



# WATERY SAUCES OLDIES AND BOLDIES

Newsletter No 71

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NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## A Committed Committee

That isn't to say we are all certifiable.

The 29th Annual General Meeting, held on 18 April, brought changes to the Committee. Hein van der Heide, having served three meritorious years as President has stood down and his former Vice President Geoff Eades has stepped up to the plate. A brief biographical note on Geoff can be found on page 3. Brian Shannon has become Vice President and Hein, naturally, Past President.

After 11 years of meritorious service (five as Treasurer, three as President and three as Past President), Lee Rogers has retired from the Committee. We will miss his company and guidance and thank him for his devotion.

Bevan Faulkner who spent six devoted years as Treasurer has retired through ill health. We thank him for his contribution and wish him well. Our new Treasurer is Ross Stewart and we welcome him along with our new Committee member Pat McCourt.

Continuing Committee members are Terry Loos and Ian Pullar. Jon Henry is continuing as WebMaster and Ray Sutherland has agreed to continue as Auditor.

Contact details for Committee Members can be found as usual on the back page.

We are also very grateful that our Co-Patrons Peter Boettcher and Jon Black have agreed to continue in those roles and the two dozen attendees at the AGM certainly were delighted that they chose to grace the occasion with their presence and to deliver very interesting "State of the Nation" addresses. Our painstaking Secretary has summarised their informative words as can be seen on page 7.

Once again the meeting also provided an opportunity for socialising which was very enjoyable. It was interesting to observe the change in patronage as some of our older members have been replaced by 'younger' ones.

The new Committee has met and prepared a program for the next year as listed below. We certainly hope to meet up with lots of members at each of these opportunities.

- 6 June 2013 - Mid-year lunch at COTAH (already held)
- 9 August 2013 - Bowls Day at Aspley Bowls Club (already held)
- 11 September 2013 - Bundaberg Trip
- Date and venue to be advised - technical address on a topic such as Coal Seam Gas or the Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- Possible inspection of Paradise Dam hydraulic model at Rocklea
- 14 November 2013 - Christmas Luncheon at COTAH
- 27 February 2014 - informal lunch at Club Central
- Possible QMIR visit (to be advised)
- 24 April 2014 - AGM at Club Central

### From the Editor's Chair

*We recently attended a wedding at which the father of the groom offered him some advice. "In marriage, you will always get a second opinion. And it's free!" And isn't this so true?*

*It's claimed that 'there's nothing as queer as folk.' Well, I think the English language is right up there. If I were to say, "I publish a quarterly Newsletter" (which I don't) you, my readers, would know that there would be four editions a year at roughly three monthly intervals.*

*But if I were to say "I publish a thirdly Newsletter (which is as logical a grammatical construction) you would probably be non-plussed.*

*I'm afraid this edition has fallen outside its normal third because of our need to travel, but I'm sure you will all be forgiving. I expect the next one will fall within its normal time frame.*

*So, until the next third, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

*P.S. The profound thoughts at the bottom of each page are by Steven Wright, thoughtfully provided by Marilyn Caton.*

**A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.**

## Out and About

### New Members

WRRRA welcomes the following new members: Kev Devlin, Ross Walduck, Garry Grant and Gary Corbett. Others (we hope) will follow. Current members may care to encourage others to join. And remember, you don't have to be retired to be a member.

### Mid-Year Luncheon

A very enjoyable luncheon was held at COTAH on 6 June. The meal was particularly tasty and the company was naturally first class with larger than usual numbers.

Because the AGM had been addressed by both our patrons, it was decided to forgo the 'state of the nation' addresses. But we were 'entertained' again by Terry Loos's baffling trivia (see page 9).

### The Wearing of the Green

The Annual Bowls Day was held at the Aspley Bowls Club on 9 August, once again organised in advance by Norm and Lindsay White, to whom we are most grateful.

There were 14 bowlers and 17 for lunch. Unfortunately Norm White was unable to come on the occasion because he had only just got out of hospital (pleurisy). Allen Seabrook stepped into the breach to organise the teams and a great day was had by all, as usual. The weather, of course was perfect.

### Trip to Bundaberg

The Bundy trip is scheduled for 11 September. We are indebted to SunWater for the assistance provided. No doubt the participants will enjoy themselves in the fresh country air as well as being able to witness first hand the sights of Paradise Dam and the damage caused by the floods.

There will be a report on the excursion in the next Newsletter.

### *Birthday Greetings*

*- to Bill Eastgate who turned 70 on 7 July. Many happy returns, Bill.*

### Tripping Around

Hein and Francoise van der Heide have continued to caravan and explore every nook and cranny of Australia, with the occasional visit home just to make sure it's still there.

### Tripping Over Seas

Over the past few years Allen Seabrook has been exploring the Pacific region and although he hasn't been everywhere, he's seen a lot by coach and by ship. He tells me he prefers the latter, because there's more to do at night.

### Tripping Up

Following on from trekking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru last year, Ross Stewart's wife, Marjorie, trekked with a girlfriend to Everest Base camp in Nepal in April. It began with a flight from Kathmandu to Lukla, a mountain village with the most renowned airstrip in the world and where the 12 day trek started. Ascending from 2800m altitude at Lukla to 5356m at Base Camp was arduous but rewarding with spectacular mountain panoramas. A highlight was the first view of Mt Everest on day 4. Visiting Sherpa villages, Buddhist monasteries, crossing several suspension bridges over the Imja Khola River and following alongside the Khumbu Glacier were memorable experiences. They shared the trail with yaks and Sherpa porters carrying huge loads of goods.

Ross was sensible and stayed home to look after the dog. Next walk for Marjorie is the Milford track in NZ in November and plans are afoot to trek Mt Kilimanjaro in Kenya next year.

### Tripping Over

The Pullars have returned from their time in Europe visiting their daughter's family who are resident in Helsinki for a year. We also took the opportunity to tour in Scandinavia, travelling as far north as 72° - well above the Arctic Circle. Since it was summer, the sun had risen in May and wasn't due to set until August. It was amazing to see it at midnight, just above the horizon and **due north!** This was country we had never expected to see.

A much appreciated extra to the trip was for us to go to Verona with Margaret and Nick and their two boys to see the 100th Anniversary performance of *Aida* in the 1st century colosseum. What a spectacle, although the very modern production had no pyramids or sphinxes.

Very sadly, we report the following deaths:

**Ailsa Afflick**, wife of Ron (whose passing was recorded in the Newsletter of March 2012), in March.

**Patricia Morse**, wife of John, in April.

**Bob Kimber** (aged 89) who worked on many projects, particularly the Burdekin, and retired as a Works Supervisor, in May.

**Gordon Gracey** who worked throughout the state as a Surveyor, in May.

**Shirley Beattie**, wife of Don, in July.

Engineers Australia reported the passing of **Gerry O'Hanlon** who was also an "Old Boy" and members are reminded of an interesting story told by Bernie Credlin about Gerry on page 199 of the *People's History*.

**Borrow money from pessimists – they don't expect it back.**

## Our New President - Geoff Eades

Geoff was, for many years, Principal Geologist at Water Resources Commission and later SunWater. He joined WRC in 1981 after working for 16 years with Main Roads based at Rockhampton, Townsville and Brisbane. Geoff left SunWater in 2004 and has spent the last 9 years doing part-time contract work for SunWater and other government agencies. During his career he was fortunate to work on many major projects including Burdekin Falls Dam, Bjelke-Petersen Dam and Peter Faust Dam. After a major restructuring at SunWater he spent the last 3 years of his career there diligently but, largely unsuccessfully, chasing overseas projects offered by aid agencies. This involved some overseas travel to interesting but less than glamorous locations such as Manila and Port Moresby.

He and wife Helen have three children and four grandchildren. Now, almost completely retired, he is spending time with the grandchildren, attempting to lower his golf handicap and working on the family property near Mapleton. The latter involves an over-ambitious project to re-vegetate part of it with rainforest. At the moment the score is weeds one, rainforest nil. Like many other retirees Geoff and Helen are keen travellers and have spent time in Europe, China and North America and more recently a cruise to the Kimberley Coast. More travel is planned for next year.

*Editor's note: Geoff's wife was Helen McCosker. Her sister, Margaret, married our former colleague John Ward while her brother Stuart married Penelope Wensley, Queensland's Governor.*

*It was a very happy day for John Ward and me when Geoff left Main Roads and joined us in Project Planning.*

*Geoff was Vice President of WRRRA for three years and has now stepped up to the top job, for which we members are very grateful*

## Our New Treasurer – Ross Stewart

Ross was recruited from Victoria during his final year at Caulfield Institute of Technology in 1969 by the then Assistant Commissioner Harry Hiley. He commenced work with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in Construction at Maroon Dam in early 1970. It was later that year that heavy rains caused a major foundation failure following stripping of the foundation and conduit construction that delayed further construction. He was assigned to Designs Branch in 1971 to assess the geotechnical failure issues onsite together with laboratory testing. Fate would have it that this line of work was to characterise his future career choice. In 1972, he resigned to travel overseas for a year and luckily was able to return to his old job (lucky, as employment opportunities were scarce and Alan Wickham pleaded a special case for him).

Except for a stint in Project Planning in 1982 working on a feasibility design for the Bremer River dam site, Ross was to spend his career in the Brisbane Designs Group as a Materials Engineer, spending much of his time conducting geotechnical investigations for dams, weirs, off-stream storages, channels, pipelines and other water infrastructure. Unfashionable subjects like investigating and testing construction materials of soil, rock, concrete, mining waste and geosynthetics were to capture his passion for geomorphology and geology. The love of the bush and new projects never waned for him and he participated in about half of the significant projects designed up until his retirement in 2004.

In 1981 he was to link up with current WRRRA secretary Peter Jones for a stint working part time for the 1982 Commonwealth Games as Assistant Venue Manager, Road Cycling while still working for the then Water Resources Commission.

During the last half of his career, he was Project Leader and designer for the rehabilitation of many abandoned mine sites conducted for the Department of Mines and Energy. Major sites included Horn Island and Chariah Gold Mines, and Herberton tin/copper Tailings Dams.

During periods from 2002 through to 2004, he managed a team in the preliminary inspection of over 500 privately owned water storage dams in Queensland for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. These dams were considered potentially referable with population at risk under the Water Act.

In 2003, he managed the development through to certification of the Engineering Services Environmental Management System to AS/NZS ISO 14001 and administered the ongoing system.

He was involved with Standards Australia Committee CE20 – Geosynthetics as a committee member from 1984 and was chairman from 1999 until 2011.

He retired in 2004 due to a dodgy back. He is married to Marjorie whom he met in London in 1972 and they have four children and eight grandchildren. World and local travel is a passion for them both. Marjorie still works part time teaching to earn additional travel money.

**Half the people you know are below average.**

## A Decent Holiday (Part 2)

by Patrick McCourt

We'd agonised over which tour of Britain to take as there are so many available. However, we'd chosen this particular tour because it included all the usual tourist locations as well as Cornwall and Wales, and a good part of the Scottish highlands as well. The success of tours like this largely depends on the quality of the Tour Director, and we were lucky to have an absolute gentleman who was personable as well as professional and was also extremely knowledgeable. The coach driver was one of the best we've had as well. He proved to be able to do things with a full sized coach that I wouldn't try in a car, especially when he was negotiating narrow streets in towns which are unchanged since medieval times. An enjoyable tour also depends on the others on the coach, and we were blessed with a wonderful group of people to accompany us around the British Isles.

There were many highlights for us during this tour, but some of them would be St Ives and its art community; Cardiff Castle; Bovey Tracy village; the Lakes District; Grassmere; cruising on Lakes Windermere and Lomond; Glencoe; snow in the Scottish highlands; various lochs; Isle of Skye; Balmoral Castle; Edinburgh Castle; Rosslyn Chapel; York; Shakespeare's house; Ann Hathaway's cottage; Oxford including the Ashmolean Museum; and Stonehenge.

We were told that the English Heritage people want to return the Salisbury plain near Stonehenge back to what it was 5000 years ago during neolithic times. That would include a two kilometre long tunnel past the world heritage listed site to replace the nearby section of the A303. The plan includes not letting people access Stonehenge as close to the monument as they do now. The latest idea is apparently to shift the point of access about three kilometres away and make people walk there irrespective of their age or condition. Strangely, the British Government balked at this idea because of the cost in 2007, and there the matter continues to rest. If this ever happens, maybe the heritage people will continue the neolithic theme and accept animal furs and flint tools to be bartered for the entry price to see the megalith instead the millions of pounds that tourists pay for the privilege each year.

Most Queenslanders wouldn't know it, but we have our own township of Stonehenge in Barcoo Shire. But no-one believes me when I tell them that. I know that old Commission hands know all this. Of course, there isn't anything like the English megalith there, but there was a stone hut that bullock drivers used to use many years ago for temporary accommodation. I once wrote a poem, part of which mentioned Queensland's Stonehenge.

*I saw the last of the swagmen out Blackall way,  
I've seen timber hauled on jinkers by bullock dray,  
I've been in dust storms at Stonehenge, and floods  
on the Balonne,  
I've seen many a sight that now is long gone.*

We also attended a Scottish highland show and "Burns" dinner which included piping in the haggis and sampling this national dish. The haggis actually didn't taste too bad although I found it to be quite bland. Apparently, haggis is supposed to be toasted at a special dinner like this with whisky. You'll notice that the Scots spell "whisky" without an "e" while the Irish use the spelling "whiskey". The Irish told me that this is because the Scots are too mean to use another letter. We never got back to Scotland to give them the right of reply.

My first thought was what country would revere something like the haggis? After all, Rabbie Burns has immortalised the dish in his fairly long poem entitled *Address to a Haggis* which was quoted at length by the Master of Ceremonies for our haggis dinner.

*Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,  
Great chieftain o the puddin' - race!  
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,  
Painch, tripe, or thairm;  
Weel are ye wordy of a grace  
As lang's my arm.*

And then I thought of some other dishes people had written about such as Australia's own *The Magic Pudding* which was written by Norman Lindsay, and Murdoch's essay *On Tripe and Onions*. Of course, Sir Walter Murdoch wasn't quite our own because he was born near Aberdeen in Scotland which coincidentally was where my maternal grandfather was born. So perhaps I shouldn't be too hard on Robert Burns and the Scots and their love affair with chopped up offal stuffed into a sheep's paunch.

No doubt this gastronomical amalgam sustained many a crofter and his family on a cold winter's night, although being washed down with whisky may have been of some assistance to digestion and overcoming any reluctance. I could just imagine some Scottish mam centuries ago telling her children, "*Hae sa uisge beatha* (Erse for *whisky* or *water of life*) *wi' yer haggis ye ungrateful bairns. Think of the starving wee Sasennachs in England!*"

The tour was a great success and it came to an end all too soon. But there was more excitement in store. We were off to southern Ireland, and relations we had never seen.

Well, this brings me to the terribly inclement weather we encountered at Dublin Airport. However, we were staying in what proved to be a very good hotel overnight on Bachelors Walk beside the River Liffey. I don't drink much these days, but I decided that I had to try Guinness that night while we were in Dublin which is where the brewery is sited. I'd previously had Guinness in Australia, the USA, and now Ireland. I'm happy to report that my view about this stout hasn't changed – it's only fit to be used to fill in holes in the road! Guinness has been brewed since 1759 and they still haven't got it right. Mind you, I'm aware that there may be a few million Irishmen who might want to take issue with my conclusion.

**If at first you don't succeed, destroy all the evidence that you tried.**

### **A Decent Holiday (cont)**

We picked up our hire car the next day. The plan was to drive to Limerick where we would base ourselves for some days. We'd already checked out some possible places to stay on the internet prior to leaving Australia although we hadn't booked anything in advance. We wanted to stay in a quiet location outside Limerick, and one of the places we thought had potential was a B&B outside a village called Patrickswell. This establishment and its neighbourhood were absolutely wonderful and we settled in for five days.

The village was given its name because St Patrick was supposed to have stopped off there to drink from its well. The ancient chronicles do not record whether he stayed at our B&B. St Patrick must have been a frequent imbibor of water because there are many places with similar claims. My namesake obviously didn't like Guinness either. In any event, the village was well positioned for us for touring, and to meet some of our Irish relations. Yes, both Ros and I have strong Irish heritage, and we had arranged to meet people that we had never met before leaving Australia.

### **The Best Years (Part 2)**

**by Don Best**

While we were still living in Theodore, every weekday morning Len Redmond and I would get up and go to the workshop area to give instructions or get information from the workers before they moved off to work. Then we would go home for breakfast. On Saturdays we could sleep. On the Saturday morning of 30 November 1957 I woke as normal around 5:30am. About ten minutes later Vera was still asleep and I felt that I had to get up. Vera woke and said that it was Saturday and I did not have to start work. I replied that I needed to turn the wireless on. I did that and after a minute or so the 6:00am ABC news came on. The first item was that there had been an accident the previous day near the bottom of the Kuranda Range Road and that Baden Best the driver of the car, his wife Ethel and baby son Ross had all been injured and were taken to the Cairns Base Hospital. We did not have a phone so I went across to the office and rang my parents in Brisbane. They had been advised and my mother was making arrangements to go to Cairns. Baden (my brother) had a badly broken leg and Ethel had facial injuries. She had had Ross on her lap and so he was thrown forward and had various injuries. He survived but lost the sight of an eye. They all had extensive stays in the hospital.

I cannot explain why I got up and turned the wireless on. Also names of people involved in such accidents were not normally broadcast.

Soon after returning from leave in late April 1957 I was advised that I was being transferred to Tinaroo and that I had to make arrangements to move as soon as practicable. While Vera and I were sorry to be leaving Theodore we were both looking forward to living

There are many people in Ireland with my wife's maiden name of Murphy, but there aren't so many McCourts. Yes, I know that everyone knows about the books written by Frank McCourt. I've been asked many times whether we were related, and I used to say that we weren't which is the truth. However, no-one would believe me, so I now say that we were, particularly as he isn't around anymore to deny the association.

I rang the 85 year old matriarch of my clan who promptly invited us to a family gathering the next day in Limerick to attend a celebration for the Confirmation of one of the younger people. This was the start of the extraordinarily wonderful standard of hospitality we received from people from both sets of families. We weren't allowed to put our hands in our pocket, and yet we were taken to restaurants and tourist attractions which would surely have cost more than a few euros.

- to be continued next edition.

*Once again, thanks Pat for this entertaining tale. - Ed.*

in Tinaroo where Baden and his wife Ethel were living. We had not seen them since their accident. We had been very happy living in Theodore and we had made many friends there especially Len and Cec and also our next door neighbours, Sam and Isla Baxter. Also we were good friends with Theodore Irrigation Area farmers Nev and Av Pearce and Nev's parents. We enjoyed fishing with Len and Cec below Orange Creek Weir on the Dawson River. We also played tennis and watched the experts play. The experts included Theodore born Mal Anderson who twice achieved a ranking of World No. 2 as an amateur. I also think Rod Laver played at Theodore when we were there but I may be wrong.

After our furniture and refrigerator were packed and consigned to Queensland Rail to be delivered to Tinaroo, we loaded up our VW Beetle for the trip. The essentials were the Primus, with some kerosene and methylated spirits as well as food, and a couple of thermoses with water. We also took the cat that had adopted us. The cat eventually lost all its nine lives in Tinaroo when it was crossing the road behind our house and was run over by one of the Euclid trucks delivering aggregate from the quarry.

We had an uneventful trip to Rockhampton. Vera visited her doctor for a check-up and we topped up with petrol and drove north. The Redex Round Australia Reliability Car Trial had recently taken place. One of the worst horror sections of the course was from Marlborough to Sarina. The road was unsealed with a number of unbridged creeks. One of the drivers was Galignite Jack Murray who would throw lighted half sticks of galignite from his vehicle onto the road. We stopped at Lotus Creek where fuel could be bought as well as groceries and snacks.

*- continued overleaf*

**I intend to live for ever... So far, so good.**

### **The Best Years (cont)**

After a cuppa and a check of the car we dove on through Sarina to Mackay where we stayed the night at Vera's sister place. In the morning we left after breakfast with the object of getting to Townsville or maybe to Ingham

We had a good run. I was interested in crossing the Burdekin River and would have liked to detour to see Clare and Millaroo as I had done some work on those irrigation areas when I was in Irrigation branch in Head Office. We did not detour but kept going and made good progress and kept on to Tinaroo. I cannot remember whether we went via the Palmerston or Gilles Highway to get to Atherton and on to Tinaroo. Probably we took the Palmerston.

We arrived at Tinaroo about 20 June 1957 and went directly to the Office and were met by Baden. I first met Frank Learmonth, the Project Manager. Baden took Vera and me to his house in Robson Street. We were pleased to see Ethel and their son Ross. After a cuppa and a chat we went to the house in Church Street that had been allocated for us. We unloaded the car and locked the cat in the bathroom. The cat had been no trouble on the trip.

Baden took me to the Office and I had a chat with Frank Learmonth and met Dick Woffenden, the 2/IC and Merek Kotek whom I would be working under. Other engineers then stationed at Tinaroo were Allan Taylor, Bill Day, Pat McMahon (in charge of the testing laboratory) and Fred Kemball, the Mechanical Engineer. Draftsmen were Tom Palmer and Lotsie (a Hungarian whose surname I cannot recall). There was also a surveyor whose name I cannot recall at present.

Baden took me on an inspection of the dam and then the Danbulla Forestry road which had been Baden's major responsibility. We then had a look at what had been completed of the siphons contract which was not much as well as the day labour bench flume which was nearing completion.

Next morning I reported to Merek in the office. He told me I would be supervising the contract for the construction of the seven 104 inch inverted siphons which I had designed when in Brisbane. The supervision had been carried out by Bill Day prior to my arrival. He gave me the file and all the drawings and contract documentation and said study them carefully until you know them from start to finish. As I had done the preliminary investigation for the channel system downstream of the dam when I was in Head Office and had carried out the detailed design and prepared the specifications for the siphons I had no trouble in refreshing myself with the siphon drawings and specifications. I did have to get familiar with the contract with T.J. Watkins Ltd of Cairns who had won the contract for the construction of the first seven siphons. The concrete bench flume was constructed by day labour and was almost completed. I was interested in how Merek Kotek had planned and controlled the bench flume construction. I used his techniques for many

of my projects until I learnt critical path techniques after attending a course in construction management at the University of New South Wales when I was working in Papua New Guinea.

For the seven siphons contract, I had Bill Catling as my supervisor for the earthworks and concreting aspects of the contract. Tony Nieuwenhuis was my supervisor for the steel liner aspects. The siphon contract was Watkins's first civil engineering contract. Their previous contracts were building contracts in North Queensland. No real problems were experienced during the contract for the unlined monolithic concrete barrels which were constructed in 40 ft lengths.

The steel liners for the steel lined barrels were fabricated in nominal 18-foot lengths from three rings each 6 feet long. Initially all welds were radiographed under contract using radioactive iridium 192 or cobalt 60 isotope. Initially all shop welds were radiographed but as the techniques improved testing was gradually reduced to only ten percent of welds.

In the field the 18-foot sections had to be joined together. The welding sub-contractor used top welders from Sydney. All the field welds were radiographed. Tony Nieuwenhuis carefully watched the field welding. If radiographic testing showed a particular welder was producing more faults than the average, Tony would observe closely how the welder was welding.

This eventually caused one of the welders to object to Tony closely watching him while welding. The Sydney welders were very union-oriented and a strike was threatened. To sort things out the Watkins Project Manager, the welding sub-contractor, Tony and myself fronted up in Merek Kotek's office. The welder complained that whenever he was welding Tony would be looking over his right shoulder. Tony said that there had been a number of faults detected in the radiographic examination of that particular welder and Tony wanted to see if there was some fault in the welder's technique. After considerable argument Merek asked what could be done to overcome the problem and stop any talk of strike action. The Welding sub-contractor said that Tony had to stop looking over this welder's right shoulder. Merek said that he would so instruct Tony which he did. Watkins and the welder and the welding subcontractor were happy. A minute was noted of the agreement. As the contractors were leaving Merek called out to Tony, "Tony, in future you will look over his left shoulder." There was no more trouble by the welders.

As the Watkins contact was coming to an end, the Commission called tenders for construction of the Rocky Creek siphon. It was thought that Watkins would win the contract as they had the experience, were established close to Rocky Creek and had the formwork, experienced workforce, etc but they were beaten by Transfields.

- to be continued next issue

*Thanks to Don for these memories of the 'Good Old Days' - Ed.*

**When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.**

## DEWS News

*The following is a summary of the address by Jon Black, CEO of DEWS to the AGM, compiled by Peter Jones*

The Government, which has now been in office a little over 12 months, came to power with a significant reform agenda which is progressively being implemented. DEWS responsibilities lie in the urban/irrigation area of the water sector with the water resource planning and development resting with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Jon currently chairs a group of 8 Directors-General to progress the Government's water agenda. The number of Directors-General reflects the extent to which the water sector spreads across different departmental responsibilities.

To date, some 150 submissions have been received on the proposed preparation of a 30 year strategic plan for water. A number have drawn the link between water resources, their use and the economy. Generally, the feedback from the submissions has been consistent in a number of areas, for example, reliability and cost of supply, confusion as to how we get to the end plan and the particular interests of local government.

In today's world, it is beyond the capacity of the vast majority of individual local governments to take on the development of a major water resource/supply project. A focus of the Department is the building of capacity within the local governments and developing recognition of the benefits of scale for water projects. The need is to be able to engage the expertise and enter into the development of infrastructure to achieve a regional approach. This will be an area of ongoing work with local government.

With respect to the energy sector, consideration will be given to the findings of the Costello report on Queensland's economy before going back to its review.

## A SunWater Summary

*And this is a summary of Peter Boettcher's address, also pkf Peter Jones*

A primary focus over the last 12 months has been on understanding the new Government's priorities within its announced policy framework. The Government has a clearly defined agenda with respect of water resources, but the development of internal detail and implementation of that agenda requires ongoing work within the organisation. Critical to this is the limited availability of capital funding.

Water supply for the coal sector has been a mainstay of the organisation's business for some years now. However, a slow down within the coal industry, and the sector's focus on reducing costs as production decreases, has led to the reduction of opportunities for the organisation. On the positive side, the gas industry is pushing forward and opportunities will arise in that sector.

The organisation is now to work within a framework where all projects must be either self-funding or funded by the private sector.

A consequence of the demand by the private sector for skilled and experienced personnel is that the organisation is losing staff, particularly to the gas sector. The challenge is for the organisation to present a viable alternative to retain staff and not lose them to the private sector. This poses some difficulties in an environment of insecurity and uncertainty as the transition is made to the new policies and operating requirements.

Critical in planning for the future is the recognition that there is no policy framework which allows the private sector do many of the things which the organisation can in developing a resource or infrastructure. It is foreseen that the future will see the organisation partnering with other organisations for specific developments – not necessarily as the lead, but as the provider of a range of specialised delivery services. In this regard, as well as in general, the Board is being forward and innovative in its thinking.

A number of jobs are currently being bid for. The short term goal is to maintain the capacity and reputation of the organisation until the market turns.

The recent wet season has brought a number of dam safety related issues to the fore. In some areas, the 2013 floods were unprecedented and some real challenges have arisen which will have to be addressed and resolved. The visible damage caused by the floods has been reported in the media, such as the scouring below Paradise Dam.

It was also noted that the Dam Safety Regulator has changed the schedule for upgrades of existing structures. As a result, there are discrepancies between the ANCOLD and Regulator's requirements to be addressed and resolved.



*Seeing Gary Burgess off from the Department are Doug Flanders, Leon Leach, Bill Huxley and Lyall Hinrichsen with Gary himself (fourth from left) already in relaxed mode.*  
Photo Terry Loos

### Answers to trivia on page 11.

1. (iv) Aegean & Ionian. 2. (iii) Hanoi to Saigon. 3. (iii) steak tartare. 4. (iii) Argentina. 5. (iv) Hindi 6. (i) 56 km. 7. Salsa 8. (iii) cold-hearted. 9. (iii) sarong. 10. (v) 90%

**What happens if you get half scared to death twice?**

# HEALTH *and beauty*

As all you readers know, this column is devoted to promoting the health, beauty and well-being of all our members. To this end, the depths of learned texts have been regularly scoured and their contents plagiarised for your benefit. Make what you will of the following tips, but always remember "Caveat emptor." - Ed.

Forget about vitamins; forget about exercise; research has shown that the best way to stave off dementia is to exercise those brain cells (*see below*). According to the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, a team from the University of Toronto looked at 32 trials involving about 25 000 healthy patients aged 65 or more. They found that studies of drugs, hormone therapy, vitamins and supplements showed no positive effect and the evidence supporting physical activity was weak. Only mental training showed benefits every time. One trial saw participants significantly improve memory during five-year follow-ups.

So, sudokus and crosswords are strongly recommended. (*A couple of years ago, in a TV interview, Bob Hawke announced that he did a couple of sudokus every day.*)

You will also be pleased to know that, according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, there is a strong scientific correlation between the number of Nobel Laureates from a country and the amount of chocolate consumed. The Swiss win, with the Swedes and Danes following closely, followed by Austria, Norway and Britain. Australia just beat Canada, and was ahead of Poland, Japan, Italy, Spain, Greece and China.

The lead author started plotting the data while in a hotel room with nothing else to do. He could not believe his eyes when all the countries lined up neatly on a graph with higher chocolate intake linked to more laureates.

It is thought that eating chocolate might improve the ability to think because it is high in antioxidants also found in cocoa, green tea and **red wine**.

## Exercise those Brain Cells

A squadron of long distance planes is challenged to fly an aircraft round the circumference of the world without landing. Each plane can carry enough fuel to fly only half way round. However, all planes are capable of refuelling each other instantaneously. How many planes are required to get one right round and all others returning safely to base?



"We never talk any more."  
"We've just run out of things to talk about."  
"You don't need something to talk about just to talk."

More good news. A US study of 140 000 women has found that those who eat a 28 gram bag of walnuts twice a week are 24% less likely to develop diabetes. Walnuts are rich in fatty acids which can help protect against heart disease and cancer.

So if your spouse complains about you going nuts about brain-teasers, chocolate and red wine, just remind him/her that it is purely in the interests of your health.

## Maintaining one's metal

Metal body parts from dead Britons are being recycled into road signs, car parts and aircraft engines. Metal joints, plates and screws are collected after cremation and sold on, with money raised going to charity. Even metal plates from false teeth and old fillings are recovered and reused.

High value metals that survive the 1000°C furnace are sold for use in the automobile and aeronautical industries. These include cobalt and titanium which have been used in implants and some dental work.

Other less valuable metals are used for more general use such as road signs, and freeway barriers.

A Dutch company has signed up about half of Britain's crematoria and recycle 75 tons of metal a year.

Before cremations, relatives are asked if they want to keep the metal parts of their loved ones. The majority say they have no need for them and sign a consent form to agree to the recycling.

Ashes go into a special cremulator which separates any metal.

We've solved the snoring problem. He's moved into the spare bedroom. Now I can snort and groan and saw logs without disturbing him.



## Answer to last edition's puzzle

A. Alphabetical order

English: eight, five, four, nine, one, seven, six, two

French: cinq, deux, huit, neuf, quatre, sept, six, trois, un

German: acht, drei, eins, fünf, neun, sechs, sieben, vier, zwei

Hungarian: egy, harom, hat, het, ket, kilenc, negy, nyolc, öt

82.7 % of all statistics are made up on the spot.



## How Come - ?

### My oath! He swears it's true

When people swear an oath, it is customary to do it on something sacred to them, such as a bible or other holy book. However, an authority whom I have always found to be extremely reliable has shed an interesting light on this custom.

According to him, a man's most sacred thing was (and is) his genitalia. So, in biblical times, when a man wanted to swear fealty he would grasp his liege lord's "privates" and make his oath. The implication was that if he failed to honour his pledge, the lord's heirs (the issue of his loins) would seek retribution for disloyalty.

In support of his claim, my authority resorts to etymology. The words "testimonial", "testament" or anything which "testifies" alludes to the fact of swearing upon the testes. Believe it if you will.

It certainly gives a new slant to the euphemistic play on words of having a doctor "inspect one's testimonials".

## Travellers Tales

*Not surprisingly, I picked up some tales during our recent trip. Here are a couple. - Ed.*

### Long Term Planning

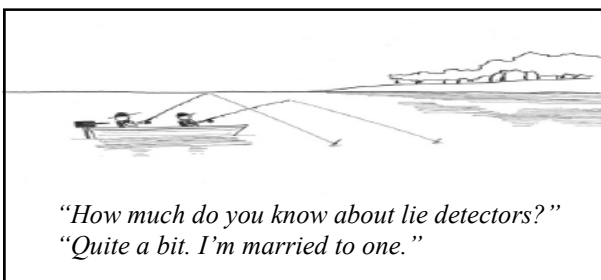
During the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark was allied with France. England feared the powerful Danish navy and demanded that the Danes surrender it. The Danes refused, so British ships bombarded Copenhagen for four days in 1807, after which the ships were handed over.

The king decreed that the navy would have to be replaced as quickly as possible and ordered the planting of one million oak trees. By 2007, a mere 200 years later, the trees were ready to be harvested and turned into ships.

### The Handicap of a Wife

What began as a heathen mediaeval habit of plundering local villages in search of nubile women has become a much publicised annual event. In early July, the Wife Carrying World Championships are held in Sonkajarvi in northern Lapland.

The championship is a race over a 253.5m obstacle course where competitors must carry their 'wives' through water traps and over hurdles. The wife travels with her back against her husband's with her legs locked around his neck as the only means of keeping her in place. Dropping your cargo earns a 15 second extra penalty. The winner gets the wife's weight in beer and the prestige of the title.



### A Sign of the Times

In a tourist shop in Stockholm:

**Men are from Mars  
Women are from Visa**

### Terry's Trivia

*From the questions posed at the mid-year luncheon. If you think they are difficult, bear in mind that the winning consortium scored only 12 from 22. -Ed.*

1. The Corinth Canal connects which seas?: (i) Adriatic & Black; (ii) Aegean & the Sea of Marmara; (iii) Adriatic & Ionian; (iv) Aegean & Ionian; (v) Red & Black
2. Noel Coward wrote "Mad dogs and Englishmen" when travelling from: (i) Rangoon to Mandalay; (ii) Calcutta to Madras; (iii) Hanoi to Saigon; (iv) London to Edinburgh.
3. Minced raw beef or horse meat served with onions, capers, pepper, Worcestershire sauce and raw egg yolk is: (i) Yorkshire pudding; (ii) Toad in the hole; (iii) Steak tartare; (iv) Carpaccio; (v) Awful.
4. Graham Greene set *The Honorary Consul* in: (i) Haiti; (ii) Cuba; (iii) Argentina; (iv) Panama.
5. From which language does the word *jugger* originate? (i) French; (ii) German; (iii) Russian; (iv) Hindi; (v) Swedish.
6. A typical lead pencil can draw a line of: (i) fifty six km; (ii) six km; (iii) sixteen km; (iv) twenty six km; (v) thirty six km.
7. Which word means a type of dance and a type of sauce?
8. Shakespeare, in 1616 in *Antony and Cleopatra* was the first to use the 'hearted' term: (i) Warm-hearted; (ii) Kind-hearted; (iii) Cold-hearted; (iv) Stout-hearted; (v) Hoof-hearted.
9. Which Malay word for a garment was first recorded in English in 1834? (i) Saree; (ii) Turban; (iii) Sarong; (iv) Banian; (v) Batik.
10. How much of a cabbage is water?: (i) 50%; (ii) 60%; (iii) 70%; (iv) 80%; (v) 90%

*Answers on page 7*

When a flea met a fly in a flue  
They feared they'd be floored by the 'flu.  
"Let us fly," said the flea;  
Said the fly, "Let us flee."  
Through a flaw in the flue they both flew.

**I'd kill for a Nobel Peace prize.**

# Book Club

## Johnson's Life of London

The blurb on the back of the book asserts that London is a place that has always lived on the skills and energy of its people. I can't imagine anyone could tell the stories of these people in as entertaining, and learned, a fashion as Boris Johnson (the current Mayor). He writes about: Boudicca; Hadrian; Mellitus; Alfred the Great; William the Conqueror; Chaucer; Whittington; Shakespeare; Robert Hooke; Samuel Johnson; John Wilkes; JMW Turner; Lionel Rothschild; Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole; WT Stead; Winston Churchill, and, well, Keith Richards.

The historical record and the anecdotes about each of these famous people will fascinate you. Additionally, Johnson discusses the history of London Bridge; the flush toilet; the Bow Street runners (pre-Bobbies); the suit; the King James version of the Bible; the various sports that were codified if not created; the Tube and the Routemaster double decker.

Boris Johnson is known for creating 'factoids' about London so some of the following may be a bit 'suss', but here goes:

While football, athletics, swimming, tennis, cricket, rugby, boxing and rowing all have had their formal origins in Victorian Britain/London, the one sport that is wholly indigenous to Britain is ping pong.

WT Stead (1849-1912) was a newspaper editor who, pioneered investigative journalism and paved the way for the modern tabloid. He demonstrated how the press could be used to influence public opinion and government policy, and advocated "government by journalism". (We should be grateful?). Stead was the most famous Englishman on board the Titanic.

The current London Bridge is the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> manifestation of the crossing. The old timber versions were often in a state of 'falling down' – or being destroyed during invasions.

The British (PM Disraeli) bought the Suez Canal from the Egyptians in 1871 for £4M with money loaned in an instant by Lionel Rothschild.

London has more live music venues (approx. 400) than any other city in the world. Keith Richards once agreed with a Johnson thesis that The Stones *gave back* the blues to America.

The Suit was conceived in the early 1800s by Beau Brummell.

In 1776, John Wilkes (the Father of Liberty and key democratic freedoms) became the first Parliamentarian to call for every man, rich or poor, to be able to vote.

The King James Bible has contributed 257 idioms to the language.

Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784 (*when a man is tired of London he is tired of life*) "arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history", the sole author of the first dictionary, gave the world compassionate conservatism.

Robert Hooke 1635-1703 (Hooke's Law; springs) – the greatest inventor you've hardly heard of. Da Vinci-like in his range of interests: Architecture, surveying, painting, astronomy, microbiology and several scientific inventions and theories. He created the microbiology term 'cell', invented the sash window, the air gun, camera iris, watch spring, etc. designed 'The Monument' tower, mansions, churches, and figured that there was an element in air that aided respiration and combustion – to name a few. He has some claim to (his contemporary) Newton's Law. He was the Curator of Experiments 1662-1702 for the newly founded Royal Society.

**Terry Loos**

## Credits

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*"Don't be impatient, son. Growing up takes time."  
"Is that what Mummy means when she says you have a lot of growing up to do?"*



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