



# WATERY SAUCES OLDIES and BOLDIES

Newsletter No 92

July 2020

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION

## The AGM that wasn't ...

As members will be all too aware, the AGM which was scheduled for April had to be cancelled once the regulations for managing the COVID-19 pandemic were introduced by the governments. I'm sure though, that members would much rather have avoided the malady than attend an AGM.

Our constitution requires us to hold an AGM within six months of the close of our financial year which gives us until September. Advice has also been received that, under the circumstances, a further delay would be permitted without application to the authorities while the regulations make it impossible for us to meet.

Members will be advised when the AGM is to be scheduled once the situation changes. In the meantime, the current Committee will soldier on.

Consideration was given to holding an AGM via Zoom, but this was considered somewhat impractical and defeating of the collegiate aims of the Association.. (This could be translated rather roughly as having a beer with our mates!)

## The Port of Brisbane Visit that wasn't ...

This proposed visit also fell victim to the COVID regulations along with

## The Fort Lytton Visit that wasn't ...

and

## The Mid-Year Luncheon that wasn't.

The Committee has been unable to meet in person, but as we live in this era of technology domination, we have been able to communicate via various devices.

Our meetings have for years been held in the SunWater offices, but these have been off limits for us and for most of their staff. A skeleton staff of only 30 has been on site since the closure with the other office staff working from home. The number allowed in the office will be increased to 100 after 13 July. We may be able to resume our Committee meetings and mail-outs soon.

## SunWater CEO

It was reported in the Newsletter last December that Nicole Hollows had resigned. No permanent replacement has yet been appointed. Lisa Dalton is currently acting in the position.

## From the Editor's Chair

*Will life ever be the same again?*

*When I last went to press, we had no real inkling of the impact on the world of the corona virus named COVID-19.*

*Unless a vaccine is produced, will we ever return to normal? And what will the new normal be? Perhaps "working from home" will have been so successful, that work forces will require less office accommodation. And perhaps start and finish times may become more flexible, relieving public transport and traffic jams. Only time will tell.*

*In the meantime, keep safe!*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## The Passing of Tom Fenwick

Members will no doubt be aware that former Commissioner of Water Resources and Director-General of the Department of Natural Resources, Tom Fenwick, died on 20 April.

Tom was a man of considerable significance to the water industry of Queensland and Australia and to us who had the privilege of serving with him and under his leadership.

Following his death, there was a flood of tributes which have been published on our web site. On page 5 of this Newsletter there is a brief obituary to Tom and a much longer and more fulsome version can be found on the tributes page.

Once COVID regulations permit, it is expected that there will be a memorial function which, no doubt, will be well attended.

**President Pete has provided some definitions of what it means to be 'OLD'. I have inserted these at the bottom of some pages. Do you agree?**

## Bits and Pieces

### Commission of Inquiry Paradise Dam

In April, the Commissioners published their report on their “full and careful inquiry into the root cause of structural and stability issues identified with the Paradise Dam near Bundaberg”. The Inquiry had heard testimony from a number of our members before producing its 562 page report.

This is not the place for any consideration of the technical aspects of the inquiry. However, any readers keen to know more may visit

[https://paradisedaminquiry.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PDCOI-Report-April-2020\\_Web-accessible.pdf](https://paradisedaminquiry.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PDCOI-Report-April-2020_Web-accessible.pdf)

The document is available to anyone and may be quoted provided it is attributed to the authors. Members are also referred to the SunWater web page where regular updates on Paradise Dam remedial works are posted along with details of additional work required other than just the main spillway.

There are a number of recommendations which could be expected to be taken into consideration during design and construction of future dams, particularly those using roller compacted concrete.

### Wivenhoe Dam Class Action

Last year Mr Justice Robert Beech-Jones found that the State of Queensland, Seqwater and SunWater had mismanaged the operation of Wivenhoe dam during the 2011 flood and were therefore responsible for damages incurred to properties downstream of the dam. On 29 May the NSW Supreme Court apportioned the share of the damages to be paid: State Government 20%, Seqwater 50% and SunWater 30%.

However, both Seqwater and SunWater have lodged appeals against the original finding and the government is considering appealing against the judgement on its share of the damages. These appeals are unlikely to be heard before the end of the year. As yet, there has been no determination of the total cost of the damages that have to be reimbursed. According to the original judgement, this is to be based on the incremental cost of the damage caused by the mismanagement and not on the total damage, some of which would have occurred in any case.

It will be some time before “the fat lady sings”.

### The New Bradfield Scheme

With a State election coming up within a matter of months, members will no doubt be aware that one of the promises of the Leader of the Opposition, Deb Frecklington, is the implementation of the modified Bradfield Scheme which she says will include a very large dam and irrigate an area in Western Queensland “bigger than Tasmania”.

We will watch with interest.

### Happy Birthday Alan

Alan Vizer turned 90 on 22 June. Congratulations.

### Marjory (Peg) Wheeler Makes a Ton

Marjory (Peg) Wheeler turned 100 years young on 21 March 2020. The day was celebrated with three generations of her family, extended family and close friends gathering at Marjory’s residence in Bundaberg.

Marjory was born in Walsall in England. Her father had served in the Royal Engineers in France for five years and as a member of the “Occupying Force” in Germany followed by 18 months in hospital recovering from chest conditions.

When she was 18 months old, her family returned to Australia, living in Bundaberg, Brisbane and Bundaberg again. Her father gave her the nick-name of “Peg” because he did not like margarine.

Peg married Eric Wheeler on 21 April 1941. They originally lived on and worked the family cane farm at Splitters Creek, Bundaberg until Eric obtained a job as a cane tester at Millaquin Sugar Mill. They purchased an uncompleted house in Bundaberg. Eric and Marjory’s father completed the construction of the house where Marjory still resides today.

By 1951 Eric decided that his seasonal job at Finch Hatton Sugar Mill as the “Government Check Chemist” could not support his family of three children with another on the way, so he applied for a position with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission as a Water Officer in the then Burdekin Irrigation Scheme outside the township of Ayr. The “Soldier Settlement Scheme” was designed to produce tobacco and provide farming opportunities for returned soldiers from WW2. Eric’s application was successful, so in August 1952 they packed up the family and furniture and moved north to Clare outside of Ayr.

The family lived in a prefabricated masonite hut on the banks of the Burdekin River for a few years until permanent housing became available. The building consisted of 2 x 16’ x 12’ prefabricated huts joined by an enclosed skillion roof. The shower, toilet and laundry were separate buildings. There was a fuel stove in the kitchen, a wood fired “copper” and concrete tubs in the laundry.

Peg had another child in July 1956 and in September 1956 Eric was transferred to Dalbeg which is located some 96 kilometres from Ayr. Peg and Eric sent their two eldest children to boarding school in Townsville as the local school in Dalbeg only went as far as scholarship. Peg and Eric moved back to Clare in 1958 where Peg worked as a farm worker in the tobacco industry and as a book keeper in the Clare Shop to earn money to cover Boarding School fees.



**'OLD' is when: An 'all-nighter' means not getting up to use the bathroom.**

In April 1961 Eric was transferred to Moogerah Dam on Reynolds Creek in the Fassifern Valley outside the townships of Kalbar and Boonah. Peg had her sixth child in 1962. The farming community was not as friendly and easy going as the farming community of the Burdekin and it took a few years to establish community friendships. Education of their children was much easier as the district had good local primary schools and a "High Top" arrangement to Junior Level in Boonah with promise of a new High School to Senior level and a school bus service.

Peg and Eric enjoyed their period at Moogerah Dam where Eric could demonstrate some of his building prowess in developing the recreation areas, office complex and enhancement of the water distribution system associated with this project. They were proud members of the local Lions Club and played competitive tennis on the weekends in the winter months. As Eric was away from the office a lot, Peg became his unofficial receptionist answering telephone calls from the Brisbane Office, taking messages and responding to members of the public enquiring about the picnic facilities or daily weather conditions on site. After some years on site Eric was permitted to engage the

services of a fulltime receptionist.

As Peg had developed potentially life threatening health problems, Eric decided to retire in December 1978 and they returned to their family home in Bundaberg. In March 1979, they took a Women's Weekly World Tour on the passenger ship "Oriana".

Upon their return, Eric gave their Bundaberg residence a much needed make over and they settled into retirement enjoying the fruits of their labours, availing themselves of many long distance bus trips to other States of Australia, holidays at the Gold Coast and Mon Repos in Bundaberg.

Sadly, Eric passed away on 13 January 2007 aged 90, leaving Peg to battle on with life.

She still resides in her own home although she does receive daily assistance. Peg is truly a resilient individual, enduring many set backs in her life, but always managing to regain her composure and soldier on.

Happy Birthday Peg.

*This interesting biography is abridged from the story by her son Ross who, with brothers Peter and Mark, followed their father into IWSC. Their sister Robyn married Ray Hargreave, a Water Officer -Ed.*

## A Proclamation

*Mick Garvey sent this historical document thinking readers might be interested in both the contents and style. It emanated from the office of Governor Lachlan Macquarie - Ed.*

Government and General Orders

Government House, Sydney

Wednesday 5 March 1817

Civil Department

The Governor's official Communications from the interior within the last few Days have excited in His Excellency's Mind the most sincere concern and Regret for the recent calamities in which the unfortunate settlers on the Banks of the Nepean and Hawkesbury have been once more involved by the late dreadful inundations of those Rivers.

Whilst it does not fall within the Reach of human Foresight or Precaution to be able to guard effectually against the baneful Recurrence of such awful Visitations or to avoid being more or less involved therein, yet when the too fateful Experience of Years has shown the Sufferers the inevitable consequences of their wilful and wayward Habit of placing their Residences and Stock-yards within the Reach of the Floods (as if putting at Defiance the impetuous Element which it is not for man to contend with); and whilst it must still be had in Remembrance that many of the Deplorable Losses which have been sustained within the last few Years at least, might have been in great measure averted, had the settlers paid due consideration to their own interests and to the frequent Admonitions they had received, by removing their Residences from within the Flood Marks to the Townships assigned for them on the High Lands, it must be confessed that the Compassion excited by their Misfortunes is mingled with sentiments of Astonishment and Surprise, that any People could be found so totally insensible to their true interests as the Settlers have in this instance proved themselves.

His Excellency, however, still cherishes the Hope that the Calamities which have befallen the Settlers will produce at least the good Effect of stimulating them to the highly expedient and indispensable measure of proceeding to establish their Future Residences in the Townships allotments for the Preservation of Them selves, their Families, and their Property; and that they will, one and all, adopt their Habitations on the High Lands cheered with the animating Hope and fair Prospect of receiving, at no very distant Day, their late Losses, and securing themselves from their further Recurrence. Those who, notwithstanding, shall perversely neglect the present Admonition and Exhortations to their own benefit, must be considered wilfully and obstinately blind to their true interests, and undeserving of any future indulgences, whilst, on the contrary, those who shall meet this severe Dispensation of Providence with manly Fortitude and unbroken Spirit, may rest assured that their Exertions and industry will not only merit, but obtain the favourable Consideration and Protection of their Government.

These Orders are to be read during the Time of Divine Service at each of the Churches and Chapels through the Colony, on the three ensuing Sundays.

**'OLD' is when:....You don't care where your spouse goes .. Just as long as you don't have to go along.**

## Vale – Ross John Stewart 20-12-1947 to 16-03-2020

After completion of his studies in engineering at Caulfield Institute of Technology in 1969 Ross joined the Water Resources Commission in Queensland as Site Engineer, Construction Branch at Maroon Dam on 18 March 1970. Ross then moved to join the Civil Design Group within Designs Branch in Brisbane in February 1971 where he commenced his very successful career as a Civil Design Engineer specialising in Geotechnical Investigations involving field and laboratory test programs for major water resource infrastructure. After returning from a period of world travel in 1973, Ross was located at the Civil Engineering Materials Testing Laboratory at Rocklea until March 1982 when he was involved for a short stint in Project Planning Branch in Brisbane office.

Ross was appointed as Materials Engineer, Design Division in mid 1982 delivering a wide ranging service in both a geographical and geotechnical context (and under various departmental names) up until 2002 when he was appointed as Senior Engineer, Environment and Materials within the Engineering Projects Group at SunWater where he was responsible for the introduction and management of the Environmental Management System to the Engineering Group until his retirement in 2006.

During his career Ross developed, and was recognised by his peers for, specialised skills in Geotechnical Investigations for the design and construction of major water retaining structures as well as the rehabilitation of contaminated sites and tailing dams. Highlights of this stage of his career were managing a team of engineers and technical staff in the preliminary inspection of some 570 privately owned water storage dams in Queensland as well as the successful rehabilitation of the Chariah Gold Mine Site, the Herberton Tin/Copper Mine tailings dam and the Horn Island Gold Mine site.

Another career highlight for Ross was being invited in 1984 to join the inaugural Australian Standards Committee CE/20 – Geosynthetics, where he was involved in the preparation of standards on geotextile test methods and the development of a Handbook on the Durability of Geosynthetics. Ross was an active member of the committee for some 22 years, the latter 5 years as Chairman, until his retirement in 2006.

Ross was involved in so many water resource projects in Queensland during the course of his career it would be very difficult to list them all; suffice to say that it would be easier to list those on which he was not involved and that list would not fill the back of a postage stamp!

With such a busy workload it is hard to imagine how Ross found the time outside of work to be an active member of the many organisations, both professional and community, to which he gave his every effort thus gaining the respect of many of his peers and community members. Ross very ably performed the role of Treasurer WRRRA for 3 years from 2013 to 2016 and will always be remembered for his meticulous record keeping. I am sure he will also always be remembered for his impeccable choice of a good red wine.

Ross and Marjorie enjoyed travel and covered a large part of the world in his retirement, his sense of adventure taking them to faraway places. In the latter years of retirement Ross was to be challenged by ill health. He met the challenge as he had lived his life, with dogged determination and unbridled courage. When given the opportunity to take part in a medical research program he agreed with gusto throwing all his efforts into a complete understanding of his illness and all his strength into fighting the “invader”. His attitude was that if the program worked for him it was a success and if it did not then it would still be a success as it would help others. Sadly the latter was the case but he accepted the outcome with a smile and the same stoic, uncomplaining attitude that had been the hallmark of his fight for some years. Ross displayed a level of courage against adversity that earned him the deepest respect and admiration of all lucky enough to know him. He thumbed his nose at his illness right to the end and without complaint.

Ross is survived by his wife Marjorie, his family, Glen and Kym, Darren and Bobbi, Allison and Rob, Natalie and Chris and eleven grandchildren.

*"A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles"*

This tribute was prepared by Daryl Brigden, a close colleague of Ross's over many years.

### An Anniversary

I am quite sure that under different circumstances the nation would have given much greater recognition to the date 19 April as this marked exactly 250 years since Lieutenant James Cook and the crew of the *Endeavour* first set eyes on the country that was to become known as Australia. This is the day in 1770 on which an event irrevocably changed the history of this country.

Of course, settlement by the British did not begin until almost 18 years later.



#### St Barnabas Bulletin Board

##### For sale.

An antique chaise longue by a recently widowed parishioner with a well padded seat.

### **Vale Thomas David Fenwick 4-01-1944 – 20-04-2020**

Tom Fenwick was born in Brisbane, the eldest of three children. His father, Osborn Thomas Fenwick, was a Civil Engineer, and his mother Amy was a Kindergarten teacher. Tom attended Wilston State School and Brisbane Grammar School, as did his father and uncle. A recipient of a Government Scholarship, Tom studied at the University of Queensland, graduating with Honours as a Bachelor of Civil Engineering.

He began his professional career with the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission in January 1963.

He married primary school teacher Valerie Claire Jordan in April 1964 and they lived at Indooroopilly for two years before moving to Wuruma Dam where son Matthew was born in 1968. In 1969 the family moved to Boonah to work on Maroon Dam. Nine months later, an offer from consulting engineering firm Reinhold and Partners, where his father worked, enticed Tom to leave the IWSC and join the private sector.

Frank Learmonth persuaded Tom to return to the IWSC in 1972, the same year that son Craig was born.

During the period to 1979, he progressed from directing investigations into a number of major water related projects to the establishment and management of Forward Planning Branch. From 1979 to 1985, Tom held the position of Senior Engineer, Special Projects, where, in addition to his responsibility for internal coordination of major projects (which included: Burdekin River Project, Boondooma Dam, Wivenhoe Dam, Awoonga-Callide Pipeline, Stanwell Power Station Water Supply and Tarong Water Supply), he was involved in a wide range of policy and management issues. In 1984, he established a Policy and Economics Unit which provided a broader policy perspective to water resources management. He also undertook a review of the overall Commission organisational structure, both in Head Office and in all country centres. As a result of his recommendations, the initial regional structure for the Commission was established.

He was appointed Assistant Commissioner in December 1985 and, following the retirement of Don Beattie, he was appointed Commissioner of Water Resources in August 1986.

As Commissioner, Tom's attention was focused on providing a clear corporate direction which saw the introduction of strategic planning, the development of a corporate plan, clear objectives, new strategies and firm targets which placed the Commission in a position to manage the emerging era of rapid change resulting from the economic reform agenda which Tom's vision and foresight had predicted.

Following the election of the Goss Labor Government, the Commission was incorporated into the expanded Department of Primary Industries in December 1989. Tom continued as Commissioner until 1991, when he became Deputy Director-General of DPI where he played a pivotal role in establishing a corporate structure in the new Department. In 1994, Tom was appointed Director-General of DPI, where he provided the leadership required to move a large and diverse department into a new era of responsive rural services and professional management of the State's natural resources and commercial forest and water businesses.

At the request of Health Minister Peter Beattie, Tom undertook the role of Acting Director-General of Health for a brief period, to implement a new regional structure.

With the change in Government and the creation of the Department of Natural Resources in 1996, Tom was the "natural" choice to lead and guide the development of this new organisation, with its various and diverse elements. Tom's vision and leadership during this time of restructure is widely acknowledged by other States and the Commonwealth through his relations with them. These included Commonwealth-State involvements in water matters, including Senate inquiries, Commonwealth Grants Commission, Australian Water Resources Council and representation of the State in a range of interstate involvements, including The Murray Darling Basin Commission, and The Border Rivers Commission.

Tom's contribution to the water industry was recognised a number of times. The major pumping station in the Burdekin Irrigation Area was named the Tom Fenwick Pump Station and he was the Institution of Engineers Engineer of the Year in 1998.

He retired in 1999.

As their sons grew up, flew the nest and began families of their own, Tom and Val resided variously at Aspley, Bridgeman Downs, Auchenflower and Hollywell. Tom loved to drive and travelled regularly to Melbourne to stay with son Matt, and enjoy the culinary and vinicultural delights of the surrounding districts. Painting, entertaining grandchildren, and a longstanding intense desire for the latest technology occupied his leisure time.

Board positions and work for his own consultancy, Tom Fenwick and Assoc., kept him busy. For example, the Gateway Motorway Dispute Resolution Board, the Gateway Update Project, Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd, and Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal Project Board all commanded his attention.

In 2014, Tom was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He dealt with it in a typical manner, treating it as a project. He always looked and planned for the next option, undergoing endocrine therapy, chemotherapy and radio-immunotherapy as he continued to consult, drive interstate and spend time with family and old friends. Finally, medical science could offer him no more, and Tom passed away peacefully on 20 April 2020.

- from the speech delivered by Mike McKenna on Tom's retirement, reported in WRRR Newsletter 30, supplemented by information supplied by Tom's son Matt.

### **Vale – Selwyn “Joe” Gerhardt 19-06-1936 – 21-03-2020**

“Joe” Gerhardt was one of the legendary Senior Works Supervisors of IWS and QWRC. His real name was Selwyn, but he disliked that and insisted on being called “Joe” – never Joseph.

Joe was first employed on the construction of Moogerah Dam in 1961, before transferring to Leslie Dam where he worked on diamond drilling operations and the excavation of the foundations of the dam. In December 1963, he married Lesley Hastie, daughter of Bob and Jess Hastie, the mess contractor.

His next work was at Wuruma Dam followed by Maroon Dam, where the experience gained on dam construction work resulted in his promotion to Works Supervisor at Glenlyon Dam. He worked at Clare Weir and then on the Wivenhoe Area Project.

Initially this involved the construction of Splityard Creek Dam. Following several major rock falls on the excavation for the lower channel to the power station, Joe ran one of the two 12 hour shifts to remedy this. This work was of a very high priority as it held up the construction of the power station. The contractor flattened the slopes starting from the top of the excavation down, leaving benches at regular intervals as work proceeded. Rock bolting and spray-curing the rock face was carried out from each bench to stabilise the batters by a work-force supervised by the Water Resources Commission. Joe's previous experience on excavation, drilling and arranging suitable subcontractors to carry out this work was invaluable. The total cost of this remedial work was some \$3,600,000.

During the Third Stage Construction of Wivenhoe Dam, Joe supervised the construction of the main dam embankment by Wivenhoe Constructions. His experience on this work was invaluable. He organised the conditioning of a replacement borrow pit for the clay core without any holdup to the contractor. His man management, organisation of supervisory staff and relationship with the Contractor were equally good.

His final dam construction supervision was on Peter Faust Dam.

- Information on Joe's career provided by Jim Mienert.

### **Vale – Cornelis (Con) Toonen 1951 - 2020**

As the Engineering Surveyor for the Eton Irrigation Project, Con Toonan would have had some involvement with almost every piece of water infrastructure developed in the Mackay District over a thirty-five-year period. He was never afraid of a bit of hard work and took great pride in completing the tasks assigned with accuracy and determination no matter how difficult. This accuracy was exemplified by the way he diligently marked up the Design Drawings with the actual “as built” information.

Con was also an integral member of the construction team, positioning and setting out the concrete structures that would store, pump and or control the flow of water throughout the Eton and Pioneer Irrigation Schemes.

As the Eton Scheme is a very asset rich scheme, Con and his chainman were very busy people constantly liaising and working with almost the entire site workforce on a weekly basis as the various construction teams went about building the wide variety of assets incorporated in the Eton Scheme. Yet, Con always remained cool calm and collected.

Con would always make himself known to landholders when venturing upon their lands for official purposes and established a good rapport with the farming community of Mackay. He was the type of person who would take time to explain the answer to that silly question albeit with a little bit of friendly banter. Con would always make time available to provide assistance and or professional advice where possible.

Con was a keen gardener and sportsman and played or followed a multitude of sports. He was always able to provide accurate and sometimes humorous commentary to that smoko or lunchtime conversation. He was also a strong family man who, with wife Maureen, raised three fine children.

As the Statewide construction program drew to a close so did the work for Engineering Surveyors, so Con took a position in Emerald as Maintenance Supervisor. This was a fairly major decision at the time as Con and Maureen resided in their own house in Mackay. However, they moved to Fairbairn Dam for a few years until Con decided to retire from his employment with SunWater and purchased a residence in Yeppoon on the Central Queensland Coast.

Con was a regular attendee at Mike McKenna's Annual CQ Get Together where even though he did not partake in the consumption of the amber fluid he would remain until the conclusion of the event and provide transport where it was required..

Con Toonen, was one of the most friendly, accommodating, honest, reliable, and diligent people one could ever hope to meet. Unfortunately, his time came too soon.

- Adapted from the tribute provided by Ross Wheeler.



## **Vale – Grahame John Bertram 26 March 1934 to 23 May 2020**

Grahame died on 23 May 2020 at the age of 86 after a short illness of some five weeks. He had a fall at home and when he was taken to hospital the doctors uncovered cancer in the brain, lung and liver. He went into palliative care for nine days and had Joyce, son David, and daughter Anne at his side towards the end, and a Facetime with youngest son Colin in New York who couldn't be there with his Dad.

Grahame was born on 26 March 1934 in Brisbane and was educated at Brisbane State High and Church of England Grammar School. He married Joyce in 1959 and their family comprised Peter, David, Anne, and Colin plus eight grandchildren and one great grandchild – a source of love and understanding to Grahame.

At his Funeral Service, his son Colin videoed from New York a truly beautiful eulogy. Colin shared his memories of his father being known by many names throughout his life – Gray, Dad, Graymee, Mr B, Grandpa, and Pa. Other words to describe Grahame over recent weeks were interested, caring, true mate, dependable, loving, a gentle man, and simply one of the good ones.

He was happiest in his home at Moorooka in earlier times, on the beaches of the Gold Coast, visiting his children, and at their home at Palm Lakes at Eagleby.

Grahame completed his National Service at the age of 18 and then he joined the IWSC and served there faithfully until he retired at the age of 55. Early postings were as clerk in Water Resources Branch in the early '60s when Arthur McCutcheon was Senior Engineer and Senior Clerk, Rivers and Streams when Ken Carmichael was SER&S. Grahame also held the positions of Investigation Officer and Stores Supervisor & Supply Officer, succeeding Garney Johnson in both of those positions. As SS&SO, he "pursued his new role with equal dedication but with considerably more restraint". Finally, he was appointed Administration officer (Special Duties), seeing out his career.

One of Grahame's staff members in Licences Branch, Barry Mewburn, described his former colleague as "absolutely a top bloke and a top boss". Barry tells the story of Grahame visiting him in Bundaberg and confiding that it was a complete coincidence that he purchased the same hat that Ken Carmichael wore (some will remember Ken as the Chief Engineer of Rivers and Streams Branch – a very proud man and a true professional – so, emulating Ken was seen to be quite a significant gesture). Barry also muses that Grahame was so meticulous in ensuring the Section 9s, the Waterworks and Bore Licences were word-perfect before mailing out to licence holders and if his staff's handwriting was a touch illegible, he would buy them a Grade 1 copybook and make them practise their printing.

Barry remembers the time when Grahame was called upon to contact thousands of licencees as there was a glitch in the system and it was a monstrous task for the group to arrange for re-application. Again Grahame checked everything twice.

Following his retirement, Grahame became heavily involved in the Retirees Association. He was Treasurer from 1989 to 1993, President from 1993 to 1995, Past President from 1995 to 1997 and then served as Secretary from 1999 to 2000. A very laudable contribution.

Interests outside the Commission included being a returning officer for Federal, State, and Local Authority elections. He was an accredited auditor for the Doomben Race Course, and a family man interested in his children's involvement in ballet, swimming, cricket, theatre productions, recitals, and anywhere else when a volunteer was called – he was there.

He gained inner strength (Colin recalls) from his acceptance into Freemasonry and being a Church Warden and Parishioner for most of his life.

As a family, they travelled Australia (sometimes in a caravan) always listening to Herb Alpert or Glenn Miller on tape deck with the children crying out "not another dam – not another weir, Dad". Overseas, Grahame and Joyce holidayed in Hong Kong, Western Europe, Africa, Asia, New York, UK, Indonesia, and New Zealand.

Rob Craig recalls the very particular handwriting that Grahame had, which was reflective of his approach for perfection in life. Rob and his wife were known to visit the Bertram family at Moorooka and on the beach at Currumbin – Grahame and his family were very welcoming and accommodating.

No doubt, there are countless more former work mates who could add to the memory of a most genuine man who believed in Family, Friends and in Faith. *Well done ... Good and Faithful Servant*

*This tribute to Grahame was written by Rob Craig with input from Barry Mewburn, Dudley McIntosh and Ross Gomersall and later augmented by contributions from Peter McMahon, Trevor Tuesley, John Connolly, Col Hazel and Rolf Rose.*

*The Courier Mail* on 21 June carried a notice of the death, on 14 June, of Germaine Kennedy, widow of John Kennedy whose obituary was printed in the February 2020 edition of this Newsletter.

# My Life of Hydrography

## Part 3

Ray Alford

The other major service item was the gas bottle. A full bottle weighed close to 100 pounds and was made of steel. A low pressure gauge reading from the regulator screwed to the top indicated the need for a bottle change and again the necessity to change the bottle depended on the time of day and distance from the truck. Luckily, gas bottles required only infrequent changes whereas the battery replacement was a more frequent occurrence.

Cross sectional surveys were undertaken at the sites at regular intervals with one or two surveys conducted each field trip. The cadet carried the staff while the party leader operated the tripod mounted survey level. Surveys were always commenced from the station "bench mark". This consisted of a brass dome set into a concrete block. The party leader would first take the reading of the staff on the bench mark before taking readings at the points of interest. When the staff was no longer visible from the tripod location, a fixed point of level was observed before the tripod and level were moved to a new location. The fixed point was known as a change point and I was taught to use a screwdriver pushed into the ground to provide this reference. The survey would end with a fore shot back to the bench mark. If no mistakes had been made, the difference between all the rises and falls in ground level should be near zero. A small margin of error called the closure was allowed. If the difference fell outside this margin then the survey had to be repeated.

There was a lot of mental arithmetic necessary to calculate the closure and mistakes here were common. It was always a relief when the party leader declared that the survey had "closed". I would later find out that some party leaders would wait until they were back in the comfort of the office to do the arithmetic. The problem with this method was that if the survey was found to be in error, it couldn't be repeated. Party leaders got around this by "correcting" one of the field readings. Their surveys would then close. I'm not sure how prevalent this practice was but I do know that it occurred. There were also stories of stream flow measurements being fabricated at the bar of hotels but this was never substantiated. I think that it would have been easier to perform a gauging than to try and fabricate one.

One task not enjoyed by the offsidiers was the conversion of the strip chart recorder to metric. The two cogs that supported the pen carriage had to be modified in order to accommodate the new metric chain and gears. This necessitated the filing of the teeth of the cogs so that they would engage smoothly with the new chain. We were supplied with a small aluminium jig to hold the cog while we filed either side of the tooth. This was fine in practice, but as you filed consecutive teeth, the file would get blunter, the aluminium jig would get filed so that it wouldn't align properly

ly and, inevitably, your fingers and hands would get nicked by the file. The finished cog would often show red smears when handed back to the party leader. I couldn't understand why we weren't simply supplied with a few metric cogs to start with. The returned cogs could have been much more easily machined back at the Rocklea facility before being used again to upgrade the next batch of recorders. During my career as a hydrographer, I would come across many instances where trying to save a few dollars led to frustration and a poor outcome. I guess this penny pinching was offset by the other instances where large amounts were squandered by the department with negligible results.

Our vehicle for my first field trip was a Willies Jeep. It was a much bigger vehicle than the familiar WW2 model and more resembled a Ford F100 with a Willies grill. Behind the cab was a custom-made cabin which contained the tool boxes, spares and survey equipment. The back was also fitted with roof racks designed for carrying a boat. Boats were used to measure river flow when the depth of water was too great to wade. On this trip, there was no boat on the racks. On the last night of the trip, we stayed at a motel in Dalby instead of the usual hotel. I was driving as we entered the motel entrance and forgot about the roof racks as I drove under the sloping roof of the front office. One of the metals loops, designed to secure a boat strap, gouged a long strip in the lower side of the fibro ceiling. A man came rushing from the office and berated me for my mistake. I could see my career in hydrography coming to a premature end as he raced off to get the manager. The manager appeared, took one look at the damage, and said not to worry about it. I was very relieved and also learnt a valuable lesson about the awareness of the height of the vehicle I was driving. A few boats were wiped out by driving under low objects by other hydrographers, but it never happened to me.

Between field trips, we cadets were kept busy doing "office-work". After a trip, the first task was to calculate any remaining travel allowance owed to them. This job always took priority over any others. While the party leader wrote the required field trip report, the cadets checked the maths of the stream gaugings or readings in the level books. There was only one electronic calculator in surface water branch and it was reserved exclusively for the hydrologists. I remember it was the size of a typewriter, that it did only basic maths, and that it was the only piece of office equipment that was locked up at night. The mainstay for calculation tasks for the rest of the group were Facit machines. These were mechanical calculators fitted with an electric motor to turn the wheels and cogs. They were both noisy and slow. A favoured trick by the cadets was to divide 99999 by 99999 just before leaving for lunch. The machine would whirl and grind away at the calculation for many minutes much to the annoyance of those left in the office.

**'OLD' is when: ...'Getting lucky' means you find your car in the parking lot.**



## **My Life of Hydrography** *continued*

A task not enjoyed by the offsidiers, was the conversion to metric of the gauge readers cards. Before the advent of instrumented gauging stations, river height readings were recorded by individuals who would read daily, the water level from a gauge board. These gauge readers were mostly the property owners at the site where a gauging station was located. It was only later in my career that I realised the dedication of these people who would often take multiple readings throughout the night (and often in the rain) during times of flood. The observers would record each reading in a book along with any other, usually weather related, notes. At the end of each month, the observer would transcribe that month's data to a card and post it to Brisbane. The river heights were recorded in feet and decimals of a foot and written carefully in ink. A postage stamp was affixed to each card. As manually read gauges were the norm for all of the gauging stations for the first half of the 1900's, there were literally thousands of these cards. When I joined the IWSC, the task of converting the readings to metric measurements had only just begun. When the routine work from a field trip was completed, the party leader would present his cadet with a pile of gauge readers' cards and a pad of blank data input sheets. Each height reading would be manually converted to metric before being transcribed to the data sheet in a date, time and height format.

Electronic data processing and storage of streamflow data had begun a few years before I joined. The systems were primitive by today's standards but seemed highly technical in my eyes. The actual computer systems were located at a central government complex with input preparation and output checking being the tasks undertaken by the branch. Keith Smythe and John Ward were the gurus of the data processing world. John, an engineer, headed the Hydrology section and was instrumental in the introduction of computing for hydrologic analysis. Keith managed the hydrographic data. As part of our training, he took me and the other cadets to inspect the trace analyser machine. Before the advent of this machine, water level data recorded on the strip charts was manually extracted and entered, initially into large books, and later onto data input sheets. When the river height changed rapidly, a large number of readings were generated, requiring a lot of work to extract the data. The trace analyser machine automated this process. An operator, nearly always female, would sit in front of what looked like an overgrown Stevens chart recorder. She would turn a hand dial which controlled a pointer placed over the chart. As the chart slowly passed under the pointer, she would attempt to follow the trace line with the pointer. The machine would then record the readings at set intervals. If the river height was stationary or slowly changing, the data would be set to record every 6 hours. If the height changed more quickly, the

records were taken at shorter intervals up to a maximum of 5 minutes. The recordings were punched onto paper tape for later processing. The operators were very skilled at this task but it must have been a tedious task to concentrate all day on a moving ink line.

Sometimes the routine office work was punctuated by other activities triggered usually by runoff producing rain. One such event resulted in me and another cadet accompanying hydrographer John Ridler to a site on the Bremer River just outside Ipswich. The task was to measure the flow from a boat, my first opportunity at this form of measurement. The boat was equipped with an 18hp outboard, much faster than the seagull outboards that I was used to. John winched the meter up and down, I managed the tag line and the other cadet, Henry Granic, wrote down the results. After the first measurement, we were met at the bank by a man with a camera who asked to take our photo. He was from the local newspaper and our photo appeared on the front page of the Queensland Times the following day. Although evidence of our good work, the photo also showed us sitting on, instead of wearing, our life jackets, a point not overlooked by management.

The hydrographic activities were headed by Harry Stark, Senior Engineer, Surface Water. He often strolled about the floor, hands behind his back, looking at the work being undertaken. Harry was a great advocate of the worth of streamflow data and oversaw a large expansion in the size of the network during his period as Senior Engineer. I can remember at one meeting that he looked around the room at the staff and remarked that the branch was in good hands because of the relative youth of the group.

It was indeed a time of regime change, with many of the senior staff nearing the retirement age of 65. When the access age for superannuation was lowered a few years later from 65 to 60, there was an exodus of retirees and subsequent management changes, but for the first few years of my career, Harry Stark, Len Ezzy and John Ward were the mainstays in surface water management.

Head Office also managed and coordinated the work of the regional offices. The budgets were set in Brisbane and the regions answered directly to Head Office. Staff in the regions mainly came from Head Office. When you joined the public service at that time, one of the conditions of employment was that you could be appointed to any location in Queensland. Surface Water branch took full advantage of this and routinely rotated staff throughout the state. The younger staff were the most vulnerable and feared the annual staff movement notification that was distributed at the beginning of the financial year. There was no prior discussion about the transfers. If your name appeared, you had to either accept the transfer or resign. It was with much trepidation that my group of first year cadets awaited the publication of the 1973 transfer list.

*... to be continued. Many thanks, Ray - Ed.*

**'OLD' is when: A sexy babe or hunk takes your fancy and your pacemaker opens the garage door!**

## Memories of Leslie Dam

**Hector Macdonald**

*Aware that all too often, children know little about their parents' life stories, Hector wrote "A Long Letter to My Children", and I was privileged to have the opportunity to read a really fascinating memoir. Hector generously agreed that I could publish an extract which I believe will interest readers as much as it did me. Hector graduated as a scholarship holder and joined IWS Surface Water Branch in 1962. -Ed.*

One day while I was at my desk calculating stream discharges Arthur McCutcheon told me I was being transferred to Leslie Dam, which I knew was a new dam just starting outside of Warwick. He told me it was only temporary but that I had to start work there in about ten days time – he had a copy of the Commissioner's Direction to prove it. He told me to see the Branch clerk to arrange travel details. Such was the personnel management of the 1960s. No consultation: you simply did what you were told.

I was looking forward to starting a social life after four years hard work at University. However the transfer had its good points. The work in construction would be interesting and Leslie Dam was only a two and a half hour drive from Brisbane. Maybe I would be able to come home every second weekend or so.

One Monday morning in March 1962, I caught a taxi to Roma Street Railway Station and boarded the 8.15 am Wallangarra – Sydney mail train. My worldly possessions at that time would be contained in a large suitcase and a briefcase. I had no trouble boarding or settling into my first class seat – courtesy of Her Majesty's Queensland Government. Travelling to Warwick by train was a full day's journey – morning tea in Ipswich, lunch in Toowoomba and arrival in Warwick at 2.45 pm. When I alighted on the platform in Warwick with both hands carrying luggage I was spotted by the Chief Clerk from Leslie Dam, Jack Hicks. He had come to meet me and drive me out to the dam site – about seven miles from town out on the Inglewood road. Jack Hicks was most polite and hospitable. He had finished posting and collecting the mail and doing other chores in town prior to meeting me. He was driving the car allocated to the Project Engineer, Alan Richard Taylor, a current model yellow EK Holden sedan. So we travelled in comfort out to the camp.

At this time the workforce at the dam was about 150 – about half of whom lived in camp, the others travelling from Warwick and its surrounds each day. The camp was, in effect, a small township. There was the works area consisting of an administration complex as well as workshops, plant yards and so on, and also the town area which consisted of single and married quarters, both for staff and for 'the men'. There were separate ablution blocks, messes and canteens for staff. The mess, one building divided into two areas for the staff and the men, also sold items such as toiletries but there was no shop in the early stages.

When we arrived at the camp Jack Hicks dropped me at the door of my accommodation in the single staff barracks, which consisted of two buildings each of six rooms with an ablution/toilet block between them. I was given a room at the end of one of the buildings next to the ablutions complex. The building was on timber stumps about three feet high and along the front was an open verandah about five feet wide. Each of the six rooms measured eight feet by twelve feet. The floor was bare timber and the walls were Burnieboard or Masonite. There was an iron bed, mattress, sheets, blankets and pillow, and a wardrobe with a mirror on the front door, and drawers and hanging space inside. The furnishing was made complete by the provision of a table and chair. Once all this furniture was in place there was sufficient room to open the door, walk inside and find a place to stand up before closing the door again. Jack told me that once I had settled in I could go to the canteen for a drink and then to the mess for the evening meal. He said if I needed anything I should go to the works area store, about 100 yards away, and they might be able to help me.

After I had taken in the surroundings I saw that the floor was filthy. I needed a broom. So I went to the store, walked up the front steps, went inside and found Des Rayner, the person in charge. I introduced myself and asked if I could borrow a broom. Standing in the store, holding court, was a short, plumpish, red faced and strange looking man with only half a head of hair to distinguish his appearance. This, as it turned out, was Alan Richard Taylor, the Project Engineer, and known at the camp as 'The Little Red Rooster'. Taylor looked at me wondering what sort of person had been inflicted on him by Head Office in Brisbane. They had sent him a boy of 20, a mere child in fact. Taylor was the boss. I was the only other engineer on the project. This meant I was his 2-IC in a camp of about 150 men and a township of about 200, including wives and children. (The term 'partners' was unknown in those days.) Taylor seemed rather perplexed at this thought. He asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted a broom to sweep the floor of the room allocated to me. Although I said this with no ill intent, it was a great put-down for Taylor. He knew, and so did everyone else present in the store on that day, that he should have organised a clean room for my arrival. From that moment on, Taylor and I never quite hit it off. But then again, during my ten years in the Commission I never met anybody who did hit it off with Taylor.

Life at Leslie Dam was the beginning of an adventure in my career as an engineer. I was given about half of the work at the dam to look after and Bob Kimber, a Senior Works Supervisor, had the other half. He was an experienced and capable operator willing to share his knowledge. During my time at Leslie Dam I kept my ears open and my mouth shut and I learnt a good deal about civil engineering construction which I found of great benefit in subsequent years.

**'OLD' is when...Your friends compliment you on your new alligator shoes and you're barefoot!**

## Memories of Leslie Dam *continued*

My 2-IC was a foreman, Mick Farrell, a native of Northern Ireland. We made a good team. My principal task at the dam was to build the township, which consisted of three staff houses and about sixty 'prefabs' – huts which were 12 feet in width and varied in length from 32 feet up to 48 feet. Married couples with no children had a 32 footer. Some families with five or six kids had a 48 footer. One staff house had been built when I arrived and Taylor was living in it with his wife Phyl and two young boys. Building of the houses and prefabs was done by contract and the main contractor for this work was a man named Watts who lived in Warwick. He was an old rogue and I learnt a good deal about contracting from him. He put in the house steps, the rafters and bearers, the tongue and groove flooring and then erected the wall panels, ceiling and roof which were supplied by the Commission. Prefabs used by staff were lined. Others were not. There were no septs or sewerage – toilets were in the back yard. After the prefabs were built, water and electricity were connected. Each prefab had a bathroom/laundry connected at the rear. Once the buildings were finished they had to be painted. The Commission hired a colour consultant – a girl in her twenties or thirties – who came up from Brisbane and provided a colour scheme. All prefabs were to be painted in one of four colours, blue, green, cream and a really cacky colour called stone. The paint was delivered and I was given the job of allocating colour to prefabs. I did it in a systematic engineering fashion. I got the plan of the township and allocated colours starting in the top left hand corner making sure I kept the same regular pattern throughout, that is a blue, followed by a green, followed by cream and then stone. Once we started painting (we had our own day-labour force of about four painters) it became obvious what a putrid colour the stone was – a sort of dirty nappy colour. The wives of the township would come to me and plead that their home not be painted stone. It was then that I realised what an influential position a non-entity such as myself could hold. I told them the plan had actually been done by Taylor (which was not really correct) and this got them off my back. Telling them this caused no problems for me – Taylor was not popular and nobody was game to go to him and complain.

The weather in winter on the banks of Allan Creek was freezing. I bought nine sheets of Masonite from the contractor Watts and used it to line my room. I gave the brown Masonite a coat of light green gloss. It transformed the room. I also bought an electric heater which I left on 24 hours a day in winter – the IWS paid the electricity bill. I think this was the first time any staff member had lined his room to improve the amenity of the place. All other staff members came to my room and expressed their amazement at what could be done. Nobody else, however, bothered to do their own rooms.

As well as building the township I was given the job of developing sand and gravel supplies for the project. Work on production and placing of concrete in the dam wall was due to start in mid-1963.

The geologists had identified the quarry sites. I took charge of a team of diamond drillers who spent their time drilling the quarry to prove its capability to produce rock of the right quantity and quality. So too with the sand deposits in the area. We needed enough aggregate to mix up over 100,000 cubic yards of concrete for the dam wall. This project also entailed establishing a concrete laboratory on site. As concrete was produced and placed in the dam, samples were to be taken and then tested later to check that the right quality had been achieved. Taylor told me that once the building of the dam started I would be in charge of concrete production and testing.

Before any concrete could be produced it was necessary to establish the concrete-batching plant and aggregate crushing plant. This task was also given to me. Mick Farrell and his team excavated all the foundations and then built them. We had to provide for a cement silo, a batching plant, aggregate storage areas and a conveyor system to transport aggregate from the storage areas into the batching plant. These storage areas were located some distance away and aggregate travelled by conveyor belt in an eight feet diameter prefabricated steel tunnel which we assembled on site in an excavated trench and then covered over with soil. The biggest job however was the construction of the crushing plant foundations. Here large pieces of rock extracted from the quarry were crushed in the powerful jaws of the plant and then screened into selected sizes ranging from about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch up to six inches for use in making concrete.

All of the concrete production facilities were located on one side of the creek. Next to the batching plant was a large tower called the head tower. It was fixed in position. On the other side of the creek was another tower smaller in size, the tail tower, but which ran on rails which formed part of an arc of a circle with the head tower at the centre of the circle. The two towers had strong steel wire cables connecting them and when a bucketful of concrete came out of the batching plant it was picked up by the head tower crane and then sent off along the cable towards the tail tower. Because the tail tower ran on rails and was mobile, it was possible to position the bucket on the cable anywhere over any place in the creek where concrete was needed to construct the dam wall. This was how the dam was built.

*To be continued, next issue ...*

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

1. George. 2. (ii) 1920s 3. (v) 11 4. (i) 1. 5. (v) Maxine McKew 6. (vi) The number 13. 7. (ii) First Fleet ships. 8. (ii) Australia. 9. (iv) 1.5 M 10. (v) Twelve Apostles. 11. (ii) Munich 12. (iv) 1000.

**'OLD' is when:..Your sweetheart says "Let's go upstairs and make love" and you answer, "Pick one, I can't do both!"**

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Can a Colonoscopy be Peachy?

President Pete told me about a woman of his acquaintance who had undergone a (fun!) colonoscopy. As she emerged from the anaesthetic, her gastroenterologist asked her if she was very fond of peaches. Yes she was, but how on earth did he know? He had observed all those supposedly digestible sticky labels adhering to her bowel!

## Bitter About Losing Weight

This could be the tonic to beat the bulge and cure the world's growing (term chosen advisedly) obesity problem. Belgian scientists have experimentally found that even a tiny amount of quinine, which makes tonic water taste bitter, can interfere with parts of the brain involved in regulating appetite.

At Leuven University, 15 healthy women were tested to see if they could detect the bitter taste of tonic water and the impact on their appetite. "As soon as they had the bitter solution, the amount they felt like eating decreased," researchers reported.

The report did not note the proportions of tonic water and any other common mix. The recommendation rather appears to be to eat bitter vegetables, but I'm sure a different conclusion could be reached.



Vincent van Gogh 1853-1890

### Terrace Café by Night

*"I don't know which is worse – death by pandemic or death by economic strangulation."*



*"These past months have been terrible, haven't they?"  
"Yes. Who could have imagined there'd be runs on toilet paper!"*

## Exercise those Brain Cells

Q. James says to his wife, "I'm really sorry that the COVID-19 restrictions mean we can't celebrate your birthday next Saturday, especially as this year, for the first time in my life, I was able to celebrate my actual birthday on a Saturday which was the day of the week on which I was born."

What was the date of James's birth?



## Is this the Future?

Today in the US more people read digital books than printed ones. Devices such as Amazon's Kindle are able to collect data on their users while they are reading. Your Kindle can, for example, monitor which parts of the book you read quickly and which slowly; on which page you took a break, and on which sentence you abandoned the book, never to pick it up again. If Kindle is upgraded with face recognition and biometric sensors, it will know how each sentence you read influenced your heart rate and blood pressure. It will know what made you laugh, what made you sad and what made you angry. Soon, books will read you while you are reading them. And whereas you quickly forget most of what you read, Amazon will never forget a thing. Such data will enable Amazon to choose books for you with uncanny precision. It will also enable Amazon to know exactly who you are, and how to turn you on and off.

Eventually we may reach a point when it will be impossible to disconnect from the all-knowing network even for a moment. Disconnection will mean death. If medical hopes are realised, future humans will incorporate into their bodies a host of biometric devices, bionic organs and nano-robots, which will monitor our health and defend us from infections, illnesses and damage. Yet these devices will have to be online 24/7, both in order to be updated with the latest medical developments, and to protect you from the new plagues of cyberspace. Just as my home computer is constantly attacked by viruses, worms and Trojan horses, so will my pacemaker, hearing aid and nanotech immune system. If I don't update my body's anti-virus program regularly, I will wake up one day to discover that the millions of nano-robots coursing through my veins are now controlled by a North Korean hacker.

-from *Homo Deus* by Yuval Noah Harari

## Answer to last Issue's Teaser

Q. The son of Pharaoh's daughter is the daughter of Pharaoh's son. Can this be true?

A. Yes, in either of two ways. (i) Suppose Pharaoh has a son Jack. Then the sentence could read Jack's daughter is the daughter of Jack. (ii) If Pharaoh has a daughter Jill, then the sentence could read the son of Jill is Jill's son.

**'OLD' is when: You are cautioned to slow down by the doctor instead of by the police.**

## Planned Obsolescence

I was recently extracting compost from my composting bin – isn't it amazing what 'social distancing' can lead to? – and I found a potato peeler, rather the worse for wear. It reminded me that many years ago, I had read – I think in Vance Packard's *The Waste Makers* – the account of an American firm that had invented a most superior potato peeler which they marketed in attractive, vibrant colours. It proved a great success and sales boomed, until they gradually dried up. The bright colours meant that the peelers seldom got thrown out with the peelings. So back to the drawing board. A new batch were manufactured in a dun potato peel hue. But they didn't sell until they were marketed on attractive vibrant coloured cards. Sales took off again, as did a satisfactory rate of accidental disposal. Planned obsolescence at work!

## Intelligent Possums

The possums at our place must be highly intelligent. As soon as the Government gave the all clear to go out as of 2 May – and not one moment earlier – they went out that very day and ate the lettuce seedlings we had planted a few days earlier!

## Litter to the Editor

*Rolf Rose copied the following from a vintage car magazine.*

### TAKE THEM OFF THE ROAD

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

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

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

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

### A Fine Outcome

Most of us endured our lot,  
and at the governments' insistence  
we stayed at home - we'd rather not -  
and socially we kept our distance.  
In this pandemic we sat tight.  
Defiant groups who chose to rove'd  
think it's fine; 'cause they'd the right.  
'Twas fine - the cops had got them covid.  
\$1334 each.

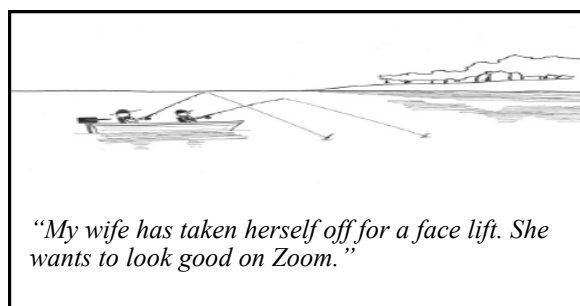
### A Sign of the Times

On a shop at Karalee, closed for Covid-19:

**I wish I was a bin  
They can still go out.**

**Terry's Trivia** - from the 2019 Christmas lunch  
Answers on page 11.

1. On the cover of the 1969 Beatles Album Abbey Road the last Beatle onto the pedestrian crossing was: John; Paul; George; Ringo
2. Vegemite was first made and sold in the: (i) 1920s; (ii) 1930s; (iii) 1940s; (iv) 1950s; (v) 1960s.
3. How many time zones does Russia have: (i) 1; (ii) 5; (iii) 8; (iv) 10; (v) 11.
4. How many time zones does China have: (i) 1; (ii) 5; (iii) 8; (iv) 10; (v) 11.
5. Who defeated John Howard in Bennelong in the 2007 election? (i) Maxine McKew; (ii) Virginia Trioli; (iii) Emma Alberici; (iv) Leigh Sales; (v) Jenny Woodward; (vi) Lee Lin Chin; (vii) Denise Drysdale; (viii) Jackie McDonald.
6. Triskaidekaphobia is an irrational fear of: (i) mirrors, (ii) high heels; (iii) going crazy (iv) being poisoned. (v) getting old. (vi) the number 13.
7. Alexander, Borrowdale and Charlotte were: (i) Members of the Bronte family; (ii) Ships of the First Fleet; (iii) PMs of England; (iv) Lakes in the UK Lake District; (v) The names of cars owned by Alan Bond.
8. Budgies are native to: (i) NZ; (ii) Australia; (iii) PNG; (iv) Indonesia; (v) Fiji.
9. How many cans of baked beans are sold/consumed in the UK each day: (i) 100k; (ii) 500K; (iii) 1M; (iv) 1.5M; (v) 2M,
10. The rock formation originally called the sow and piglets is: The (i) Olgas; (ii) Warrumbungles; (iii) Three Sisters; (iv) Pinnacles; (v) Twelve Apostles.
11. Shane Gould won five Olympic gold medals in: (i) Mexico City; (ii) Munich; (iii) Montreal; (iv) Moscow; (v) Tokyo.
12. Approximately how many human faced carvings are there on Easter Island? (Rapa Nui): (i) 100; (ii) 300; (iii) 600; (iv) 1000; (v) 1500.



*"My wife has taken herself off for a face lift. She wants to look good on Zoom."*

**'Old' is when: You are not sure these are jokes!**



## Book Club

If you haven't read *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris you should. Although it is by no means a happy book, it is enthralling as it tells the story of Lale Sokolov who survived the horrors of Auschwitz by virtue of his role as the man who tattooed the new arrivals at the death camp.

Another survivor of Auschwitz was Cilka Klein who was sent there as a sixteen year old. Heather Morris has taken up her story in *Cilka's Journey*.

Through her absolute determination to do whatever was necessary to survive, Cilka is still alive when the camp is liberated by Russian troops. But her relief is short lived. She is charged as a collaborator by the Russians and sent to a brutal, desolate prison camp in Siberia known as Vorkuta, inside the Arctic Circle.

There she faces incredible challenges, both new and familiar but again exerts her indomitable will to survive. She manages to avoid the fate of most of the women who are forced to collect coal by hand in the open each day in arctic conditions, by an accidental encounter with a woman doctor who befriends her. She learns to become a nurse, struggling to care for the women in the camp.

Maltreated by the male prison guards, she is surprised by a spark of affection when she tends a man called Alexandr. Once again, Cilka survives.

Without first hand information, Heather has imagined this journey, based on what is known of Cilka's life in Auschwitz and the experience of women in Siberian prison camps to produce a memorable book.

**Ian Pullar**



"Mum, I'm bored."  
"Well you could go and tidy your room."  
"Some people can even make boredom appealing."

Why do we read books? – to learn, or to be entertained; and if we're lucky to do both at once.

Very much in the learning category for me was *The Berlin Wall: 13 August 1961 - 9 November 1989* by Frederick Taylor. This is a remarkable story and surely about the only instance in world history of a government building a wall to keep its own citizens IN. But this is what happened virtually in one night and with no warning. It could have precipitated a crisis to rival the Cuban one, but didn't. The narrative reveals the characters of the personalities involved (East Germans Ulbricht and Honecker, Russians Stalin, Krushchev and Gorbachev, Americans Kennedy and Johnson and West Germans Adenauer, Brandt and Kohl among many others).

The sudden fall of the wall is equally amazing. A very enlightening book.

On the entertainment side, for those who like me like a good crime novel, I recommend Dervla McTiernan's trilogy of *The Ruin*, *The Scholar* and *The Good Turn*.

These well-constructed and engrossing stories are set in County Galway in Ireland where the chief protagonist is Garda Cormac Reilly.

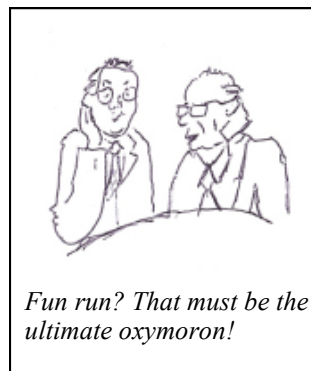
Dervla McTiernan is an Irish woman now living in Western Australia with her husband. She was a successful solicitor who had always felt she "had a book in her". So when she had more or less recovered from a life threatening illness, she decided in her late thirties to give herself five years in which to succeed or fail. And succeed she did, obtaining a three book contract at basically her first attempt (but after a draft and four revisions).

We were lucky enough to attend two of her book launches at *Riverbend Books* (at the second of which I was one of only two men). She is also an entertaining speaker.

**Ian Pullar**

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*Fun run? That must be the ultimate oxymoron!*