



# RGSQ Bulletin

ISSN 1832-8830

Vol 48 no 9 October 2013

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

Having just spent seven days' holiday at Noosaville, and missed an RGSQ Council Meeting, I am writing about people I met during that time. This nostalgic geography stems from my strong interest in Antarctica.

Each year, for the last ten years, a small number of Australian National Antarctic Expeditions (ANARE) expeditioners have gathered at Noosaville from all over Australia, because it was convenient to coordinate travels with a meeting of ANARE people who live in the area.

Some of those gathering are from the same year of service in Antarctica, some from adjacent years and others many years apart. Discussions, stories, experiences and lines of activity vary immensely. However there is a common thread, ANARE, which holds the interest of all concerned, and always new and interesting knowledge is revealed.

The discussions review what we did; and highlight what is being done in Antarctica now.

From 1950 to say 1970 strenuous physical effort in the field and on the

stations was required to achieve results, be it exploration, science or merely running the station. Dog sledging and heavy tractor traverses are a slow way to travel and humping bags of briquettes and fuel drums is heavy and dirty work. The use of helicopters with a long distance capability is one notable advancement in getting to places where work is required. Those present at our gathering last week have all contributed to the development of expedition operations through the years. For the modern expeditioner, it continues to be cold and difficult work and still potentially dangerous, but experience and advanced equipment have facilitated the tasks undertaken.

This year at Noosaville there were expeditioners from 1956 through to 1990.

It is notable that there is always a strong representation of Diesel Mechanics, ("Diesos"), at ANARE functions, largely due to the commitment and responsibility of these party members and dependance on keeping all things mechanical in working order. We had Diesos from Melbourne, from Murray Bridge, SA, Caboolture, Cooroy and Brisbane. There was one electrician from Brisbane. Meteorological Observers came from Tin Can Bay and Peregian. The Radio Operator travelled from Dalmeny, NSW. Expeditioners in the group this year numbered fifteen with nine interested partners contributing.

Surveyor Syd Kirkby, a well known member of RGSQ, Thomson

Medalist, Lecturer, and participant in RGSQ activities, was the longest standing ANARE Expeditioner present, having first served at Mawson Station in 1956. There is little doubt that Syd Kirkby has seen and explored more of Antarctica than any other Australian. And that is stated by Dr Phillip Law in comparing his own extensive work and that of Sir Douglas Mawson. Syd Kirkby has travelled by ship along the full extent of the seaward boundary of Australian Antarctic Territory and has done extensive inland traverses by dog sledging, oversnow vehicle and using aircraft from 1956 and extending into the 1980s.

Neville Collins, also a (former) member of RGSQ, was also with the group at Noosaville. Neville is widely recognised for his outstanding contribution to ANARE as a Diesel Mechanic on the stations and for field traverses. Neville served at Mawson in 1957 and again in 1960. Subsequently he spent 1962 at Wilkes Station and did the major inland traverse to Vostok Station (Russian) that year. In 1968 he once

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again applied his expertise in the establishment of the Amery Ice Shelf Station which operated for a whole year as a base for drilling an ice core through the ice shelf and a traverse along the centre of the ice shelf to study the flow of the ice.

In this context, I mention that I was the Surveyor and leader of the first over-surface traverse from Mawson to the Amery Ice Shelf, initiated to determine the practicality of studies across that part of the continental ice and on the ice shelf. This was done over three months in 1962 to January 1963. Two others of that field party attended at Noosaville; Mark Single (Dieso) of Brisbane and Kevin (Mumbles) Walker (Dog Man) from Noosaville.

The enthusiastic sharing of experiences of up to fifty-five years ago highlights the teamwork characteristic of ANARE.

An item of interest is a good example of the involvement of ANARE people, and concerns the ice core drilling at Casey Station in 1969. Robert Innes, the carpenter for that year, brought along a photograph of the shed in which the ice cores were stored before being shipped back to Australia. He had built this shed, as well as being involved in the drilling. At the traditional Midwinter Dinner in Brisbane for 2013, the guest speaker from Antarctic Division in Hobart provided an enlightening outline of the present status of Australia's activity in Antarctica. In answer to a question, the speaker informed us that these 1969 ice cores were still the subject of studies, now using more modern equipment for analysis.

I hope you will excuse my rambling enthusiasm about this Antarctic geography, the land and the people, and especially identifying the Queensland connection.

*David Carstens*

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## New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members: Steve Duke; Thomas Sigler. We hope your association with your new Society is long and happy.

## Lecture - Brisbane Geology

The October lecture will feature a presentation by Mr Warwick Willmott on the topic, *The (Very) Ancient Geography of Brisbane*.

By "very ancient" Warwick means reaching back about 370 million years! Brisbane has probably the most complex geological history of all the Australian capital cities, resulting in a great diversity of rocks within a small area.

Warwick will explain how this geological framework came about, how it has controlled the landscape, affected the occurrence of important materials and urban construction, and what other influences it has on our lives.

Warwick Willmott is a geologist who worked with the Geological Survey of Queensland in a variety of fields. He has a strong commitment to making geology accessible to the public through his writing, lectures, and guided excursions – including one for the Society some years ago. Some Society members will be familiar with Warwick's work through his *Rocks and Landscapes* series of books, published by the Geological Society of Australia, Queensland Division.

Warwick has also been prominent in the identification and preservation of significant geological sites in Queensland.

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## 2013/14 Council

The Annual General Meeting in September marked the start of a new Council year. Councillors for 2013/14 are:

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

Welcome to new Councillor Frank Birchall. Frank has already been

contributing to the Society through his work on the Treks and Activities Committee, and we look forward to his wider contribution as a Councillor.

Thanks are due to Frank, and to all continuing Councillors, for their willingness to undertake this volunteer work to advance the Society and its aim of promoting geography.

If you didn't see the Society's 2012/13 Annual Report at the AGM, you can download a copy from our website – [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au), go to 'The Society', then to 'About the Society'.

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## 2013/14 Committees

Much of the Society's work is carried out through its committees. Listed below are the committees, and their convenors, which will operate during 2013/14.

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  
Finance and Building  
John Nowill  
Honours  
Iraphne Childs  
Scientific Studies  
Tony Hillier  
Treks and Activities  
Leo Scanlan

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## Oktoberfest

Bookings for the Society's celebration of Oktoberfest have closed. This information is repeated here for the convenience of members who have already booked. They will enjoy a German-themed dinner and drinks, an illustrated talk, and each other's company.

When: Friday 4 October 2013  
Time: 6.00 for 6.30pm  
Where: RGSQ

Thanks to Audrey Johnston for organising another of these very popular social events.

## High Morning Tea, Parliament House

Where: Strangers' Dining Room,  
Queensland Parliament House

When: 10.30 am to 12.00 noon,  
Friday 8 November 2013

Meet: 10.20 am at the main gate of  
Parliament House, corner of  
George and Alice Streets

Cost: \$40.00

RSVP: with the office by 11 October  
and pay by 5 November

In this traditional high tea you will be served a tempting selection of sweet and savoury delicacies prepared by the Parliament's resident chefs while taking in the beauty of Queensland's premier heritage building.

The high tea will be followed by a short (half-hour) tour of the Parliamentary Chambers, including a visit to the heritage O'Donovan Library. This is housed in part of the original library as designed by the Parliamentary architect, Charles Tiffin, in the 1860s.

Dress code is smart casual.

After assembling at the corner of George and Alice Streets, we will enter as a group through the Parliamentary Annexe in Alice Street. For security reasons, guests are not permitted to leave the foyer area without an escort. There is no visitor car parking available.

*Leo Scanlan*



## Cycling the 6

We've added an exciting multi-media presentation to our November programme.

When: 7.30pm Wed 20 November

Where: RGSQ

Who: Steve Fabes

On 5 January 2010, twenty-nine year old British medical doctor Steve Fabes embarked on a projected six year solo journey to cycle the length of six of the earth's continents. Over the last three and a half years Steve has cycled more than 54,000 km through 42 countries – a distance equivalent to more than once around the planet.

Having reached Prudhoe Bay in northern Alaska, Steve has cycled the length of four of the planned six continents he hopes to cross by bicycle. He expects to continue riding for two more years as he pedals from Australia back to the UK.

So far Steve has been tested by almost 50°C heat in the Sahara and Syrian Deserts where he was forced to carry 20 litres of water on his bike, and minus 20°C in the mid-winter Alps. Steve has crossed several mountain ranges, including The Alps and The Andes where he cycled up to 17,000 feet above sea level and often biked more vertical metres in one week than from sea level to the summit of Mount Everest.

The epic journey has come with many challenges – lions have visited Steve's tent at night in a remote part of Botswana and a black widow spider, scorpions and fire ants have crawled inside. Steve has had a gun held to his head in remote Peru, has collided head-on with a motorbike in Uganda, has been stabbed in the hand and has been lost without water in the remote tribal badlands of Africa. For the duration of the expedition Steve has been entirely unsupported and he carries everything he needs on his bike as

he travels around 130 km each day and bush camps by night.

Over the course of his journey, Steve has visited a number of remote hospitals and clinics to witness the impact of tropical infections firsthand, experiences that he uses to raise awareness about a group of infections called the Neglected Tropical Diseases that receive little exposure despite being both prevalent and widespread. Steve has also raised over £20,000 for Merlin, a charity which responds worldwide with vital health care and medical relief for vulnerable people caught up in natural disasters, conflict, disease and health system collapse.

Steve has generously offered to give a presentation at the Society during the few days he is in Brisbane. This will feature his award-winning photos and a short video.

Visit his website to check his route and lots of other details:

[www.cyclingthe6.com](http://www.cyclingthe6.com)

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## Ludwig Leichhardt

The Society's printed programme shows an event to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leichhardt's birth. However, the Committee decided not to proceed with it.

The September *Bulletin* included a notice of a Leichhardt public lecture at the University of Queensland. Society members have also been invited to a book launch, of:

*Leichhardt Diaries: Early travels in Australia during 1842-1844*, edited by Thomas Darragh and Roderick Fensham.

Meet the editors and celebrate this monumental publication, marking 200 years since the birth of the scientist and explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt.

When: 6.00 pm Tuesday 22 October  
Where: Brisbane German Club,  
416 Vulture Street, East Brisbane

Pre-orders of the book can be made at: <http://www.shop.qm.qld.gov.au/the-workshops/books/the-leichhardt-diaries-vol-1.html>.

## Nat Geo World Champ'ship

As briefly mentioned in the last *Bulletin*, the Australian team came fifth at the 2013 National Geographic World Championship in St Petersburg. This international contest is for students under 16 years of age. The students in the Australian team, led by Society Councillor Margaret McIvor, were:

Jamie Abel, Shore School, Sydney  
Tom Butler, Northern Beaches  
Secondary College Manly  
Selective Campus, Sydney  
Garry Zhu, Camberwell Grammar  
School, Melbourne

Some quotes from the students:

Overall, it was a great experience and I was humbled to have represented Australia abroad. It was wonderful to experience a country with a completely different culture. The architecture was particularly interesting, a blend of European-influenced Baroque and Neo-Classical architecture but with a distinct Russian twist. It was a very colourful and vibrant city. I also enjoyed the experience of meeting and socializing with the other contestants who were from many countries around the world; as well as working together with Jamie and Gary as part of the Australian team.

*Tom Butler*

The World Championships was a great experience – to compete with others from around the world in a very interesting city. It was fascinating to be in a city where history is so prevalent, from the old buildings to the imperial palaces. It was good to be able to meet with people from other countries, including some who come from cultures very different to our own. Other things such as the hotel (especially the breakfast buffet), the Russian food, and the gift exchange made the competition even more enjoyable.

*Jamie Abel*

# RGSQ Bulletin

October 2013

**Lecture**, Tues 1 October, 7.30pm

Speaker: Mr Warwick Willmott

Subject: The (Very) Ancient Geography of  
Brisbane

**Social**, Friday 4 October, 6.00pm

What: Oktoberfest, a German-themed  
dinner and presentation

**Overseas Trek**, 12 Oct - 2 Nov

Where: Peru - a Microcosm of South  
America

**Lecture**, Tues 5 November, 7.30pm

Speaker: Prof Steve Webb

Subject: Climate change in Australia over  
200,000 years

**Day Trip**, Fri 8 November, 10.30am

What: High Tea and Guided Tour  
Where: Parliament House

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