



RGSQ Bulletin

August 2016

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President: Mr Leo Scanlan

From the President

I have just returned from Canada and it is now time to start working on next year's programme of 'Geography on the Ground'. Over this past year we have been very successful - all our day activities and treks have been fully booked and in some cases we actually have had a wait list in reserve. This, to me, is proof of the fact that our programme is resonating with our members.

However, as I have mentioned previously, we do have a problem - we need more RGSQ members to put up their hand and become part of the organisational side of our activities programme and join the Tours and Activities Committee. Without your help we may have to curtail our activities in the future. If you would like to join this very active committee please phone either myself anytime on 07 3343 4398 or phone Bernard or Lilia in the office on 07 3368 2066.

Later in this Bulletin I have placed an advertisement for a forthcoming trek to Canberra in March 2017. This trek is being organised to correspond with the 'Canberra Balloon Spectacular', so, if you are at all interested, it is absolutely essential that you register your interest in taking part in this Trek with RGSQ, and book your accommodation now (see page 4).

There is a wealth of entertainment going on in and around Canberra during the 'Canberra Balloon Spectacular' and these activities combined with the myriad of other activities that are only found in Canberra should make for a very interesting and enjoyable trek.

The number of participants will be limited to facilitate accommodation and RGSQ participation in tours to different venues around Canberra at this time.

Leo Scanlan

2016 RGSQ International Trek: AFRICA

Johannesburg to Kruger National Park and in between.

On thinking about what I could write this month I thought I would like to focus on a road twice travelled during our recent trip to Tanzania, Madagascar and South Africa.

On the 25th of April, our tour arrived back in South Africa for the last four days of our trek. We landed at O R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and spent the night in the very comfortable City Lodge Hotel adjacent to the airport. On our arrival I was relieved to be reunited with my lost luggage which had gone missing over the previous two weeks.

Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to 3 more of our group when we reached Johannesburg. Barbara Odgers left for Australia last night as she had chosen not to travel on the last part of our trek to Kruger National Park, and Paul and Susan Lambert had to return to Australia on the following night due to a family bereavement.

Early on the 26th of April the remaining fifteen RGSQ travellers left the hotel in two Toyota mini buses to travel the nearly 350 kilometres along the N4 road out of Johannesburg and out along the high veldt towards Kruger National Park. We were to travel this road in both directions and it presented a great opportunity to have a look at South Africa and draw some of our own conclusions as to what things were really like here post the apartheid regime.

Both our transit drivers were certainly multi skilled. Garrit, my driver, was part owner of a number of people movers which travel between Kruger NP and Johannesburg on most days, and is also involved in private charter tours. Chris, our other driver, was part time driver and spends a good deal of his time ushering people in and out of various countries in the region on photographic safaris.

Kruger National Park is a 19,485 sq. kilometre reserve that takes in parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces and is part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park bordering Zimbabwe in the north and Mozambique in the east.

When talking to Garrit he had quite a positive outlook for the future of South Africa in that he felt the younger generation who know nothing of 'the struggle' and had grown up together were now starting to mix and put the past well and truly behind them. On the other hand, one seems to hear conflicting stories on how things are developing in South Africa as there are many South Africans who now live here in Australia and, while still having fond memories of home, have certainly opted out.

The statistics related to the tragic homicide figures from South Africa, particularly in the Johannesburg area are

well known through stories in the Australian media. On the night of the 26th of April, I visited one South African home in Johannesburg briefly and to access this estate there were three double boom gates covering three different entry points, a twenty four hour security guard, and high fences with electrification on the top to deter intruders. This seemed to be the norm around private and public buildings as we drove through and out of Johannesburg.

The start of our journey on the N12 is the epicentre of Gauteng Province and all the resultant activity, the people, the pollution, the wealth, the crime, and the extreme poverty one tends to see inside this mega city of Johannesburg. On leaving O R Tambo airport and Jo'burg just after 7 am, the air was certainly thick and misty and the traffic was barrelling along at a frantic pace. The highway is a well tarred, well signposted motorway with a concrete median island along the median strip.

Travelling north out of Johannesburg one tends to take note of the signage along the road much like the outskirts of other western cities indicating factories, warehouses, trucking companies, malls, supermarkets, and the many internationals such as Shell, BP, South African Airways, Woolworths, Barclays, Qantas, John Deer, and The Bank of Africa, to name just a few I saw as we travelled by. It wasn't long before the N12 turned into the N4 and we were then well and truly on our way to Kruger.

While the misty conditions of the early morning did improve there still seemed to be an overall smoggy outlook on both sides of the road. I suspect it was a combination of home fires, power stations, open cut mine sites, and general smog from the amount and density of population, traffic, trains, planes and industry centred around Johannesburg. In some places the overburden from the draglines was heaped up right to the verge of the highway.

Our first stop was the Alzu Roadhouse. It's a huge establishment with extremely busy petrol pumps, a predominantly white clientele, souvenirs, coffee shops, hamburgers, and an enclosed wildlife park out the back with rhinos on display. Unfortunately they had all had their extremely valuable horn cut off with a chainsaw to discourage poaching. Rather disappointing to see these rather magnificent animals having to be guarded night and day with armed guards, tags, cameras and razor wire. Perhaps that's the price the world has to pay to guarantee their continued existence.

The next stop was the town of Mashishing or Lydenburg. Seemed a nice comfortable town, serving nice coffee, with a supermarket, and a range of souvenir shops, service stations and banks. We stopped briefly on the way to and from Kruger National Park.

Further along closer to Kruger there was a lot of intensive agriculture on both sides of the road, mainly orange groves and mangos earmarked for export and the European market. We did pass a number of cold stores and packing companies who obviously employed many Africans in their packaging operations. Bags of oranges were on display at roadside stalls, and some orchards along the way, which had sustained damage a couple of years before with an extreme hail storm, were now

covered with a white mesh netting as insurance from damage should there be a similar event in the future. There were miles and miles of electrified fence to discourage the local baboon population from plundering the fruit. Most of this agriculture is owned by a group farming co-operative in the Blyde River area. A network grid of powerlines delivering power to the many small towns, agricultural villages, and industry along the way was towering high along the side of this road.

The northern end of the Drakensburg Mountains definitely has a green tinge of iron and is quite beautiful particularly at the northern end near the entrance to Blyde River Canyon which some RGSQ members had visited on a previous RGSQ Trek. Finally we reached our destination, Timbavate Lodge, a collection of mid-range but comfortable rondavels set behind an electrified fence on a private reserve not too far from Hoedspruit. Our first afternoon's walk through the reserve was rather disappointing as our total wildlife tally was a couple of impala. There was, however, some evidence of scat from other animals not too far away.

Next morning we started out from the lodge at 5:30 am to explore Kruger National Park. Kruger Park entrance gate was about 30 more kilometres down the highway and while the morning temperature at the lodge was quite warm, the chill factor while driving in open safari trucks soon began to bite and for the next couple of hours it was extremely cold. Our day out in Kruger was excellent - we saw a full range of animals and I suspect some would have compared it with Tanzania and were a little disappointed. However the cover here is low veldt scrub which makes conditions a good bit more difficult for spotting the variety of animals unless they happen to appear close to the road.

Mid-morning we did manage to see a beautiful leopard resting at the base of an acacia tree with his prey an impala safely cached and draped in the fork above. We also saw a number of lions, elephants, impala, bush buck, water buck, hippos, kudu and of course the usual variety of birdlife.



Our tally for the day included the Big Four of Lion, Leopard, Buffalo, and Elephant, while the 5th Big, the Rhino proved to be just too elusive. Fortunately many of

our group had seen rhino in Tanzania in the Ngorongoro Crater Environmental Area.

On our second day at Timbavate Lodge we were warmly welcomed at a neighbouring local school about a kilometre up the road from the lodge and afterwards managed a quiet village walk back to our accommodation. It was interesting to see the variety of housing on display through the village – from the very primitive to some quite sophisticated dwellings. We stopped for a séance with the local witch doctor and it was a really interesting experience to hear and see how traditional healers operate. To my surprise - they're even licenced!



"In the evening we ventured out again on a game drive with the result counting a few elephants, a couple of buffalo, and some kudu."

We finished with a very pleasant drink at dusk with a colourful sunset receding over the scrub in the distance. The drive back to the lodge went from cool to quite cold as we drove up and over some gently rolling hills.

On our journey back to Johannesburg on the final day of our safari we were witness to the aftermath of a rather serious accident and it was interesting to note the range of emergency vehicles at the scene as we drove past. There was a bump truck, Limpopo Province Ambulance, police, fire truck and an assortment of other tow vehicles, much like what you would witness here at home in Australia at the scene of a serious accident. Despite the criticism of conditions in South Africa from many quarters, this along with what we had witnessed along this road, was evidence, to me, the South Africa hasn't slipped too much in the intervening years since the end of the apartheid era.

On our way back into Johannesburg we were greeted by multiple rays of sunshine shining down on O R Tambo Airport and I was thinking despite its myriad problems and a huge gulf between rich and poor, South Africa still has first world infrastructure, and a level of prosperity many other residents in African countries north of the border could only envy.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all who took part in this memorable trek to East Africa, Madagascar, and South Africa for your participation, your company, and your overall enthusiasm for the people you have met and for all that was on display along the way.

Leo Scanlan

Meeting/Lecture

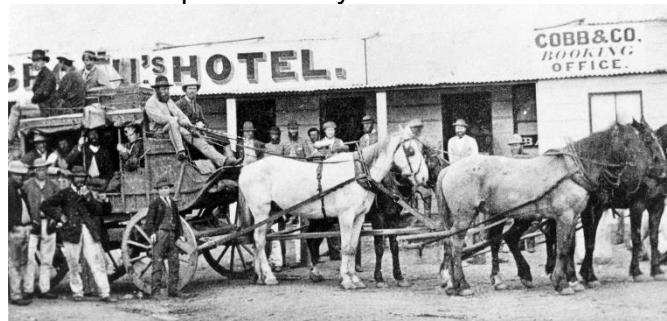
Tuesday, August 2, 2016

Where: "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton

Time: 7:30 pm

"Cobb & Co. Comes to Queensland"

presented by Jeff Powell



A coach outside William H. Groom's hotel in Stanthorpe, 1874. Stanthorpe experienced a tin mining rush. Groom soon returned to Toowoomba, which he represented in Queensland Parliament

Jeff Powell is the Curator of the Cobb + Co Branch of Queensland Museum located in Toowoomba. He has been with the Queensland Museum for nearly 30 years and has worked on over 100 exhibitions during that time. Jeff's most recent exhibition - "Cobb & Co comes to Queensland, 1866" - marks the 150th anniversary of the company in this state. Jeff has written extensively on Australia's transport history, and has answered literally thousands of enquiries about Cobb & Co and the technology and history of the 'buggy era'.

'Cobb & Co in Queensland' will provide a 'go to whoa' history of the Company. Queensland was the Cinderella colony in 1866 in comparison with Victoria and New South Wales, with far less wealth and few obvious opportunities for investment. The challenges, and limitations, presented by distance, topography and climate were even greater than Cobb & Co had experienced in the southern colonies. Yet Cobb & Co expanded to form a 'national network', long before Australia became a nation. Jeff will also look at how new electronic media such as TROVE provide researchers with information at their fingertips, often leading to a re-evaluation of histories such as that of Cobb & Co.

Synopsis July Lecture: Endurance Horse Riding in Australia by Virginia Dale

Virginia Dale took us on a journey that very few of us would aspire to, however the audience certainly appreciated her enthusiasm for this most enduring of sports. Her horse Jum Jum Spirit, known as Jummy, was a show pony before Virginia bought him 6 years ago and has since trained him in endurance riding. Being part Arab he is a little smaller than a full Arabian but he is all heart when it comes to endurance riding. His first ride, a 40 km gallop, was at Blackbutt in 2014. In September 2014 he came 5th in the lightweight section of the 100 km Clifton State Championship. The successful completion of the Homewood Ride in April 2015 enabled them to qualifying for the annual Tom Quilty Cup.

This significant endurance race was initiated by R. M. Williams in 1906. A substantial donation from his friend Tom Quilty, a great horseman and cattleman in the Kimberly area of Western Australia, enabled a gold cup to be made as a prize. This is a perpetual trophy now housed in the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach.

Virginia explained that there is much preparation prior to a race in getting the horse in good condition - diet, exercise, health, both mental and physical, vaccinations and with her mother and partner as part of the team, they all achieve this goal. On the journey south, it appeared that all was not well as Jummy refused to eat or drink until when they arrived in camp, he drank from a nearby black bucket. "Just water." the lady said, "It's probable that he doesn't like bright colours. Keep the bucket." Now he travels with a black bucket and is fed special food with apples & pears his favourite being hidden in his bag of hay.

The 2015 Tom Quilty Cup was held in Wisemans Ferry on the Hawkesbury River on the long weekend of 6-7 June. These long races start at midnight with the ride continuing all the next day and into the next night. There are five legs to the race ranging between 12 and 40 km. At the completion of each leg, each horse must be presented to the on-track vet for monitoring. Always an anxious moment for the rider.

Virginia & Jummy completed the race in 17h 40m 35s thus being rewarded with the coveted Tom Quilty buckle. "A fat pony who became a successful endurance rider." A great achievement for both of them and the team. In the vote of appreciation at the end of the talk, it was concluded that it was "A Lecture of Geography on horseback".

Kay Rees, RGSQ Member

August Activity: Pond to Plate

When: Thursday, August 18

Time: 7:15 am for a 7:30 am departure from Eagle Junction Railway Station – Redcliffe Coaches. There should be parking in the surrounding streets.

Where: Cherax Park Aquaculture Farm – the largest in SE Qld - Theebine (north of Gympie).

Cost: \$75 members, \$78 non-members

RSVP: Thursday, August 4

Treat yourself to a day with a difference. Be part of the Pond to Plate experience.

Meet owners, Peter and Ethel Moore, and join an informative and enjoyable 1 hour farm tour covering all aspects of Redclaw aquaculture. Savour the taste of a delicious 2 course Redclaw lunch served country style on the verandah of their Queenslander home.

Cost includes: bus travel, morning tea (Gympie), farm tour, before lunch nibbles, a generous mixed Redclaw lunch served with assorted fresh salads and fries, dessert, unlimited tea/coffee, cold water served at table.

BYO wine or beer. Wine glasses are provided.

Note: Redclaw can be purchased to take home. Boxes can be provided and packed for transport and easy

distribution. Bring a hat, walking shoes and water bottle. Expected arrival time at Eagle Junction Railway Station is 4:30 pm. Time is dependent on traffic conditions.

Do join us. Numbers are limited to 34.

Please notify RGSQ Office of any dietary requirements.

Jeanette Lamont

September Activity: Cruising (some of) Europe

What: nibbles and drinks, a 3-course meal and a presentation on a river cruise

When: Friday, September 30

Where: "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton

Time: 6:00 pm for 6.30 pm

Cost: \$37.50 per person

Book and Pay: please contact RGSQ Office by phone at 07 3368 2066, by Tuesday, September 13

Friends are welcome!

Note: Please order your main course when booking - beef or pork.

Castles, cathedrals, monasteries, bridges, ruins, magnificent architecture - some buildings or even districts heritage or UNESCO listed, windmills, spectacular scenery, thousands of kilometres of grape vines in fruit (for wine making) crawling along river flats or clinging precariously up steep rocky cliffs, tiny villages, much manufacturing along the riverbanks, huge cities, coach travel, much guided walking, many locks - one rising or falling 42 metres, cobbled streets, many, many photos!!! 1800 'wet' km and how many??? 'leg' km!!!

All this and much more cruising from Amsterdam to Budapest the Rivers Rhine, Main & Danube & the Main Canal.

History, Geography, Geology and more.

Look forward to seeing you.

Audrey Johnston

October Activity: Day Outing - Robotic Dairy

When: Tuesday, October 18

Time: 10:00 am

Where: Robotic Dairy, Tamrookum, via Beaudesert

Cost: \$25 members, \$28 non-members

RSVP: Tuesday, October 4

If you have not been to the Robotic Dairy before please consider joining us on our half day Trek in October. The cost includes morning tea provided by the family at Tamrookum. Fascinating, expert and informed presentation about a different type of dairy farming. The cows decide when they want to be milked.

If you have an interest in applied technology, modern "green" farming, or even family history of farming, we can

promise you a great day!! It gives new meaning to "People and Place".

We did it before and it was a great day. It is a self-drive, so plan to car pool with your friends. We will probably be going back to the Beaudesert Hotel for lunch and perhaps a refreshment compliments of the RGSQ.

THIS IS A WORKING FARM, NOT A TOURIST ATTRACTION. You can only go there as part of a pre booked group. Remember it is a farm, so shoes may be soiled and shiny cars made not so shiny. But it is a great day!!

Carnarvon National Park Trek 3 - 11 September 2016 - Cancelled

Unfortunately, the Society had to cancel the Carnarvon National Park Trek planned for 3 – 11 September, 2016. Due to unforeseen personal circumstances, the Trek Leader has recently advised that he is unable to lead the Trek. An unsuccessful attempt was made to find another Trek Leader at short notice.

A number of members have expressed interest in this Trek, and the Society apologises for any inconvenience that this cancellation may cause.

2016 AGM Format – September 20

Dear members, please note the RGSQ Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Tuesday 20 September, 2016. You may have noticed that your Council decided to include an extra Lecture on the 2016 Programme during our usual second Tuesday meeting/lecture evening in September rather than hold the AGM at that time. The AGM will be held on Tuesday 20 September.

While AGMs can be rather bland, they are a necessary part of an organisation's governance, and are a legal requirement, so your Council thought the evening should be a little more of a social evening. With this in mind, the format for Tuesday 20 September will be as follows:

- Pre-meeting drinks and nibbles. There will be a number of displays of RGSQ activities (e.g. Map Group, Library Group) around the auditorium and members involved in the activities will be happy to chat about their special geographical interest;
- Short (25 minute) Lecture by Prof Jamie Shulmesiter (<https://www.gpem.uq.edu.au/james-shulmeister>) on "Shrinking glaciers - Cautionary tales from North America and New Zealand";
- Annual General Meeting;
- Members' Forum on Society's future directions;
- Tea, coffee and light supper.

The role of geographical societies in fostering geography in the community

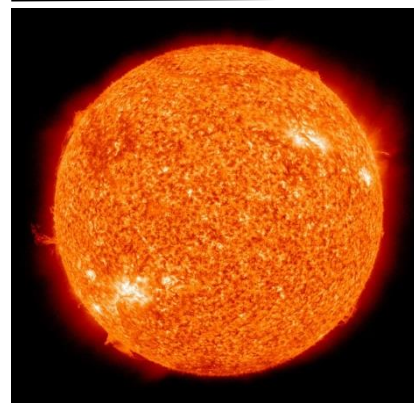
Would you like to contribute to the paper?

The RGSQ has been asked to comment/contribute to a paper on the role of geographical societies in Australia in fostering geography in the community. The final paper with input from Australia's Geographical Societies will be

part of a larger "Strategic Directions for Geographical Sciences" report coordinated by the National Committee for Geographical Science, Australian Academy of Science.

The National Committee for Geographical Sciences aims to foster geography in Australia, to link the Australian Academy of Science to Australian geographers and relevant scientific societies, and to serve as a link between Australian and overseas geographers, primarily through the International Geographical Union (IGU) (<https://www.science.org.au/supporting-science/national-committees-science/national-committee-geographical-sciences>). The RGSQ has had observer status on the National Committee for Geographical Sciences for a number of years, and RGSQ member, Dr Iraphne Childs is the current RGSQ representative on this Committee.

Our Executive Officer, Bernard has a copy of a draft paper, and he will be coordinating the RGSQ's response to the paper. We need to respond by the end of August. If you wish to contribute or participate, please contact Bernard during office hours at 07 3368 206 or email at excofficer@rgsq.org.au.



The Blank Sun: Impending Little Ice Age?!

The image displays activity on the Sun as solar storms rage across its surface, but apparently that all ceased, for at least two days, in June 2016.

The Sun by the Atmospheric Imaging Assembly of NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory - 20100819.jpg. Created: 19 August 2010 (http://sdo.gsfc.nasa.gov/assets/img/browse/2010/08/19/20100819_003221_4096_0304.jpg)

In late June and early July this year there were media reports of a "blank sun" which may indicate early signs of an impending Little Ice Age such as the one experienced following the European Middle Ages.

The Little Ice Age started in the Fourteenth Century and continued through to the Nineteenth Century. A search of the internet on the topics of "Blank Sun", "Spotless Sun", or "Little Ice Age" reveals some interesting reading. A cool period was experienced at least in the Northern Hemisphere, and evidence of this cool period in the Southern Hemisphere is reliant on coral and ice core samples, as well as tree growth rings.

Was the Little Ice Age a result of Solar Minimums, or a combination of low Sun activity and increased volcanic activity during that period? Whatever the cause, it impacted human populations as a results of cold weather, freezing of water bodies, and food availability.

Recent reports of the Spotless Sun along with the knowledge of Solar Cycles have forecasters expecting the next Solar Minimum to arrive in 2019-2020, that is eleven years since the last one in 2008. A Solar Cycle

takes about 11 years, so Solar Minimums based on Sun Spot observations since the late Eighteenth Century are a regular occurrence. As for this recent "Blank Sun" being an indication of an impending Little Ice Age, we will have to wait and see what happens.

Ken Sutton Memorial Library Group

When: Monday, 29 August

Time: 9:00 am to 11:30 am

Where: "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton.

Map Group Gathering

When: Monday, August 1

Time: 10:00 am

Where: "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton.

Key Event: Ron Wallace's Working Session on The Use of GPS. Map Group members will be emailed further details closer to the date.

Friday 19 August: *Digging Deeper* Seminar.

For Map Group members or other RGSQ members interested in attending. Geological Survey of Queensland (GSQ) Annual Seminar – free entry, but need to pre-register.

Location: Auditoriums 1 & 2, 80 George St, Brisbane. Registration forms now available on the GSQ site within DNRM website. <http://cdn-au.mailsnd.com/88732/aMk9AZErRifntB1xNgaDmrsq6YE1ZIBF8w7xVvyCLDo/1990991.pdf>

Bob Abnett, Map Group Coordinator

RGSQ Bulletin

August 2016

Lecture/Meeting: Tue 2 August 7:30 pm

"Cobb & Co in Queensland" presented by Jeff Powell.

Tours and Activities: *Day Outing - Pond to Plate*, August, Thu 18.

Map Group: Mon 1 August 10:00 am, "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton.

Ken Sutton Memorial Library Group: Mon 29 August 9:00 am, "Gregory House", 237 Milton Rd, Milton.

Council meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.

The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Inc
"Gregory House", 237 Milton Road, Milton Q 4064

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