



WATERY SAUCES OLDIES and BOLDIES

Newsletter No 85

March 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

The AGM is Upon Us

Once again, we will meet on 26 April to conduct the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Association. As can be seen in the accompanying notice, the meeting will be conducted in the Sailor Jerry Room at the *Victory* hotel in Edward Street.

As is customary, the meeting will be followed by a convivial lunch at the expense of the Association – in the congenial atmosphere of the Victory Beer Garden. Members could therefore view the occasion as another opportunity to get together, with the entertainment of the AGM a bonus.

It is also our custom to invite representatives from our parent departments to address the meeting about current activities. As there have been a number of very significant changes in departmental arrangements, these addresses should be of great interest.

We have lost one of our Co-Patrons. Paul Simshauser, Director General of the Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS) is no longer a government employee, as a result of changes in departmental arrangements following the recent State election.

DEWS and DNRME have been merged to form The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. James Purtill, former Director General of DNRME, is now the DG of DNRME.

DNRME now holds responsibility for a significant proportion of Queensland's water resource management responsibilities. The department will undergo some reorganisation to cater for the changes.

The Water Policy Unit will include Strategic Water Supply Policy and Reform.

A new Water Markets and Supply Division will manage that part of the water resource available for sustainable consumptive use. The Regional Urban Water Supply Planning, Water Systems Improvement, Regional Water Supply Infrastructure, Local Management Arrangements and Economics and Governance teams from the former Water Supply Division will form part of the Water Markets and Supply Division. An entirely new team will manage this division. The division will also include a new Rural Water Management Renewal.

The Water Supply Regulation and Dam Safety teams will shift to Natural Resources Division.

The Non-commercial assets team will join the Abandoned Mines Unit in a newly formed Infrastructure Management Unit within the Minerals and Energy Resources Division.

SunWater is also undergoing a reorganisation. Members who attend the AGM will have the opportunity to learn about the implications of the changes.

In the meantime, SunWater continues to support WRRRA, for which we are grateful.

From the Editor's Chair

The day before our AGM is ANZAC Day, 103 years since the fateful landing at Gallipoli. But also of great significance is that it marks exactly 100 years since the Australian triumph at Villers-Bretonneux where even after all this time, the name of Australia is honoured (as Bruce and Jennifer Pearce can attest – see page 5). This was a crucial battle in the "war to end all wars". In the intervening 100 years there has not been one day without armed conflict somewhere in the world.

Like Richard Fidler, I am a history enthusiast, not an historian. Nevertheless I delight in publishing your historical Watery anecdotes – so please keep supplying them!

Until next time, au reservoir.

Ian Pullar, Editor

The Future

Following the AGM, the incoming Committee will develop a program for the next twelve months (or so). Any suggestions of possible activities from members would be appreciated.

Two upcoming events are already in place:

The Tenterfield trip will take place on 22-24 May with inspection of Glenlyon Dam, a winery or two and a round of golf (or other activity).

The mid-year luncheon will once again be held at COTAH. Put 21 June in your diaries and come and join us once again.

Coal Seam Gas

On 22 February, **David Free**, Chief Hydrogeologist, Groundwater Investigation and Assessment, Coal Seam Gas Compliance Unit, Department Natural Resources Mines and Energy presented to WRRRA an address on **"Compliance and Engagement in the CSG Industry in Qld"**.

The following notes were taken by Terry Loos and reviewed by Dave. - Ed.



- While CSGCU stands for CSG Compliance Unit, the primary work of the unit is in landholder engagement and advice.
- The CSGCU is a multidisciplinary unit comprised of two teams; a Groundwater investigation and assessment team (GIAT) and an Engagement team.
- The role of GIAT is to:
 - investigate landholder concerns that a water bore may have been impaired as a result of CSG operations;
 - implement the Groundwater Net community based groundwater monitoring and Groundwater Online continuous monitoring programs;
 - conduct audits and report on CSG company water monitoring and monitoring bore construction procedures; and
 - engage with industry and community stakeholders in relation to the potential impact of CSG development on groundwater resources.
- The *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*, provides for the as-of-right take of groundwater associated with petroleum/gas project activities.
- Landholders in the Surat Basin have taken a while to get used to the CSG industry on their lands. Previously, on some days, these landholders (grazing and cropping) wouldn't see *any* outsiders. Now, the properties with CSG wells could have up to 100 vehicles per day on them.
- The geological history of how coal (and CSG) forms was described.
- The CSG (methane) is adsorbed to cleats in the coal. Fracking aims to increase these cleats by applying pressure to the coal formation. Typically these fractures extend 10-20 m. A 90 m fracture would be exceptional.
- The Walloon Coal Measures are at the surface at Acland; about 200 m down at Chin-chilla and about 1200 m down at Roma.
- The gas is kept in the formation by groundwater pressure. A pressure reduction of up to 100 m in the shallow parts of the basin to 800 m in the deeper parts needed to enable the gas (and the water) to be released to the surface. (At Acland all the CSG has evaporated because it is close to the surface).

- There are around 8500 CSG wells in the Surat Basin at present. This is a wind-back of earlier predictions that the number could go up to around 20 000.
- The CSG wells are spaced 750 to 1000m apart.
- Notwithstanding that the Walloons water is salty there are around 2500 stock bores drawing from it.
- For CSG producers the associated water is a 'regulated waste' and so, to avoid the requirements attached to this, they have to treat it to remove the salt, to then use it beneficially. Farmers can use the salty water any way they choose. Water treatment costs around \$2000/ML.
- The CSG producers typically locate their gas treatment plants typically about 20 km apart, and reverse osmosis plants service 4-5 gas plants..
- There can be more than 100 wells on a property. Many graziers towards the west of the basin welcome the benefits of CSG wells. They can easily work with and around them. They get compensation and they get water delivery to their far paddocks - to where they have never had a water supply before. CSG wells, pipes and roads are more problematic for cropping operations.
- The CSG companies are striving to work with farmers. Cooperative well plan design is now common. Infrastructure is kept away from farm-houses.
- Evaporation ponds have been banned as a means of water disposal. However, evaporation continues to occur from all storages. Treated CSG water goes to feedlots and to irrigate tree plantations. It also goes to rivers, by arrangement with the regulator.
- 600 cu.m of CSG compresses to 1 cu.m of LNG at minus161 C. It takes 32 hours for the gas from the Wallumbilla gas pipe hub to reach the Curtis Island LNG plants at Gladstone.
- The Office of Groundwater Impacts Assessment (OGIA) in DNRME prepares the Underground Water Impacts Report (UWIR) for the Surat Basin Cumulative Management Area (see Chapter 3 of the Water Act). This arrangement enables an impartial assessment as to which company is responsible for which part of the cumulative drawdown impacts across the basin. 'Make good' is required for predicted drawdowns of greater than 5 m in 3 years time.



Some of the attentive audience

Coal Seam Gas *continued*

- The recent UWIR identified 91 bores in the immediately affected area (over the next 3 years) and 459 in the long-term affected area.
- The tenure holders must deal with those landholders with water bores identified as possibly impacted.
- There are many options for 'making good' the landholder bores that will be adversely impacted. The ultimate option is financial compensation. Some landholders have received up to \$0.5M to give up certain bores. In some cases these bores weren't being used.
- Natural water movement through the GAB aquifers (including the Walloons) is around 1-5 m per year.
- The modelling suggests the pressure reduction in the Walloons may impact on the adjacent Springbok aquifer (above) and the Hutton aquifer (below) for up to 1000 years.
- The deeper Precipice sandstone aquifer is the best aquifer for water supply in the GAB in Queensland. The drawdown impacts could extend to this aquifer in some parts of the basin. Unfortunately, it has also been identified that the Precipice would be the most receptive formation for carbon sequestration, which would compromise its storage and transmission of groundwater. Oversea attempts at carbon sequestration have targeted deep, unused aquifers.
- Carnarvon Gorge is an outcrop of the Precipice Sandstone.
- Landholders were concerned that the CSG companies do not provide accurate data to the government. As a result, DNRME set up a network of monitoring bores.
- The Government initially established a 300 bore water level monitoring framework with some bores only visited once a year through lack of resources.
- Since 2013, 60 continuous loggers have been installed with landholders in the Surat Basin undertaking the groundwater monitoring.
- The data is uploaded into the department's systems and is freely available on line.
- Bore monitoring data required from various companies is also provided to OGIA.
- The data set is live on the DNRME website: Water Monitoring Information Portal. This portal

also provides links to the geology, Qld Globe, etc.

- CSGCU also created a video – on the web.
- Loggers are good as they show the daily fluctuations (i.e. when water is pumped by farmers) and the overall trend (up; down or static).
- CSGCU has investigated 148 bores for claimed impacts over the last four years but only five have been found to be CSG related. Long-term DNRME monitoring of farm bores have found drawdowns (pre-CSG) of over 20m.
- The initial scepticism held by landholders about the companies is waning and landholders now want the companies to attend meetings.
- ORIGIN provides a subsidy of 75% of monitoring costs. Santos constructs its monitoring bores in stainless steel – for the long-term.
- CSGCU also engages with NRM and landcare groups.
- Research shows high concentrations of gas in GAB water (natural) and microbial activity.
- DNRME now wants to use the learnings and principles learned from the Surat Basin to translate into the new gas fields, such as Galilee (to be on the front foot).

P.S. Since Dave commenced pre-retirement leave there have been major reforms to the legislation in relation to underground water rights. In brief:

- The reforms (commencing on 6 December 2016) extend the P&G statutory right to take 'associated water' to mining activities. This right is subject to compliance with the underground water obligations
- At the same time the reforms removed the as-of-right provision in the P & G Act to groundwater for petroleum/gas project activities where the water is NOT associated water. This water take is now required to be licensed under the *Water Act*.
- Additionally, the State's regulatory framework in this area has been strengthened by amendments to the *EP Act*. These amendments specify that where a mining project needs to remove groundwater as an unavoidable part of its operation (such as dewatering to provide safe operating), this activity will be conditioned in the environmental authority for the project. The fundamental aim is to protect the Environmental Values that could be adversely affected..

Many thanks to Dave for his presentation and to Terry for his very comprehensive notes. - Ed.

Don Drysdale passed away in Mackay in December at the age of 83.

Don spent many years in construction in a variety of roles but mainly as a front end loader operator at Kinchant Dam. He retired from Water Resources at Teemburra Dam. He was quite a character.

Robert Arthur Kay died on 30 November, aged 80. He was in a nursing home at Caboolture, and had been quite ill for some time. Members would remember him as a long term groundwater database staff member, starting with the conversion to a new storage system, assisting in the design of the system in 1974, and working there until his retirement in the early 1990s when he moved to Bribie Island. He had previously worked in the groundwater drafting group, and prior to that, on several construction sites.

I first met Bob at Leslie Dam, then worked with him in Groundwater. We collaborated on "Aquarius". He was an artist and cartoonist. He drew the two men on the back page – though in a different context - Ed.

Around the World in 104 Days

Part 4

Bruce Pearce



View of Hudson River, New York

We awoke to a beautiful day in Newport, anchored in the bay surrounded by very expensive yachts and pleasure boats. We went ashore by tender to join our tour which included a drive through Newport, a visit to see the spectacular coastline along 10 Mile Ocean Drive, and then took a guided tour of Belcourt Castle, one of Newport's palatial summer cottages that some believe is haunted. The 60 room Louis XIII style castle was designed as a bachelor residence with the entire first floor devoted to his beloved horses and collection of carriages and was built in 1896 which was very impressive. Our tour passed many other mansions located in a very pretty area. We also saw where the America's Cup was held for over 150 years.

We sailed into Massachusetts Bay early in the morning, en route to Boston Harbour. Boston is the capital of Massachusetts, a state in the New England region of the north-eastern United States. Massachusetts is the most populous of the six New England states and ranks third in overall population density among the states of USA. The population of Boston is approximately 6.4 million. The city was founded in 1630 by Puritan colonists from England. During the late 1700s, Boston was the location of several major events during the American Revolution, including the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party. Several early battles of the American Revolution, such as the famous Battle of Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston, occurred within the city and surrounding areas. After the revolution, Boston became a major shipping port and manufacturing centre because it was the closest major American port to Europe. It exported rum, fish, salt and tobacco. The city was the site of several firsts, including America's first public school, Boston Latin School (1635), and college, Harvard College (1636) in neighbouring Cambridge, as well as the first subway system in the United States. With many colleges and universities within the city and surrounding area, Boston is a centre of higher education and centre for health care.

We had a tour of the city and its historic sites as well as visiting the nearby towns of Lexington and Concord. We strolled the battlefield of Lexington Green where Paul Revere rode on his famous midnight ride and felt the awe-inspiring power of the old North Bridge where the British were confronted by the minutemen and the "shot heard round the world" was fired. On our way back to the ship we visited the grounds of Harvard University. We had lunch at the atmospheric Union Oyster House, America's oldest continuously operating restaurant.

In the evening, *Dawn Princess* set an easterly course across the North Atlantic Ocean.

Several passengers had asked the captain if we could pass over the "Titanic" on route to Ireland but he had indicated that it was located too far north from our planned course. In mid-afternoon the Captain announced that as a result of the calm conditions he had decided to digress further north than planned and pass over the "Titanic". At about 8.30 pm that evening we passed over the "Titanic" with all our bells and whistles blazing as a mark of respect to its victims. It was an eerie feeling to know that their watery grave was directly below us.

After five days of pleasant cruising we arrived at the port of Cobh in Ireland. Cobh was the departure point for 2.5 million of the 6 million Irish people who emigrated to North America between 1848 and 1950. The passing of laws in 1790 rendered the transportation from Ireland of "felons and vagabonds" more easy and effectual, and the first shipload of convicts left Ireland for New South Wales at the beginning of April 1791. Between 1787 and the termination of the system in 1853, Australia received over 160,000 convicts, one quarter of whom were Irish. Spike Island on the centre of Cork Harbour was used as a holding centre for many of these convicts, the majority of whom had done no more than steal food to feed their families during the Great Famine.

It took over 200 years, but in 2009 Australia sent its first shipload of Australians (albeit in party mode) back to Cork Harbour aboard the cruise liner *Dawn Princess*!

Cobh is built on a steep hill on Great Island in Cork Harbour. Its architecture and streetscape is distinctly Victorian. St Colman's Cathedral dominates the town. Its 49 bell Carillon is the only such instrument in Ireland and is the largest in Ireland and Britain. Cobh has a population of over 12,000 people. Its heavy industries of steel making, shipbuilding and fertilizer manufacture that provided employment in the past have all disappeared to be replaced by tourism.

To celebrate the arrival of the *Dawn Princess* to Cobh, the local community organised "Australia Day". They aimed to provide a taste of Irish hospitality, music and culture. They decorated their shops with Australian themes, had tucker stalls and barbies and had local arts and craft stalls.

Continued on next page

Around the World in 104 Days

Continued from previous page

In addition they had a series of entertainment programs in the Town Park near the wharf, which included ballad singers, traditional Irish folk musicians (button accordion, concertina, tin whistle, flutes fiddles and bag pipes) and Irish dance groups. There was a Carillon recital on the 49 bells of St Colman's Cathedral which went for one hour and was followed by a traditional Cobh send-off from the quayside featuring the Cobh Confraternity Band.

Our visit to Cobh was truly a major highlight of the voyage.

On day 52, *Dawn Princess* proceeded through the English Channel heading towards the port of Le Havre in France, maintaining various courses as we passed the many other ships also using the Channel. The channel is one of the world's busiest seaways carrying over 400 ships per day. As we passed the southern shores of England the Captain commented that in his 30 odd years at sea as a Captain he had never before seen Land's End and Lizard Point simultaneously due to usual foggy conditions. He also commented that this crossing of the Atlantic was one of the smoothest he had encountered.

The Le Havre region has been part of the central heartland of European civilisation for 20 centuries. Northern France is fertile and rich in resources of all sorts. It supports a large, vigorous population, with a tremendous variety of agricultural products. We had visited Paris previously so we opted to go on a tour to the World War I battlefields at the Somme and Pozieres. We inspected several of the memorials and saw where the Red Baron was shot down by Australian troops. We also visited the Australian War Memorial and cemetery at Villers Bretonneux and a local school in the village that had a giant sign in the court yard saying "Never Forget Australia". Their assembly hall was decorated with wooden carvings of Australian native animals that had been donated to the school by the Australian government. We had a good look at the French countryside as well as lots of corn and silver beet and dairying.



The Australian War Memorial in the Somme

Our arrival in Southampton marked the conclusion of the first half of our round the world cruise with many passengers leaving the ship, but several more joining for the return voyage back to Australia. Southampton, the United Kingdom's premier passenger ship port, was home for many years to the great transatlantic liners of yesteryear and serves as your gateway to a wide variety of magnificent historic sites, national landmarks, charming villages and typical English country scenery.

Having been to London previously, we chose a tour to Windsor and Windsor Castle for the day. This involved a two hour trip each way through rolling countryside with old farmhouses and cottages. We entered England's largest castle through the ancient Henry VIII Gateway to visit the State Apartments and St George's Chapel.



Inside Windsor Castle

The State Apartments are used by the Queen to entertain visiting Heads of State, while ten monarchs are entombed in the 15th century chapel.

After returning to our ship in the evening we set sail and entered the English Channel for the last time and then set a south-westerly course towards our next port of call – Gibraltar.

To be continued next edition ...



St Barnabas Bulletin Board
Max Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Answers to Terry's Trivia page 9

1.(iv) Point Piper 2. (iii) Sofia; Bucharest. 3. (ii) Pakistan 4. (i) Susan Kiefel 5. (iii) It is cubed 6 (iii) 3 7.None 8.(iv) Eric Clapton 9. (iv) Johannes Vermeer 10. (i) Nemo 11. (iii) Teddy Bear's Picnic 12 (i) Methyphobia

Great Rail Journeys

Part 2

Peter Gilbey

Our return to London on the East Coast train was fairly uneventful until just past York the mobile phones of some of the folk we were travelling with began ringing. It then became apparent that someone had unsuccessfully it seemed tried to blow up one of the London underground trains at Shepherd's Bush which was only a couple of stations past where we were booked in to stay at Kensington Gardens. The problem with this was that the authorities had shut down the rail network fearing a repeat of the previous multiple attacks on the commuter buses and trains.

On arriving at Kings Cross we decided the only way we would be able to get to our lodgings was to catch a cab which I was able to do immediately but amid all the traffic Lesley found herself on the wrong side of the road – however on spotting me getting a cab she parted the Euston Road traffic like Moses crossing the Red Sea and we were on our way albeit at a snail's pace which meant the trip was twice as long as normal.

The next day life was back to normal and we were able to take in the sights of Hyde Park on the way to Harrods for some shopping – this amazing store sells virtually anything one would want from Groceries to the latest fashions – they must have the most effective air cleaning system as there are no odours even in the fresh seafood section.

On our walk back we passed by the magnificent Albert Hall, visited the Albert and Victoria Museum and took lunch outside Kensington Palace, the current home of Princes William and Harry and family.

The next day we took the Eurostar to Paris from St Pancras Station and crossed the English Channel via the rail tunnel which links Britain to Europe – the trip took only a couple of hours and you get to see what the French countryside is like – lots of farms with mainly pasture, canola and corn growing while we were there.

On arrival at the Gare de Nord – a station through which up to 700,000 people pass each day I was told, we took another cab to where we were staying near the Gare de Lyon another massive station which serves the Southern and Eastern commuters.

The following day we were off on our European adventure using our Europass which we had pre paid back in Aussie – the system works well but there are additional charges for some seat reservations which cost a fair bit. We had chosen to stay overnight in a smaller regional centre called Colmar and while English is certainly not spoken much at all, we were able to find our way around and taste the local culture. Like Edinburgh, Colmar has a delightful old town and is described as a mini Venice with its network of small canals adjacent to the old town centre.

Colmar is one of the towns with a chequered history having been subject to both German and French rule over the past 130 plus years – in fact some of the major civil building were built by the Germans in the 1880s to enhance their position in the region – one of which was the magnificent water tower which had only recently been decommissioned.



The next day we were off to Switzerland with an interesting train change at Basel – we thought 8 minutes would be plenty of time to change trains but the travel gods thought they would test us by putting in our way some renovation works which meant we had to leave the station – run down to the next entry – seemed like a couple of hundred metres – was probably less, return inside to find the train to Lucerne and get back on board – we made it just with a bit of help from an obliging attendant who re opened the carriage door.

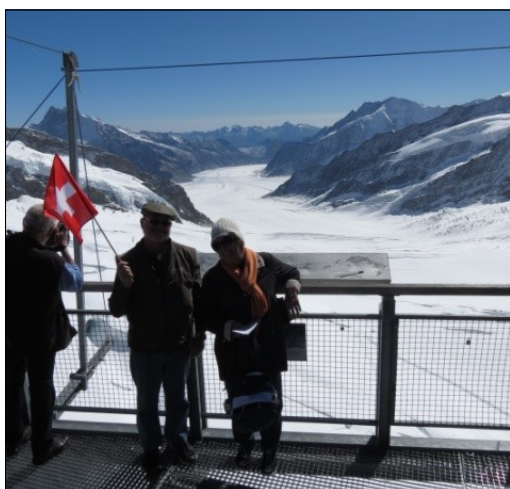
We had been to Lucerne previously and so knew our way around and to our delight our travel agent had snagged us a trip to Jungfrau on a Top of Europe one day tour which was just fantastic. We had a bubbly Thai ex pat guide by the name of Kit and he looked after us so well we were able to relax and take in the scenery without the worry of making train changes while we travelled to the mountain top which is 3,454 metres above sea level. The foresight of

the Swiss in the early 1900s to build infrastructure to take people to the top of these mountains is mind blowing – that they did it with just manpower and explosives carving out not only rail tunnels but a web of stations and visitor areas such as the Ice Palace on the theory of “build it and they will come” shows what progressive people can achieve.

Continued next page



Great Rail Journeys *continued*



A shot from the top

For those of us who are still climate sceptics, after seeing the retreat of the Glaciers all over the Swiss Alps you can get some understanding as to why the Europeans are so concerned to try to reduce man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

A massive new tunnel linking Northern Europe to Italy was recently constructed under the Alps for some 25 Billion Euros with one of the main justifications being not only reduced travel time but also reduced carbon emissions – maybe we should have put our money on improved transport rather than the NBN?

Back to the rail journey and our next adventure was to take the Gotthard Panorama Express from Lucerne to Lugarno which is on the Italian side of the Alps. The journey starts with a fabulous three hour voyage from Lucerne to Fluellen from where we caught the train. We made the crossing on a paddle steamer built in the early 1900s and which is kept in pristine condition – the mechanical minded would marvel at the workmanship and care on display in the engine room with the crankshafts and steam boilers immaculate.

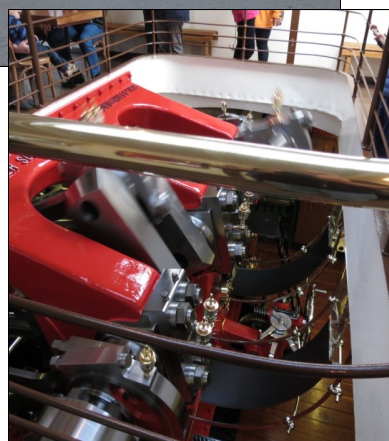
The trip to Lugarno coincided with Lesley's Birthday and it would be hard to find a nicer way to celebrate your birthday than travelling to the southern part of Switzerland. For those not aware, the Swiss state was cobbled together by Napoleon in 1814 and while everyone who lives there seems happy to be a part of Switzerland, the locals speak the language of the countries from which Switzerland was formed. So in Lugarno you speak Italian: further to the west you speak French: and to North it's mainly German/Austrian.

To be continued next edition ...



Above: The paddle steamer

Right: the immaculate engine room.



Rembrandt. The Night Watch



"Did you hear the one about the farmer's daughter and the travelling salesman?"

Memory and Memorial

At 11 am on 11-11-2005, Henry Palaszczuk, the then Minister for Water Resources and Mines, conducted a ceremony to rededicate the Water Supply Department Roll of Honour Board for World War I in the Landcentre. It had been relocated because of the closure of the Indooroopilly Science Centre where it had been housed after several previous relocations. The event is recorded in Newsletter 48 of November 2005.

But now the Landcentre is to be demolished to make way for the Cross River Tunnel, so attention is being given to a suitable site for its latest relocation.

The attention of the decision makers has also been drawn to the old Groundwater Clock once located in the office of the Senior Engineer Groundwater in the old Courier Mail Building



HEALTH *and beauty*

The Eye of the Beholder

For centuries, people have gone to great lengths to make themselves beautiful, at least in their own eyes. The cosmetics industry is astronomically valuable.

The following account of the dressing of Queen Elizabeth I comes from *The Last Tudor* by Philippa Gregory.

"...only when we agree that she will be the richest, the best-dressed, the most beautiful woman present, do we start to prepare her for dressing. Her thinning hair is carefully brushed and tied on the top of her head in a scrawny bun. Mary, the maid of honour with the steadiest hand, comes forward with a pot of fresh-mixed ceruse, and Elizabeth sits still, closes her eyes as Mary paints the white lead and vinegar from her plucked eyebrows to her nipples in painstaking gentle strokes. It is a long process. The queen's neck, back, and shoulders have to be painted too; the gown she is wearing is low cut and there can be no ugly smallpox scars showing through the glowing white.

"When the queen's cheeks are dry, Thomasina stands up on a stool and dusts rouge on the hollow cheeks, and paints carmine on the narrow lips. My aunt Bess comes forward with a brown crayon and draws in two arched eyebrows.

"Lord! What I do for beauty!' the queen exclaims, and we all laugh with her, as if this were amusing and reasonable, and not an absurd daily chore for us.

"With immense care, Bess pulls the great red wig over Elizabeth's graying hair, as Elizabeth holds it in front of her head, and then looks into her mirror to approve the effect."



Is this your idea of beauty?

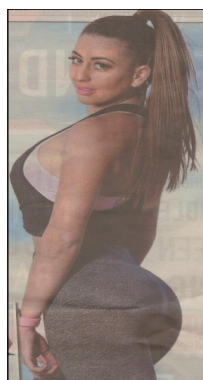
Is My Bum Big in This?

Well may we laugh at this Elizabethan idea of beauty. But perhaps – just perhaps – contemporary ideas of beauty are equally extraordinary.

The Courier-Mail reported that a Gold Coast woman (right) paid out \$22,000 to have a bum enlargement (having already had a breast enlargement). She wanted to emulate the buttocks of Nicki Minaj (left).



Good grief!



Exercise those Brain Cells

Q: How can you write a sum using each of the numbers 5, 5, 5 and 1 once only to make a total of 24. You may only use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.



Playing the Part

A few years ago, Buckingham Palace had some vacancies for domestic staff; footmen, flunkies and so on. Naturally the new recruits had to be trained to be sufficiently obsequious and unobtrusive.

Sir Nicholas Hytner, the celebrated director of *The Madness of King George*, was once at an official function when an equerry scurried over, full of effusive thanks. When he got the palace job, he had no knowledge of etiquette and was advised that if he wanted to learn how to bow, nod and walk out of rooms backwards, he should study the DVD of the film. "All the etiquette is tremendous. How did you know about it?" "We just made it up," Hytner replied. "That's what we do in the movies."

Carried on the Voices

The hidden message in the way a person speaks may be used to diagnose depression through their mobile phone.

Voice-scanning technology developed under an Australian-US collaboration is being used to detect mental illness by measuring changes in the speed, pitch and inclination in a person's speech patterns.

At present diagnosis is reliant on subjective measures. A mobile phone app will be launched soon. It is hoped it will provide an earlier, more accurate detection of depression, by software analysing subtleties in speech that are lost to the human ear. Clinicians will be able to assess whether the users of the app are outside the healthy range.



"My husband and I have a magical relationship. Whenever I ask him to do some housework, he disappears."

Answer to last Issue's Teaser

The mercenary says "Four", which is the number of letters in "nine".

Chess

During the holiday seasons, at least some readers would have spent time with grandchildren playing board games. This might even have included chess – if they had no fear of being shown up by youngsters!
- Ed.

The game of chess probably originated in northern India between the third and fifth centuries. It was played on a board of 8 by 8 squares. Each player had sixteen pieces: a *shah* (king), a *vizir* (prime minister), two *asp* (horses), two *pil* (elephants), two *rukh* (charioteers) and eight *piyadeh* (foot soldiers). Players would call *shah* when the opposing king was threatened and *shah mat* (the king is finished) when all was lost.

Arabs took up the game and pilgrims brought it to Europe where it evolved into the modern day version. The *vizir* became the queen, the elephants became bishops, the horses became knights, and the chariot-eers took the shape of castle turrets but retained the name 'rook'. The *piyadeh* became pawns.

There is a fable about the origin of the game.

Once there was a great Shah of Persia who asked a learned man to invent him a game that would hone his skills as a military tactician. The man came back with a chess set.

The Shah was delighted and told the man he could name his own reward. The man thought for a moment before saying, "Sire, my wish is simple and can be reckoned according to the chess board. For the first square, I would ask one grain of rice. For the second square, two grains of rice, for the third square, double it again to four grains, eight for the next and so on."

The Shah replied, "This would be a modest reward for such fine and clever work, but I will grant you your wish." The Shah's Treasurer withdrew to calculate the amount of rice now owing, and returned with his face full of amazement.

"Sire," he stammered, "It seems you owe more than 18 billion, billion grains of rice!" (To be exact 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 grains. These would form a heap bigger than Mount Everest.)

This was more rice than could be grown in Persia in a million years. The Shah could not fulfil his rash promise and so, even though it grieved him, he had no choice but to chop off the man's head.

- from *Ghost Empire* by Richard Fidler

Bored Games

In leisure times I'm made aware
Of pleasures gained upon a square.
I'm told that I should take on board
Those games that bring their own reward.
But should I stick to Arts and Crafts? -
I seldom have success at draughts.
And, then again, I must confess
My grandson thrashes me at chess.
Of all such squares I would be rid -
Give me a cryptic crossword grid.

A Sign of the Times

On a highway billboard:
**All those who hate speeding tickets,
raise your right foot.**

Terry's Trivia

From the 2017 Christmas luncheon. Answers on page 5.

1. In which Sydney suburb does the PM have his private residence?: (i) Vaucluse; (ii) Leichhardt; (iii) Double Bay; (iv) Point Piper; (v) Rose Bay.
2. Which of these cities is NOT on the Danube?: (i) Vienna; Budapest; (ii) Bratislava; Belgrade; (iii) Sofia; Bucharest.
3. Which country is NOT on the "new silk road (12 000 km rail)"?: (i) Kazakhstan; (ii) Pakistan; (iii) Russia; (iv) Belarus; (v) Poland; (vi) Germany; (vii) Belgium; (viii) France.
4. Who is the Head of the High Court? (i) Susan Kiefel; (ii) Robert French; (iii) Anthony Mason; (iv) Virginia Bell; (v) James Edelman.
5. Wombat poo is unique for what reason? (i) It takes a year for wombats to digest one meal; (ii) It smells like eucalyptus flowers; (iii) It is cubed; (iv) It is spikey.
6. How many times has Donald Trump been married? (i) 1; (ii) 2; (iii) 3; (iv) 4; (v) 5.
7. How many verses has the Spanish National Anthem?:
8. Which of these British musicians has not been knighted? : (i) Paul McCartney; (ii) Elton John; (iii) Tom Jones; (iv) Eric Clapton; (v) Mick Jagger; (vi) Cliff Richard.
9. Which horse was runner-up in the 2017 Melbourne Cup? (i) Rekindling; (ii) Almandin; (iii) Max Dynamite; (iv) Johannes Vermeer; (v) Red Cadeaux.
10. What is the name of French President Emmanuel Macron's dog? (i) Nemo; (ii) Woof; (iii) Maurice; (iv) Chevalier; (v) Rover.
11. "See them gaily gad about" is a line from which kids' song? (i) Twinkle Twinkle; (ii) Humpty Dumpty; (iii) Teddy Bear's Picnic; (iv) The Boggabilla Bus; (v) Jack and Jill.
12. An abnormal fear of alcohol or becoming an alcoholic is known as: (i) Methyphobia; (ii) Alcophobia; (iii) Ketophobia; (iv) Carbophobia; (v) Etherphobia.



*"They said on TV that lions have sex ten to fifteen times a day."
"Damn! I just joined Rotary!"*

Book Club

In 1912, an American man was greatly moved by reading a volume of poetry written by Elspeth Dunne, a woman living on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. He wrote to her, thus starting an exchange of letters over many years.

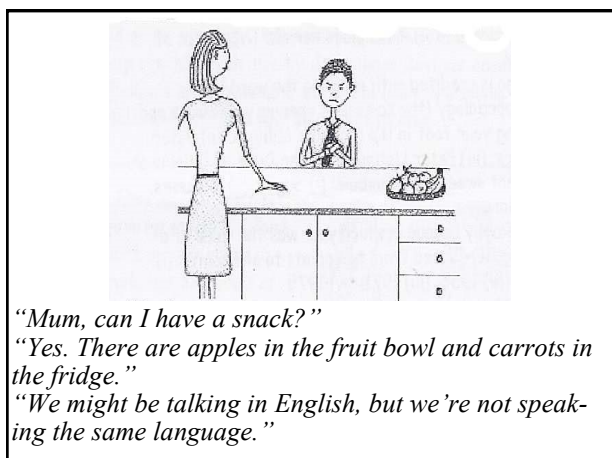
This is the scenario of *Letters from Skye*, a wonderful book by Jessica Brockmole. The entire story is told in a series of letters; on the one hand between the American David and Elspeth and on another between a much younger Margaret and Paul.

Elspeth has never lived anywhere other than Skye when she begins the correspondence against the background of the impending World War I. Her brothers and husband enlist. David is at a loss over what to do with his life, having tried several possibilities. America is keeping out of the war, but David feels compelled to volunteer for a non-combatant role as an ambulance driver. Elspeth is drawn to the mainland for the first time in her life to meet with him and then to suffer his experiences at the front from afar.

Years later, Margaret is caught up in a similar situation with Paul becoming involved in World War II. She finds in her mother's possessions a series of letters from a mysterious American called David to an even more mysterious "Sue". She is determined to get to the bottom of it all.

The series of letters is a very ingenious vehicle for a very poignant story, providing a rich sub-text and great enjoyment for the reader.

Ian Pullar



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Over the course of a long, sleepless night, Elizabeth Macquarie composes an epitaph for her husband, Governor Lachlan Macquarie. From widowhood on the Isle of Mull, she revisits their part in the tumultuous life of colonial Australia.

In *Mrs M*, Luke Slattery creates a wonderfully vivid tale. Elizabeth Macquarie is a fine observer – a singular, independent woman with an acerbic wit and hidden passions. She chronicles the world of early Sydney with a refreshing clarity.

Married to a much older man, she is transported to an alien shore with little feminine or intellectual company, save that of "the architect" (who is clearly Francis Greenaway, but is never named in her memoir). The Macquaries are determined to establish a new, vibrant nation, which brings them into conflict with those in England who believe the colony should remain a place of punishment and cheap labour. Pivotal to their dreams is the convict architect, who designs many of the early buildings that are intended to fill the population with civic pride and ambition. As Slattery himself acknowledges, he takes liberties with the facts of Elizabeth and Greenaway's relationship. But who is to say what really happened between them?

For us, Macquarie is regarded as the father of the Australian nation through his efforts in establishing a viable settlement. We forget that at the time there was bitter resentment over what was regarded as his favouring convicts and emancipists over those seen as the natural ruling class. We have largely forgotten the fact that the English government under Lord Liverpool sent Commissioner Bigge to investigate the management of the colony. His damning report resulted in Macquarie leaving, not quite in disgrace, but a man broken by his ceaseless toil who died soon after, leaving his still young widow, impoverished and eking out an existence on Mull.

It is a wonderful book: a fascinating tale and beautifully told.

Ian Pullar

