Watery Sauces Oldies and Boldies

Newsletter No 70 **March 2013**

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Will We See You at the AGM?

Enclosed with this Newsletter is your personal invitation to attend the 29th AGM of the Water Resources Retirees Association to be held at Club Central (formerly Public Service Club) on 18 April.

It would be really good if you were to come and bring some of your colleagues. You will hear a report on activities of the Association. You will hear reports on some of the activities of the new departments established under the year-old government. You will have the opportunity to participate in the election of a management committee. And above all, you will have the opportunity to catch up with old (term used advisedly) colleagues.

And if that is not incentive enough, the Association will shout you lunch.

From the Editor's Chair

Astute readers may have noticed a few typographical errors in the last Newsletter. Please accept my apologies for these oversights. However, I have discovered that it is not my fault that errors occasionally creep in. As it turns out, this is entirely consistent with Muphry's Law which is explained in some detail on page 11.

Errors are inevitable - I have even known people who inadvertently spell my surname wrongly. Sometimes the errors provide amusement without obscuring the intended meaning, but every so often the omission of a word or even a single letter can convey an entirely wrong sentiment. For example, the 'Wicked Bible' which listed the seventh commandment as "Thou shalt commit adultery" got its publishers into trouble in 1631.

I have provided a few other examples of typos, taken from "Just My Typo" by Drummond Moir, at the bottom of pages for your edification.

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

WRRA February Lunch

Enjoying lunch together, clockwise from left: Ian Pullar, Daryl Brigden, Brian Shannon, Mick Merrin, Trevor Sleep (obscured), Peter Jones, Beverley Robinson (obscured), Judy Morwood, David Morwood, Geoff Eades, Don Gardiner, Warren Lane and Ross Stewart. Photographer Terry Loos.

You could experience similar enjoyment by coming along to the AGM.

Our membership ranks have swelled somewhat of late. The following "oldies" have either joined, or applied to join the Retirees Association: Michael Merrin, Chris Robson, Trevor Ryan, Con Toonen, Daryl Brigden, Beverley Robinson and Eileen Rossi. All are very welcome as can be seen from the photograph above. We still expect more of the recent retirees to come on board.

Two recent retirees from SunWater are Garry Grant and Kevin Devlin (who has moved to Mapleton to be nearer family).

Rolf Rose has finished up with DEWS, but is keen to point out that he is not a retiree but a redundee! Wai-Tong Wong is also leaving DEWS.

I don't care if my glass is half full or half empty ....

... as long as there's wine in it.

THIS MANUAL HAS BEEN CAREFULLY TO REMOVE ANY ERRORS

Out and About

We're told that "No news is good news" so everything must be pretty OK out there in memberland because I have received virtually no news.

Recently *The Courier Mail* has carried funeral notices for Warren Hutton and Peter Noonan, but to our great relief, they were not for OUR Warren and Peter.

Our Treasurer Bevan Faulkner has not been well and is currently undergoing treatment. We offer our best wishes for his recovery.

We offer similar good wishes to other "sickies" for their respective recoveries.

Don Beattie has relocated to the Holy Spirit Home in Carseldine.

2013 is the year in which the Pullars were definitely not tripping overseas - that is until our son-in-law accepted a year's contract to go prospecting for minerals in Finland and he moved our daughter Margaret and two grandsons to Helsinki. Consequently we will be visiting Scandinavia in the Summer (and the July Newsletter won't be published till August!)

SunWater has discovered about 13 large boxes of photographs and Terry Daly has sought the assistance of retirees in identifying, sorting and culling these - a mammoth project to be slotted in later this year.

IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY CAMP KIDS REUNION

26th – 27th OCTOBER, 2013

Another BBQ/ Overnight Camp will be held for a reunion with as many camp kids as possible (Tinaroo, Walkamin, Paddy's Green, Mutchilba or any other camp you may know of). Please spread the word to everyone you know who was a CAMP KID.

Kerribee Park, Mareeba (Rodeo Grounds) from 1pm onwards

RSVP:- *By 5th October, Please*

For more details contact	Allan Pollard	4092 1340
	Bev Haines (Buttenshaw)	4095 5130
	Lyn Herron (Bailey)	0407 644 789

Burying the future

On one occasion when I was still "Secretary", Don Beattie paddled down to my office with a half smile on his face. He said, "Here is one with a difference" and left a letter with me to draft a reply from him, as Commissioner, which was to be read by persons unknown in 100 years time. The request was from an historical society (I think) in Clare/ Claredale. They had some celebration coming up and were going to place (bury) a time capsule to be opened in a hundred years.

It was a strange task, eased by the extensive amount of time already put into the area by IWSC and WRC, but none the less a bit weird "talking" to people so far in the future. A number of times over the years I have asked Don did he recall the occasion but not so……maybe because he didn't have to write the letter!!

I understand the reply/letter was well received and duly encapsulated and buried along with other local contributions.

I am wondering if anybody from within the association has any knowledge of this event and maybe the location of the capsule so I can reassure Don that I was not "pulling his leg".

Bill Meredith

One-legged model Heather Mills marries Beatles legend Paul McCartney

- Newspaper Headline

Brisbane: Lessons from Large Floods

The Institution of Engineers December Journal carried an article with this title. It was written by Dr Rory Nathan who is the practice leader for hydrology with Sinclair Knight Merz. He gave testimony to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry. The paper draws on Dr Nathan's paper and keynote address to the New Zealand Symposium on Large Dams in Wellington, in August 2012.

Because our members are likely to find it interesting, we have sought the permission of the Institution to post it on our website. Look out for it.

Taking Leave

On 1 August 1942, Leon Henry (father of Jon) married his beloved Stella. But as he was an enlisted soldier at the time (WO2), he had to get a leave pass. This was duly signed by fellow WO2 George Pearce (Jon still has the original document). So Jon attributes the fact that he exists at all to "Gentleman George".

Both Leon and George rose to the rank of Lieutenant during the war and went on to illustrious engineering careers. Both lived at Rainworth in the 1970s and often caught the same bus to work.

"The first thing I'm going to do when I get home on leave is make love to my wife."

"What's the second thing you'll do?"

"Take off my boots."

Vale George William Pearce 16 June 1916 – 20 January 2013

George William Pearce, was born on 16th June 1916 at York Street, Ipswich, where his parents Stanley and Jessie Pearce lived. The family soon moved to Woolwich in Sydney as George's father, an Electrical Engineer was needed during World War I at Cookatoo Island Naval Dockyard, where he was engaged on the electrical work on submarines and other warships.

George grew up in Woolwich on Sydney Harbour. His sister Susan was born in 1919 and his brother Robert in 1922. George had a very happy childhood. Their father owned a steam driven car and as a young boy George had to get out of the car and fill the car's water tank from a watering can, filled with water at horse troughs.

After completing his Secondary Education and obtaining his Leaving Certificate in Sydney, George returned to Queensland in 1934. He joined the State Government Irrigation and Water Supply Commission as a Cadet Draftsman and studied Civil Engineering, gaining his Degree.

George's love of the outdoors is reflected in his interest in joining the newly formed National Parks Association of Queensland in 1935. He later became a Life Member.

In April 1936, George made the news in *The Courier Mail*. He and other youths had been swimming in a creek at Kenmore. When they left the water George trod on a brown snake and was bitten on the left heel. He was taken by ambulance to the General Hospital where he recovered.

In 1941 George answered the call of the Australian Government to defend Australia, by volunteering to join the Australian Army. As an Engineer, he joined the A.I.F where he served in units of the Royal Australian Engineers in Australia, New Guinea and New Britain. George's achievements included the rank of Lieutenant, the 1939/45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal 1939/45 and Australian Service Medal.

It was during the war that George met Iris Evelyn Curnow, who was born in Sydney, the second daughter in a family of ten children. Their marriage took place in Brisbane on 15th August 1942. George and Iris had two daughters, Anne Elizabeth who was born in Sydney during the War and Karen Julie who was born in Brisbane after the War.

After the War, George resumed duty with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission and in 1950 was appointed District Engineer at Longreach. Subsequent appointments saw him move from Senior Engineer of Groundwater Branch in 1964, Chief Engineer of Rivers and Streams Branch in 1971 to Assistant Commissioner of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in 1977.

In 1935, George became a member of the Queensland Professional Officers Association. After 50 years of continuous membership, George was awarded Life Membership for loyal and distinguished service to the Association.

George was an active member of the Gaythorne RSL for many years, becoming a Life Member.

George and Iris lived in Toowong, Longreach, Rainworth, The Gap and Ashgrove. After Iris passed away on 29th December 1994, George moved to Keperra Sanctuary Retirement Village. George spent his final years living at Keperra Sanctuary, where he enjoyed interacting with the other residents and the dedicated staff.

George will be remembered for his 'gentleman ways'. He was a kind and loving husband and father and a true friend to those close to him.

- from the eulogy delivered by his grandson Mark Woodward

Members will be interested to know that Hector Macdonald made a Christmas visit to see George Pearce at his nursing home at Keperra. “Gentleman George”, as his work mates knew him, was born on 16th June 1916 and retired on 31 December 1978, making him the “senior citizen” of the former Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. Hector had the privilege of working for George from 1964 to 1971. Although George was frail, he was still the perfect gentleman and spent most of the time during Hector’s visit enquiring about his welfare and that of his family.

President Hein van der Heide had a phone call from Karen Woodward, George’s daughter, shortly before he died. She reported that George had been reasonably well until a year or so ago, but gradually Parkinsons was taking its toll. She read our newsletter to him in bits and pieces (when he had a good day). He enjoyed hearing about the goings on in the water industry and snippets about previous work mates.

Interestingly, George’s daughter Karen and son-in-law Tony told us at the funeral that George was commonly known as “Bill” or “Uncle Bill” by family members.

By an unfortunate typographical error we were made to say on Tuesday that the departing Mr … was a member of the defective branch of the Police Force. Of course this should have read: “the detective branch of the Police Farce” - a New Zealand Newspaper

Tanks for the Response

Phil Sternes' article in the last Newsletter elicited a very welcome response from Jim Cook, as follows: -

In relation to the Glenlyon Dam water tank pics:

The tank was constructed by Monocast tanks and the two young gentlemen who turned up on site were more interested in shooting the local wildlife than tank building.

Before the first concrete pour, the formwork and steel placement were not approved, but they decided to pour anyway. The first pour, placed with buckets, came up to the construction joint seen in the photos.

The concrete for the second pour came from Tenterfield in a ready mix truck. The concrete left Tenterfield at 5:00am. The truck broke down crossing the Dumaresq River and time delays resulting from repositioning most of the reinforcing steel resulted in the second pour of concrete finally being placed (with buckets from scaffold) after 3:00pm. The dry concrete from the previous pour dropped down and created a crumbly construction joint. Holes up to 2 inches existed in the 4 inch concrete wall at the construction joint.

At this stage they were advised again that we would not accept the tank.

Following talks with the Contractor's principal, it was agreed that we would remove the tank and he would build a new one. (He claimed he was with the commandos during the war and we would have trouble doing it - obviously not!!)

Dennis Polinski was our powder monkey on site and he set 2 x 40 lb bags of nitropril inside the tank. One 40lb bag hung from the centre column and the other 40lb bag was broken down into smaller lots and placed around the inside wall at the base. On the outside we strapped two rows, each of 15 plugs, of "jelly" as seen in the photo.

Dennis only had about 50m of firing wire and positioned himself behind the best tree he could find.

I took the photographs from where the staff quarters were being built and just after the blast; it started raining concrete and reinforcing steel. We took refuge under a nearby blitz truck.

The big item in the air of the blast photograph is the 5m diameter lid which came down flat on the tree and stripped it of its branches.

The blast also took out about 100m of boundary fence and it being Friday afternoon we had to rebuild the fence before we could leave to go home for the weekend.

The tank was demolished on 2 March 1973.

A few weeks later a powerline contractor was leaving the site and claimed he had a hole in the roof of his caravan from the concrete fall out and was after compensation.

Being a junior engineer I was all for devising some scheme to pay him out. Charlie Paolucci, being "squeaky clean" would have no part of it.

The powerline contractor finally agreed that he had hired us a welder for 2 hours at $5/hr and went off happy with a $10 cheque to fix his caravan.

I would not be surprised if you walked around the site today you would still find remnants of the tank in the form of concrete and reinforcing steel.

Bundaberg in flood *This graphic picture was sent by Trevor Tuesley*

Specialist in women and other diseases. Doctor's surgery, Italy

A Decent Holiday

by Patrick McCourt

It was the 25th April 2012, and we had just arrived in Dublin and the weather was vile. Torrential rain lashed the airport terminal and sheets of water drenched people inside the newly refurbished airport near the lifts. Gale force wind roared and moaned like a *bansidhe* crying out to be let inside. Out near the cab rank, movable steel bollards tied together with rope were picked up by the wind and thrown through the air as if the old Irish storm gods had tired of playing with them and had contemptuously cast them aside. Broken umbrellas poked out of rubbish bins all over Dublin that day like so many misplaced porcupine quills. And one of them was mine. What an introduction to Ireland! I was put in mind of the lines of the great Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh:-

There's a wind blowing
Cold through the corridors,
A ghost - wind,
The flapping of defeated wings,
A hell - fantasy
From meadows damned
To eternal April.

And yet this wasn't even the beginning of this traveller's tale - and it wasn't the end either. It all started last year when my wife, Roslyn, commented that we hadn't gone on a decent holiday for quite a while and that she was thinking about Melbourne. Melbourne, I thought, reaching for my atlas. Isn't that in Australia somewhere close to where they speak Taswegian and have recently discovered cursive writing? Aha, there it was, down at the nether end of Australia. That got me thinking about the trip to the United Kingdom we'd talked about many times over the years. We'd never gone of course for the usual reasons which seemed so important at the time but weren't really. Perhaps it was time to resurrect the idea while we were still in good health, and my wife agreed. Ah, the pleasure of the open road and seeing new people and places. I think Toad put it as well as any in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind and the Willows* when he told Ratty and Mole:-

The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs! Camps, villages, towns, cities! Here today, up and off to somewhere else tomorrow. Travel, change, interest, excitement! The whole world before you, and a horizon that's always changing!

What was good enough for Toad was good enough for us. So it was off to the travel agent and coming home with a stack of travel itineraries and tours to pore over - and pore over. A proposed three week trip became a two month sojourn in no time at all. We eventually settled on seven weeks and found ourselves at the Brisbane airport in early April 2012. Our carrier for the entire trip was to be Emirates Airline, and we were very happy with all our flights with this airline company.

We broke our flight overnight in Dubai which didn't really allow us much time to look around. But what we saw was very interesting including a restaurant with an Egyptian name in an Arabian country with everything on the television in Russian. It was quite an experience hearing the call to prayer, and we saw some mosques as well. Then we were off to London.

I don't know if younger Australians can understand an old Anglophile like myself. They wouldn't know about the close ties between England and Australia when I was a younger and hopefully better looking chap. We sang "*God Save The King*" when I was a boy, and we relied on the "old country" for most of our trade and wealth. Australia fought wars for England; almost all our books came from England; our education system was British; ABC radio announcers spoke with plummy British accents; many of the names for Australia's towns and cities were copied from Britain; and most Australians were either from "*Old Blighty*" or were only one or two generations away from their forebears in the United Kingdom. I had been reading about the history of Great Britain since I was a boy, and I couldn't wait to start experiencing what I had read about for years.

We landed at Heathrow airport in quite a state of excitement about our holiday. We had already decided to travel from the airport to our hotel by train which was a novel experience because we didn't know that we'd have to get two 20 kilogram bags up steep flights of steps to Grosvenor Road in Kensington. Fortunately, our hotel was just around the corner in Cromwell Road. The hotel was very well positioned with restaurants and the Stamford Arms close by, as were Waitrose and Sainsbury's supermarkets; a Post Office; banks; cabs; the underground; and the Natural History and Victoria and Albert Museums; Hyde Park; and Kensington Palace.

There has been drought in Great Britain for about two years, but it was raining, cold, and windy during much of our stay in London. Perfect for walking around and standing in queues full of other wet and miserable tourists. We'd actually planned well for British weather and we had sufficient warm clothing; water proof walking shoes; scarves; gloves; and water and wind proof jackets with plenty of pockets. We also bought umbrellas in London, but mine didn't know its life was to be tragically short.

We spent the week visiting the usual tourist sites, and we got around mostly by foot and the underground rail network. We'd already bought "*Oyster*" cards back home with £20 on them. Rail travel is cheap as we each paid only about £2 to £3 for each trip. The cost of getting from Heathrow airport to Kensington on the Piccadilly line was £6 each. We actually took a cab later on from Heathrow airport to a hotel near Marble Arch when we came back from Ireland to use up the last of our pounds, and it cost £68 by comparison. We used the underground almost every day and found the trains to be frequent, clean, and safe.

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A Decent Holiday (continued)

London doesn't seem to have many English people. It seemed to us that languages other than English were spoken all around us as we walked the streets and shops. We'd been told about this by a quintessential Englishman on the flight from Brisbane to Dubai, and he was right. It became clear to us that the European Community is just that and people flit back and forth over borders of the various member countries as if they don't exist any more. However, we did hear genuine London accents in a small cafe called "*La Liaison*" near our hotel. They were all cabbies having cups of tea while they waited for a radio or telephone call for their next fare.

The other thing that we found was that London doesn't have much in the way of public toilets. The same was true during the European part of our tour. We had to pay for using conveniences, and we later found that this was *de rigueur*. I've concluded that the tourist population in Europe spends its time in various stages of discomfort or very much dehydrated. I've no idea how the locals cope.

We thoroughly enjoyed London and South Kensington. Some of the highlights were Buckingham and Kensington Palaces; the Victoria and Albert Museum; Westminster Cathedral and Abbey; the Houses of Parliament; Jewel Tower; and the Big Red Bus Tour. The bus tour is great value at £59 each because, not only is it a get on and off trip, but the ticket also includes a cruise on the Thames River to Greenwich and back, and a ride on the London Eye. A one day ticket lasts for 24 hours so we used it the next day to go up to Kensington Palace, and we walked back through Earl's Court to the Kensington district. A week isn't anywhere near enough in London, but we moved to a hotel on the Albert Embankment to join up with a coach tour of Britain for eleven days.

- to be continued next issue

Thanks, Pat, for a vivid account of your travels. - **Ed.**

An Outback Air Tour

by Peter Jones

As a kid at school I can remember marking places like Birdsville, Lake Eyre, Coopers Ck, the Channel Country, Beetoota Bore and a few similar remote places on maps as part of our Social Studies assignments and tests. Never at that time did I ever envisage travelling to them.

Having passed 60, I still did not envisage visiting them – I've lost the camping gene somewhere along the line and never did buy a four-wheel drive complete with off□road van or trailer.

That was until one Sunday last June. I spied a small ad in the *Sunday Mail's* travel insert offering a three day air tour visiting these remote areas. One email later, a deposit lodged and we were booked in to go.

So early September found us on the road to Charleville, the departure point for the tour. There was also a family interest in Charleville, Di's grandparents had lived there in the 1920/30s, so here was a chance to find the old family home.

On the Tuesday morning it was out to the airport to find our tour operator (not that it is too hard to find anyone at Charleville Airport) and meet up with our fellow travellers.

The tour is operated by South West Air Services P/L under the operating name of Outback Airtours. Our pilot/guide, Peter Wade (known on the airways as "Charleville Pete") is also the Managing Director of the company, the Budget car rental agency, the Shell Aviation agent and I do not know what else. You have to work hard to make a living in the more remote areas of the country.

Our travelling companions were a couple from Bundaberg and of similar age to us. Each tour takes only four guests – it's a bit hard to fit more than four passengers and a pilot in a single engine Cessna (I think it was a Cessna 210 which, for those not of an aviation bent, is a single engine, high winged, light plane very well suited to sightseeing from the air).

And you have to believe in coincidences – following the tour, we were heading off to Bundaberg to watch our grandson compete in the Queensland Schools Rowing Championships. Our travelling companions would also be at the Championships – to watch their grandson compete.

The first day we headed out of Charleville for Birdsville, across the Bulloo River, across to Thylungra Homestead (a massive shearing shed and yards), across Coopers Creek at its widest point and on to the Diamantina River and thence to Birdsville in time for lunch.

All the time, Charleville Pete kept up a running commentary on the country, points of interest, characters of the region and a seemingly never ending collection of anecdotes – all while flying in the range of about 2000ft to 3000ft. (The early development of commercial aviation was driven primarily by the British and Americans who both use the imperial system of units. Within the aviation industry the imperial system still rules – feet, knots, nautical miles).

It's a long time since I had travelled in a light aircraft and that was well before GPS navigation and iPads had come into wide use. There was the usual array of instruments with which I was familiar – airspeed, altimeter, rate of climb, artificial horizon, compass, direction finders etc. But now there was also a smart phone and GPS unit attached to the control panel and an iPad containing a range of apps (including maps) for navigation – no more dead reckoning to work out where we were.

Ted could not raise the cash necessary to purchase a house, and eventually in desperation he had to burrow. - *The Price of Love* Rosemary Jeans

An Outback Air Tour (continued)

Charleville Pete parked the plane on the tarmac at Birdsville Airport, off loaded our bags and led our walk from the plane to the motel – a walk of around 200 metres – where our rooms were ready and waiting for us. Off then to the bar of the Birdsville Hotel for a cool drink and lunch.

Peter in the Birdsville Pub

You can be fined for most anything in the bar – taking a photograph, wearing a baseball cap on back to front and whatever else may take the barman's fancy. But it is all in a good cause, the fine for every misdemeanour being a gold coin donation to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The afternoon was taken up with a walk around the town (the school, the artist's studio "The Blue Poles Gallery", the old town buildings including the hospital museum, the information centre, the geothermal power plant and The Roadhouse). It was at this last stop we saw one of the signs of the time, a couple of grey nomads recently arrived were sitting in the shade of the Roadhouse each intently poking away at their smart phone (yes, the internet and wi-fi are readily accessible in Birdsville).

The afternoon was taken up with a minibus tour of the nearby district (the race course, Burke and Wills sites and some of the surrounding country). But even this turned out to be an unexpected adventure. Our bus broke down on the way home (I think someone had not been checking the radiator regularly and it simply boiled). But a quick mobile call had the desert recovery service out and were soon back in town. At the garage, the old mechanic was heard to say "bit hot to have a look yet, but I've never found a problem that money can't fix".

The cinema at Innaminka

Next morning, it was back in the air again, this time heading for Innaminka crossing the northern part of Lake Eyre (much of the water and birdlife have now gone) and heading into William Creek for a short stop to refuel – both for the plane and for us – with lunch at the William Creek Hotel (again park the plane and walk a couple of hundred metres to the hotel). The original Ghan rail line to the north used to pass through Williams Creek, but the new line built in, I think, the late 1970s or early 1980s now takes off the main line at Tarcoola and all that is left at Williams Creek is the right of way and the old platform.

A feature in William Creek is its outdoor museum, its exhibits ranging from relics from the old Ghan to rocketry components from the golden days of testing at the Woomera Rocket Range. And you can't forget the Telstra solar powered public telephones.

Onwards after lunch to Innamincka, this time passing over the southern part of Lake Eyre.

The big excursion for the day was a sunset cruise on Coopers Creek. They work hard out here to provide for the tourist and I must say that they deserve everything they earn. No specialist jobs, the bus driver tends the bar, while the cruise boat driver is the maintenance man at the hotel. No doubt they each have other duties to occupy them as well.

On the last day, it was a short flight to the famous Burke and Wills "Dig Tree". An airstrip is located within a few hundred metres of the tree. Despite the tragedy associated with the tree and the Burke and Wills expedition, the tree is located in a beautiful spot on the banks of a large waterhole on Coopers Creek.

The final leg of the tour from Innamincka to Charleville took us across the oil and gas fields of south west Queensland. It was quite surprising to see the extent of work in this area. The country was crisscrossed with the lines cleared for the seismic investigations. Production wells were common, and at various points drilling rigs could be seen preparing the next well. I never realised just how extensive the oil and gas development was in this corner of Queensland.

We arrived back in Charleville just after midday, in time to say our goodbyes, grab a bite of lunch and head off to Bundaberg.

For those who would like to see the iconic sites of the Channel Country and Lake Eyre without the discomfort of long drives, I would strongly recommend this air tour. Charleville Pete operates the tour between April and September – outside these times the weather and heat are not well suited to low level flying. Our understanding from Charleville Pete is that he will be operating in 2013, with a little less focus on Lake Eyre as the water level continues to fall, but perhaps with an extension to take in Coober Pedy. Check out their web site http://www.outbackairtours.com/Tours.htm

Many thanks, Peter. You certainly travel well and tell the tale equally well. - **Ed.**

Answers to Terry's Trivia on page 11

1. (iv) Sodium 2. (v) 23 3. (iii) Titanium 4. (iii) Houses of Parliament 5. *My Black Hen* 6. (iv) Long words 7. (iv) raw vegetables 8. (iii) 1974 9. (iv) coffee 10. (vi) cats

Love is just a passing fanny.

Reconstruction

by Graeme Milligan

In February 2011 I took the opportunity to apply my twenty five years of water and natural resource management experience by being seconded to the newly created Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QldRA).

In the 2010/11 Summer of disasters, Queensland suffered from a number of adverse weather events resulting in six Natural Disaster Relief & Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) activations. For the first time ever all 73 local government areas across the state were declared as disaster areas. The events just kept coming. The summary damage statistics include 210 communities affected, estimated damage to public infrastructure of $6.8 Bn, 124,500 insurance claims to the value of $3.6 Bn, 7 800 houses destroyed and sadly 37 lives lost. Then the events of 2012 came along, and now more recently 2013 events.

In early January 2011 the government created a task force led by Major General Mick Slater, similar to the one led by Major General Cosgrove to deal with Cyclone Larry.. Following further flooding rains and cyclone Yasi, the State government took the unprecedented step of forming the QldRA under its own Act with sweeping powers to facilitate reconstruction. These included the power to establish reconstruction areas, overriding land use planning regulations. This power was used for the new development area at Grantham.

The QldRA strategic objective is to reconnect, rebuild and improve Queensland communities and the State economy. This was delivered on three fronts: land use planning, administration of NDRRA, and special projects to deal with the constantly emerging recovery and reconstruction issues. The first step, "Operation Queenslander", was led by Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel seconded to assist the QldRA with planning and initial recovery projects. About fifteen ADF personnel adapted ADF planning processes for the purpose and many military approaches are still used.

My role as the DERM Liaison Officer was to work collaboratively with representatives from all relevant agencies (Federal, State and Local), non-government organisations and a range of industry groups. This work needed to meet the demanding timeframes of the ADF-led planning process. There was a clash of cultures, but I made some good friends in the ADF and maintained my relationship with environmental and natural resource management stakeholders.

The recovery and reconstruction work was frenetic with many calls for expedited regulatory approvals. While the QldRA did have powers to short cut regulatory approvals, these were used sparingly. This meant that my role was to ensure extremely timely approvals.

My best result was to get gravel material for road construction out of a National Park. Only a few issues arose from accelerated regulatory approvals. The comment from industry was "why can't government be like this all the time?"

The next phase reflected my passion for incorporating the principles of river basin or catchment management as a component of flood risk management. We developed an integrated approach that incorporated landscape and environmental management, public education and information, emergency management, infrastructure operation, land use planning, coastal management, building controls, flood insurance and structural works. This, together with rapid flood hazard mapping undertaken by the QldRA, has provided a solid basis for Local Governments to improve their preparation for, response to and recovery from flood and adverse weather events.

An example of the real time application of our work was the evacuation of St George in February 2012, informed by basic modelling of flood heights at the river gauge over a high resolution digital elevation model (DEM). This was done in real time as the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) revised forecast gauge heights at St George. This work has further resulted in flood hazard (depth and velocity) mapping for 104 small towns and communities. This has been possible due to the availability of high resolution DEMs captured for these towns defined by the BoM as being at risk to flooding or isolation. The flood hazard was determined using 2D modelling with the work being undertaken by eight consulting firms. For a small number of towns a simple GIS based approach was used to estimate the flooding extent for a range of gauge heights.

A $8.4 M program for riparian, coastal and floodplain restoration is now being finalised. This was a special case as the NDRRA standard arrangements do not include any waterway restoration provisions.

I have also been involved in projects to review the river gauge networks, the development of a trademarked approach to damage assessment and reconstruction monitoring, assisting councils develop fit for purpose approaches for dealing with floods, producing key documents for flood plain resilience, building control and for critical electrical infrastructure, and the administration of NDRRA claims from River Improvement Trusts. A specific project that I was able to facilitate was recognising the value of natural assets and strategic revegetation of landscapes for improved flood and cyclone resilience.

More recently I have delivered business improvements for local government road reconstruction, consistent with Federal and State Government requirements for ensuring eligibility for funding and demonstrating value for money responses.

Continued overleaf

The Large Hardon Collider - Richard Dawkins *(He was greatly embarrassed by this typo in his book)*

Reconstruction (continued)

I was deployed to the State Disaster Coordination Centre for ten days as the QldRA Liaison Officer to assist with the Ex Tropical Cyclone Oswald emergency response. I was able to provide specific detail on flood hazard mapping and a conduit for the transfer of data and intelligence between the QldRA and the State Disaster Management Group.

The work of the QldRA has received national and international recognition. I was invited to give two keynote presentations at flood conferences in the Netherlands late last year while on leave in Europe. While it seemed like I was trying to sell ice to Eskimos, the pragmatic Queensland approach and my ability to provide specific examples of my direct involvement across the range of flood response, recovery and preparation activities added to its recognition and complimentary remarks.

I hope that this brief reflection has provided you with a taste of my adventure into the flood management world. I have been able to undertake my role in the QldRA based on the good grounding I received in the Water Resources Commission and subsequent agencies. I have been able to bring together my passions for river basin management with integrated flood risk management, and to work on solving problems across the Queensland landscape.

For additional information on the QldRA, go to http://qldreconstruction.org.au/

Many thanks, Graeme, for this very interesting article and your account of this function of great importance to Queensland. - **Ed.**

SunWater Snippets

The policy flow-on effects of the change of government and a major slowdown in development within the resources sector have had an impact on SunWater. Early casualties were the Connors River Dam and Connors to Moranbah Pipeline projects.

Similarly, the new pipeline from Gorge Weir to Byerwine is no longer. Before its demise, the project showcased SW's first move into Computational Fluid Dynamics for the pump intake design. CFD is recognised as the way of the future.

Late last year, Queensland's eight channel irrigation schemes were invited to develop business proposals to transition from SW to local management arrangements. The investigation is expected to conclude in the second half of this year.

The Burdekin to Moranbah Pipeline Stage 2 Augmentation is well advanced, with commissioning progressing well. It will boost the existing capacity from 17,000 to 22,600 ML/a. Due to pipeline pressure constraints during starting of the new pumps, SW continued the use of Liquid Resistance Starters, first used on BMP1, in lieu of more conventional Variable Frequency Drives. LRIs have the advantage of lower cost, robustness and reliability.

A major project on the go is the 120 km long Woleebee Creek to Glebe Weir Pipeline to draw treated water from QGC's Queensland Curtis LNG project site west of Wandoan. With steel pipes in diameters ranging up to 1m now arriving on site, construction will commence in May.

Regarding the pending retirements of John and Peter Richardson, John took the plunge late last year, and, after a short overseas trip, comes in one or two days a week just to keep his eye in. Peter had a recent attempt at taking some long service leave, only to be called back to duty to help assess the flood damage to our dams and weir. Kev Devlin also attempted to sneak out without too much fanfare, but ended up attending more morning teas, lunches and dinners than was good for him!

Mark Lepper

NRM Notes

NRM, as previously noted, is becoming a leaner organisation. It now has around 400 fewer employees than it had immediately following the State election. It is therefore implementing measures to make it more efficient. The Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment (LWOLA) Bill was introduced into parliament on 5 March. The Bill proposes a large number of operational amendments which will result in considerable reduction in the work involved in licensing with the removal of the need for licences at all in a number of cases. Existing licences have now bee extended to 30 June 2111. Further information can be found on the OQPC website.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is now in the implementation phase, having passed through the House of Representatives with a vote of 95 to 5.

The government has announced that it does not support the wild rivers legislation and intends to replace wild river declarations with alternative strategies. A Western Rivers Advisory Panel has been established to provide advice. In late February, a meeting of the Panel was held in Longreach to discuss the long-term management of the western rivers. It was very pleasing to note that there was agreement between graziers and environmentalists, effectively to pretty much maintain the status quo. Development will neither be significantly increased nor decreased.

Among the surprising announcement of departures from the department is that of Gary Burgess who is leaving at an early age and will be a great loss. We wish Gary all the best for his future.

- Information provided by **Lyall Hinrichsen**

Bishops agree sex abuse rules. Sunday Business Post

HEALTH *and beauty*

No hang-ups about hangovers

These columns have previously listed many hangover cures; both simple and outrageous. But recent research in South Korea suggests that eating asparagus before a big night out may be all that is needed. It is concluded that the amino acids and minerals found in the vegetable may alleviate hangover symptoms and, as a bonus, protect the liver.

Litter-ally the perfect skin treatment

Forget expensive wonder creams. The best thing to shrink pores, prevent acne, reduce wrinkles and leave your skin feeling "extremely soft" has been found to be pasting kitty litter on your face.

Simply open your brand new bag of kitty litter, scoop out two tablespoons, add a splash of water (aloe vera is an optional extra) and stir well. Place in a microwave for 20 seconds (to produce a warm but not hot paste) and plaster it on as a mask. Results guaranteed.

The secret is that kitty litter pellets are made from bentonite clay. Perhaps drillers mud would be even cheaper.

Maybe this explains why those scantily clad female mud wrestlers have such smooth skins. Or maybe it's just that they're still young!

A-hem

Remember the furore created when Jean Shrimpton appeared at the Melbourne Cup meet of 1965 with **that** hemline?

Well, a mathematician now claims to have developed a formula for the perfect hemline: the length of your body from shoulder tip (cm) + heel height (cm) divided by 1.618 = your golden number.

Once you have determined your golden number, measure it down from the shoulder and that's your ideal dress length.

US Mathematics graduate Lily Serna was hired to create an illusion of perfect legs whatever a woman's shape, size or age. She drew on ancient principles of proportion and visual balance. So now you know.

Back to Jean Shrimpton. One commentator at last year's Cup spilled the beans. Jean had chosen the fabric in advance and her dressmaker simply made the longest skirt it would run to!

Exercise those Brain Cells

For what logical reason would these languages put the numbers 1 to 9 in the following order?

ENGLISH	8 5 4 9 1 7 6 3 2
FRENCH	5 2 8 9 4 7 6 3 1
GERMAN	8 3 1 5 9 6 7 4 2
HUNGARIAN	1 3 6 7 2 9 4 8 5

The milk of human kindness

ABC radio recently carried an account of a 16 year Queensland research study that concluded that, by comparison with fat-reduced milk, full-cream milk actually **reduced** the incidence of heart disease. I ask you!

The benefits of exercise

Walking can add minutes to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at $4,000 per month.

Advanced computers

Researchers have downloaded all Shakespeare's sonnets on to synthetic DNA in a breakthrough that could lead to major advances in computer storage.

Scientists were then able to decode the information and reproduce the words of the bard with complete accuracy.

Theoretically 100 million hours of high-definition video could be stored in a cupful of DNA – enough for every film and TV program ever made.

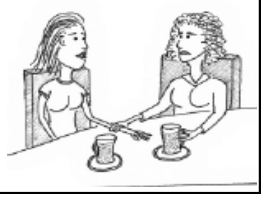
The rate of technological development certainly makes a mockery of the rumoured closure of the US Patent Office in the mid 19th century because "everything had been invented"!

Con-text

Does anyone else feel the way I do about Microsoft predictive text that knows better than you do? For example, it drives me mad that in words like "realise" it changes the "s" to "z" and unless I am vigilant, I may not realize it has happened.

A couple of years ago, Shayne Neumann, the new Member for Oxley delivered his maiden speech in Federal Parliament mentioning Ipswich Little Theatre and naming some of its office bearers. The treasurer is Jan Paterson, but Hansard, nobbled by Microsoft, recorded her for posterity as January Paterson.

"It's easy to give up smoking. I've done it lots of times."



Solution to last edition's puzzle

A: Heaven

The given words were (first) aid, (second) nature, (third) world, (fourth) estate, (fifth) column, (sixth) sense. So (seventh) heaven.

TO CALL A BROAD FROM FRANCE, FIRST DIAL 00 (Paris guidebook)

Muphry's Law

John Bangsund of the Society of Editors in Victoria, Australia, identified Muphry's Law as 'the editorial application of the better known Murphy's Law' and set it down in 1992 in the Society of Editors Newsletter.

The Law, as set out by Bangsund states that:

(a) if you write anything criticising editing or proofreading there will be some kind of fault in what you have written;

(b) if an author thanks you in a book for your editing or proofreading, there will be mistakes in the book;

(c) the stronger the sentiment expressed in (a) and (b), the greater the fault;

(d) any book devoted to editing or style will be internally inconsistent.

Muphry's Law also dictates that, if a mistake is as plain as the nose on your face, everyone can see it but you. Your readers will always notice errors in a title or caption, in headings, in the first paragraph of anything and in the top lines of a new page. These are the very places where authors, editors and proofreaders are most likely to make mistakes.

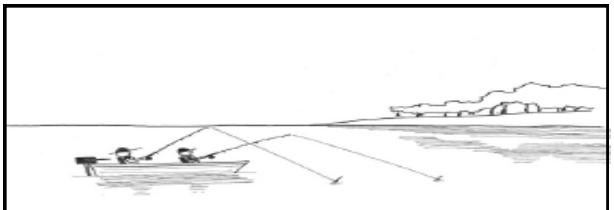
How Come - ?

Many members, including Pat McCourt, have taken themselves off to "the Mother Country" also commonly known as the "Old Dart". But why would it have acquired that apparently meaningless name?

Quite likely, the origin dates back to our convict founders. A number of the convicts arriving in Australia would have previously been held in the infamous Dartmoor Prison. Even from the early days, Australians had a strong propensity for shortening words. It would not be surprising if the deportees referred to their old domicile as the "Dart" and that term gradually extended to the whole country.

Alternatively, from very early times British Government property was branded to reduce theft with a broad arrow, or dart. The clothing issued to convicts thus carried a large dart on its back.

Detached from the sordid convict association, the term came to assume an almost endearing quality so that nowadays there is an affectionate reference to "the Old Dart."



"She said she'd get me a coffee maker for my birthday if I liked."
"Gee, that was good of her."
"And then her mother moved in."

A Sign of the Times
On a yacht in an Adelaide marina:

She got the house

Terry's Trivia

More questions from the 2012 Christmas luncheon.
Answers on page 7.

1. What is the eleventh element in the Periodic Table? (i) Carbon; (ii) Magnesium; (iii) Chlorine; (iv) Sodium; (v) Potassium.
2. What is the number of people at random where the chance of any two of them having a birthday on the same day is 50:50?: (i) 366; (ii) 182; (iii) 150; (iv) 91; (v) 23.
3. What is the only element that the body doesn't need, even in trace amounts; it triggers a zero immune system response; and it cons the body's bone-forming cells into attaching to it? (i) Gold; (ii) Zinc; (iii) Titanium; (iv) Chromium; (v) Magnesium.
4. What does the HP in HP Sauce stand for: (i) Higgledy Piggledy; (ii) Hewlett Packard; (iii) Houses of Parliament; (iv) Holst and Purcell; (v) Heaps of Praise.
5. Which nursery rhyme does 'Higgledy Piggledy' come from? **… …**
6. Quippedaliophobia is a fear (i) pedals; (ii) quips; (iii) bicycles; (iv) long words; (v) insults; (vi) public-speaking.
7. Crudites are a selection of: (i) toasted breads; (ii) raw meats; (iii) swear words; (iv) raw vegetables; (v) biscuit dips.
8. New Zealand first beat Australia in a cricket Test Match in: (i) 1954; (ii) 1964; (iii) 1974; (iv) 1984; (v) Never.
9. What is the world's second largest traded commodity surpassed only by Oil? (i) Tea; (ii) Rubber; (iii) Steel; (iv) Coffee; (v) Sugar.
10. Napolean and Julius Caesar suffered from *Ailurophobia* which is a fear of: (i) forums; (ii) chariots; (iii) beef wellington; (iv) public-speaking ; (v) mice; (vi) cats.

The Courier Mail Strikes Again

Did you catch the report in the local paper (as Terry Loos did):-

"Chris McArdle, who is representing Thomson, yesterday night claimed prison guards stripped naked and searched his client".

Exhibitionists, those guards. Not to mention 'yesterday night'. **- Terry**

Reminds me of the woman who says she's been barred from Woolworths after she did as she was told by the young man at the Eftpos machine on the check-out, "Strip down facing me." **- Ed.**

I have a graduate degree in unclear physics - from a job application.

Book Club

The Disappearing Spoon by Sam Kean.

I didn't realise chemistry could be this entertaining. I'm enjoying this book immensely, and am only halfway through it.

Sam Kean is a physics major who, as a child, was fascinated with mercury (broken thermometers) and with the tales told by professors. Kean, now a writer in Washington DC, came to realise that "there's a funny, or odd, or chilling tale attached to every element on the Periodic Table"– and on the compounds they form. Here are a few paraphrased samples at random, but this really doesn't do the book justice. There are countless fascinating stories:

- Gallium is like aluminium and is mouldable but melts at 29^0C (84F) and so chemistry pranksters (with cool hands) offer visitors a cup of tea with a Ga teaspoon and watch it disappear as they stir.
- The symbol 'Hg' comes from *hydragyrum,* Latin for "water silver". Dr Benjamin Rush (a signer of the US Declaration of Independence) was fascinated with mercury and prescribed mercury chloride tablets as laxatives. They worked because the body is good at expelling poisons and so an incidental benefit is that modern archaeologists have tracked down the routes followed by the early explorers in the US by the deposits of mercury still dotting the landscape (their latrine sites).
- Hydrochloric acid in our stomachs has a pH of 1. In 2005 a NZ chemist invented a boron-based acid (carborane) with a pH of MINUS 18 – ten billion times stronger.
- Vulcanised rubber, penicillin and teflon were discovered by accident.
- Maria Goeppert-Mayer (1906-72) daughter of a sixth-generation professor endured extreme scientific condescension (as a women scientist) but won the Nobel Prize for developing the theory of the stability of the nucleus of the atoms at Atomic Numbers – 2, 8, 20, 28, 50, 82 etc. This explains why Helium (2) after hydrogen, is the second-most abundant element in the universe, Oxygen (8) not Lithium, is third and Calcium's (20) abundance.
- The US Government in 1884 crowned the Washington Monument with aluminium because it was the most expensive metal available at the time. In 1886 an American, Charles Hall worked out how to separate aluminium from its commonly available oxide compound – by electrolysis. This eventually brought the price down to about 1% of what it was in 1884. However, the crown is still up there. Hall realised there were competitors emerging in Europe, so he set up the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) dropping the second 'i' to align his product with the more 'classy' platinum rather than the boring sodium or calcium etc. A commercial decision.
- The gold tip of the Parker 51 pen was found to deform under rigorous writing pressure. So around 1944 Parker hired a metallurgist from Yale who found that Ruthenium fixed the problem. Under a major advertising campaign the Parker Co, (the first evidence of *forced obsolescence*) convinced people to throw away their old serviceable pens and go for the doubly expensive 51s with the wonder Ruthenium tip. Eisenhower and MacArthur signed the treaties to end WW2 with them.
- Antimony the answer? Nebuchadnezzar in 600 BC used an Antimony-Lead mix to paint his palace walls yellow; but this caused him to go mad. Later medieval monks grew obsessed with the sexual properties of Antimony (not sure why). Mozart probably died from taking too much of it to combat a fever. Antimony pills won fame as laxatives – they didn't dissolve and were considered so valuable they were retrieved from.…yes. The pills were passed down from father to son.

And then there's Curie and Pasteur and Bohr and there's a lot, lot more. I know I've missed heaps. Rush out and buy this book, and re-energise your chemistry.

Terry Loos

Credits

My thanks are once again due to Helen and Jean; to the contributors; 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.

Office Bearers

President	Hein van der Heide	18 Bamburgh St CARINDALE 4152	33952084	hf.vanderheide@bigpond.com
Past Pres	Lee Rogers	61 Upland Rd ST LUCIA 4067	33713200	rlrogers@gmail.com
Vice Pres	Geoff Eades	6 Gleason St MCDOWALL 4053	33530629	geades@ozemail.com.au
Secretary	Peter Jones	PO Box 297 PADDINGTON 4064		secretary@waterysauces.org.au
Treasurer	Bevan Faulkner	21 Honeysuckle Way CALAMVALE 4116	32732809	bevwendy@tpg.com.au
Executive	Brian Shannon	14 Trebonne St THE GAP 4061	33002823	bbj@bigpond.net.au
	Terry Loos	7 Codford Pl CHAPEL HILL 4069	33788656	tloos@bigpond.net.au
Auditor	Ray Sutherland			
Editor	Ian Pullar	21 Lansdowne Way CHUWAR 4306	32814437	hpullar@bigpond.net.au