



RGSQ Bulletin

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From the President

Back in 1989 I was commissioned by the Department of Defence to undertake a 12 month-long study of the strategic military geography of Australia's north-west. As part of that study I had the opportunity to visit the area and see quite a bit of it by air and by land. Since producing that study Judy and I travelled through the Top End and Kimberley regions in 2005 and we are currently making our third visit to the region.

In the introduction to that study of 21 years ago I wrote the following:

'North-west Australia is traditionally identified by defence strategists as the area most likely to bear the brunt of operational activity in the event of military aggression being directed against the Australian mainland. It is also recognised in the civil community as the area of Australia most vulnerable to non-military threats such as the introduction of exotic pests and diseases, the entry of illicit drugs and other contraband and the entry of refugees and illegal immigrants. Beyond that broad recognition, however, knowledge of the north-west held by most Australians is generally vague and

frequently impressionistic, rather than factual. To the bulk of Australians it is terra incognita.'

I suspect that if I were writing an introduction to a similar study today I would not change those words at all. In spite of the growth of seasonal tourism and the efforts of TV shows such as 'Getaway' or personalities such as Malcolm Douglas and Les Hiddens, this remains a very remote and poorly understood region. It has been experienced at first hand by very few Australians except the local Aboriginal population and those grey nomads or package tourists who visit places such as Kakadu and Broome. A few will take a flight over the Bungle Bungles (Purnululu) or to the so-called 'Horizontal Waterfalls' of Talbot Bay, and a much smaller number will take on the challenge of driving the Gibb River Road and the Mitchell Plateau.

Judy and I have just finished a 10-day trip by sea along the Kimberley coast which has reinforced my respect for the unbelievable majesty of this area. I continue to be in awe of the area's landscapes and biodiversity. Its tectonic history has produced incredible sandstone plateaus that are cut in places by fault-constrained rivers such as the Prince Regent that runs in a dead straight line for more than 100 km; or the gorge of the King George River which terminates against its twin waterfalls towering 100 m high. The incredible warping of a dozen different layers of sedimentary rocks through more than 180° along the shores of Yampi Sound speak of forces many hundreds of times

greater than any earthquake experienced by humans.

It is the area into which the first humans to occupy this continent arrived, perhaps as far back as 70,000 years ago when the last Ice Age produced sea levels more than 150 m lower than they are today. Evidence of the successive waves of migration that followed those first settlers over the next 30 to 40 thousand years can be seen in the rock art in places such as Raft Point and Bigge Island. Some of these sites contain work that pre-dates even the mysterious Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) art that dates from more than 20,000 years ago and the much more recent Wanjina figures.

Evidence of early European visits also exists. On a massive old boab tree in Careening Bay the engraved name of Philip Parker King's ship *HMC Mermaid* that was repaired there in 1802, is still clearly visible. On Sheep Island in Camden Sound the graves of several members of the ill fated attempt to establish a settlement there in the 1860s remain.

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This trip has reinforced my view that this coastline and its hostile interior is still one of the best natural defences that this country could have. This is some of the hardest and most unforgiving country in the world. Whilst the north-west may not be under an imminent threat from invasion by outside forces, it is under the very real threat of invasion by the resources sector.

The Mitchell Plateau, for example, is said to have the richest bauxite deposits in the world, assaying at around 70% alumina compared to 30% for Weipa. Bigge Island was recently proposed as the site for a massive on-shore LNG processing facility. The area is said to have significant deposits of uranium and the off-shore area contains vast natural gas reserves. The thought of such an invasion fills me with dread.

I hope that my grandchildren and their children will be able to see this unique and beautiful part of Australia as I have been fortunate to see it virtually unchanged over the past 21 years. I hate to think that in another 21 years it will be marred by great big holes in the ground and beaches polluted by the detritus of 'development'. If any part of this planet deserves World Heritage protection it is the whole of the Kimberley.

Ken Granger

Lecture – SEQ Population

The June lecture will be delivered by Dr Tom Wilson on the topic, *Population Trends in South East Queensland*.

In 1981 the population of South East Queensland stood at 1.4 million. Today the region is home to just over twice that number, and over the last few years has been increasing in population by an average of 2.7%, or 77,000 per year. Concern about high population growth and its implications for housing affordability, transport, water supply and the environment have recently led some commentators to call for reduced population growth, or even a population cap. The presentation will examine key characteristics of South East Queensland's population and

household trends and present several scenarios, both plausible and implausible, for their future development.

Tom Wilson is a Senior Research Fellow in demography in the Queensland Centre for Population Research at the University of Queensland. He was awarded his PhD in geography from the University of Leeds in 2001 for his work on multiregional population projection methods. His main research interests are in population projection methodology, migration analysis, and local area demography. His recent papers have focused on population growth in South East Queensland, local area population forecast accuracy, and model migration schedules. He currently teaches a course at the University of Queensland in Applied Demography. Prior to his appointment at the University of Queensland he was Principal Demographer with the New South Wales Department of Planning.

Note that Tom is replacing the speaker on our printed programme, Prof Martin Bell, due to Martin's absence overseas.

SE Qld Geography Trail 2

Continuing our South East Queensland Geography Trail, on June 26 and 27 we visit Oakey and Gatton and some sites in between.

The planned tour of the Vet School at the University of Qld Gatton campus will be a highlight of this weekend. Remember, this trip, as with most RGSQ trips, is quite suitable for children and young adults.

Oakridge Motel and Caravan Park, phone 4691 3300, is the selected accommodation (camping or motel unit). **Please make your own accommodation booking and payment.** Mention you are with the RGSQ group. There are other motels and hotels in Oakey if you prefer. The programme is

Saturday 26 June. Drive via Helidon to Spring Bluff Railway Station (130km). **Meet at 10.30am** for morning tea (BYO or the café) and inspection of this picturesque site.

Drive through Toowoomba (14km) with its gracious homes and tree-lined streets. Onto Oakey (30km) for accommodation check-in and lunch (own arrangements).

At 2.00pm, visit the Army Aviation Museum for a conducted tour. At the conclusion of the tour, drive out to Ackland to view the new Hope Coal Open Cut from the Oakey-Cooyar Roadside.

5.00pm Happy Hour at Oakridge Camp. Dinner own arrangements.

Sunday 27 June. Walk main street, Oakey, view statue of *Bernborough*.

Depart Oakey 9.00am for Toowoomba. View heritage buildings in Russell Street including Queensland's oldest existing public urinal! At 10.00am, visit Cobb & Co. Museum, 27 Lindsay Street.

Depart Toowoomba 12 noon. Drive to Gatton (37km), meeting at Lake Apex Park for BYO lunch. Then drive through Gatton town out on the Forest Hill Road to the University of Queensland Gatton campus (8km) for a guided tour commencing 2.00pm of the newly opened Veterinary School.

Costs: Accommodation – book and pay for your own.

Tours of Army Aviation Museum, Cobb & Co Museum, and UQ Vet School – \$15 adult, \$11 concession, \$8 child

Please send your trip booking and tours payment in early to the office. Any queries re details may be directed to Brian McGrath, email brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com, or phone 3378 5960.

New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

Pauline and Phil Frederick; John Quantrill; Elaine and Neville Smith; James Stephens and Christine Hackwood.

We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.



125th Anniversary Lunch

You are invited to celebrate
the Society's

Quasquicentenary*

Guest Speaker: Bill Kitson

Where: Map Room, Conrad
Treasury Hotel, Queen St, Brisbane

When: 11.45am for 12.00 noon
Saturday 10 July

Cost: \$47.00 p.p., drinks extra

RSVP: by 18 June, see slip below

Saturday 10 July is 125 years to the day since the meeting that set up our Society. The meal will be buffet style and include a range of hot and cold dishes (eg, veal and mushroom ragout, tandoori reef fish, sesame chicken, Asian noodles with vegetables, various salads), deserts, and tea and coffee.

* Member Paul de Haan has passed on the word for our 125th anniversary.

SE Qld Geography Trail 3

Continuing our South East Queensland Geography Trail, on July 24 and 25 we visit Rosewood and Allora and some sites in between. The planned tours of the Emu Farm at Marburg and historic house Glengallen at Allora will be highlights of this weekend. Remember, this trip, as with most RGSQ trips, is quite suitable for children and young adults.

There is no camping ground or motel in Rosewood. Accommodation has been reserved at the Rosewood Hotel, 6 John St, phone 5464 1402. There are 2 other hotels in Rosewood if we fill the Rosewood Hotel. You may be lucky (?) enough to catch a glimpse of the resident Rosewood Hotel ghost! The programme is:

On **Saturday 24** July we drive to Marburg (50km) on the Warrego Highway and join a conducted tour of the Emu Heaven Emu Farm, Marburg, commencing **10.00am**. Then onto Rosewood calling into the Cabanda Station on the Rosewood Historic Railway en route. After lunch (BYO) in Johnston Park, John St, Rosewood, we'll visit the St Brigid's Catholic Church in the afternoon for a conducted tour over Queensland's largest timber church, 100 years old and Arnold and Joyce Rieck's Arboretum. Dinner that evening your own arrangements.

On **Sunday 25 July**, after breakfast at the Rosewood Hotel, we'll drive through Laidley and Forest Hill to Gatton, and then on to Allora passing through Grandchester, the terminus for the first railway in Queensland (Ipswich to Bigge's Camp as Grandchester was formerly known) and pausing to view the Thiess Memorial at the Heifer Creek campground. We'll stop for a morning cuppa at Centenary Bridge, Dalrymple Creek in Allora and then drive on to Glengallen Historic House for a self-guided tour commencing **10.30am**.

Returning to the Commercial Hotel, Allora for its Sunday Roast Lunch,

we'll visit the Allora historic museum in the afternoon and then walk part or all as time allows the Allora Historic Heritage Trail. **4.00pm** Depart Allora for home by own chosen route – you might consider through Warwick, Killarney and Boonah.

Costs: The cost for this weekend is \$85 per person. This covers overnight accommodation Saturday, Sunday breakfast in Rosewood, Sunday lunch in Allora and tours of the Emu Farm, Arboretum, St Brigid's Church, Glengallen homestead and Allora historic museum.

Please send your trip booking and tours payment in early to the office. Any queries re details may be directed to Brian McGrath, email brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com, phone 3378 5960.

Geog Comp Thanks

Many thanks to the members who sorted and posted the certificates and results back to schools:

Dal and Wendy Anderson, Margaret Hardy, Susan Jeffries, Audrey Johnston, Bev Leggett, Maureen Meier, John and Mary Nowill, Karen Nunan, Anne O'Connor, Andrea Smith, Margaret Townsend

The Final for under 16s will take place in Sydney on Monday 7 June at Foxel Studios (details were in the last *Bulletin*).

Thanks for everyone's help in 2010. Now we can relax till next year!

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RSVP for RGSQ 125th Anniversary Lunch

Map Room, Conrad Treasury Hotel, Brisbane, 11.45am for 12.00 noon, Saturday 10 July 2010

Please return by Friday 18 June to RGSQ, 237 Milton Road, Milton Qld 4064

Names of those attending:

.....

.....Phone contact:

Payment of \$47.00 per person, totalling \$ is paid by

enclosed cheque/money order payable to RGSQ

Visa

Mastercard

Card no.: _____ Exp date: _____

Cardholder name: _____ Cardholder signature: _____

Haddon Corner Trek

The theme of this trek, 13 - 27 Sept, is *Exploring Cooper Country*. We will visit Windorah, Birdsville and Innamincka, and other outback sites such as the "Dig Tree". Much of the Cooper Creek Catchment will be traversed and we are also planning a forum with guest speakers on the Cooper Country. Another focus is a meeting with RGSSA at Haddon Corner on the border between Qld and SA, to celebrate our joint 125th birthday. This is a rare opportunity to see the west of our great State in the Spring following a bumper wet season. Please get your bookings in as soon as possible to help the planning process. You can take part

in the Trek either in your own 4WD, or on the group coach. Please contact the office for more information and a booking form.

Gov't House Open Day

Sunday 6 June, 10.00am - 3.00pm
168 Fernberg Road, Paddington
Visit stately Government House and learn about the Governors who have resided there since 1910. Explore the house and gardens. A Community Fair will provide a fantastic festival atmosphere, with musical entertainment, displays and activities to enjoy and refreshments available for purchase, or bring a picnic. Don't forget to visit the RGSQ display.

Jack Arden RIP

John Arden, father of member Heather McGrath, passed away in Brisbane on 3 May last. He was 93 years old. He was a member of our Society for some 20 years and participated in the Haddon Corner trek in 1985. He lived on his property "Akaray" in the Augathella District from 1961 until 2006, when ill health forced his relocation to Brisbane. Members of the Society camped on his property on occasions, and he usually regaled them with stories of the bush and explorers of which he was a keen student. He was buried in Augathella cemetery on May 11.

Brian McGrath

RGSQ Bulletin

June 2010

Lecture, Tues 1 Jun, 7.30pm
Speaker: Dr Tom Wilson
Subject: Population Trends in South East Queensland

Final for Under 16s, Mon 7 Jun, 11.00am
For: National Geographic Channel
Australian Geography Competition
Where: Foxtel Studios, Sydney

SEQ Geography Trail (2), 26 - 27 Jun
Where: Oakey and Gatton

Lecture, Tues 6 Jul 7.30pm
Speaker: Mr Peter Lloyd
Subject: RGSQ: the Past 25 Years

Social, Sat 10 July, 7.30pm
☆☆☆☆ 125th Anniversary Lunch ☆☆☆☆
Speaker: Mr Bill Kitson

SEQ Geography Trail (3), 24 - 25 Jul
Where: Rosewood and Allora

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