



# WATERY SAUCES OLDIES and BOLDIES

Newsletter No 90

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NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## Ongoing activities

There is much to report on in this edition in relation to activities of the Association with all the activities organised for our members, partners and friends.

The mid-year lunch is normally held in the first half of the year and so, in other circumstances, would normally have been reported in an earlier Newsletter. But this year, the mid-year lunch was in July so a report was not possible until this issue.

In August, the Annual Golf Day was held with a report by President Pete on the members who played a-round (see page 2).

Mike McKenna's Annual CQ Reunion was held in Yeppoon on 30 October (see page 4).

In October we were privileged to hear a fascinating address from Claude Tranchant on her walks on the Camino (see page 2).

And in November, we fronted up again to COTAH for the usual Christmas luncheon (page 3).

What a busy time for retirees!

## Mid-year Luncheon

As noted opposite, the mid-year luncheon segued to July, more specifically to Tuesday 9 July when 35 of us met once again at COTAH to enjoy an excellent meal and, of course, outstanding company.

Once again we were required to answer Terry's Trivia, though the questions were mercifully a trifle easier than on previous occasions and the competition was fierce with most tables getting high scores.

Unfortunately, neither of our patrons was available to join us, but they were ably represented: DNRME by David Wiskar, Executive Director Water Policy, and SunWater by Katrina Beikoff, Corporate Communication Advisor.

David (with two of his eminent predecessors Chris Robson and Greg Claydon in the audience) spoke on the recent amendments to the Water Act introduced via the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 (NROLA) and the Minerals Water and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (MWOLA). He foreshadowed that the continuing drought was expected to trigger a decision on future options for urban water supply in south-east Queensland within 6 to 12 months (see report on page 3 from 4 months later).

Katrina informed us of a project for which she was responsible relating to the history of SunWater and its predecessors in terms of the benefits that their activities had brought to Queensland. She expressed the hope that retirees would be able to assist by providing information and anecdotes. We await more information on what we can do to assist.

## Future Events

The annual get-together will be held in February at the Victory Hotel. The Committee is following up a number of possible speakers at this event. And the AGM in April (also at the Victory Hotel), will provide another opportunity for us all to get together.

## Stop Press

WRRRA will be looking to appoint a new patron. Nicole Hollows has resigned as CEO of SunWater.

## From the Editor's Chair

*It is hard to believe that already twenty years have passed since the world faced with trepidation the possible calamity of the Y2K Bug as the calendar was turned to the year 2000. (Many people celebrated the new millennium even though they were a year too early).*

*On 31 December 1999, we dined on our front verandah (it was a hot night naturally). One of our guests was very senior in the IT world and he was on standby in case of a melt-down. But of course nothing happened. It could have been because of the very expensive precautions taken by the world ...*  
*...Once again there are those who would have us believe that we are faced with imminent extinction ...*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

*Best wishes for the Festive  
Season from WRRRA*



## 2019 WRRR Annual Golf Day

A most pleasant day was had by all at this year's WRRR Annual golf day held at the Keppera Golf and Country Club on Thursday 8 August.



A total of 11 members and friends competed this year. The competition was won by a ring in, Barry Simic, who took away a nice bottle of Pinot Noir with a very creditable score of 20 Stableford points with Trevor Sleep the next best with 17 points.

Barry was in the Ken Watson group which also included Graham Young and another guest, Larry Muijac. Ken took out the nearest to pin from Trevor Sleep on the par 3, 8th hole and Graham had a really good round with a score of 15 points.

Newcomers Greg Claydon and Doug Flanders played with Geoff Eades and me, and despite having not played for a while showed enough to be a threat in years to come with a bit of practice and in Doug's case maybe a bit of an upgrade of his vintage clubs!

The final group comprised our photographer Terry Loos, Trevor Sleep and Peter Allan who was backing up from last year and again had a creditable round.

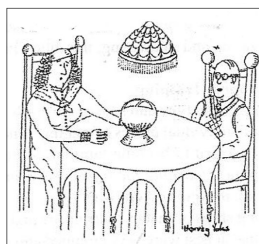
Unfortunately, Bill Meredith was unable to defend his title because of a prior commitment but I'm sure he'll be back next year.

Apologies also included Past President Mike Merrin who is away house minding at Atherton. Hopefully next year we will again be able to attract some new players to test their skill against the challenging Keppera course.

Thanks again to Geoff for helping to arrange a great day and to the Club for putting on a great day's golf and excellent lunch.

I hope to see you all again next year.

**President Pete**



*"The good news is, they do play golf in heaven. The bad news is you're due to tee off next Thursday."*

## Victory Gathering

On 24 October a number of interested members gathered once again at the *Victory* Hotel to listen to a very interesting talk delivered by a very vivacious and personable lady. Claude Tranchant was born in France but came to Australia at a young age (but old enough to retain her charming French accent. And in that she told us her tale. In 2010, at the age of 64 she covered, on foot, alone, approximately, 2,500 kilometres, with a 13-14 kg backpack through France and Spain, along the St James' Way commonly known in Spain as the *Camino*. She started her journey from Vezelay - Burgundy region - Northern Central - France and finished it at Muxia - North-West of Galicia. She was known along 'The Way' as *Claude the Australian*.



*Claude and some of her listeners*

In 2018, at the age of 72, she again walked the Camino Frances in Spain from Saint-Jean-Pied-de Port to Santiago de Compostela, with group for the documentary *Camino Skies*. Then from Finisterre she walked, alone, to Muxia and returned on foot to Santiago de Compostela before walking on the Portuguese Way and covering close to 1100 km.

Although she walked alone, she was one of many thousands who make the journey. According to her figures, in 2018 some 12000 people walked the Camino (the Spanish section); far fewer the Chemin in France. While many are Christian pilgrims travelling as others have done over the centuries to Santiago de Compostela, there are people from many nations and many cultural backgrounds.. The talk was interesting and we could not but admire Claude's resoluteness and determination.

The talk was followed by the customary conviviality over lunch.

### New Members

WRRR welcomes new members Ged Brennan, Phil Byrnes and Ian Fox.

We do encourage our existing members to use their good offices to recruit new members.

## Christmas Luncheon

This year's Christmas Luncheon was held on 21 November when 41 of us attended CTAH for the full Christmas menu – seafood cocktail, roast turkey and trimmings and plum pudding. Our guests were David Wiskar, Executive Director Water Policy DNRME, and Lisa Welsh, General Manager, Customer Strategy, Sunwater.



President Pete and secretary Rolf with Lisa and David

As well as the usual conviviality and Terry Loos's ubiquitous trivia, we were entertained by the addresses of our guests, as follow:.

### David Wiskar

This week (17 Nov), the combined SEQ water storage volume fell below 60%. This is the trigger to commence implementation of the SEQ water security plan

- Step 1: the Gold Coast desalination plant has been put into full operation.
- Step 2: TV messaging on water consumption has commenced. Before the Millennium drought the average water consumption in Brisbane was around 300 L/p/d. Since then it has fallen to around 180-190 L/p/d. So, we are starting from a better base. However, the aim of the water security plan is to get this down to 150L/p/d.
- Step 3: SeqWater has started the early moves to activate the Western Corridor PRW scheme. Nothing significant on this will commence until around February after we see what the 'wet' season brings. SeqWater has surveyed the acceptability of using PRW into Wivenhoe Dam. In general terms about 50% are accepting; 30% are sitting on the fence and 20% are vehemently opposed. As the drought gets worse more of the fence-sitters tend to move into the 'accepting' category. It seems that the work done last time on promoting the acceptability of PRW-to-Wivenhoe is paying off now.

Wyaralong Dam has yet to be connected to the SEQWater supply system because of water quality issues (Fe; Mn). A Business Case is being prepared about how best to utilise the water. So, Wyaralong may not be part of the current drought response plan.

The biggest news story in the MDB involves the 100 GL/a Adelaide desal plant (2011) which has been operating at its minimum level of 8 GL/a with Adelaide mostly drawing water from local reservoirs and the River Murray. A deal negotiated between the Federal and SA governments will see the desalination plant increase production to provide 40 GL of water



Ross Caruthers, Greg Claydon, Jon Henry and Kev Devlin

this financial year for Adelaide's drinking water supply, and, all going well, a further 60 GL in 2020-21. The intent is that an equivalent volume of water can be returned to the Murray River and used for upstream drought relief. The federal government expects the water to be used to grow an extra 120,000 tonnes of fodder for livestock. The water will be sold to farmers at a discount rate of A\$100/ML.

### Lisa Welsh

- A key goal for Sunwater is to have 'commercially focused projects'. The Mining downturn has put the 'kybosh' on several proposed projects e.g Connors River Dam.
- Sunwater is working to improve water delivery efficiency. For the Burdekin it has increased this from 78% to 85%, resulting in significant water savings
- Now customers are asking for energy use efficiency as well. Solar energy is being investigated.
- The QCA is doing an analysis of including a component of the cost of providing dam safety in the price of water supplied to customers. At present the customer component for dam safety is zero.
- The three main Sunwater scheme improvement projects at present are: Fairbairn; Burdekin Falls and Paradise. (A drought is the best time to undertake dam repairs).
- At St George the outlet to the Thuraggi Channel is under repair. Specific releases were made from Beardmore to facilitate this. Irrigators were forewarned to fill their storages as much as possible.
- The Stanthorpe water supply is being augmented from the Warwick water supply at present. The latter supply is OK to about next October.
- As of 22 November the dams in NQ have greater reserves: Burdekin Falls is at 77%; Tinaroo at 73%; Julius at 78%; but Fairbairn is at 12%; Bjelke Petersen at 4%; Beardmore at 4.5%; Leslie at 5%;
- Only about 15% of the yield of Paradise Dam has been taken up. The decision to operate the dam at a lower level has been based on expert advice. All the water being released is from Sunwater's 85%. All of the allocation sold will be guaranteed. Downstream farmers are being offered the released water at no cost.
- Water trading is occurring in the Fairbairn system – at around \$600-700/ML.

*Many thanks to both speakers for their informative talks. And thanks to Terry Loos who provided these notes. - Ed.*



## CQ Reunion

The 2019 Get Together of Water Resources Retirees was held in Yeppoon on Wednesday 30 October. About 35 turned up to enjoy a beautiful day on the waterfront as well as ample quantities of amber fluid and finger food. The yarding was slightly down on last year with sickness intervening for some and the Melbourne Cup perhaps a little too close.

People's home towns stretched from Mackay to Brisbane and no doubt the stories told will be transferred well beyond the participants of the day. It's interesting to note the relationships which have been maintained regardless of the occupation or position of the individuals in the work scene, and how we keep finding the odd one who hasn't been before and indicates an intention to keep coming. The linkages also reflect the number of locations in which people served across the State and how difficult it is to tell a lie without being caught.

Our senior statesman Bob Gray was again present and with four score and ten years just around the corner we wish him and wife Pam all the best.

There's ample support to continue next year so if anyone is interested mark the second last week in October on the calendar as a time for a bit of festivity.

**Mike McKenna**

## Around the World in 104 Days

### Part 9

**Bruce Pearce**

Day 80

In the early hours of the morning, *Dawn Princess* left the Gulf of Oman and entered the Persian Gulf on approach to Dubai. This largest natural harbour along the Emirates' coast has blossomed into one of the most modern cities on earth. As it now stands, it's the perfect place to get a deeper peek into Arabian culture in a friendly and secure environment. Dubai is one of seven autonomous emirates which formed the UAE federation in 1971. Like some of its gulf neighbours, Dubai enjoys significant revenue from oil and natural gas, but trade continues to be the primary focus of local economic planners. Our tour for the day allowed us to see the major sights both old and new on a panoramic tour. We visited the Dubai Museum located on the banks of Dubai Creek. These graceful buildings were superb examples of traditional wind towers, designed for comfortable living in the days before air-conditioning. This was followed by a visit to the Gold Souq. The souq glitters with all things gold, from gold bars and bangles to rings and necklaces and is one of the world's major gold markets. Finally we visited one of Dubai's beaches to view the Burg Al Arab Hotel built in the shape of a towering sail.

During the afternoon we visited one of the shopping malls in modern Dubai which was incredible. It featured a full ski slope indoors with the temperature outdoors approaching 40 degrees. Our visit to this incredible city was undoubtedly a highlight of the whole trip.

## Is This a Record?

*I recently received this missive from Greg Murphy - Ed*

"I'm contacting you in relation to the very recent retirement of old mate and long-time work associate, Dave Schmiede.

Dave joined the then Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in 1967 as far as I know within the early year (Jan/Feb) Cadetship (Hydrology) draft. If it was a later draft in 1967 the same outcome exists in respect of his starting year.

His recent September retirement establishes a continuous service period of either 52 or 53 years depending on his actual date of appointment i.e. he would likely have been in his 53rd year of continuous service with appointment in say January or February 1967.

Irrespective, the service period involved here is very significant."

*This is certainly a wonderful achievement. Is there anyone out there who can think of someone who served for a longer time?*

En route to our next destination in Mumbai, we had an immigration check. An Orion aircraft buzzed the ship early in the afternoon. Rumour had it that the Australian warship that followed us through the Red Sea had bailed up some pirates near Somalia who had lots of machine guns etc. The "fishing boats" we saw a couple of days previously may have been them.

On day 84 we reached Mumbai. Bombay Harbour is seven miles wide at the base and tapers as it goes north. It is an impressive sight, studded with mountainous islands and with the imposing buildings of the city on the one side and the palm-fringed mainland to the east slowly rising to the peaks of the Western Ghats. The city of Mumbai is built on seven islands joined to the mainland by an artificial causeway. An Act of Parliament officially changed the name of the city from Bombay to Mumbai in 1997.

Following a travel advice issued by the Australian government warning of possible terrorist activity in Mumbai, we decided to stay on the ship for the day. Mumbai didn't look very attractive from the wharf and pollution was terrible.

Tucked between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, Goa is an extraordinary amalgam of East and West. For over four centuries, Goa was the pearl of Portugal's Asian possessions. This enclave on the Konkan Coast resembled not India but the Iberian Peninsula with its imposing baroque churches, tile-roofed villas, feast day carnivals and mantilla-clad senhoras.

*Continued next page ...*

### **Around the World in 104 Days** *continued*

Yet even the Inquisition failed to erase Goa's Hindu roots. A distinct and cosmopolitan Goan culture emerged. Here the traveller can view a Hindu temple that incorporates elements of Baroque design or tour a church interior decorated with intricate woodcarving influenced by Hindu art. That hybrid culture survived reunification with India in 1961.

Our tour for the day included a visit to one of Goa's largest spice plantations specialising in cloves, cinnamon, pepper and medicinal herbs, along with fruits such as papaya, guava, pineapple, limes and tangerines. It was very interesting to see the different spices growing on the trees. We had an Indian lunch at the plantation.



*Green pepper seeds at Goa spice plantation*

The area was a lot cleaner than in Mumbai but still looked so run down and old. There was a lot of rice being grown and iron ore was exported from the area down the river by barge. In the afternoon we visited Old Goa's historic landmarks on a narrated city drive.



*Iron ore barges in river at Goa.*

Next port was Cochin which is one of the three largest ports on the west coast of India, handling over 5 million tons of cargo a year. It is one of those places where the 20<sup>th</sup> century and ancient civilisation exist side by side with a past so rich that it has a valid claim as a museum city. Cochin is actually a handy name for a cluster of towns and islands all linked by ferries and ridges. Vypeen island's fishermen still use their Chinese cantilever contraptions which make the river landscape look rather weird.

As part of our tour for the day we visited a coir mat factory, a cotton weaving factory and a coconut oil extraction factory. We visited Viakom traditional village in the countryside where we were served traditional Southern Indian food on a banana leaf, eaten in the traditional Indian way using our fingers with no eating utensils. It was quite enjoyable and a lot different to the Indian food usually served in Australia. Following lunch we went on a one hour canoe ride down a canal, passing Indian houses. This gave us an insight into the way Indians live in this area. We were greeted by young children at several locations begging for pens and pencils rather than money. These apparently were very much prized at school where they were often not available. We finished off the day with a Tuk-tuk ride back to the bus.

*Dawn Princess* continued her course across the Gulf of Mannar, past Sri Lanka on the port side, across the Bay of Bengal, passing through the Nicobar Islands, before arriving in Phuket in Thailand.

Hailed as the "Pearl of the Andaman Sea" this island off Thailand's long southern coast boasts a colourful history. A crossroads for trade, Phuket has been a melting pot of Thai, Malay, Chinese and Western influences. Its importance over the past 500 years stemmed from the island's natural resources, which include tin, hardwoods and rubber. In the past half-century, Phuket has enjoyed wide popularity as one of the premier travel destinations in South-east Asia. Travellers are drawn to the island's beaches, crystal-line waters and dramatic forested hills. Phuket is Thailand's largest, wealthiest, most populous island and a province in itself. The jagged coastal terrain encompasses broad sandy bays, rocky peninsulas, limestone cliffs and tropical vegetation. Phuket's interior supports rice paddies, rubber, cashew-nut, cacao, pineapple and coconut plantations.

Our tour for the day consisted of a narrated drive around parts of the island including a visit to Wat Chalong, the largest and most venerated of the island's 29 Buddhist temples. We also stopped for photographs at Cape Promthep overlooking Phuket City and Rang Hill overlooking Rawai Beach and had a shopping stop at a location selling Thai cotton, silk and semi-precious stones.

*To be continued ...*

#### **St Barnabas Bulletin Board**

Ladies, don't criticise your husbands. It may be these very faults that prevented them from getting better wives.



## Three amigos have a puzzle to solve

### Ross Carruthers

Three of the key players in the regulation of Queensland's burgeoning Coal Seam Gas (CSG) industry have spent their lives piecing together an extremely complex jigsaw puzzle called the Great Artesian Basin.

And now deep in the careers of chief hydro-geologist David Free, senior hydro-geologist Gerry Harth and principal project officer Ross Carruthers, they have all been reunited in Toowoomba as part of the Coal Seam Gas Compliance Unit's Groundwater Investigation and Assessment Team – a key plank of the Queensland's Government's action on community concerns about the impacts of CSG extraction on groundwater resources.

David says, "Between us we know a lot of the people in this industry and over a long period of time have developed a degree of trust within the community. We've been working with some landholders since the 1980s, helping them solve problems; when you can sit at a kitchen table and have an open discussion as friends, you have the chance to make a difference. It's an advantage alright having been around as long as I have," he adds. "You go out and explain the details of how the groundwater system works to a landholder. In many cases they are educated people, some have multiple degrees and can understand the science if you put it before them.

"I had one case recently, a very smart person, a veterinarian. He had questioned why his bore was suddenly not performing as well.

"It's a typical story. He had noticed the performance issues and thought: 'What had changed recently? Coal seam gas? It must be that.'

"I went out, showed him the trend of the past 40 years' worth of data from the monitoring bores, and suddenly he saw the answer ... it was a light-bulb moment. We ran a workshop for him and his neighbours addressing the issues on why their groundwater levels had dropped that much over the past 40 years.

"In many cases landholders have always had a poor understanding of how groundwater works: it's there and they are happy, they never give it a second thought until something goes wrong. That's where we come in. They are open-minded to us because they have been dealing with us for a long time on a personal level. There is trust and that is invaluable in any long-term relationship."

Gerry Harth is the senior hydro-geologist. He has worked extensively with mineral extraction and groundwater issues in the Great Artesian Basin since 1983 before shifting his focus slightly to CSG extraction methods in the past two years.

"I have spent the last few years working primarily on bore investigations and landholder complaints. Since I have come over to the CSG side of things I have found that most of the complaints we are getting are based around landholders being misinformed ... they just don't have enough information," Gerry says.

"Lots of the bores are being impacted by old age. It may be a bore construction issue, rotting casing, or poor quality groundwater having an impact."

When the CSG industry first came to prominence in 2010 there was no one Queensland Government organisation to deal with landholder or community concerns about CSG's impact on groundwater.

"But that is changing, bringing us all together in one unit with one purpose is allowing us have more of a customer focus," Ross Carruthers says.

"It is all about engaging landholders and community groups, giving them some accurate information and showing them how to monitor their own bores - this gives them some tools to fend for themselves. They are then able to compare the government monitoring, the company's monitoring and the results they have from their own monitoring."

"It gives the landholders' confidence that we are keeping an eye on it and they can too," David adds.

"Talking to the landholder is one part of the puzzle. We have been working within this landscape for a long time. We have records that go back decades in some cases; we understand the hydrology and the interconnectivity of the systems.

"You put all these pieces together when we are doing an investigation and you find you have all the right pieces to complete that puzzle."

*Thanks, Ross, for this contribution. Ed.*

### Answers to Terry's Trivia (page 11)

1. (i) Turandot 2. (iii) Breed of horse
3. (v) Rembrandt 4. September
5. (iii) Dogs 6. (iii) 1975 7. (iii) Jerusalem
8. (iii) Angela Merkel 9. (v) Tomatoes
10. (iii) Nancy-Bird Walton 11. (i) Cheese
12. (iv) England and India.

Jacques-Louis David  
**The Death of Marat**



*"I always feared tangling with Charlotte Corday could get me into hot water and even be the death of me."*



## Asset Management Unit

**Peter Gilbey**

Our editor Ian Pullar has asked me to pen a few words about an experience I had in the early 1990s after I was asked to assume responsibility for the delivery of a recent initiative of the then Department of Primary Industries which came to be known as the Asset Management Unit (AMU) and which was based mainly in Cairns and Thursday Island but with links to officers in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Bundaberg.

The unit provided technical support to Aboriginal and Islander communities throughout the state, some of which were in very remote locations throughout the Gulf and Cape York Peninsula, the Torres Strait Islands as well as in North, Central and Southern Queensland.

The services ranged from assisting in the design and installation of new facilities to improving the quality and security of community water supply. Through the use of innovative systems such as lined and covered lagoons which were filled by rain collecting on the dam cover and lined catchment which was channelled to an inlet – some of these covering several hundred square metres – communities were able to augment their household rain tanks.

One of the main challenges of the rain-fed storages was to dissuade the prolific sea birds in the Torres Strait from roosting and pooping on the catchment to minimise contamination from the bird droppings – again innovative methods were adopted to minimise the problem.

The photo below is the local water officer Justine, and Stuart Duncan from the AMU standing on one of the rain-fed storage lagoon floating covers, on Dauan Island in the Torres Strait.



Other initiatives included the setting up of trans-portable reverse osmosis plants which could be taken to a community when the established water supply system failed (mainly due to lack of rainfall).

Training of the community water officers was a major responsibility of the unit and was particularly important where sophisticated equipment was employed to augment the communities water supply.

Another aim of the unit was to encourage the community to be aware of the need to ensure their house-

holds minimised the wastage of water through the implementation of a waterwise program similar to that adopted in mainstream communities but tailored to suit the traditional ways, for example by recognising that certain individuals in the community had a key role in developing the awareness as traditionally they were the people who had a responsibility to provide water to their community.



*Stuart Duncan addressing some of the Torres Strait Island Water/Sewer operators who attended a training workshop on Thursday Island in 2007.*

One of the most rewarding features of the work with the unit was to see the participation of community water officers in the various training programs that were conducted each year either in Cairns or in the Torres Strait to upskill the officers. In fact, the development of the Certificate II Essential Services Officer qualification was a joint initiative between the AMU and the North Queensland College of TAFE, Cairns.

It must be said their enthusiasm may have been enhanced by their access to KFC whenever they visited Cairns.

At the higher level it was also pleasing to work with the community leaders who were grateful for the practical assistance provided by our technical officers who worked with the communities to solve problems on the ground with minimal fuss or disruption.

The work of the AMU was also recognised at the highest levels. The then Minister for Health, Senator John Herron of Queensland, was particularly supportive of the work done by the DPI in Queensland to improve health outcomes for Queensland's remote communities through provision of safe, secure water services.

I would like to take the opportunity to thanks some of the AMU team members and the support staff who made this initiative work so well during my time in the North, particularly Ian Ferrier, Russell Cassidy, Glen Starkey and more recently Stuart Duncan and their staff who did such a splendid job in improving the water and health outcomes of those far flung communities throughout Queensland.

*Many thanks to Peter and to Stuart for his input. Ed*

# **My Life of Hydrography**

**Ray Alford**

## **Early days in the Commission**

Clement Wragge joined the Queensland Public Service in January of 1887. He was appointed Government Meteorologist with the view of predicting cyclones to help stem the shipping losses resulting from them. The government saw the merit in setting up its own weather bureau as there was no federal equivalent at the time. Wragge had interests in all aspects of what we now call the hydrological cycle, including an interest in water resources. There is little doubt that his devotion to data collection helped persuade the government to set up a stream gauging branch in 1909. Wragge and others had long argued that long term records of river flow were required in order to design and operate dams and irrigation projects. Queensland had suffered under floods and droughts since settlement in 1839. The state would need good management of its water resources to reach its full potential. Wragge's own son, Bert, was one of the first employees of the fledgling stream gauging branch, formed to access the state's water resources.

I had no knowledge of Wragge, his son, nor of the importance of stream gauging as I prepared to join the public service 86 years after Clement. My thoughts were more likely occupied by the plum job that I had landed and the not inconsiderable \$45 per week that the government was willing to pay for my services. My intention had been to follow my father into the building trade, but my mother's aim was to see her sons with government jobs. She had endured the hardships of small business with its ups and downs and favoured the stability of the public service above private enterprise.

My career in Hydrography came about in a curious way. I had failed the physics and chemistry subjects when I completed grade 12. The only employment offered me was a teaching career which I didn't care for, so I opted to repeat grade 12 and try to temper my interest in motorbikes, boats and beer in the interests of better grades. Towards the end of that year, one of my previous year's classmates told me of the job he had taken with the Queensland Department of Irrigation and Water supply. He told me his job required him to sometimes work away from the city and that when he did, he got paid extra to stay in a pub. This aspect of his employment was especially appealing so I decided to apply. When I perused the list of jobs offered by the state government, I couldn't exactly remember what job he had. I thought he must have been a hydrographer, so I applied for that. It turns out he was a farm advisor. He resigned to join the police force shortly after I was employed.

My first day of employment started with a train trip from Ipswich in a brown wooden carriage pulled by a blue diesel-electric locomotive. The steam trains had been replaced a few years earlier but were not forgotten as attested by the smoke grimed stations and

lumps of coal lying besides the tracks. I joined the throngs of commuters jostling from Roma Street station and walking in waves down George Street towards the government precinct. My destination was the Executive Building, Joh Bjelke Peterson's pride and joy and one of the tallest buildings in Brisbane. I joined our group of new employees and was given a quick tour of the building as part of the induction process. The top storey cafeteria was particularly appealing and I thought that this would be a great place to work. The group was then broken up into our respective departments and I was a little disappointed to find out that my work place was elsewhere. About a dozen of us were walked from the Executive building to the Margaret Street corner and into a ramshackle building that I'm sure must have come from a Dickens' novel. My admiration for old architecture was yet to develop as we meandered through narrow corridors and up and down rickety stairs, shedding fellow travellers as we passed from section to section. There were four of us left when we finally arrived at the Surface Water section and I was concerned that I might not be able to find my way out of the building at the end of the day.

The Surface Water group were housed in a large room about the size of a small church. The seating was also church like with a raised section at the end seating the senior management who overlooked the more junior staff sitting, face forward, in rows. At the back of the room, parallel to one side, sat a row of elderly men, heads bent over huge books, engrossed in using pencils and rulers and sheets of graph paper. I later learned that most of these people were refugees who had fled western Europe after WW2 to seek a better life in Australia. They were also among the most skilled hydrographers in Australia.

The supervising hydrographer was Len Ezzy, a grey-haired man who sat, headmaster style, facing the group. To the side sat two clerks. Jim, the elder of the two controlled the stationery and reluctantly handed over a biro, pen, rubber and ruler to each of the new starters. We were informed sternly to make sure we kept the empty biro or pencil stub in order to prove a claim when asking for a replacement. We were also given a small towel embossed with the blue government logo as well as a glass ashtray. As was common at the time, nearly everyone smoked and a faint blue smoke pall hung daily over our heads, saturating our clothes, but no one cared. The public service dress regulations required that the men wore ties. This led to two distinct dress styles with the senior staff wearing plain, mostly white, shirts with thin dark ties, and the younger staff favouring wide ties and colourful shirts. I did notice a couple of the staff members were not wearing ties and wondered how that could be. There were no women working in the room. It would be many years until the first female hydrographer was employed. Thus, this was the environment where I began my career as a cadet hydrographer with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.



## My Life of Hydrography *continued*

Surface water group was responsible for the operation and collection of data from over 600 locations (gauging stations) on rivers and streams across Queensland. Staff operated from Brisbane and from five regional offices, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Mareeba. Head Office was responsible for the sites in southern Queensland, managing sites in a geographical area extending westwards to the SA border. The stations within this boundary were grouped into areas, each containing around 25 gauging stations. Each area was named after the locality giving rise to names such as border rivers or far west to distinguish individual clusters of stations. The responsibility for the operation of the stations within each area was assigned to one hydrographer called a party leader who was assigned one cadet. My party leader was Geoff Pocock who was responsible for the upper Condamine area.

Geoff was around three years older than me which seemed pretty old to me at the time. We were both from Ipswich and both our families owned holiday houses on Hope Island. I thought that this was a bit of a coincidence at the time and I only discovered thirty years later that we were distant cousins. My great great grandfather and his great great grandmother were brother and sister who had immigrated to Queensland together aboard the sailing ship "Mary Pleasants" in 1853. I got on well with Geoff and the other party leaders despite the fact that cadets weren't exactly treated well by some of the senior members. As a junior member, the first task I was assigned was to make the tea for the rest of the group before each break. This didn't worry me, as tea making was always my job when I was helping my father on building sites. At least I didn't have to start a fire before boiling the billy.

A condition of employment was the successful completion of a hydrographic certificate course. This course was conducted via distance education from a college in NSW and cadets were allowed four years to complete it. If the course wasn't completed by then, there would be no promotion beyond assistant hydrographer. Non-completion could also be used as grounds for dismissal. To assist with their studies, cadets were allowed to study at work on Friday afternoons. This was very helpful as there was help available from others who had completed the course. If you were lucky, you were given some previously marked units. This made life easy as the unit questions barely changed each year.

There was little training for the cadets apart from on the job training by the party leaders. Not long after we started, the new cadets were all taken to the Logan River and shown how to do a wading measurement by Graham Gillies. A wading measurement calculated the volume of water passing a point in a stream and as the name implied, was conducted by wading across the stream and taking a series of water velocity readings using a hand held current meter. This meter was simply

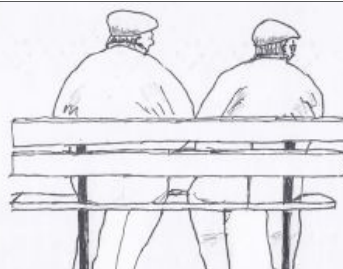
a propeller, attached to a rod, which rotated as the water flowed past. The faster the water flowed, the faster the propeller turned. The speed of the propeller was determined using a buzzer and stopwatch. The buzzer would sound for ten revolutions, and then be quiet for the next ten. The buzzers were timed for a period of greater than thirty seconds giving a result like 60 revs in 34.8 seconds. To perform the measurement, a tagged wire rope was first strung across the stream. The distance across the stream was divided into intervals so that there were between ten and fifteen places that the water velocity would be measured. If the stream was shallow at the interval marker, one velocity would be recorded at point 6 of the depth. If the water was deeper than 2 feet, then two velocities were recorded, one at point two and one at point eight of the depth, in order to obtain the average velocity at that interval. The rod that held the propeller meter was marked to show the depth. The calculation for the meter setting involved a bit of mental arithmetic. This took some practice but eventually became second nature.

The measurements were conducted by the cadet in the water who relayed the results to the party leader on the bank of the river who recorded the results with a pencil on a waterproof gauging sheet. The final result was calculated back in the office. Calculating the result in the field later became common practice after the advent of portable calculators. This allowed the gauging to be checked before the field party left the site.

The unit of flow measurement at the time was cusecs, short for cubic feet of water per second. This would later become cumecs (cubic metres/sec) after metrification, but for the first few years of my career we measured in cusecs. One game we played was to guess the flow in cusecs. Guesses were written on the back of the gauging sheet. Whoever came closest to the calculated answer would win. Even many years after going metric, I would still mentally estimate a flow in cusecs before converting to cumecs.

Soon after starting at Surface Water Branch all the new cadets were taken to the IWS Depot to inspect the instrumentation used to monitor river heights. Keith Smythe led the group. The depot was routinely called just "Rocklea" without a descriptor. The suburb name was adequate enough for the department. "Rocklea" was the operational hub for all the major dam constructions underway throughout Queensland, housing the essential infrastructure and supportive engineering necessary to build dams.

*To be continued ...*



*"You know, you can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that made you want to live to be a hundred."*

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Run a Bath, Not a Marathon

Getting into hot water, may be a good thing (unlike the event on page 6). A long soak in the bath may not seem like the best way to get fit, but lying in a piping hot tub burns as many calories as a thirty minute walk. An hour in 40C water burns off 585 kilojoules and lowers blood sugar even more than exercise does.

Having a hot bath five or more times a week could help prevent a heart attack or stroke, by reducing the risk of hardened, blocked arteries.

Studies have been reported from both Kyoto and Loughborough Universities. Researchers found that steaming in a bath may produce the “heat shock” proteins thought to remove sugar from the bloodstream and transport it to the muscle cells where it is burned as fuel.

Of course the Scandinavians have long espoused the sauna.

## Heartbeets

Drinking beetroot juice has been found to have beneficial results in reducing the incidence of heart failure. Doctors say nitrates found in high levels in beetroot can reduce stress on the heart by widening blood vessels and improving blood flow.

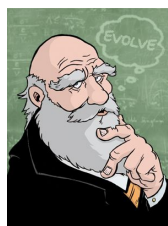
Around 100 heart failure patients have taken part in a trial at Queen Mary University of London, drinking 70ml of juice every day for three months with positive results.



““I’ve been living with this terrible headache for such a long time.”  
“You need to see a doctor.”  
“No. I need to see a divorce lawyer.”.”

## Exercise those Brain Cells

Q. Of six consecutive even numbers, the highest is divided by two and four is added. If this result is two more than the average of the six numbers, what is the lowest of the consecutive numbers?



## Darwin Awards

Each year these awards are made in honour of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution. Darwin Awards commemorate those who improve our gene pool – by removing themselves from it in the most spectacular way possible. Among the “winners” are:

(3 September 2018, New Zealand) Howard Miller, 39, professional welder spent his last moments helping a friend weld an exhaust pipe onto a classic Holden Kingswood sedan. He arrived at the garage shed with an experimental welding kit: an LPG bottle, similar to a propane tank, in which he had mixed **both components** that make up oxy-acetylene welding gas: acetylene and oxygen. A tank of **mixed acetylene/oxygen**+ no flow regulator = an accident waiting to happen.

Once Miller unveiled his jury-rigged device, his friend recognised this dangerous equation and repeatedly warned that it was crazy! Finally he high-tailed it out of the shed while Miller, undeterred by a bit of panic, attached a torch head straight onto the bottle and lit the welding tip.

Sans regulator, the flame crept back into the bottle and the inevitable explosion flattened the shed, which also contained about twenty litres of paint thinner and gasoline. The force of the explosion was so intense it shattered the windows of neighbouring properties.

Needless to say, the friend is in need a new car – but Mr Miller won a Darwin Award.

(27 November, 2018) The Buckeye Police Department in Arizona reported that a man accidentally shot his own sausage while shopping in the meat aisle at Walmart. Arizona law does not require a permit (nor a holster for that matter) to carry a firearm, so our hero felt free to carry his piece “commando-style” (unholstered) beneath his waistband. When the unholstered gun drifted down into his jeans, he reached in and pulled the trigger while repositioning his weapon. This loose cannon’s low hanging fruit didn’t have a chance. Firearm supporters can add this event to the arsenal of ammunition against gun control. Guns really do make a difference.

Because this shopper is still alive but unable to reproduce, he wins the uncommon Living Darwin Award:

## Answer to last Issue’s Teaser

A You take two tokens, leaving nine. Your opponent then takes one, two or three and in response you take three, two or one. This will ensure that there are five tokens left. Whatever your opponent then takes, you take whatever is required to leave only one for him.

## Perpetuating Errors

How often do errors get perpetuated? All too frequently, I fear. A classic (term used advisedly) example is in the well-known fairy tale of *Cinderella*.

Everyone knows that when Cinderella fled from the ball as midnight struck, she shed a glass slipper by which means the Prince was able to identify her and join her in living happily ever after. But glass slippers are plainly ridiculous. No one would wear such things on a cold night, let alone try to dance in them.

The very earliest French version of the story has Cinderella sensibly wearing slippers made of fur, which would have kept her feet very warm on a cold night. In Cinderella's case, they would have been of ermine, fit for a princess.

The French for fur is *vair* and for glass, *verre*. Spelled differently, the words are almost identical in sound. Now it must be remembered that the old stories were always handed down orally and not in written form. For once the perpetrator of the error can be identified. When Charles Perrault, a French poet, wrote the tale down in 1697, selecting elements from a number of versions, he erroneously turned the fur slippers into ones of glass. As all later editions and translations are based on his text, they copied his mistake which has never been corrected!

No doubt readers will be aware of examples of perpetuated errors. Here are some. Moreton Island and Bay were named after the Earl of Morton, but the cadastral draftsman got it wrong.

In the Lockyer Valley the town of Forest Hill is located on what could be the flattest part of the valley, while Plainlands is located on a hill. I have been told, but not verifiably, that the draftsman appended the wrong names to his map.

The town of Bundaberg is well known for being flat, yet its name is clearly derived from the German for mountain (berg) and not the name for town (burg). Is this another error? (The Bunda part of the name comes from the local aboriginal tribe).

The railway station at Maryborough in Queensland, constructed during the colonial era, is a simple building, particularly by comparison with the magnificent edifice at the small hamlet of Maryborough in Victoria. It is almost certain that the plans were sent from the British Colonial office to the respective wrong address!

### A Caution

Every little girl might like to be  
like an angel on the Christmas tree,  
sitting up high with a smile on her face -  
but a twig in a most embarrassing place.

Original author unknown.

### A Sign of the Times

On a church in Ipswich

**The first five days after a weekend are the worst.**

**Terry's Trivia** - from the 2019 mid-year lunch  
Answers on page 6.

- 1..*Nessun Dorma* features in which Puccini opera:  
(i) Turandot; (ii) Tosca; (iii) La Boheme; (iv) Madama Butterfly; (v) Le Villi.
2. Lippizzaner is a (i) German Fast Train; (ii) Type of Austrian Hat; (iii) Breed of horse; (iv) Belgian chocolate; (v) Spanish vegetable dish (vi) Czech sea song.
3. The *Night Watch* is a painting by: (i) Van Gogh; (ii) Mozart; (iii) Turner; (iv) Cezanne; (v) Rembrandt; (vi) Rubens.
4. In which month is the Birdsville races usually held?
5. Malamute, Chow Chow, Basenji are: (i) Monkeys; (ii) Cats; (iii) Dogs; (iv) Pigs.
6. When did Australia grant PNG independence:  
(i) 1969; (ii) 1982; (iii) 1975; (iv) 1956; (v) 1972.
7. In which city would you walk the Via Dolorosa and the Stations of the Cross: (i) Venice; (ii) Rome; (iii) Jerusalem; (iv) St Petersburg; (v) Lourdes.
8. Black Russian, Grose Lisse and Beefsteak are all types of: (i) Cocktails; (ii) Mushrooms; (iii) Dogs; (iv) Apples; (v) Tomatoes.
9. Which leader has a doctorate in quantum chemistry: (i) Scott Morrison; (ii) Emmanuel Macron; (iii) Angela Merkel; (iv) Vladimir Putin; (v) Narendra Modi.
10. After which famous aviator will Sydney's new airport be named?: (i) Kingsford Smith; (ii) Bert Hinkler; (iii) Nancy-Bird Walton; (iv) Douglas Bader; (v) Biggles; (vi) Gareth Evans (vii) John Gorton; (viii) John Flynn.
11. What type of food is *chevre*: (i) Cheese; (ii) Tomato; (iii) Meat; (iv) Herb.
12. Mulligatawny soup is from the cuisines of: (i) France and Vietnam; (ii) Portugal and Sri Lanka; (iii) Holland and Indonesia; (iv) England and India.



"I reckon I've cracked the problem of never being able to remember passwords. I've set them all to 'incorrect' and that always agrees with the machine."



## Book Club

*From Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage* by Judith Brett is an entertaining and illuminating account of the development of the unique Australian electoral system.

Australia is one of the very few nations in the world which has compulsory, preferential voting. We also, unusually, vote on Saturdays. Brett's book describes the unique circumstances and the personalities responsible for the adoption of these characteristics.

The American colonies were established by settlers who wanted no truck with authority (Pilgrim Fathers etc) which led to the strong belief in individual freedom and responsibility. Furthermore, the States broke away from England largely over the issue of taxation. So when Australia was first settled by the British, to avoid a tax-fuelled rebellion, the government levied no taxes, but provided all infrastructure and services. Australians developed a majoritarian faith in democracy.

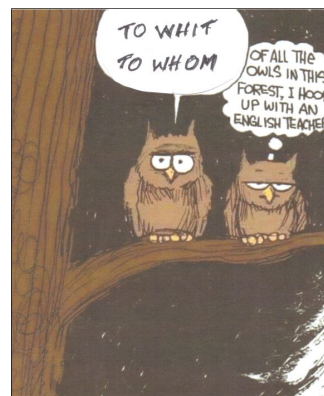
Brett traces the development of the franchise from the public nomination and voting in front of the pub (with suitable inducements) to the development of the secret ballot, universal suffrage (including in turn women and eventually aborigines), compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting through the disparate voices of the states before, during and after federation, with policy being developed to try to advantage particular interest groups. The Saturday poll is a wonderful Australian custom with sausage sizzles and produce for sale including Malcolm Turnovers, Bill Shortbreads and Jacqui Lambingtons. The Democracy Sausage even made it to the Macquarie Dictionary as the 'word of the year'.

She concludes, "What the story of compulsory voting tells us is how very good we are at elections. We should celebrate it."



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*My Friend the Enemy* by Paul Briscoe is a true story around World War II.

On a visit to Germany in 1934, English-woman Norah Briscoe became enamoured of National Socialism, so that two years later she entrusted her six year old son Paul to the care of a German whom she had hoped to marry, and his family. Hindered by language, Paul struggled to fit in and when war broke out, he was stranded in an alien country. Meanwhile his mother found a job in the Ministry of Supply in London and tried to smuggle secret information to the Nazis. She was entrapped by MI5 and arrested for treason.

As time went on, Paul came to see himself as German and, because of his Aryan looks, he was cast in a German propaganda film eulogising the Fatherland. Shortly before his tenth birthday, he proudly enrolled in the Hitler Youth. He longed to fight for the country and die a glorious death for the Führer.

Repatriated to England after the war, he was confronted by a mother he did not recognise in a country whose language he could no longer speak.

*My Friend the Enemy* brings vividly to life an extraordinary story, conveying the pain, exhilaration and confusion of the son but also the ambition, delusion and eventual shame of the mother.

**Ian Pullar**

