

Special newsletter for RGSQ members



# Member Connect

Issue 1

**Patron: H.E. Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland**  
**President: Dr Iraphne Childs**

## President's message

Dear Members

I hope you are staying well and finding interesting things to catch up on during the time we need to stay at home. We thought a short RGSQ newsletter every couple of weeks might help to keep our members engaged with the Society and matters Geographic. So, Lilia and I have put this first issue together to send to you.

For Ralph and myself, of course, we are “at home” keeping busy with cleaning out areas of the house that haven't seen the light of day for years and plugging on with some gardening projects.

It seems we are now “premium customers” at Coles and can order our groceries online to be delivered – we haven't done that before, preferring to select our own fruit and veges especially but we'll give it a try.

Otherwise, taking time to connect with friends via phone and email and friends overseas by Skype – where would we be now without the Internet!

Please send us your letters from home, and articles or links to websites that you think may interest members. Let us know your thoughts on our special newsletter and hope you enjoy this one!

With best wishes,  
*Dr. Iraphne Childs, President*

Contact RGSQ: [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au); [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)

## Letters From the Home Front

Leo and Sharyn Scanlan

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Since isolating I'm into a good bit of gardening here at home and fortunately I do enjoy this activity.

It is also a great time to listen to a variety of music via my computer (YouTube has loads of classical music and a good selection from other music genres as well), and it is a good time to do a few odd jobs around the house (the more you look for things to do the more you seem to find), and it may prove to be a good geographical exercise to document activities during this close down. Communication with friends and relatives is via FaceTime and over the phone for some good old-fashioned conversation and I'm into my 14th day of a diary of our time in isolation.

From a geographical point of view the media are saturating us with news of the ensuing battle with clusters of the virus, the cause, and how authorities are tracing clues and mapping the outcome. I'm sure we're all familiar with flattening the curve on the graph and one can only guess at the final outcome.

Unfortunately, we're not going to know the full implications of this disaster until it's all over. From a shared personal perspective, the downside is we still have to attend doctor's appointments when I would rather just stay at home and isolate - this is one of the more unpleasant personal experiences of this close down for the pandemic. I'm sure when this is all over, there will be many books written about our cloistered months in isolation and the resultant experiences both good and bad.

We hope you're all bunkered down and keep safe.

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## GEOFACT of the week Mauna Kea on the Big Island of Hawaii is Taller Than Everest

Mount Everest may be the tallest mountain above sea level, but when it comes to the tallest mountain on earth, that honour goes to Mauna Kea. Above the sea, Mauna Kea only stands 13,796 feet in height. But when you follow the mountain to its base at the bottom of the Pacific, it's **32,808 feet** - more than 3,000 feet taller than Everest.

*Image by Adrian Malex from Pixabay.*



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*Below is the "From the President" column contributed by former President and long-standing RGSQ member, Ken Granger, for the August 2010 issue of the Bulletin – for all of us who are fascinated by volcanoes. Enjoy!*

**I** have had a fascination with volcanos since I was a kid. Stories of the devastating eruption of Mt Lamington in PNG in January 1951, recounted around our dinner table later in the year by a family friend, Bert Speer, were more graphic than any of the newspaper photos or newsreels of the day. Bert was a medical assistant and had been based at Higaturu, 14 km from the volcano, and was the first to provide medical aid to the many casualties. His photos of the event (now in the National Library in Canberra) and his stories perhaps sparked my interest in geography and set me on a career path that has taken me to many of the world's volcanos.

In the early 1960s, I was based for two years just outside of Rabaul in PNG. The Rabaul volcanos had erupted less than 30 years previously, killing over 500 people. The surrounding Gazelle Peninsula, with its rich volcanic soils, supported one of the most vibrant indigenous populations in PNG – the Tolai – as well as extensive expatriate plantation agriculture. The Gazelle became the subject of my first piece of academic geographic research and later became the subject of my Masters thesis. Another PNG volcano, Karkar Island, provided a close encounter with the forces of nature that I will never forget.

The Karkar volcano had been in low-level eruption since 1974, but on 8 March 1979 it erupted suddenly and violently killing volcanologist Robin Cooke and his Tolai assistant Elias Ravian who had been monitoring its activities from a camp on the caldera wall. At the time I was based in Port Moresby and became involved in planning for the evacuation of the island. As part of that work I visited Karkar and just happened to be there when volcanologist Chris McKee had arranged a helicopter to fly him into the caldera to measure temperatures at the still very active central vent. He had a spare seat, so off I went.

The experience of landing less than 100m from the roaring mouth of a very active volcano is something I will never forget. 'Awesome power' doesn't come close as a description.

A less 'awesome' but probably no less bizarre volcano experience was swimming in the thermal waters of the Deception Island volcano in the sub-Antarctic while on a cruise to the Antarctic in 2002. The air temperature was around -4°C but the water close to shore was a pleasant 20°. Unfortunately you only had to move a few more metres away from the shore and the temperature dropped very rapidly! For someone with a passion for volcanos, a visit to Pompeii and Mt Vesuvius was a must-do. I came away a few years ago with a strong impression that brooding Vesuvius poses an incredible threat to the city of Naples, a threat that the Neapolitans seem to accept or ignore. When (not if) it does erupt violently again, the 4.4 million citizens of Naples will certainly not be in a good place.

The recent eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull (which I am told is pronounced A-ya-fyat-la-yok-utl) is another reminder of the intricate relationship between the various forces of nature. The explosive nature of the eruption in April, which pushed through 240m of glacial ice, threw an ash cloud some 9000 m up into the atmosphere. Unfortunately, Iceland sits directly under the jet stream with the result that the very fine ash was carried directly over the UK and Western Europe – some of the busiest airspace in the world. When the Rabaul volcanos again erupted in 1994 the ash cloud thrown up was (surprisingly) carried south as far as Mackay before westerly winds took it out over the Pacific as far as Fiji. On that occasion aircraft were warned about the potential danger but no flights were cancelled. All of the modelling and disaster planning had been based on the assumption that the ash plume would be taken to the west by the persistent easterly upper atmosphere winds.

If there is one thing I have learned about volcanos it is that they are a law unto themselves. Ken Granger"

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## RGSQ FORUM at [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)

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Home » Members » Members Forums » News & Discussion Forum

### MEMBERS NEWS & DISCUSSION FORUM

This forum provides the opportunity for members to initiate and discuss ideas and topics. Any member can initiate a topic or reply to add to an existing discussion. This news and discussion is visible to members only, however, we can create any additional forums, which can be made public or restricted to members or member sub-groups as required.

**You must be logged in to access the forum on the rgsq website [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au) and connect with other members.**

**Some of the discussions on the forum**



Topic	Last message	Replies
<a href="#">Are rainforests really burning?</a>	4 Mar 2020 12:58 PM Ken Granger	2
<a href="#">Computer &amp; Phone Security</a>	29 Jan 2020 5:05 PM Graham Rees (Administrator)	—
<a href="#">Unprecedented Bushfires</a>	23 Dec 2019 7:36 AM Graham Rees (Administrator)	6
<a href="#">Queensland by Degrees</a>	3 Nov 2019 9:54 AM Ken Granger	5

### GEO MINI QUIZ

These questions and images are from <https://www.studyinternational.com/news/interesting-world-geography-facts/>

**1. Where is Angel Falls, the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall, located?**



#### What to watch?

**“Good Enough to Eat? Next Generation GM Crops”**

<https://science.uq.edu.au/event/session/2915> presented as part of the BrisScience lecture series.

#### More geography? Yes, please!

**Top Geography Websites and Resources That Will Rock Your World**

<https://tutorful.co.uk/blog/learning-geography-useful-websites-and-resources-that-will-rock-your-world>

**2. Which European country provides free heat to residents' homes using geothermal energy piped in from geysers and hot springs?**



#### Quiz answers

Q1



Q2



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