



RGSQ Bulletin

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From the President

Welcome to our Society's 125th Anniversary year. The programme of lectures, treks and other activities that has been planned for the year should make it an exciting and stimulating celebration. I am especially looking forward to the meeting with our South Australian colleagues at Haddon Corner in September. By one of those quirks of history, the RGSSA was established on the same day in 1885 as the RGSQ and we are the only 'Royal' geographical societies remaining in Australia.

In the spirit of the Festive Season I will resist the temptation to rabbit on about the political farce that was played out in Copenhagen in December and the remarkable revelations of the emails and data leaked from the University of East Anglia in November, other than to observe that the Copenhagen Conference added a reported 40,500 tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere (the UN estimate) of which the official Australian Commonwealth delegation of 114 contributed 1,817 tonnes. Well done!

During the holiday period my wife and I went to see the movie *Avatar*

screened in 3D. It is really a simple story about a good and environmentally attuned society resisting and eventually overcoming the invasion of the evil and rapacious mining company set to destroy their homes in search of the appropriately-named mineral Unobtainium. What struck me most about the movie, apart from the stunning special effects, was the underpinning that geography and spatial technologies have given to such movies.

The landscapes of this mythical planet, especially when viewed in 3D, are fantastic. There are floating mountains and great forests with luminous plants that are interlinked by a mystical neural network into which the Na'vi, the 3 m tall blue indigenous inhabitants, literally connect themselves.

While this could be seen simply as great science fiction and entertainment, its creation and visual representation would not have been possible without the work that has been going on for more than 30 years in the development of technologies such as geographic information systems (GIS), spatial visualisation techniques and spatial modelling. That application of technology was built on the foundation of several hundred years of evolution in techniques of graphically portraying the three dimensional surface of the earth through cartographic conventions such as contours. It is this very long tradition of representing three dimensional surfaces that has made the incredible visual effects

employed in *Avatar* possible. Unfortunately, very few people who view this movie will be aware of that legacy or appreciate the role that generations of geographers and cartographers have played in making this spectacular entertainment possible.

I remember very clearly the thrill I had back in 1984 when the computer in the ANU Geography Faculty produced the first representation of the volcanic landscape around Rabaul in PNG as part of my Masters research. This simple graphic had been derived from the data I had taken months to labouriously and manually digitise from the reprostat used to produce the 1:50,000 map series of the area. It was a simple 'wire frame' graphic but to me it represented a huge break-through in the science of geography and my ability as a geographer to understand and communicate the issues that were the focus of my study.

Of course it was not long before GIS technology evolved to the point where such crude wire frame models

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could be 'draped' with realistic rendering to better portray the real world. Such a capability is now common-place and freely available in products such as Google Earth. The same techniques are now also employed in fields as diverse as medical imaging, archaeology and the entertainment industry. Nor is it widely appreciated that the 3D viewing technology used in *Avatar* has been in use in some high-end GIS for at least 15 years.

Therein lies the problem for geography – its fundamental role in pioneering such tools, and its ongoing contribution, are largely unappreciated or ignored. The value of our science is thus diminished by its anonymity.

Ken Granger

2010 – RGSQ's 125th Anniversary

To keep members appraised of events for 2010 the following is for member information.

The **lecture programme** will feature some of the Society's past Thomson Medalists and/or topics that relate to our work over the past 25 years. The Society has been honoured by its Patron, H.E. Ms Penelope Wensley, Governor of Queensland, agreeing to give the March address.

An **Anniversary Luncheon** at Conrad Treasury is being arranged for Saturday 10 July 2010, the anniversary of our foundation day (and co-incidentally also that of the Royal Geographical Society of SA). The luncheon will be held in the Map Room from 12.00 noon till 3.00 pm. Bill Kitson will give an address. Luncheon will be buffet style, with the cost \$47 per person. Drinks will be available at the bar at members' cost. Members will be able to select from a menu of veal and mushroom ragout, reef fish, crumbed chicken, Asian noodles, etc. Although names are not required at this early stage, this advice is being given to members so they can put the date in their diary and also save for what is sure to be a lovely event. Jeanette Lamont has done a lot of homework in finding a suitable venue at a reasonable price.

A **Reunion** for all past Trekkers will be held on 26 May 2010. Further details on this will be included in a later *Bulletin*.

The **Joint Trek with RGSSA to Haddon Corner** is covered elsewhere in the *Bulletin*.

Keith Smith

Changes to Council

It is with regret that we advise members that Helen Duckworth has had to resign from Council because of the pressures of her other commitments. We thank Helen for her contribution, and know that she will continue to assist in the work of the Society as time allows. With the previous resignation of Doreen Worth, this has led to two casual vacancies on Council.

Wendy Davis has been appointed by Council to fill one of the vacancies, as stipulated in the Society's constitution. Wendy is a relatively new member, having joined to take part in the recent Icons Trek. Council looks forward to her bringing new perspectives to their meetings.

There remains one vacancy on Council. Any interested members should talk to a Councillor on a meeting night, or ring Keith or Kath in the office. Please consider supporting the work of the Society in this way.

Treks and Activities Committee

Thank you very much to Brian McGrath for agreeing to chair the Treks and Activities Committee. He has gathered a very enthusiastic group of members as his committee, and you can see the fruits of their planning in the 2010 programme enclosed.

Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Leo Scanlan for his many years of sterling service chairing this committee. Leo chaired the Treks Committee from 1991 to 2009! He is now taking a well-deserved break from the committee, but continuing as a Councillor.

Evening Meeting – Savannas

For our first meeting of 2010, John Holmes will address the Society on *The Multi-Functional Transition of Australia's Tropical Savannas: the Future of Cape York Peninsula*.

John Holmes is Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of Queensland, a past President, and a recipient of the Thomson Medal on the Society's 100th anniversary. John continues an active 'retirement' with a succession of research projects and publications. His most recent contribution is a pontifical article on disciplinary flux in human geography over the last fifty years, guaranteed to elicit a torrent of replies, possibly exceeding (if less complimentary than) those already triggered by his other recent publications on the 'multifunctional rural transition'.

This rural transition is propelled by the emergence of a mix of consumption and protection values, contesting the former dominance of production values in the use of rural lands. John will discuss this transition in Australia's northern savannas as evidenced in maps showing the rapid expansion of Indigenous and conservation land tenures from 1976 to 2006 (maps drawn by Les Isdale). John will highlight divergent regional trajectories, using the Barkly Tableland and the Gulf Country as examples. He will also trace changes in resource orientation and power relations on Cape York Peninsula from the 1960s onwards.

Until the 1980s, precedence was given to pastoral and mining projects, with scant attention to Indigenous and conservation interests. Over recent decades, the Peninsula has become the focus for increasingly complex contests, involving a mix of pastoralist, mining, tourism, developer, speculator, Indigenous, conservationist, political and public agency interests, requiring a succession of innovative legislative, judicial, administrative and interest-group actions. Complexity is compounded by internal contests within Aboriginal communities and among conservationists, the two most influential constituencies, with the state government pursuing inconsistent agendas, tied to electoral imperatives.

A Walk and Lunch

What: Walk the old Hornibrook Hwy, followed by lunch at Woody Point

When: Sunday 21 February

Meet: 10.00am Elizabeth St, Clontarf (full details below)

Wear: walking shoes and sun-smart gear

Bring: camera, water bottle, (bathers and swimming shoes)

Cost: \$31.50

Book: with the office and pay **by 2 February**

Bring your friends and introduce them to your Society.

Until 1935 access to the Redcliffe Peninsula was by road via Petrie, or by sea from Sandgate or Shorncliffe. On 4 October of that year the Hornibrook Highway was officially opened. With the opening of the Houghton Highway in December 1979, the Hornibrook was closed to traffic. When the Ted Smout Memorial Bridge is opened (about mid 2010) much of the historic Hornibrook Highway will be demolished.

The return walk (it's flat) is about 6 km. Then to Woody Point for lunch at the Belvedere Hotel – 2 courses and tea or coffee. (Unfortunately the teppanyaki lunch previously mentioned was much too expensive.) Then, if we still have any energy left, back to Clontarf for a swim. I've "arranged" a high tide about 2.00 pm.

Meeting details:

Drive off the Houghton Highway and follow the sign to Kipparing. Almost immediately, pass through 2 sets of traffic lights, only about 150 m apart, turn in just before the 7 Eleven (whose address is 9 Elizabeth St, Clontarf) and park off-road beside the Medical Centre on your left.

Weather:

If it is really wet, the walk will be cancelled, but we will still go to lunch as it will be pre-paid. If in doubt, phone me on 3283 4494 between 9.00 and 9.30 am. In this case we will meet at the Belvedere Hotel, Oxley Ave, Woody Point, at 12.15 pm. My mobile is 0438 159 218. I'll switch it on about 9.30 am.

Audrey Johnston



Nostalgia

What: a steam train trip

Where: Warwick to Wallangarra and return

When: Saturday 6 March

Meet: 7.30 am (for 8.00 am departure), Warwick Station, eastern end of Fitzroy Street (return at 6.00 pm)

Stay: Rose City Caravan Park, New England Highway (cnr Glengallan Rd). There are unpowered and powered sites, on-site vans and cabins (some with en suite).

Make your own bookings for accommodation, ph 4661 1662.

With an 8.00 am departure it would be advisable to travel to Warwick on Friday and perhaps, stay over on Saturday night.

Take: a light wrap (just in case) and a camera

Cost: for train, adults \$80.00, concessions \$70.00; hot lunch \$22.00 (does not include wine)

Book: with the office (3368 2066) and **pay by 2 February**. I have booked 20 seats for the Society, so get in early.

Leader: Audrey Johnston (ring on 0438 159 218 on Sat morning if any problem)

Remember the "good ol' days" of steam trains, smuts in your eyes and smoke in your lungs? Relive these days by joining us for a touch of nostalgia as we travel the Southern Downs Steam Railway, climbing the Silverwood Range to Dalveen, passing through grazing country, to the Summit, the highest railway station in Queensland and on to Stanthorpe for a 30 minute stop. The "Apple and Grape" festival is on that weekend. Back to the train to travel through the Granite Belt, passing vineyards and on to the Qld/NSW border for lunch at Wallangarra, as the crew turn the steam loco to swap ends. Another 30 minute stop at Stanthorpe on the return journey with

a chance to buy apples and perhaps some local wine.

Optional extra: If you are staying over on Saturday night, we could drive out on Sunday morning to Killarney and the Falls for a short walk to the bottom of the Falls, through beautiful rainforest. Probably birds too.

Register for this extra when booking.

(PS: I'm looking for 1 or 2 people to share my car and a cabin for Friday and Saturday nights. Audrey 3283 4494)

Audrey Johnston

Rail, Reef and Rainforest

When: 6 - 16 May 2010

Where: Townsville, local national parks (Paluma Range, Bowling Green Bay), conservation reserves (Pallarenda, Townsville Town Common), and Magnetic Island

How: train, ferry, cars and much leg
Group size: 6 to 10

Book: with the office **by 16 Feb** and pay a deposit of \$250.00 (only refundable if trip cancelled)

Cost: \$795.00. NB:- Cost has been calculated for a group of 10. Cost may increase slightly if the numbers are fewer.

Cost includes:-

- accommodation in shared (perhaps mixed) cabins
- all meals from dinner on Fri 7 May to breakfast on Sat 16 May, except lunch on Sun 9 May
- car hire in Townsville and on Magnetic Island
- return ferry to Magnetic Island

Cost does not include:-

- rail fare (see below)
- meals on train
- taxis (if needed)
- fuel for hire cars
- sheets, towels, blankets in cabins (hire at extra individual cost or BYO)
- activities on free day - Sun 9

Itinerary

Thurs 6 May - dep Roma Street Station at 1:25 pm

Fri 7 May - arr Townsville 11:50 am, collect cars, food shopping, and settle in

Sat 8 May - visit Paluma Range NP with much walking; Mt Spec and Jourama Falls, perhaps swim

Sun 9 May - free day to visit museums, gardens, theatre, aquarium, markets, etc (at own expense)

Mon 10 May - Bowling Green Bay NP, which includes historic sites, and (I hope) the Aust Institute of Marine Science, near Bowling Green Bay

Tues 11 May - am: Pallarenda Conservation Reserve (with historic sites), Townsville Town Common Conservation Reserve and Castle Hill; pm: ferry to Magnetic Island

Wed 12 May - Sat 15 May - Magnetic Island

Sat 15 May - midday return to Townsville; train dep 4:35 pm

Sun 16 May - arr Brisbane 3:55 pm

Rail fares (return):

Seat

pensioner 2 vouchers + \$25.00

senior \$189.21

adult \$378.42

3-berth sleeper

pensioner 2 vouchers + 145.00

senior \$309.32

adult \$498.54

I will make the rail bookings but you must show your concession card so, unless we can meet at a common time, you will have to make your own payments in person.

We need 2 people to volunteer to share the driving of each car. If we can't get drivers, the trip will be cancelled. There will be 3 cars in Townsville and 2 on Magnetic Island. Trekkers will share food shopping, carrying and meal preparation.

A **booking form and health form** will be available on the website or from the office soon. For further information, contact me 3283 4494, best times about 8:00 am to 8:30 am or 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm.

Audrey Johnston

Haddon Corner Trek

Following on from its highly successful Q150 Icons Trek in the second half of 2009 – a nine week journey through Queensland involving over 50 people – the RGSSQ

is planning a new Trek, this time through southwest Queensland. The purpose of the Trek is to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Society, and we will join for part of the journey with the South Australian Society (RGSSA) who are also celebrating 125 years of existence. We met them at Haddon Corner for our 100th Anniversary as well.

Our theme for the Trek will be "Exploring Cooper Country: the Treasure at our Back Door". It will depart Brisbane on Monday 13 September and return to Brisbane on Monday 27 September. Detailed planning of the 15 day itinerary – including input from prominent community people and representatives from government entities who will be invited to speak about this magnificent area – is already underway.

Haddon Corner on the border between Qld and SA will be the major focus for the Trek and we will visit other centres in the region such as Windorah, Birdsville and Innamincka. Famous landmarks such as the "Dig Tree" will also be on the agenda. Much of the Cooper Creek Catchment will be traversed on the Trek.

The Trek is planned as a combined 4WD and Safari (Camping) Coach Tour so that all adventurous and interested people will be able to join in. Places on the coach will be limited and will be allocated on a "first-in" basis.

Costs and the detailed itinerary will be available very soon. In the meantime, to reserve your place on the coach (or in the 4WD group), please contact Brian McGrath, email brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com or phone 3378 5960.

Brian McGrath



Can you help?

In 1912, the ship *Titanic* sank with the musicians still playing their instruments. I am told there are three memorials to the bandsmen here in Australia: one at Broken Hill, another at Ballarat, and the third on the Darling Downs.

It is not known where or what shape or form the Darling Downs memorial is (e.g. a band rotunda), or if its location is linked to a distant relative of a bandsman or passenger. It is supposed that it is a memorial to the "devotion to duty" of these bandsmen. It is not known if this memorial still exists.

The 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic* is in 2012, and it would be an opportune time to remember this event.

All my information is second or third hand. If you have any information, please contact me, David Brownsey on phone/fax: 07 33525860 or my home address at 46 Gibb St, Kelvin Grove Qld 4059.

David Brownsey

Geography's Big Week Out

Geography's Big Week Out is a jam-packed week of fun, friendship, and with lots of hands-on geography fitted in there as well.

It was held from 7 to 11 December 2009 at Perth and Rottnest Island. Taking part were sixteen student geographers from around Australia who had won their places through outstanding performances in the senior division of the National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition. On offer was selection in Australia's team to the 2010 International Geography Olympiad in Taiwan.

Everyone arrived by about Monday lunchtime. On the way to our accommodation at Scarborough Beach we detoured to Kings Park to practice (or learn) field sketching.

After our (in most cases) lengthy plane trips and our field sketching activity, we gathered to have our Aussie themed BBQ night. With our patriotic Australian flag tattoos, and

with Wallabies jerseys and cork hats in attendance (the staff were far more creative!), we cooked up a storm on the complimentary BBQs. It was a great opportunity to get to know each other, breaking the ice and setting the stage for a week of fun and adventure. Lizzie

Next morning we were off early to Rottnest Island where we hired bikes to get around.

Cycling around Rottnest Island – what can I say, but to quote "it was only five minutes before I could really feel it". I personally suggest an inquest into the torture of innocent visitors through the means of hired bike seats! This said I think everyone will agree with me saying that, despite the pained limbs and other body parts, cycling was the only way to really see and experience Rottnest Island. This allowed us to just stop and take photos or just slow down to admire the view, usually consisting of turquoise water, spectacular formations weathered or eroded by the waves, and depending on the location not too many tourists. I believe I have to say that the sight of our group whizzing past on our very fast and cool red bikes would have been a sight to behold. Ahh good times!!! Emily

Fieldwork on Rottnest started with using a GPS to record a dune blowout near Kingstown Barracks (where we stayed in 4 houses). Then we cycled to the "Settlement" – that's what the area on Rottnest with shops

and restaurants is called. We observed the "urban" structure and also visited the Museum. After lunch we used a bus to get to the western end of the island (bit too far to cycle) and on the way took GPS readings of another dune blowout.

We got a really good overall impression of Rottnest on the bus tour on Tuesday afternoon. The driver had lots of really good information and the bus (if cramped) was far more comfortable than the seats of our bikes! We saw shipwrecks, osprey, quokkas, a square-round lighthouse and salt lakes. I think we also got a good feel for both the environmental problems evident on Rottnest as well as the efforts that are being made to overcome and improve them. Rottnest is such a beautiful place with a incredibly varied coast. This was exemplified on Cape Vlamingh, where we stopped to do field work including mapping the sheltered, white sand beach of Shell Bay beach and sketching the stacks present in the steeply cliffed Fish Hook Bay just around the headland. The wind here made our jobs fairly hard with papers flapping, but no one lost any work or their hats, though those of the group from a 'warmer climate' (Queensland) complained about the (supposed) cold.

We also experimented with exactly how much sand can get stuck to people's shoes from carrying a GPS around a dune blow out. The answer is a lot. We left rather a sand castle

behind on the side of the road before climbing back in the bus! Bronnie

After our lovely sleep and indulgent breakfast at the Kingstown Barracks, we mounted our bikes once again. Destination: The Rottnest Picture Theatre. This was a quaint little cinema, with canvas slung chairs, an ancient popcorn machine, and movies that the rest of Australia saw two years ago. But we weren't there to see a movie, we were there to LEARN. Natalie, from the Rottnest Island Authority, gave a presentation on the Island, its flora and fauna, economic history, and conservation/management strategies. She kept us interested, by involving us in her explanations with questions and prompts. I found this experience very enjoyable and beneficial (we were provided three pages to write notes; I used seven!!), especially in terms of the wildlife and how they coexist with people. Sophie

After the talk from the Education Officer, it was back on our bikes for fieldwork along the northeast coast of Rottnest.

We started at the lighthouse at Bathurst Point. I learned some interesting stuff from the teachers about Thompson Bay. Next we jumped on our bikes and cycled to the Basin. Regrettably we couldn't swim in the crystal clear water, after taking notes on how the bay is conserved. After the Basin, we cycled uphill to Longreach and Fays Bays, which looked just as nice as

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2010 Membership Renewal

Membership fees for 2010 were due on 1 January. According to our records, your membership has been paid up to the year shown in the top right corner of your mailing label. (For life members this space is blank.) Please contact the office if you think there may be a mistake in our records. If you have not yet paid, please circle the appropriate fee and send this in with your payment. The mailing label on the back of this sheet gives your name and address. Please correct it if there are any errors. You may like to consider making a tax-deductible donation for the Society's environmental and educational work at the same time. Thank you.

Ordinary	\$40.00
" Pensioner rate	\$25.00
Household	\$55.00
" Pensioner rate	\$35.00
Student/Junior	\$25.00
Schools/Non-profit organizations	\$55.00
Corporate	\$150.00
Life	\$400.00
Donation	\$.....
TOTAL	\$.....

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to RGSQ; or, please debit my Visa Mastercard

Card no.: _____ Exp date: _____

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Yes, I'd like my Bulletin delivered by email. My email address is: _____

the Basin – still no swimming. The bays and cycling were some of the best parts of the trip. David

In the afternoon it was back to the mainland. They started handing out sick bags on the ferry. We thought it must always be this rough in the afternoons with the Fremantle Doctor, but the locals told us later that it was the roughest crossing they had been on.

Wednesday afternoon after getting back from Rottenest we were thrown straight into a master chef style cooking competition. Kath put us all into 4 teams with each team cooking a specific cuisine – Moroccan, Thai,

Indian or Italian. The Italians had the easiest choice making a delicious pizza and pasta. The Indians used their Bollywood charm and created a fantastic spicy authentic Indian meal. The Thai team, my team, had the most difficult task but ultimately succeeded in creating the best meal. Unfortunately the judges overlooked our cooking expertise and awarded the Moroccan team the winners for their authentic representation of Moroccan cuisine, which even I have to say was very appetizing.

The vibe and tension that hung in the apartments was just sensational, as people raced around from room to room checking on multiple meals

and making sure everything was cooked to perfection. After all the hype and excitement of competition comes the cleaning up. This took for hours. Overall it was a great bonding activity and everyone loved the rush and excitement it created. Paris

For the rest of the story on working with GIS, the Amazing Race, friendships, etc, visit the website: www.rgsq.org.au/gbwo.htm. There should be lots of photos on the site by the time you read this as well. We'll leave the last word to Bronnie.

My geography teacher is very jealous, and I can't say I blame her!
Can we all go back? Please?

RGSQ Bulletin

February 2010

Evening Meeting, Tues 2 Feb 7.30pm
Speaker: Prof John Holmes
Subject: The Multi-Functional Transition of
Australia's Tropical Savannas: the
Future of Cape York Peninsula

Day Trek, Sun 21 Feb 10.00am
Where: Old Hornibrook Hwy + Lunch

Entry Deadline, Fri 26 Feb
For: National Geographic Channel
Australian Geography Competition

Evening Meeting, Tues 2 Mar 7.30pm
Speaker: H.E. Ms Penelope Wensley, AO
Patron's Address to Mark 125th Anniversary

Weekend Trek, 5 - 7 Mar
What: Steam train trip, Warwick to
Wallangarra

Volunteer Days, Tues 9 - Thurs 11 Mar
For: National Geographic Channel
Australian Geography Competition

The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc
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