregates were obtained from the town side of the river and thus stockpiling of the aggregates had to be done when the river could be crossed. When Norm Butler came up for the installation of the pumps and motors everything went well.

In September 1955 I married Vera in Brisbane. Our honeymoon was a two week Pioneer Bus Tour from Brisbane via the New England Highway to Sydney then on to Canberra for the Floriade festival and visits to the War Museum and the other sights and then the return journey was back to Brisbane via the Pacific Highway. After a few days with our families we went by train to Eidsvold and by car to Theodore to the little house opposite the office.

During the then largest flood at Theodore in January 1957 the department was kept very busy evacuating families from their homes to a safe location and endeavouring to prevent the breaching of an old levee bank protecting the old Theodore Irrigation Area. Flood waters came through the back fence of our yard but did not come any closer. I remember helping to boat Col Anderson's sheep from his property located between the town weir and the anabranch weir. Naturally the mosquitoes and sand flies were a huge menace. Citronella was useless. Most people had one or more smoke billies going to try to keep the mossies out of their homes. After the flood I had to be taken by ambulance to Biloela hospital to be hospitalised for a few days before I recovered.

In April 1957 we had decided to buy a car as Vera was pregnant and she had to travel to Rockhampton as there was no doctor in Theodore. She had travelled by rail motor a couple of times to Rockhampton and stayed overnight in the CWA hostel. I thought that having our own transport would enable us to be independent of public transport. We had a holiday and returned to Theodore in the VW Beetle. Soon after returning I was advised that I was being transferred to Tinaroo.

.... to be continued next issue

Tanks for the Memory

by Phil Sternes

Having a look at the town water treatment installation during a visit to Glenlyon Dam this week, I was reminded of an incident I had heard about that occurred during construction when Charlie Paolucci administered the coup de gr  s to a newly constructed but terminally faulty concrete tank. I'm sure there are many who remember the incident.

Imagine my surprise therefore, when later flicking through a folder of old photos held by the current storage supervisor Brendan Swan, that evidence of Charlie's handiwork still exists.

This matter was straightforward as I understand. The tank was faulty (see Photo 1 showing Charlie, Bob Sainsbury and the tank in question about to meet its fate) and needed removal. The following poem by Frank Charters, which accompanies the photos, captures things perfectly.

That Tank

For water, the Commission, like everyone else,
Needs something in which to contain it,
But whatever it is and wherever it's built
The damm thing for sure must retain it!

A tank made of concrete at the dam on Pike Creek
Was built by a well known contractor,
But so porous it was, t'was a moral to leak
"Remove it" we said "- just subtract her!"

But Charlie Paolucci, that doughty old man,
Had drastic ideas how to lift her
"A few bags of nitrate I'm sure" he said "can
Be put in the right place to shift her."

The builder was doubtful, but said "Go ahead",
I just hope there's not too much mess."
So Charlie with care placed his plugs here and there,
And pouff – the tank changed its address!

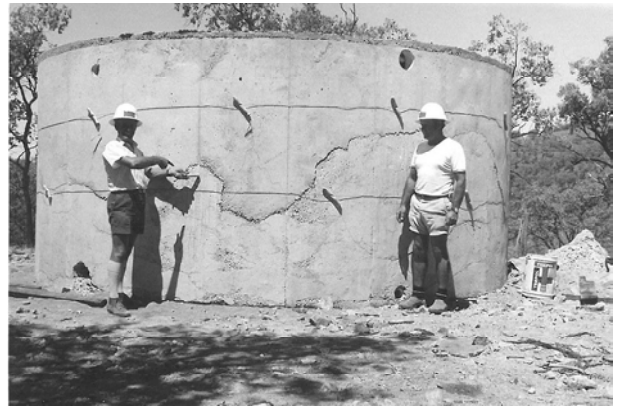
So builders take care, when you're building for us,
If we don't like the thing you've constructed,
We'll quick smart get Charlie, without any fuss,
And your efforts will soon be destructed.

Photo 2 shows the event in progress and while the quality is not great, what could possibly be interpreted as scratches on the photo are in fact pieces of the tank almost entering earth orbit. Photo 3 shows the (successful) aftermath on 2 March 1973 and is captioned in the folder as "Roof came down flat on tree at left".

Now as I remember it, Charlie always saw beauty in things concrete but a bad example could only ever be a candidate for euthanasia in his eyes.

Thanks, Phil, for this very interesting "Blast from the Past" – pun intended!

Naturally, I would welcome any other contributions, and I'm quite sure there are many imprinted on memories that could be shared with our readers. - Ed.



My Brief History of Nathan Dam

by Noel Dowling

While an internet account of Nathan Dam states that investigations into the dam construction started in the 1920s, my memory of investigations is as follows.

I started work with IWSC in 1952 in Project Planning Branch. At the rear of the Engineering section was a row of filing cabinets with two drawers in one cabinet containing folders of calculations on Nathan Dam. Engineers in PP at that time included Senior Engineer George Symonds, Colin Apelt, Geoff Cossins, Glen Sanderson and Neil Collier. I left the Commission in 1961 and returned in 1969. The files were still there although the Commission had shifted to a new building on the corner of George and Margaret Streets adjacent to the old building we occupied in William Street.

During our time there we watched Mineral House being built at the rate of one storey per week. While preparing to move into Mineral House an edict was given that all old files were to be

dumped and I watched with some degree of misgiving as the early calculations on Nathan files were binned. I wondered whose initials appeared on the calculations as well as the loss of history and wasted resources involved in the investigation and planning. Later in the 1970s Nathan was again being considered with a then young engineer being involved in design calculations of a concrete spillway for the dam but investigations again ceased.

In the mid 1990s I understand the dam was again being considered as part of the “Sudaw” project with the cost and nature of infrastructure to the coast being considered a large determining factor in the approval of the construction of the project. Once again the project seemed to have stalled.

After some 90 plus years of investigations, the present progress of the dam’s future seems to be hindered by environmental and mining considerations. Perhaps it should have been built much earlier at a fraction of the cost which presumably would have been recouped by the benefits of water yielded from the storage. Progress seems to be at a remarkably slow pace.

Around the Departments

SunWater

The change of government earlier this year also brought changes to the Board of SunWater. The new chairman is Will Siganto, who is a graduate in Civil Engineering with a career in the corporate world. There have been other changes on the Board which can be found on SunWater’s website.

A difficult decision for the Board was the cancellation of the Connors River Dam project. No doubt readers are familiar with the downturn in the mining industry, and particularly the coal sector. As a result, the number of potential customers for the water had declined with some miners reluctant to enter into take or pay contracts. Naturally with designs in place and the land acquired, the project can be resurrected at a future date, but the cancellation has had an effect on SunWater’s bottom line. The alternative supply from a Burdekin pipeline has also been deferred.

However the Coal Seam Gas water project to Dawson River previously reported on is going ahead.

An investigation into the possibility of local management of 8 Irrigation Areas has been commenced with the establishment of a Working Group chaired by Leith Bouilly.

Unlike other areas in government agencies, SunWater is not experiencing downsizing because of previous rationalisation moves. However efficiency improvements are still being sought.

- information taken from Peter Boettcher’s address at the WRRR Christmas luncheon

DEWS

The Department of Energy and Water Supply is a new department which includes parts of the former DERM, notably the planning group headed up by Richard Priman and the Dam Safety group headed by Peter Allen. From January 2013, the Queensland Water Commission is to be abolished and its functions taken over by DEWS. State-wide infrastructure planning will again be contained within one agency.

The major focus of the department is to support the government’s aspirations regarding pricing of water and energy. Although departmental numbers are currently around 470, significant downsizing is planned for next year.

From January 2013, the agencies of Seqwater, Linkwater and the Grid Manager will be merged.

As Summer and the traditional wet season have drawn closer, members will have noticed an upsurge in letters to the editor demanding that the storage level in Wivenhoe Dam be reduced to 75% in order to provide additional flood storage capacity. The Minister, however, has sought advice from his own department and the Bureau of Meteorology. The forecast does not indicate a “wet” summer, and therefore the decision has been taken not to reduce the level and thus waste supplies for future years. This decision can be revisited if the forecasts change.

- information largely taken from Jon Black’s address at the WRRR Christmas luncheon

DNRM

As noted on page 2, Greg Claydon has “retired”. However he has signed on for a new role with the West Australian Government. His wife Andrea, having moved recently from Toowoomba and expecting her first grandchild, does not want to go west so Greg will be a ‘fly-in-fly-out’ employee.

Following Greg’s departure, Lyall Hinrichsen has taken over many of his functions, the most important one of which is WRRR’s contact in NRM. Thanks Lyall. His new position is Executive Director Water Policy - the only title in the department containing the word “water”.

The new department is very much focused on outcomes rather than process and in reducing red tape. For example, among many proposed amendments to the *Water Act*, water licences will be issued for 99 years, and many minor water usages will not require licences at all, resulting in a large reduction in work load for the department.

The *Border Rivers Act*, which has been in operation since 1946, is also being amended. The approach to the wester rivers, Georgina, Diamantina and Cooper is being reexamined, aiming for a balanced outcome between water use and environmental protection.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan has been in the news creating disputation particularly in the southern states. Queensland is more concerned with the adjustment issues including the cost of water buy-backs.

- information from Lyall Hinrichsen

A 2011 Travelogue - The final leg

by Peter Jones

(continued from previous edition)

Well we've visited rellies in the US, taken an organised tour through Morocco, driven through southern Spain and Portugal and are now about to head into Italy.

The trip from Spain to Italy was taken on one of the ferries that travel the Mediterranean – for us it was the crossing from Barcelona to Civitavecchia, the major port outside Rome. I had always heard of the large ferries that crossed the Mediterranean, but never realised just how large they were. Cars were in the minority, the bulk of vehicles loading were semi-trailers – I lost count when I reached 60.

We left Barcelona in the evening and arrived in Civitavecchia just on sunset the next day. The berthing was something to see – the ferry completed a “reverse park” into the dock that seemed to be done far more easily than me trying to reverse park the family sedan outside Woollies.

It was an overnight stay in the Civitavecchia area before heading into Rome the next day. No overnight stay in Rome for us though as that evening Di and I had to fly out of Rome to return home for a family funeral. We did however manage a trip into Rome for half a day before departing. This time our GPS started – took us straight to the Colosseum where we found a park within a couple of hundred metres of this ancient structure. We had been to Rome some years before, but it was nice to walk the streets of the city and revisit some of the sights.

The time at home was hectic – not only did we have to travel to Maryborough for the funeral, but we arrived home to find we had a blocked sewer line. So there was a mad panic to get a plumber in to clear it. But we did it all and three days after returning we were back on the plane to Milan to catch up with our travelling companions.

Our friends picked us up in Milan and we drove up to Bellagio, on the shores of Lake Como, for a couple of days. There is something about the Lake Como area – not only its beauty, but the sense of history in the mansions and castles (many of which are older than Australia) and a feeling of wealth.

By this time, the travelling party had grown to eight, and would ultimately reach ten for a short period. We were travelling in two vehicles, a nine seater mini bus and a Peugeot sedan. And we had three GPS units between us. If we had had some adventures with one, then three were going to be a real challenge. But we survived it, only once having a “slight” detour into Switzerland as the three GPS operators debated which one was showing the best route.

We headed off to the Abruzzo region where we would stay a few days. On the way we stopped over at Verona (and yes, we did visit Julia's balcony to ponder the question “Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?”), Modena (home of the Ferrari and the Pagani – and no, I had not heard of the latter one, but then with a price tag in excess of \$1.25 million it never had featured in my thinking as an alternative to a Commodore for the family sedan) and Assisi where we stayed in a monastery (or at least it was once, but now restored and tastefully redecorated as a hotel) to explore the old town of Assisi perched high on the hilltop overlooking the valley below.

It was then time to move on to the town of Tocco de Casauria (population about 3,000) in the Abruzzo region where we spent some days. This was the home town of our friend David (he and his wife had travelled with us through Morocco, Portugal and Spain). His family had left Italy when he was nine years old (like many of us, he is now in his sixties), but he had returned a number of times and maintained his family contacts. It was a sight to see as he greeted, and was greeted by both friends and relatives in the best Italian style.

Six of us stayed in a villa outside of town (but within about 15 minutes walk to the centre of town) while David and his wife, together with another couple stayed in town with David's cousin.

Memories of the town include the sight of David being greeted by the local police chief while the latter was on crossing duty at the end of the school day (yes, the police chief was doing the equivalent of the lollipop lady's duty), the old man in his nineties who spent his days sitting in the sun in the town square, the olive picking, the little restaurants in obscure places we would never have found if left to our own devices and the winery below street level in the centre of town (it produced 20,000 to 30,000 bottles of wine each year).

It makes an incredible difference to the experience when you visit an area where one of your group has family ties and a knowledge that comes from personal experience.

One day while in Tocco, we travelled to the mountain pass, Passo di S. Leonardo, where we lunched in a restaurant at the top of the pass between snow covered peaks. The restaurant owner and chef was a lovely old gentleman in his seventies. He talked of trying to sell the restaurant, but somehow deep down I don't know if that was what he truly wanted – it had been his life and where would he go if he did sell?

It was here that we saw the Italian Maremma sheepdog. Since early times, these dogs had run with the sheep to protect them from the mountain wolves. In more recent times, the farmers had hunted the wolves and the need for the dogs was slowly disappearing. But then, the mountain wolf numbers were reduced to the extent that they were in danger of becoming extinct. So what happened? They were declared an endangered species and became protected, their numbers grew and they were again a danger to the sheep. The farmers could not hunt them so they resorted to the old and proven practice of running the Maremma sheepdogs with their flocks again. But the number of the Maremma sheepdogs had also reduced when the wolf numbers had been low, so a new breeding program for the dogs had to be started to meet the new demand.



Perhaps this could be the next family runabout. Peter at the Ferrari Museum.

A 2011 Travelogue - The final leg *continued*

From Tocco we headed towards the south into the region of Puglia where our home for the next few days was a traditional trulli – a house based on a circular plan with a conical roof and constructed of local stone. Two or more of the basic circular units could be joined to make a larger house. Many have been restored for tourist accommodation, but most still seem to be family homes. The town of Alberobello in the region is famous for its concentration of perhaps hundreds of these traditional homes.



A trulli delightful place to spend a night or two.

It was here that we experienced the Italian medical service. One of our travelling party became seriously ill and had to be transported to hospital. The ambulance arrived quite quickly despite us being some miles out of town. The surprise though was that it had a crew of four (yes, 4), a driver, an offsider for the driver, a nurse/paramedic and a doctor. The service was excellent, but I don't know how a four person crew could be supported. No wonder the country has some financial difficulties.

Our travelling companion did recover many weeks later, but not without some crises during her illness.

So it was onward again, this time to Sicily, but first a detour to the town of Gallipoli – a lovely old town on the east coast of Italy. Yes, there is such a town in Italy, our GPS was not so lost that we finished up in Turkey.

It was back onto a ferry for the crossing to Sicily, smaller than the one on which we had crossed from Barcelona, but still taking many semi-trailers.

We spent six nights in Sicily, two in each of the towns of Avola, Agrigento and Marsala. The accommodation in Avola and Marsala were in properties that are part of the Italian Agriturismo network. Promoted by the Government, this network, as the name suggests, is based around farm stay accommodation. In Avola, it was a working small crop farm situated on a beautiful stretch of coast, while in Marsala it was a vineyard and winery (well what else could it have been in a place named Marsala?).

The cellar at the Marsala accommodation proved interesting. It contained wine in oak barrels that dated back to the 1950s. Apparently the owner had bought these from the many small family wineries around the district. We did not get to taste these, only the wines that dated from the 1970s. The practice is to draw only about 5% of the wine from each barrel each year and to top it up with the new vintage. At least part of the storage here was the owner's private collection. Clearly the property also produced wine for commercial sale (which naturally enough could be bought in their restaurant).

We managed to visit Mt Etna, although on the day it was very cold and wet so there were no takers in our party to walk up to the crater. We did however find a delightful little mountain side

restaurant on our way down from the mountain (are you starting to get the impression that wine and food featured prominently in our priorities on this trip?).

From Sicily, it was back on to a ferry, this time to Sorrento on the Amalfi Coast where we stayed at another agriturismo property in the hills above the town of Minora, this time at a property that was primarily a lemon orchard. In the hills, some of the old practices still occur – donkeys are still used as pack animals to take goods to the places higher in the hills where roads don't exist, replaced by steep winding steps for the donkeys to negotiate.

Driving around this area was again an adventure – nothing to do with our favourite GPS this time. The roads are, in places, incredibly narrow. There seemed barely enough room for two cars to pass, let alone a bus or truck coming in the opposite direction; but somehow we always managed to do it. Only once were we in a situation where we had to back up to make way for a larger vehicle, in this case it was a bus. Some corners were so sharp/blind that the buses and trucks sounded warnings as they came to them. Not sure what it was like for the people who lived close, but even up on the hillside well above the town we could hear them into all hours of the night.

Our stay on the Amalfi Coast brought our grand tour to an end, but the adventure was not over yet. We drove back to Rome for our return flight to Australia.

The weekend we were due to fly home was the weekend that Qantas closed all its flying operations world wide. We were due to fly Rome to Hong Kong on Cathay Pacific Airlines, and then on to Brisbane on Qantas. Being adventurous, and not knowing what else to do anyway, we presented ourselves to the Cathay check-in at Rome airport with our Cathay/Qantas ticket in hand.

We brought that particular check-in desk to a halt. The supervisor was called, telephone calls were made and we just waited patiently. Our travel had become their problem as we were not going to go away.

After about a half hour, a Qantas representative arrived and offered us a seat on Thai Airways – Rome to Bangkok and then on to Brisbane, arriving home only about three or four hours later than originally planned. While all the paperwork was being processed, my innocent comment to him about being busy was greeted with the response, "Yes, thanks to our CEO".

But the adventure was not quite finished yet. We had about a 14 hour layover in Bangkok which should have given us the chance to have a day tour of the city. But it was not to be – Bangkok was flooding and farmers outside the flood barriers protecting the city were knocking them down because the barriers were increasing the flooding of their land. We were not prepared to leave the airport for fear that the flooding may stop us getting back to catch our flight to Brisbane.

So at 5.30am on our arrival at Bangkok, we fronted up to the Qantas lounge and talked our way in (Qantas was the cause of the problem so Qantas should take care of us, or so I argued. I think we might have pressured the young lass on duty to get in, but at that hour of the morning she was not prepared to wake up her supervisor to ask; with which I agreed). So there we spent the day, until boarding our Thai flight for the last leg home and the end of our grand tour.

Now the planning starts for next year – what part of the world are we going to explore next?

Thanks Peter, for this wonderful contribution. I'm sure we are all looking forward to the answer on which is the next part of the world. - Ed.

HEALTH *and beauty*

Thank goodness for studies.

Ever walk into a room with some purpose in mind, only to completely forget what that purpose was?

Turns out, doors themselves are to blame for these strange memory lapses.

Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame have discovered that passing through a doorway triggers what's known as an event boundary in the mind, separating one set of thoughts and memories from the next.

Your brain files away the thoughts you had in the previous room and prepares a blank slate for the new locale.

It's not aging, it's the damn door!

Article supplied by Marilyn Caton

Age-old deficiency

The following letter to the editor was spotted by Marilyn Caton in Melbourne's Herald-Sun in reponse to a number of people calling for drivers over 75 to hand in their licences.

It's about time the authorities did something about older drivers on our roads.

For too long older drivers have caused havoc as they hog the left lane, stick to speed limits (even the road work limits) and stop at stop signs, causing great inconvenience and often preventing others from doing whatever they like.

Another major concern is that by avoiding fines and demerit points, they are not doing their bit for the revenue of our state, and are therefore placing a further burden on younger drivers.

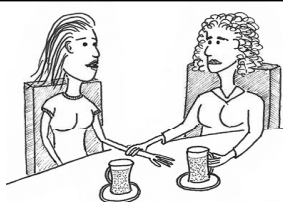
Until older drivers can prove that they are proficient at weaving in and out of traffic, driving while texting, tailgating, using drugs or doing burnouts, they must be banned from holding a licence.

Doug Money, Oak Park

"Well, here it is. The season I hate."

"Yes. The forecast is for a hot Summer."

"I'm not talking about Summer. I'm talking about cricket."



Double Whammy

It was recently reported in the press that an American had been fiddling with a firearm when he accidentally shot himself in the genitalia. He managed to drive himself to a hospital where he was treated. But on the second discharge – this time from hospital – literally adding insult to injury, he was arrested for possession of an unlicensed firearm.

It reminds me of the story in *From Here to Eternity* where the new recruit GIs were taught "This is my rifle, this is my gun; this is for shooting, this is for fun."

Wait Loss

It may be that there are many female readers out there waiting for wisdom from these columns (or from other more reputable publications) on how to keep trim. But maybe there is nothing new under the sun and the ultimate answers are contained in the 500-page *Ladies Dictionary* written by a mystery author known only as HN in 1694.

The advice contained in that definitive treatise on losing weight recommended smearing one's wobbly bits with a smelly concoction of goose grease, fox oil, pine, rosin and turpentine and letting it set in plaster.

Overweight women were advised to "rise early in the morning: be exercised to sweating; be sparse in diet, not eating sweet things." Alternatively, they could bathe in claret wine mixed with wormwood, roses, rosemary, chamomile and sage.

Those with large breasts "that hang loose" were warned they were in danger of losing "their charms". To achieve the preferred "small plump and round" shape, women were told to spread a mixture including carrot seed, aniseed, fennel seeds, cumin, honey and vinegar over their breasts and bind them for two days and nights.

After that they had to wash them in white wine and rose water for two weeks so they would be "reduced to a curious plumpness and charming roundness."

On the other hand, excessive thinness was not recommended either. "Bodies that are lean and scragged ... cannot be very comely," the dictionary advised, adding that "no part about them thrive."

The best things to eat so as not to become too fat or thin were tasty morsels of veal, mutton and eggs while anything salty, bitter, sharp or too hot was not recommended.

So forget all those magazines that can be purchased at vast expense. The answers have been there all along for those who have known where to look.

Exercise those Brain Cells

AID, NATURE, WORLD, ESTATE, COLUMN, SENSE

Which one of the following words logically appears next in the sequence?

HOLIDAY, PLEASURE, BLISS, HEAVEN, NIRVANA?



Solution to last edition's puzzle

A: Mushroom

Mary, John, peach and turnip have no repeated letter

Felicity, Peter, parsnip and cauliflower have one repeated letter

Sally, Matthew, apple and marrow have a double letter

Cecilia, George, tomato and cucumber have two repeated letters

Annette, Llewellyn, beetroot and gooseberry have two double letters and one other repeated letter

Susanna and blackcurrant have one double letter and two other repeated letters

SO, Jennifer and William, who have one double letter and one repeated letter, like mushroom.

Travellers Tales

In September Helen and I attended the wedding of Michael Marley's eldest daughter, Nicky, in England (a magnificent occasion). Prior to that, taking advantage of being in Europe anyway, we took a tour in southern France. Here are a couple of tales I picked up. - Ed.

A different solution

Charlemagne, King of France from 800, was very fond of red Burgundy wine; in his wife's opinion excessively fond. She tried to persuade him to abstinence or at least moderation by pointing out that regular spillage was staining his luxuriant beard. He responded by persuading his favourite vintner to produce a white wine!

A not so welcome gift

St Paul de Vence is a beautiful mediaeval hillside town in Provence, full of galleries. During the reign of Francois I^{er}, Charles V of Spain was also Holy Roman Emperor. His dominions surrounded France which he sought to conquer. The young men of St Paul fought valiantly to save their village. In gratitude and recognition of their valour, Francois bestowed a fortified wall to the town. Unfortunately this required the demolition of 400 homes and the relocation of their occupants. And the town has never been attacked!

How Come – ?

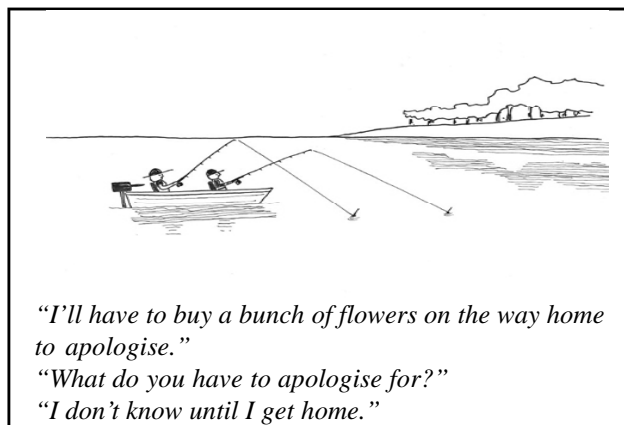
We are about to celebrate yet another New Year on January 1, 2013. There is no particular reason why this date should mark the commencement of the New Year and of course it hasn't always or universally done so. The Chinese New Year, with which we all have an annual acquaintance is not even on a fixed date. The Jewish New Year, a solemn occasion called Rosh Hashanah, begins with the first day of the month of Tishri (September 6-October 5).

The earliest known record of a New Year Festival dates from around 2000 BC in Mesopotamia where the New Year commenced with the new moon nearest the Spring equinox in Babylonia or the Autumn equinox for the Assyrians, Egyptians and Phoenicians. The Persian (Iranian) New Year is still celebrated at the Spring equinox because that marks the renewal of life after Winter.

Ancient Romans started their New Year on March 1. But in 153 BC they moved the Festival to January 1 (Janus, the god, looked both ways), confirmed by the adoption of the Julian calendar in 46 BC.

Christians originally rejected this date as a pagan institution. By early mediaeval times most of Christian Europe regarded March 25, Annunciation Day, as the beginning of the year. It was not until 1752 that Britain adopted January 1 as New Year in accordance with the Gregorian calendar.

So, given that this convention is the norm in our culture, I wish all our readers **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



A Sign of the Times

On the toilets in a convenience stop near Bowen

**Mangoes and
No mangoes**

Terry's Trivia

Some of the questions from the Christmas luncheon. Answers on page 3.

1. Which horse came second in the 2012 Melbourne Cup? (i) Red Cadeaux; (ii) Maluckyday (iii) Dunaden (iv) Fiorente; (v) Jakalberry.
2. Who said: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." (i) Mae West; (ii) Germaine Greer; (iii) Eleanor Roosevelt; (vi) Madonna; (v) Indira Gandhi.
3. Jacqueline Kennedy was married to Aristotle Onassis between? (i) 1965-1968; (ii) 1968-1975; (iii) 1975-1980; (iv) 1980-1985?
4. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean? (i) Sicily; (ii) Sardinia; (iii) Cyprus (iv) Corsica; (v) Crete.
5. The AFL Champions for 2012 were the: (i) Cats; (ii) Eagles; (iii) Hawks; (iv) Swans; (v) Crows.
6. The flag of which country has a rifle on it? (i) Mozambique; (ii) Angola; (iii) Uzbekistan; (iv) Morocco; (v) Bolivia.
7. Nearly 40% of the Cabinet of the Egyptian Government are: (i) Lawyers; (ii) Accountants; (iii) Doctors; (iv) Engineers; (v) Architects; (vi) Anthropologists.
8. The maiden name of Lady Susan Renouf, Sangster, Peacock was? (i) Taylor; (ii) Burton; (iii) Rossiter; (iv) Fisher; (v) MacLaine.
9. The height difference between Mt Kosciusko and Ben Nevis (highest point in the UK) is 884m. Which is higher?
10. Which James Bond movie theme song did Tom Jones sing? (i) *Goldfinger* (1964); (ii) *Thunderball* (1965); (iii) *You only live twice* (1967); (iv) *Diamonds are forever* (1971); (v) *Live and let die* (1973).

The Fisherman's Prayer

Give me, O Lord, to catch a fish
So large that even I
In boasting of it afterwards
Shall have no need to lie.

- Anon

Book Club

Hubert Wilkins has been described as the most remarkable explorer of the twentieth century. He was born and raised in South Australia, but few Australians have heard of him. Yet his achievements arguably eclipse those of the other great Australian explorer of his era, Douglas Mawson.

The Last Explorer (Hodder Australia, 2005) was written by Melbourne born documentary maker and journalist Simon Nasht, the former host of *Nationwide* and *Beyond 2000*.

Wilkins was born in outback South Australia in 1888 on the wrong side of the infamous Goyder line. After years of struggle, his father was forced to give up the land and move to Adelaide during the terrible drought of the early twentieth century. This left a deep and lasting impression on the young Wilkins. He was determined to do something about weather forecasting so that we might be able to predict droughts and other weather calamities.

After leaving Adelaide, he worked as a photographer in Sydney then London before being offered a job as a photographer on a Canadian Arctic expedition. On his return he found that the world had been at war for three years. He joined Frank Hurley as one of Australia's official war photographers in 1917 and covered every Australian battle until the end of the war. He was awarded the Military Cross twice, was wounded nine times, was shot down and blown up. General John Monash described him as the bravest man in the army yet he never carried arms. Wilkins was such a modest character that he asked Monash not to repeat the statement, so the line was withdrawn from Monash's war memoirs.

In the early 1920s the British Museum hired Wilkins to explore and collect specimens of flora and fauna in the tropical north of Australia because they were concerned about the destruction of unique ecosystems. The project took three years and Wilkins was shocked by the deep lack of interest in conservation and the treatment of indigenous people. This was not well received by the local authorities when he expressed these ideas in a book *Undiscovered Australia*. He was criticised severely, particularly by *The Courier Mail*.

Wilkins was particularly interested in using the best technology for exploration. He became an expert aerial navigator. With pilot Ben Eielson he was the first to fly over the Arctic from Point Barrow in Alaska to Spitsbergen. For this he was knighted by King George V. Yet he was never interested in being the first to achieve a goal. He was more interested in scientific outcomes.

After his death, the US Navy honoured Wilkins by scattering his ashes at the North Pole after a voyage in the nuclear submarine USS *Skate*. He had made 33 expeditions to polar regions, explored every continent, had been knighted by the kings of England and Italy, awarded by the great societies and honoured by US presidents. I agree with Dick Smith who wrote 'A superb book. Every Australian should read it.'

Geoff Eades

At 5.30 am on 14 May 1995 a senior water engineer from Victoria, by the name of George Mallory, stood at the summit of the highest peak in the world, in his words "*completing a little outstanding family business*". Four years later, two climbers discovered a body at approximately 27,700 feet..... "*Oh my God.....It's not Irvine. It's Mallory*".

Paths of Glory by Jeffrey Archer, (Macmillan 2009) is a part biographical story of George Leigh Mallory, possibly the first person to ascend Mount Everest in 1924 with Sandy Irvine. It is a fascinating account of Mallory as a child at school, his progression to University, followed by a high school teaching career and most importantly his love of two women – his wife Ruth, and Chomolonga, better known as Mount Everest.

Jeffrey Archer writes in an engaging style with meticulous research to produce a fictional account mixed with letters from George Mallory to Ruth and vice versa. This book will appeal to a much wider audience than climbers, scientists and engineers. Indeed, numerous requests to turn off my reading light late at night were returned to my wife the following week along with the excuse, "*I cannot put it down.*"

Critical to the never-to-be-proven argument about whether Mallory and Irvine reached the summit in 1924 is the belief that the photo of Ruth held in Mallory's jacket pocket on the final expedition to Everest was buried at the summit. In 1999, George Leigh Mallory's body was found with the photo missing. Perhaps in 1953 the Sherpa and the New Zealand beekeeper were really not the first to conquer this great peak?

Nick Cook

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to the contributors; to Terry Loos for his photographs; to Olga Kakourakis who printed it; to Ann Liekens(DNRM), Rebecca Wall (SunWater) and Jennifer Lawrence (DEWS) who made it available to departmental staff; and to Jon Henry who placed it on our website – www.waterysauces.org.au.

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