



RGSQ Bulletin

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In this issue

- Brisbane Flood and RGSQ
- Lecture - Mining and Biodiversity in Madagascar
- Day Trek - Bribie Island
- Day Trek - Wivenhoe Dam
- Car Sharing
- Where are the Youngsters
- Haddon Corner Trek II
- New Member

From the President

As I sit down to write this for the *RGSQ Bulletin* at the end of 2010, and the beginning of 2011 it has been a truly remarkable year, and an even more remarkable start to 2011. It's hard not to mention the weather and some of the very recent headlines in our daily newspapers.

Last year The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland lobbied state and federal politicians hard to include Geography as an integral part of the Australian School Curriculum up to Year 10. To downgrade geography as a subject at this very formative period of our young people's educational development would be to deny a true understanding of how our country and indeed how our society operates.

I would draw your attention to recent headlines in our daily newspapers. 'A State of Rain', 'North Braces for Huge Storm', 'Sugar Harvest takes \$1b hit', 'Sweet Hopes Sour as Sugar Harvest Rots', 'Loss Is Ours to Share', 'Toughest Hour', '23 Communities Threatened', 'Marooned, Miserable and Out of Supplies', 'Bundaberg: Residents flee

as community cut in half', to mention but a few of these headlines, and its not over yet.

Over Christmas we read headlines of how unprepared Heathrow Airport was for the cold snap, and the resultant delays in air travel within Britain and beyond. While the weather here again was the culprit, its hard not to again look closely at 'Climate Change' around the globe.

To complete this list on a slightly lighter note and something equally important, our health, I would like to mention Professor Scott O'Neill from Queensland University (after 15 years of painstaking research), and with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Health Program, hopes to control Dengue Fever by introducing Wolbachia bacteria to mosquitoes that would stop them passing on the Dengue virus to humans. This is a truly remarkable development to contain and perhaps solve a health problem that is truly international and one that affects billions and costs governments around the world millions to control. What a coup – the solution found right here in Queensland with one of Australia's pre-eminent scientists and his team of researchers.

There is one common thread that entwines all of these headlines and issues mentioned, and that is the science of 'Geography'. All these headlines and more were reported frequently during the latter part of 2010 and the first few days as we usher in 2011.

If ever there was a more compelling argument to install 'Geography' as a 'stand alone discipline' from Primary School to Grade 10, it is now!

I've mentioned issues that relate to the study of Climatology, Meteorology, Hydrology, Civics (Local, State, and Federal), Community, Town Planning, Health, Budgetary Finance, Civil Defence, Agriculture, Climate Change, Communications, Transport, and of course the floods, and more, and they're all in there somewhere. These subjects all relate to our understanding of our physical environment and how our society is organised and they are all part and parcel of the study of Geography.

I'm writing this final passage of my Jan-Feb message on 12 January and while I don't wish to change any of my earlier message I think the current situation unfolding in South East Queensland in Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley, and now Brisbane is further evidence we should place a more positive emphasis on geography right through primary,

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secondary and tertiary educational institutions as well. This year so far nature has thrown her worst at this Central, West, and South East Queensland region with this disaster still some time to run before it completely unfolds.

To all our members and the wider community throughout Queensland, I wish you a Happy New Year. To those of you who have been so severely impacted by this tragedy still unfolding in Central, West and South East Queensland, I offer our sympathy, and our ongoing support in helping to rebuild, and hopefully some renewal and prosperity during the latter part of 2011.

Leo Scanlan

Brisbane Flood and RGSQ

Thanks to Society members who called to ask how the Society had got on through the flood. We had checked the 1974 flood map before purchasing the property so knew that we would be above that flood line.

We haven't heard of any members being flooded. If you have been, and if your fellow members can assist in any way, please get in touch.

As most of you would realise, Milton was badly affected, with plenty of media images of the flooded brewery and stadium on the other side of the hill. So access was problematic with lots of cut roads. Power was restored on Tuesday 18 January and phones on 19 January (today as I write this). This is a very busy time in the office because of the geography competition so there is a lot of catching up to do.

The first competition mail-out was scheduled for 18 January and once I knew the main printing jobs were OK, I decided it was better to go ahead with it than to reschedule for only a few days later. However, the cover letter is done by Snap Milton which had been completely underwater. I had no computers so no electronic copy of it (we don't externally back up every word-processing file), but managed to find the hard copy that I had used to proofread it. So we had 3000 copies of that done on Monday ready for all the willing volunteers

who were still happy to turn up. A sincere thank you to those who came in to help – mainly by train or walking to keep off those congested roads:

David and Kathryn Carstens, Mary Comer, Jill Don, Ben and Sarah Jeffrey, Bev Leggett, Maureen Meier, Graham and Kay Rees, Ron Wallace

These members arrived on the hottest day of the summer so far, expecting there to be no air-conditioning, so it was a nice bonus to find that the power was back on.

Our post office at Milton has also been flooded so the envelopes haven't actually gone yet as they need to source vans to make pickups. But by Thursday 19 January, they will all be on their way.

Thanks too to Judy Rechner who is coming in to package the material for the WA schools whose mailing labels had been delayed arriving.

With no January *Bulletin*, the February one usually goes out early and should have been in the mail on 19 January. However, the flood interrupted its preparation, so everything but this item was written prior to the Brisbane flooding. We are posting this out to you as soon as we can, but we need to give our printer longer than usual.

That's the printer the contents of whose premises are now on a Council tip. We will still email him the print job but need to allow extra time because he will then send it to another Snap branch. As Brian McGrath points out in his item below about Riversands Winery, these devastated businesses need our support. If any member needs a printing job done, I can thoroughly recommend Snap Milton. The owners are Jack and Cynthia Tarry, phone 3367 2400, email milton@snapprinting.com.au.

The Society's 2011 programme brochure is also a victim of the flood. We won't hold up posting the *Bulletin* to wait for it, so if it's not in this *Bulletin*, it will be in the next one.

Heartfelt sympathy to those that have been badly affected by the flood. Working together as a community we

will get through this. Those of us that haven't been flooded ourselves need to show understanding and patience for the inevitable disruptions.

Kath Berg

Lecture – Madagascar

The 2011 programme starts off with a lecture from Steven Dickinson, *Mining in a Biodiversity Sensitive Location: Madagascar*.

Steven is Senior Biodiversity Advisor at Golder Associates, focusing on environmental and biodiversity management. He has taken a lead role in environmental impact assessments and biodiversity action plans for mining and oil and gas projects. Steven has recently been stationed in Madagascar on a three-year secondment contract to the Ambatovy Nickel Project as senior biodiversity adviser. Steven is also developing Biodiversity Management Plans for projects in the Austral-Asian region.

The Ambatovy Project nickel and cobalt mine is close to the ecotone between lowland eastern and montane forest, in Madagascar. It is a forest mosaic, ranging from largely intact to heavily disturbed patches. The mine's footprint is nested within this area. The key biodiversity components of this forest matrix include structurally distinct forest types linked to different substrates, streams, and seasonal ponds. The zone is biotically diverse with a flora of at least 1,367 species and fauna of 214 vertebrate species, which includes 13 lemur species. Main residual impacts to biodiversity result from progressive forest clearing.

In light of these sensitivities, the Ambatovy Project developed a biodiversity management program including a biodiversity-offset initiative with projected conservation outcomes leading to no net loss to biodiversity. The onsite biodiversity program includes impact avoidance, minimization, reclamation measures and biodiversity offsetting.

Madagascar is somewhat off the beaten track and I am sure members will find Steven's presentation most interesting.

Day Trek – Bribie Island

The first trip for 2011 is a day visit to Bribie Island, on Saturday 19 February.

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.

Brian McGrath



Day Trek – Wivenhoe Dam

On **Sunday 27 March** we'll meet at the Information/Interpretive Centre at Wivenhoe Dam around 10.00am. You'll find the Centre on the right, just after you drive across the Dam Wall coming from Fernvale.

After looking around the Centre, at 10.30am we'll meet our guide from Seqwater for a talk, video and conducted tour of the Dam, which will conclude about 12.30pm. You'll also receive an Information Pack from Seqwater.

We'll then adjourn to the Cormorant Bay Café on the other side of the Dam wall for lunch (pay your own), or you could bring your own picnic lunch or bbq.

With water a hot topic for the past many months, this is sure to be an interesting and informative visit [and was planned before the Brisbane flood!].

There is no charge for this activity, but you must register with the office so that numbers are known. Also advise if you wish to lunch at the Café so that sufficient tables can be reserved.

Bookings close on Friday 18 March.

More information from Brian McGrath, 3378 5960, or brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com.

Car Sharing

The Treks and Activities Committee is encouraging anyone who would like to come on any of the day or weekend trips but who is unable to drive, to share a vehicle with another member. By this means, more members can enjoy the many and varied activities planned for this year. If you are in this category of "needing a lift", please advise the office when you make your booking. If you have seats to spare, please also advise the office of that fact when making your booking. The office will facilitate "match-ups".

"Car Sharing" will apply to the first 2 activities for the year, day trips to Bribie on 19 February and to Wivenhoe Dam on 27 March.



Where are the Youngsters?

The Treks and Activities Committee would like to encourage members to publicise the events planned for this year to relatives and friends with children and to young adults. Most if not all our outings are suitable; many are planned for weekends or school holidays this year.

I'd love to see some youngsters on the Bribie and Wivenhoe trips. Special registration fees will be arranged for these categories of participants.

Brian McGrath

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2011 Membership Renewal

Membership fees for 2011 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: _____

Cardholder name: _____ Cardholder signature: _____

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

Haddon Corner II

Another attempt will be made to reach Haddon Corner – 4WDs/AWDs only, no coach – to meet RGSSA representatives and install the 125th Anniversary Plaque. Our contingent will assemble in Quilpie on Tuesday 12 April and reach Haddon Corner on Monday 18 April, all depending on the weather of course! More details in next month's *Bulletin*.

Riversands Winery

Many participants in our 2010 (nearly) Haddon Corner Trek will recall with pleasure our visit to

Riversands Winery in St George and the hospitality extended by its owner David Blackett and his staff. David gave a graphic description of how the vineyard was affected by the early 2010 floods, and now of course it has been hit again in more than one flood event in 2011. It will be a real struggle to survive!

The best way you could help this enterprise (and other flood-affected enterprises) is to visit or buy from them. Most of the Premier's Flood Appeal money will go directly to into the hands of individuals who need it most. So if you'd like to help David at Riversands Vineyards, simply purchase some wine. And, tell your friends as well!

You can find out more about Riversands Vineyard at www.riversandswines.com and you can place an order directly by contacting sales@riversandswines.com.

Brian McGrath

New Member

We have much pleasure in welcoming Donald Tanner 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.

RGSQ Bulletin

February 2011

Lecture, Tues 1 Feb, 7.30pm
Speaker: Steven Dickinson
Subject: Mining in a Biodiversity Sensitive
Location: Madagascar

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

Lecture, Tues 1 Mar, 7.30pm
Speaker: Liz Dann
Subject: The Future of the Murray-Darling
Basin

Volunteer Days, Tues 15 - Thurs 17 Mar
For: Australian Geography Competition

Trek Briefing, Wed 23 Mar
For: Haddon Corner II

Day Trek, Sun 27 Mar, 10.00am
Where: Guided Tour of Wivenhoe Dam

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