



RGSQ Bulletin

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From the President

The October Lecture, by Geologist Warwick Willmott, in the Society Auditorium attracted a large audience of Members, friends and associates. The presentation, "The (Very) Ancient Geography of Brisbane" captured the interest of all present leading to animated discussions over supper afterwards. Warwick related the theory of continental plate movements through some 370 Million years to the changes which resulted in the landforms we recognise around Brisbane today. It could be said that in restricting the area dealt with to the immediate surrounds of Brisbane, the concepts involved were more readily appreciated. Gondwanaland to Brisbane River Floods in one lecture excluded the more recent volcanic eruptions such as Mount Warning, thirty million years ago, to achieve an uncluttered understanding of a small but complex geological region.

Before the lecture, newly elected Society Council Member, Frank Birchall gave an inspiring report of the just completed Trek to the Lambert Geographic Centre of Australia. The twenty plus participants in this visit, involvement of the Lambert Family and contribution by the Army with two

Spatial Science (Army Survey) personnel, contributing to the visit was great news. The ceremonies at the Monument were enlightening to the audience and are for recording more fully elsewhere.

At this Lecture meeting I had the honour to present the Society's Diploma of Fellowship (FRGSQ) to Past President Ken Granger. Fellowships are the recognition of substantial contribution to geography and to the Society. Ken is a practising Geographer with special expertise in Risk Management and Emergency Services. He is a Thomson Medallist and was the lead author for the Queensland by Degrees project. He continues to contribute to the ongoing operation of this Society initiative.

After my October writing which centred on Antarctic experiences, I realised that in mentioning some names I had omitted to acknowledge other Members of RGSQ who have first hand involvement in Antarctic exploration and science with ANARE and others who have special interests and have travelled to Antarctica by tourist ship, by plane or have been involved from within Australia.

To name people would lead to omissions but the Antarctic story just highlights to me the vast geographic background and interest we have in the Membership of RGSQ. Each of us is a member because we recognise geography as a challenging topic, albeit each in our own way. Our Members publish books, write papers, study, travel,

participate and contribute in a variety of ways and sharing of knowledge is a philosophy.

The presentation of a fellowship to Ken Granger, suggests to me to mention a couple more names of people who have been awarded the Diploma of Fellowship in the last three years. Awardees are identified by the Council for their high level of contribution, sometimes not widely seen and recognised by membership in general and sometimes more visible but easily overlooked.

I refer to the awards in 2010 to Maureen Meier and to Audrey Johnston. Maureen's constant contribution to the work of the Society started with participation in extended field treks and continues with volunteering for mail-outs of the Bulletin and all the work for the Australian Geography Competition. Audrey has served for many years on the Council, has organised treks, presentation of trekking reports and tour geography; and besides regular attendance at formal meetings has catered for a light meal for

Patron: H.E. Ms P Wensley AC,
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Councillors before each Monthly Council Meeting at 6pm on a Tuesday.

These comments are merely a brief example of the interesting and varied Membership of RGSQ. Every Member is a significant contributor to Geography by participating in the many activities undertaken.

David Carstens

Lecture - Last Inland Sea

The November lecture will feature a presentation by Prof Steve Webb, *The Last Inland Sea: A Long View of Climate Change*.

Geology clearly shows that Earth's climate has changed through staggering extremes in the past but some of those changes occurred not long ago. In fact, they took place during the time of modern humans. As modern humans were making their way out of Africa one hundred thousand years ago Central Australia was a far different world than that we know today. Massive rain storms from mega-monsoons swept across the centre forming large river systems that flowed through Australia's heart and formed megalakes.

That climate changed Central Australia's environment so that desert was replaced by broad savannahs and wetlands, like Kakadu, that surrounded the megalakes. Large (now extinct) freshwater crocodiles travelled the rivers and lived in the lakes. On the savannahs megafauna roamed. These now extinct giants consisted of three tonne wombat-like Diprotodons, six metre lizards, marsupial lions, three metre kangaroos and turtles as big as coffee tables. Were these the conditions the first people to land here saw and what caused such changes to occur?

Prof Steve Webb studied Biological Anthropology, Prehistory and Human Anatomy at the Australian National University (ANU) and University of New South Wales. His early research focussed on Aboriginal health prior to 1788 and the oldest fossil Australians. He is regarded as

an expert in both these fields. His work on an Ice Age footprint site in western New South Wales, and the biggest of its type in the world, was reported worldwide.

Over the last twenty five years his research has broadened into the area of Quaternary Studies focussing on megafauna extinctions and enviro-climatic change in Australia over the last 500,000 years. Field work has taken him to some of Australia's remotest regions, particularly the Lake Eyre basin and the Simpson, Gibson and Tanami Deserts, working with an interdisciplinary team of experts from Australia and around the world. He has appeared in *Time Magazine* and made many documentaries with National Geographic, Discovery Channel, BBC, ABC and Japanese National Television.

Prof Webb has lectured and given seminars at many museums and universities around Australia, in Britain, Europe, the United States and South America. He has written four books and his many research papers have been published in a variety of international journals.

High Tea, Parliament House

What: Traditional high tea and short tour of Parliamentary Chambers
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
Pay: the office 5 November
Leader: Leo Scanlan

This function is booked out, but ring or email the office if you'd like to go on a waiting list to fill cancellations.

New Member

We have much pleasure in welcoming Wendy Harte as a new (returning) member.

We look forward to catching up with you again at Society functions.



Cycling the 6

When: 7.30pm Wed 20 November
Where: RGSQ
Who: Steve Fabes

On 5 January 2010, 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.

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 has crawled inside. Steve has had a gun held to his head in remote Peru, has collided head-on with a motorbike in Uganda 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.

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.

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. For more info, see www.cyclingthe6.com.

Position Vacant: Executive Officer

RGSQ is seeking a full-time Executive Officer to effectively manage the Society within the parameters set by its Council, and to contribute to the Society's promotion of geography.

The Society stimulates interest in geography through a regular programme of lectures and trips, facilitating geographical research and, in particular, actively supporting geographical education.

This is a fulfilling position with a large degree of control over your own work, and includes a diverse range of tasks in the day-to-day management of the Society and the coordination of the Australian Geography Competition for schools.

High-level organisational and communication skills, appropriate management experience, and the ability to work collaboratively with a variety of people, are required. A demonstrated commitment to promoting geography, a geography degree, and/or teaching experience will be favourably regarded.

Key responsibilities

To drive and support activities that contribute to the promotion of geography, you will:

- manage the day-to-day operations of the Society's office
- project manage the Australian Geography Competition and its associated events
- communicate with members, teachers, students and the wider public through a variety of formats
- plan and organise lectures and other activities
- prepare reports and submissions for internal and external purposes
- provide supervision and support to 2 part-time staff and volunteers
- work collaboratively with committees
- build on-going, positive relationships with a variety of organisations
- attend some meetings outside standard work hours

Key capabilities

To be successful in this position you will have:

- exceptional organisational ability with a high level of accuracy and attention to detail
- well-developed written and oral communication skills
- excellent interpersonal skills with the confidence to relate to a diverse range of people and to represent the Society to external organisations
- demonstrated ability to work independently, or within a small team structure, and exercise initiative within broad guidelines
- proven time-management skills with the ability to balance and respond to competing priorities
- significant administration and coordination experience
- proficiency in a wide range of computer applications
- willingness to undertake routine tasks

and desirably will have:

- a strong commitment to promoting geography
- a degree in geography and/or teaching experience

Salary negotiable.

Enquiries to Kath Berg after 4 November on 07 3368 2066.

Email applications to the RGSQ Secretary at admin@rgsq.org.au **by 21 November**.

www.rgsq.org.au; www.geographycompetition.org.au

Major Map Exhibition

What: Mapping our World: Terra Incognita to Australia

Where: National Library of Australia, Canberra

When: 7 Nov 2013 to 10 Mar 2014

Members living close to, or visiting Canberra over the next few months will be very interested in this exhibition. It might even be worth a special trip.

This remarkable exhibition brings together some of the world's greatest maps, atlases, globes and scientific instruments, many of which have never before been seen in the southern hemisphere.

Treasured items from some of the world's greatest map collections will tell the remarkable story of how Australia came to be on the map, and will reveal the history and struggle to imagine and document the world; from the earliest imaginings of the earth and the night sky through to Matthew Flinders' landmark General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia in 1814.

The exhibition will take you on a spiritual, artistic and scientific journey, showing how European explorers gradually unravelled the secrets of the south land. Highlights of the exhibition include the magnificent Fra Mauro, Map of the World; the remarkable Boke of

Idrography presented to Henry VIII; an intricate world map by the Benedictine monk Andreas Walsperger (1448); a fifteenth-century Ptolemy manuscript; magnificent and controversial 'Dieppe' charts; one of only four surviving copies of Mercator's groundbreaking 1569 projection and original manuscript charts by Pacific navigators including Louis de Freycinet, James Cook and Matthew Flinders.

'Mapping our World' is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see rare and unique cartographic treasures from around the world.

www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/mapping-our-world

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November 2013

Overseas Trek, 12 Oct - 3 Nov

Where: Peru - a Microcosm of South America

Lecture, Tues 5 November, 7.30pm

Speaker: Prof Steve Webb

Subject: The Last Inland Sea: A Long View of Climate Change

Day Trip, Fri 8 November, 10.30am

What: High Tea and Guided Tour

Where: Parliament House

Multi-Media Talk, Wed 20 Nov, 7.30pm

Speaker: Mr Steve Fabes

Subject: Cycling the 6: Europe, Africa, South America, North America, Australia, Asia

Social, Tues 3 Dec, 7.30pm

What: Christmas Party

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