



RGSQ Bulletin

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From the President

For my first message "From the President", I reiterate my comment at the Annual General Meeting. It is an honour to be accepted as President of our Society. I shall endeavour to continue the solid example of my predecessors.

I accept the responsibility quite over-awed with the role of the Society for over one hundred and twenty seven years. I note how the march of time has changed the scope of geography during this time and the way in which the RGSQ has adapted to the developments in the world to contribute to the understanding of modern geographic knowledge.

For those who did not attend the Annual Meeting and receive a copy of the Annual Report, I recommend that you seek to read of the impressive activity of the last year. The eleven page Report shows the extent of that work, and acknowledges the key contributors. The Report is available on the RGSQ website or by request from the RGSQ Office.

To continue the achievements and meet the challenges of next year, I

am very dependent on the ongoing contribution of the Members, the Committees and the Council. I have been assured of this ongoing support from our Membership.

I joined the Society in 1974. I was passing the office of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Queensland Branch, then in Ann Street, and being aware of the activity of Royal Geographical Societies in general, and conscious of my involvement with Geography as a Surveyor, I made enquiry about membership. Being assured of my eligibility, by the then Secretary, J.H. Griffiths, I left the building all signed up, just subject to ratification.

My membership has been constant from that time with much interesting involvement, and, I trust, contribution. In earlier stages attendance at lectures was spasmodic but the receipt of the *Bulletin* was valued. Since 2004 I have been pleased to serve on the Council of the Society.

During the coming year the Society, through the Council, has to deal with a significant organisational and administrative change. Keith Smith has been Secretary for the past twenty-six years and has applied his financial expertise as Business Manager to the great benefit of the Society. This considerable talent and dedication to the Society is well appreciated. Keith has now stood down from this position (although maintaining association).

Another change is that of Paul Feeney who has also chosen to stand down from Council. Paul has

been a Council Member for twenty-five years, having served two terms of two years as President as well as multiple other contributions.

This service to the society was acknowledged by Members present at the AGM and there will be a function, notified to Members via the *Bulletin*, to recognise this contribution of these two Members.

The new Council is listed elsewhere in the *Bulletin*. Notably there are four retiring Members and four new Members.

The ongoing Membership of Council by Dal Anderson as Vice President rates mention here in conjunction with the years of service by Keith and Paul. Dal has served on Council for twenty-six years and has served as President, Treasurer, and Vice President during that period, maintaining a record of considerable contribution to our Society.

The strength of RGSQ is the Membership which comes from the wide range of people of many

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backgrounds and talents who recognise the important impact of Geography and wish to learn and contribute to the benefit of Community.

David Carstens

Lecture: Beyond Zero Emissions

The lecture on 2 October, will be delivered by Adrian Holbeck, on the topic *Beyond Zero Emissions: 100% Renewable Energy in Australia within 10 years.*

Australia has one of the greatest renewable energy resources in the world, which we can capitalise on to re-power our economy with clean, safe and secure renewable energy. But can renewable energy provide for all our energy needs? Find out at this presentation about the Zero Carbon Australia Stationary Energy Plan. The Plan is a costed, detailed blueprint outlining a ten year transition to a zero-emissions electricity sector. This cutting-edge research, shows how Australia can reach 100% renewable energy within a decade, using technology that is commercially available right now.

Adrian Holbeck is a permaculturist whose personal mission is to teach people how to grow food. He spent nearly 20 years as a manager in both private and public sectors in aviation, corrections, oil, mining and manufacturing industries.

Then, as a freelance consultant in his own business for the next 15 years, he completed projects in most industry sectors. During this period, he raised a family and had a lot of fun learning the lessons that every business owner/operator has to learn. Most of these lessons cost him a great deal of time, or money, or both.

His current work is with Northey Street City Farm. He is an active member of Brisbane Organic Growers Inc and the Queensland Herb Society. Why does he do presentations on the Beyond Zero Emissions stationary energy plan? You'll have to ask him.

New Council

The Annual General Meeting in September marked the start of a new Council year. Councillors for 2012/13 are:

President: David Carstens
Vice Presidents: Dal Anderson
Jamie Shulmeister
Secretary: Chris Spriggs
Treasurer: John Nowill
Councillors: Iraphne Childs
Tony Hillier
Audrey Johnston
Jeanette Lamont
Margaret McIvor
Neal O'Connor
John Quantrill
Leo Scanlan

Thanks to the 'retiring' Councillors Keith Smith, Paul Feeney, Lucie Sorensen and Russell Saunders for their important contributions to the work of the Society – some longer than others, see From the President.

Welcome to new Councillors John Quantrill and to Chris Spriggs, who is taking on the task of Secretary. Iraphne Childs (a past president) and Neal O'Connor are both back on Council after a break.

Committees

Much of the Society's work is carried out through its committees. Listed below are the committees, and their convenors (if already decided), which will operate during 2012/13.

If you would like to know more about the work of a committee, or volunteer to help, please have a chat to the convenor at a meeting, or call the office and we will give you a phone number for him/her.

Australian Geography Competition
Kath Berg
Education
tba
Finance and Building
John Nowill
Honours
Iraphne Childs
Scientific Studies
Tony Hillier
Treks and Activities
tba

Millmerran Festival

The Society has organised a long weekend at the Millmerran Camp Oven Festival. A very interesting programme is planned from Friday 5 through Sunday 7 October. Details have been included in the last two *Bulletins*.

We are now able to confirm that we have been able to arrange a tour to the local coal mine and power station, so we can confirm the cost.

Cost: \$55.00 per person which covers a 1-day entry to the Camp Oven Festival, lunch at Forrest Estate Olive Grove and Wine Cellar, tour of coal mine and power station.

If you have already booked with the office, please send in your payment ASAP.

If you haven't yet booked, but would now like to: 1st, see if you can get accommodation (see last *Bulletin*); 2nd, ring the RGSQ office so we can check if we can increase our booking for the mine tour.

Contrasts in China

What: nibbles & drinks, a 3-course Chinese meal, slide presentation
When: Fri 19 Oct, 6.00 for 6.30pm
Where: RGSQ
Cost: \$35.00
Book: with the office & pay by 2 Oct

China is a fascinating country – huge, bustling cities, one with a population about the same as the whole of Australia; tiny villages with only 3 or 4 huts; kilometres of vibrant green paddy fields; sheer bare mountains; temples with huge, weird statues of gods; ancient history, beliefs and customs; arts and crafts; dramatic scenery; historic gardens; its food; and much more.

I've travelled in China three times, basically in different regions each time. This presentation will trace journeys by plane, ship, boat, coach, bicycle and leg – from the Great Wall to the Three Gorges Dam; from a silk factory to karst mountains.

Bring your friends and introduce them to your Society.

Audrey Johnston

Cruisin' Down the River

What: cruise the Brisbane River to the river mouth and return

When: Thursday 1 November

Cost: \$35

Book: with the office & pay by 2 Oct

Meet: NO LATER than 9.20am at the pontoon near the Big Wheel at South Bank

Bring: your camera

Wear: sunsmart gear

Anchors aweigh before we enjoy a Devonshire morning tea. As we cruise downstream we'll hear a comprehensive commentary about major and minor features along the river bank and on the water. We'll pass many familiar sights and some that we don't know – historic and modern buildings, older and newer bridges, parks, City Cats, refineries, the airport and the Port of Brisbane. There'll be many unfamiliar sights and stories, too.

On the return journey we can chat over lunch, tea and coffee. There's a licensed bar, too (at your own expense).

Arrival back is about 2.00 pm.

Numbers are limited so book early. Friends are welcome too.

Audrey Johnston

Pungalina Photos

Thanks to Kay and Graham Rees and John and Mary Nowill, there is now a photographic web display of the day-to-day workings of our wonderful group of volunteers at the 2012 Pungalina Scientific Study. Type in the following and enjoy: www.rgsq.org.au/VolunteersExperience

New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming as new members:

Tom Weir; Kevin Welsh

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

Cape Town to Victoria Falls

On 12 September our second group of intrepid trekkers returned from Southern Africa. Comparisons are inevitable, but I would say every trip generates its own excitement. This time we had thirteen new members aboard to experience their first RGSQ geographical experience.

Overall, while a little different, this trek did produce some more incredible moments along the way. Flying down through South Africa the snow covered mountains were an incredible change to our experience flying home from Cape Town towards Johannesburg on Trek 1, and Table Mountain in Cape Town was a good bit cooler than our previous excursion in April and wasn't ideal for photography the morning we ascended the cable car to the top.

The weather, however, was incredibly kind on the day we drove northwest from Cape Town and did allow an incredible signature shot of Cape Town and Table Mountain when photographed from Table View beach.

As we moved northwest, the wild flowers of the Western Cape were certainly on show but for me personally, I felt a little disappointed and thought they were a little patchy and not near as extensive as I would have liked. Fish River Canyon and the Sossusvlei Dunes were equally spectacular once again. Moving on to Cape Cross, the seals seemed less prolific as witnessed previously but were nevertheless there in their thousands.

Some members took the walk to the White Lady Paintings at Brandenburg but the real excitement here was the morning we managed to track down two of the rather elusive desert elephants. Despite having a short tempered reputation these animals did allow us to get reasonably close without disturbing their relaxed manner. These were the first elephants this group had seen and they generated considerable excitement. I noticed the river bed here was a lot greener than previously experienced in April, when it was extremely dry.

Etosha was again exciting. Elephants were everywhere this time, while

zebras and giraffes were seen in considerable numbers. We also saw a couple of rhinos, unfortunately either too far away or camouflaged with the surrounding bush. Three Etosha lions did display themselves for a photographic session beside the road towards the end of one of our afternoon game drives.

The Caprivi Strip and the Okavango Delta were next and here the birds again were special, especially for this group of trekkers. Including my predecessor as President, Ken Granger and his wife, Judy, we had in total 6 birdies on board who were more than enthusiastic about the birds they encountered on the trip. I'm informed they sighted and photographed 215 species of birds.

Our accommodation in Chobe was situated right beside the Chobe River at the entrance to Chobe National Park. Elephants, hippos, crocodiles, kudu, springbok, giraffe, and many bird species were all prolific here.

Etosha and Chobe National Parks for me, are some of the real gems of Africa. Thankfully it seems in both Etosha in Namibia, and Chobe in Botswana they suffer less from poaching and human encroachment than many of the parks further north in Kenya and Tanzania, and others further south in South Africa. In Botswana there is some controversy at the moment as the army have the task of protecting Botswana's Parks and wildlife and were responsible for a number of poachers being shot the week before we arrived.

On our morning game drive here in Chobe the vehicle that I travelled in was most fortunate in observing a leopard out for his morning stroll. This really had me on my feet and pressing my camera shutter excitedly. Leopards do tend to be lone travellers and are generally very elusive as well. Over a number of previous trips to Africa I have never seen a leopard as close or as defined as this one.

On a previous morning and afternoon drive a couple of leopards had been photographed at a distance and on an afternoon game drive others had also witnessed a couple of leopards out hunting.

This September, Victoria Falls were as always spectacular, but the volume of water had definitely subsided from when we last witnessed the 'smoke that thunders' in April. All but a few did the helicopter trip over the falls and all witnessed a number of elephants close by from the air.

On our final morning before we departed Victoria Falls for our flight to Johannesburg some of our members took part in a 'lion encounter'.

[We don't have enough room to include the description of the Lion Encounter in this *Bulletin*, so it will be included next month. Kath]

On behalf of Sharyn and myself I would like to thank Linda Austin, Sam and Lois Bateman, Michael and Eileen Bunney, Judith Coles, Ken and Judy Granger, Elizabeth Hindson, Chris Leahy, Mike and Liz McInnes, Maggie Overend, John and Liz Robinson, Andrea Smith and Greg and Jeanette Wehl for taking part in what I'm sure they will all agree was a memorable experience.

To our 'older' members it was great to have you with us again and, to our newer members, I look forward to your snapshots and your company on further trips both here in Australia and overseas.

Leo Scanlan

Vale Bob Johnson

Dr Bob Johnson, well-known botanist, ecologist and formerly Director of the Queensland Herbarium, died on 13 August 2012.

Bob was a long-standing and enthusiastic member of the Society's Scientific Studies Advisory Committee, and took part in the early ones, starting with our first, the Cape York Peninsula Scientific Study.

Members lucky enough to have been on one of our coach trips which he accompanied as a Resource Person, will have fond memories of his vast knowledge of natural history and his ability to share this in the field.

RGSQ Bulletin

October 2012

Geog's Big Week Out, 30 Sept - 5 Oct
For: High-achieving Year 10/11 Students
from the Geography Competition
Where: Mornington Peninsula, Vic

Lecture Meeting, Tues 2 Oct 7.30pm
Speaker: Mr Adrian Holbeck
Subject: Achieving Zero Carbon Emissions

Weekend Trip, 5 - 7 Oct
Australian Camp Oven Festival, Millmerran

Social, Fri 19 Oct 6.00pm
What: Talk and themed dinner - China

Day Trip, Thurs 1 Nov
What: Cruise on the Brisbane River

Lecture Meeting, Tues 6 Nov 7.30pm
Speaker: Ms Deborah Tabart
Subject: The Koala Habitat Atlas: How
Good Mapping can Save Koalas

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