



# RGSQ Bulletin

ISSN 1832-8830

Vol 45 no 11 December 2010

Published by The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc, a nonprofit organisation established in 1885 that promotes the study of geography and encourages a greater understanding and enjoyment of the world around us.

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## From the President

The last month proved to be a very interesting period with regards to meetings and seminars attended.

I would firstly like to mention Syd Kirkby's address to RGSQ on Tuesday 2 November. Syd's topic was very absorbing, as he is one of those most fortunate to have spent lengthy periods in Antarctica and was engaged in mapping the great southern continent up until the early 1980s.

It was quite obvious during his address to the Society, that Syd was more than a little dismayed that politics and politicians had interfered and renamed various parts of Australia's Antarctic Territory with scant regard for the original place names (bestowed by many of the original explorers). Syd continues to lobby government departments to maintain the status quo. While it is beyond The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland's capacity to offer material or financial assistance for this venture, I believe we could lend our considerable influence to this very worthwhile cause.

On 26 October I attended an evening organised by Australian Geographic at the Queensland Museum to promote tourism to our immediate north in Papua New Guinea. This presentation was accompanied by a dance troupe of Huli Wigmen from Tari in the Highlands of New Guinea. The islands of far North Queensland are so close to the mainland of Papua New Guinea yet culturally and developmentally we are worlds apart.

As a young man I spent some time working at the *South Pacific Post* in Port Moresby and at that time travelled to a couple of the outlying islands in the Trobriands group (to the east of the tail of Papua New Guinea) and to parts of the Southern Highlands. This is really spectacular country and something that may be worthwhile in pursuing for our programme of 'Geography on the Ground' in the future.

Then on 27 October I was most fortunate to attend an evening organised by the 'Brisbane Writers Festival' at the Powerhouse Theatre at New Farm, entitled *The Legacy: An Elder's Vision for our Sustainable Future*. This featured the internationally renowned scientist and environmentalist Dr David Suzuki at his very best.

The message was abundantly clear. He warns of the dire effect on Earth's ecosystems and our own well-being if mankind persists with prioritising economic outcomes and unfettered growth ahead of the laws of nature. If you are at all interested, *The Legacy* is available at all good bookstores and is a very interesting read. I

managed to run into a couple of our longtime RGSQ members in the foyer early in the evening.

Finally before I finish this message I must confess that I don't normally focus on earthquakes around the world, however, Sharyn and I are booked to travel to Christchurch and Nelson, New Zealand in the early part of 2011. It was with some dismay that we witnessed on television the extent of the damage of the earthquake (7.1 on the Richter scale) that hit the Canterbury area on 4 September.

Two days later I emailed the people in Christchurch where we expect to stay to enquire as to the extent it had affected their lives. Two brick chimneys in their house had been reduced to a pile of rubble and there were lots of cracks and broken windows but thankfully neither of them had been hurt and there weren't any reports of fatalities.

At home here in Australia when we consider disaster management it's normally of the flood, drought, fire, or

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cyclone variety and rarely an earthquake with the intensity experienced in Christchurch.

We do, however, tend to forget that an earthquake (5.6 on the Richter scale) struck Newcastle on 28 December 1989. The damage bill there was estimated at around A\$4 billion, and this was the result of just a few seconds of ground shaking. Thirteen people died in what is considered one of Australia's most serious natural disasters.

How many times do we read of 5.1, 6, 8.8, 7.1 measured quakes on the Richter scale, giving scant thought to what those figures actually mean. I delved a little further.

The Richter scale is a logarithmic scale, meaning that the numbers on the scale measure factors of 10. An earthquake that measures 4.0 on the scale is 10 times larger than one that measures 3.0 and a quake that measures 2.0 is undetectable to a normal person and is called a microquake. Moderate earthquakes measure less than 6.0 while those higher can create significant damage. The highest reading since 1900 scored 9.5 in Chile on 22 May 1960. Frightening stuff indeed!

On behalf of myself and the Council of The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland I would like to wish all our members a very happy Christmas and a very prosperous and contented 2011. See you at the RGSQ Christmas party on 7 December.

Leo Scanlan

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## Christmas Close

The Society's office will be closed for Christmas from 23 December, reopening 4 January.

Please note that the Society does not publish a January *Bulletin*. Next year's lecture and trip programme will be sent out with the February *Bulletin*.

Keith, Kath and Hayley wish you and yours a safe and joyous Christmas and look forward to a productive year for the Society in 2011.

## Christmas Party

The Annual Society Christmas Party will be held at Gregory House on Tuesday 7 December starting at 7.30pm. The evening will also serve as a reunion of all those who took part – either on the coach or in a 4WD – in the September Haddon Corner Trek. It is hoped that there will be a really good turnout of Society members, including trekkers, for a great evening of recollection and a final celebration of our 125th Anniversary Year.

For catering purposes, we'd appreciate an indication that you are coming, by Friday 3 December if you're reading this by then, or else on Monday 6 December. However, if you find you can come at the last moment, it's fine to just turn up. This function is free. All Society members are welcome and you may bring any friends who may be potential members of our Society.

Brian McGrath



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## 2011 Renewals

Society members who need to renew their subscription for 2011 will find a renewal form enclosed with this *Bulletin*. We hope that all of you will decide to renew to support the work of the Society and/or take advantage of our interesting programme of lectures and treks.

If you'd like to change to receiving your *Bulletin* by email, please fill that in on the renewal form. Members who already receive the *Bulletin* by email and who are due to renew will be sent a renewal form in the post.

## Email Alert List

You may still want to continue receiving a paper copy of the *Bulletin*, but if you'd like to go onto the email alert list that we are setting up, please indicate that on the renewal, or send an email to Kath at [admin@rgsq.org.au](mailto:admin@rgsq.org.au) letting her know.

We'll use the list to remind members about booking deadlines for events, late changes to the programme, etc.

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## Can YOU Help?

As most members would realise, our Society organises the National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition. Over 85,000 secondary school students entered the 2010 Competition. We need to call on our generous members again for their help. We will be packing the initial mail-out to schools on Tuesday 18 January, and maybe finishing off the last bits on Wednesday 19 January.

In this mailing, all schools get the same so it's relatively straightforward – no matching codes nor counting large numbers involved! If you can't help on those dates but can fit in some time earlier in January, you could help prepare the mailing envelopes. Other jobs come up in March, April and May.

If you can give a few hours of your time, please ring or email me [=Kath] and let me know you can help in January, or later in the year. Thanks very much.

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## Gov't House Open Day

H.E. Ms P Wensley AO, Governor of Queensland, and Mr S McCosker invite Society members to an Open Day at Government House to celebrate Australia Day on Wednesday 26 January, at 168 Fernberg Rd, Paddington. Gates will be open 10.00am to 3.00pm.

Musical entertainment; informative displays; guided tours of the gardens; refreshments for purchase or bring a picnic. Parking available at Norman Buchan Park (cnr Baroona and Rainworth Roads) with a shuttle service to Government House. Free entry. Cancelled if wet.

## Day Trek – Bribie Island

The 2011 Trips and Activities Programme kicks off on Saturday 19 February with a day visit to Bribie Island.

We will meet at the Ferryman Cruise site, on the Esplanade just north of the bridge, at 9.00am, ready for boarding at 9.15am for a 3-hour cruise on Pumicestone Passage. Morning tea will be served on board. The tide will be high, enabling the vessel to cruise over seagrass beds and, who knows, we might see a dugong.

Returning to shore at 12.30pm, we'll gather near the jetty for our byo picnic lunch. Later in the afternoon, we'll meet local identity Peter Samson who will guide us around the Buckley's Hole Conservation Park on the southern end of the Island. The tour will conclude by 4.00pm.

The cost is \$40, covering the boat cruise with morning tea and the conducted tour of the Conservation Park.

Bookings are ESSENTIAL. Please book and pay the office as early as possible, and certainly before 4 February. For further information, please phone me on 3378 5960, or email [brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com](mailto:brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com).

Brian McGrath

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## Vale

It is with sadness that we report the death of Society member Joyce Barrett, of Coorparoo.

Joyce had been a member since 1998 and regularly volunteered to help with the work of the Australian Geography Competition. She will be missed. Our condolences to family and friends.

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## New Member

We have much pleasure in welcoming Gaynor Day as a new member.

We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable. We look forward to getting to know you at Society functions.

## Haddon Corner Trek, 2010

In celebration of the Society's 125th anniversary, this was the best attended Society trip for many years. Forty persons travelled on the coach. At the peak, 47 persons in 24 4WDs were part of the trek, and 12 4WDs completed the whole Trek. Polleys had 2 staff in attendance on the coach, and for most of the trek Duncan Polley and his wife accompanied the coach in their motorhome.

The planned itinerary was interrupted by rain which closed roads, preventing the planned visits to Haddon Corner, Birdsville and Innamincka, a total of 5 nights. Three days, 17, 18 and 19 October, were very wet. Extra nights were substituted in Windorah (1), Quilpie (2), Thargomindah and Kilcowera (1 each), and an unscheduled day visit was made to Eromanga. The original itinerary totalled 3895km and the actual distance covered was 3600km.

The Cooper Country Forum held in Windorah on 16 September was a great success from the viewpoints of numbers in attendance and the quality and informative nature of the presentations. Ken Granger has reported on the Eromanga visit and the Forum in the November *Bulletin*.

The RGSSA itinerary was even more disrupted by the rain; they had to travel to Windorah on the bitumen via Broken Hill and return the same way.

Talks to the trekkers by the mayors of Quilpie, Barcoo and Bulloo Shires helped cement relations between the RGSQ and those shires.

Interviews/items on the trek were broadcast on ABC radio in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Longreach and Mt Isa, and there were two interviews (on 19 and 26 September) on Macca's *Australia all Over*. The *Warrego Watchman* and *Longreach Leader* papers carried items on the Trek.

The weather prevented the planned celebrations at Haddon Corner and the fixing of the commemorative plaque. Another 4WD trip is being planned to Haddon Corner for April next year to mount the plaque.

## RM Williams Centre Opens

RGSQ members who went to Eidsvold earlier this year will have noticed the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre under construction. The Centre was opened on Saturday 23 October. The centre is well worth a visit if you are in the area. For more details about the Centre, visit the website <http://www.rmwilliamscentre.com.au>.

Brian McGrath

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## Long-Standing Members

As the Society's 125th anniversary year draws to a close, it is fitting to acknowledge our members of long-standing. Those in the list below have all been members for at least 40 years.

Alan Bowman  
Denis Cleary  
Barbara Cross  
Manfred Cross  
Iris Dean  
Ross Dick  
Lee Gregory  
Doug Hoare  
D.V. Huntley  
Elise Lindgren  
R.J. MacIver  
Glennville Pike  
Dorothy Simson  
Rob Simson

We appreciate their ongoing support, and the support of all our members, in helping the Society fulfill its aim of promoting geography.

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## Atlas of Living Australia

The *Atlas of Living Australia* website has gone live at [www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au). While the site is still a work in progress, it already provides access to a variety of information about Australian biodiversity – animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms, including:

- species pages
- species names list
- ID information
- more than 23 million occurrence and distribution records
- information on key Australian biological collections
- mapping tools
- citizen science tools

Through the Atlas, users can discover information on species in a particular area, in their neighbourhood or around their school.

Over the next eighteen months, the Atlas will continue to grow through the integration of more information on Australian biodiversity.

The supporting institutions are interested in feedback on the Atlas website. This can be sent to Lynne Sealie, Communications Manager, [lynne.sealie@csiro.au](mailto:lynne.sealie@csiro.au)



## AAG Conference

The Association of American Geographers invites you to join them in Seattle, Washington, for their Annual Conference, 12-16 April, for the latest in research, policy, and scientific applications on topics such as:

- Asian geographies
- GIScience research and integrating space and time
- The changing roles of the university in society
- Climate change, GIS, natural hazards and disasters sessions – Haiti; the Gulf of Mexico oil spill
- Public health
- Geography and the humanities

- Cultural geography
- Cartography
- Geography education
- Human geography
- Mobile mapping
- and more!

The AAG 2011 Conference will also feature a large Jobs in Geography Career Center, an International Networking Reception, and exhibits showcasing the latest scholarly publications and advanced geographic technologies. Many educational field trips will explore the rich cultural and physical geography of Seattle and the surrounding Pacific Northwest region.

See [www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org) for more.

# RGSQ Bulletin

December 2010

**Geog's Big Week Out**, 5 - 10 Dec  
For: prize-winning senior students  
Where: Perth and Rottnest Island

**Social**, Tues 7 Dec, 7.30pm  
What: Christmas Party

**Office Closed**, Thurs 23 Dec - Mon 3 Jan  
For: Christmas

**Volunteer Days**, Tues 18 - Wed 19 Jan  
For: Australian Geography Comptition

**Lecture**, Tues 1 Feb, 7.30pm  
Speaker: Mr Steven Dickinson  
Subject: Mining and Biodiversity  
Management in Madagascar

**Day Trek**, Sat 19 Feb 9.00am  
Where: Bribie Island

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