



# RGSQ Bulletin

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## From the President

How about all that rain! Here on Buderim we have had 350 mm in the first 8 days of March. It certainly emphasises Dorothea McKellar's line about 'drought and flooding rain'. Interestingly, I have not heard anyone claim the drought-breaking rain to be caused by climate change.

I have been following the floods around Bollon and St George with particular interest. Six years ago I undertook a disaster risk study of Balonne Shire for the Council that drew attention to the flood risk and flood history of the area. I described flood as "something of a Jekyll-and-Hyde hazard. Whilst they pose a regular, and at times serious, threat to both public and private property, they are also essential to the agricultural industries that sustain the Shire's economy."

In the process of undertaking the research I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of an elderly chap who had lived in and around St George for most of his life and had a wealth of knowledge and stories about floods, fires, storms and so on – those natural events that tend to stick in one's memory if one is attuned to

nature. He also had a collection of old documents, one of which was a magazine that was produced in 1946 to commemorate the centenary of St George. In that magazine was a first person account of the great flood of 1890 that the media and others have been claiming to be the flood of record. That account reported, in part:

*At the height of St George's famous Ninety Flood, the site of the town was completely submerged. The Balonne for miles had overflowed its banks, spreading a brown sea through houses, along streets, until many inhabitants were forced to evacuate and seek higher ground.*

*Their main camp was located on the sandy ridge southeast of the present bridge, where, during the flood, diphtheria broke out, but no deaths occurred.*

*The only safe route to the hospital was via the rear of the town and it seems fantastic today to record that the entire journey was made by boat.*

That flood reached 13.1 m on the St George flood gauge – the recent flood topped that by 0.4 m.

The centenary magazine also contained recollections by a local grazier written around the turn of the 20th century that described other events including the flood of 1864 which reached a height equivalent to 15.5 m on the present day gauge! That report recalled:

*1864 was noted for its February floods. There were 13 days rain from the 26th of that month, while heavy rain fell in March and April. Generally speaking it was an awful year for rain and floods. The Moonie and Balonne Rivers joined and made a sheet of water over 25 miles wide. Tooth's Merivale station was swept away; Mr Browne of Southwood lost 1500 out of 1800 sheep; Beck of Canmaroo lost 250 rams; and Sam Hyland's store on the Balonne was swept away, the water rising 12 feet over the banks – a rushing torrent of water.*

My interlocutor told me that Sam Hyland's store stood where the present-day Australian Hotel in St George now stands – on top of the levee!

I strongly believe that there is no substitute for this type of first person historical record to put flesh onto the statistical bones of the climatic record. I would certainly like to include such material on the Queensland by Degrees site so that

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it is recorded for posterity and available to researchers. I would welcome any such recollections, photos and maps from Society members as well as access to old reports of such extreme events that they may have.

I admit that history can inform geography – though I think the scales are heavily tilted the other way.

Ken Granger

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## April Lecture – Predicting Queensland's Climate

Continuing the special series of lectures celebrating the Society's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the April lecture will be delivered by our 2001 Thomson Medallist, Prof Roger Stone, on *Predicting the Future of Queensland's Climate*.

Roger is Director of the Australian Centre for Sustainable Catchments, and Professor of Climatology and Water Science at the University of Southern Queensland.

Roger has a lengthy career in climatological research and operational meteorology, focusing on research and development in climate systems modelling applied to catchment and landscape systems and agricultural production systems. His roles have included Senior and Principal Research Scientist at the Agricultural Production Systems Research Unit (joint CSIRO and Department of Primary Industries), Director of the Predictive and Precision Systems Research Unit, Science Leader of the Climate and Systems Technologies Research Unit, and currently Director of the Australian Centre for Sustainable Catchments at the University of Southern Queensland.

Roger is a world-renowned expert on climate modelling, climate forecasting, and integrated climate-agricultural-financial-water resource modelling. He is much in demand as a speaker and has provided advice to a number of United Nations programs.

Roger is a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society.



## Australian Geography Competition

The school round of the Competition will just be finishing as you receive this *Bulletin*. Over 85,000 students from 820 schools have entered this year. Our Society can be justly proud of the significant contribution the Competition makes to promoting geography in schools all around Australia.

A willing band of Society members was on hand as usual to cope with the very substantial task of packing all the questions and answer sheets and sending them out to schools. Thanks to:

Dal and Wendy Anderson, Joyce Barrett, Mary Comer, Audrey Johnston, Bev Leggett, Maureen Meier, John and Mary Nowill, Graham Rees and Andrea Smith

Everyone worked so hard on the first two days that other members who had volunteered for later in the week weren't needed. But there's always next time – see following item.

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## More Help Please

We could use some assistance to sort the returned answer sheets – during working hours from when you receive this *Bulletin* until Monday 12 April.

This is a more relaxed job where even an hour or two helps. Please ring Kath (3368 2066) and check before you come so we don't get too many helpers here at the same time, or conversely so you don't come when we are all caught up with processing the mail. Thank you.

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## New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members: Paul Carty; Alan Don; Barb Lapworth; Nola Simpkins

We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.

## Turkey Travel and Tukka

What: Dinner of Turkish style cooking and illustrated talk about country

When: 6.00 for 6.30 pm Fri 16 Apr

Where: RGSQ

Cost: \$35.00

Book: with the office and **pay by 6 April**. Numbers are limited, so book and pay now. No late bookings will be accepted because of catering.

Food: Aussie nibbles and drinks; soup; main course and side dishes; sweets; tea and coffee

See the March *Bulletin* for details of the slide presentation on Turkey.

Audrey Johnston

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## A Walking Weekend

When: 8 - 9 May

Where: Maroochy Botanic Gardens, Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve

Cost: your accommodation

Wear: sunsmart gear, walking shoes

Bring: camera and water bottle

Book: with the office by 4 May

Accommodation: **book your own** (suggestions at end)

Leader: Audrey Johnston

**Saturday morning:** Maroochy Botanic Gardens. **Meet** near the information sign no later than 10.30 am. (Look for my big red and white umbrella.) We'll take the Lagoon Walk strolling through eucalypt and riparian forests, crossing rocky creeks with ferns, mosses, and lichens, palms, perhaps lizards and birds. We'll enjoy lunch at the picnic tables in the Contemplation Gardens, set among cultivated gardens of local vegetation. **Carry your own lunch.** There are no BBQs or bins.

**Saturday afternoon:** Explore the Fern Glade, the Mossy Log Walk, the Ephemeral Wetlands and the very spectacular Sculpture Garden. There are 13 remarkable, very large sandstone or granite sculptures set among another native garden.

**Sunday morning:** Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve. **Meet** beside the information office at 10.00 am. Again, we're walking so come prepared. Well-maintained tracks (there are a few steps here and

there) wander through subtropical rainforest where more than 100 species of trees have been identified, including rose gums, red cedar and black bean. The fertile under-storey has a diversity of shrubs, herbs, orchids, palms, ferns, mosses, lichens and fungi. More than 100 species of birds have been identified and there are mammals and reptiles. BYO lunch or buy it at the kiosk.

### Locations

Maroochy Botanic Gardens: From the Bruce Highway take the Tanawha Forest Glen Tourist Drive and follow the signs. UBD Map 77 N17.

Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve: Follow Mountain View Road from Cairncross Corner just east of Maleny.

### Suggested Accommodation

Cabins are available at each of these:

1. Lilyponds Caravan Park, Mapleton, phone 5445 7238 or freecall 1800 003 764
2. Mapleton Cabins and Caravan Park, Obi Obi Road, Mapleton, phone 5445 7134
3. Ocean View Caravan Park (about halfway between Maleny and Landsborough), phone 5494 1171 or freecall 1300 769443
4. Tanawha Caravan Park, Tanawha/Forest Glen, phone 5476 6646
5. or any of the cottages available along the Blackall Range.

## SE Qld Geography Trail

The Treks and Activities Committee has planned a series of short trips in 2010 to explore the geography and activities of selected southeast Queensland towns and their surrounds. The towns on this trail are Goomeri, Eidsvold, Oakey, Gatton, Rosewood, Allora, Pomona, Hervey Bay and Yarraman. Members who complete the Trail will receive a Certificate to be presented at the Christmas party.

The first of these trips will be to Goomeri and Eidsvold. The trip is available to campers and those using motel-type accommodation. 4WD is not necessary. The programme is:

**Saturday 29 May.** Travel to Goomeri (250 km+/- via Gympie). Camp overnight in the Sports Oval. Attend the Pumpkin Festival Dinner Dance (optional).

**Sunday 30 May.** Join in the festivities of the annual Pumpkin Festival. Overnight camp Goomeri Sports Oval.

**Monday 31 May.** Travel to Eidsvold (180 km+/-) through the citrus areas of Gayndah and Mundubbera. Visit historic Archer Homestead and Tolderodden Environmental Heritage Park at Eidsvold. Camp overnight in Showgrounds.

**Tuesday 1 June.** Visit the Eidsvold Historical Complex, Ceratodus Memorial Area, Wuruma Dam and Eidsvold Siltstone Works. Camp overnight in Showgrounds.

**Wednesday 2 June.** Return to Brisbane via Gayndah, Biggenden, Mt Morris NP, and Maryborough (470 km+/-).

### Costs

- Camping fee Goomeri (non-powered sites) \$20 per site for 2 nights
- Camping fee Eidsvold (powered sites) \$20 per site for 2 nights
- Entry fees Eidsvold attractions \$12 per person
- Dinner Dance Goomeri \$30 p.p.

Non-camping participants are required to book and pay for their own accommodation in Goomeri (or locations close by) and Eidsvold (2 motels).

The Pumpkin Festival attracts thousands of visitors, so it is essential that you **get bookings and payments in early** to the office.

Any queries re details may be directed to Brian McGrath, email [brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com](mailto:brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com) or phone 3378 5960.

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## Upcoming Events

26-27 Jun: SEQ Geography Trail 2 – Oakey and Gatton

10 Jul: 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch

13-27 Sept: Haddon Corner and Cooper Country Trek – contact the office for itinerary and booking form

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## 2010 Membership Renewal

Membership fees for 2010 were due on 1 January. According to our records, your membership has been paid up to the year shown in the top right corner of your mailing label. (For life members this space is blank.) Please contact the office if you think there may be a mistake in our records. If you have not yet paid, please circle the appropriate fee and send this in with your payment. The mailing label on the back of this sheet gives your name and address. Please correct it if there are any errors. You may like to consider making a tax-deductible donation for the Society's environmental and educational work at the same time. Thank you.

Ordinary	\$40.00
" Pensioner rate	\$25.00
Household	\$55.00
" Pensioner rate	\$35.00
Student/Junior	\$25.00
Schools/Non-profit organizations	\$55.00
Corporate	\$150.00
Life	\$400.00
Donation	\$.....
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$.....</b>

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to RGSQ; or, please debit my  Visa  Mastercard

Card no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I'd like my Bulletin delivered by email. My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_

## Trekkers Reunion

When: 7.30 pm Wed 26 May

Where: RGSQ

RSVP: to the office

A big part of the life of our Society over the past twenty five years has been the treks undertaken by our members. As part of the events for the Society's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary year there will be a Trekkers Reunion.

This reunion will not be restricted to current Society members, but to all present and past members who participated in treks. It will be a night of reminiscing and renewing friendships over photos and memorabilia.

## Australia Day Honours

I'm rather belatedly fitting in news of two geographers who were honoured on Australia Day.

Em Prof Bruce Thom received an AM as "adviser, advocate for coastal ecological management, natural resource policy, geography".

Prof Andy Short received an OAM for "service to science in coastal studies, to Australian beach safety and management program".

Prof Roger Kitching (not a geographer but a 'friend' of our Society) received an AM as "conservation science academic,

researcher, educator, tropical rainforest ecology and ecosystem management".

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## Vale

Dr Les Heathcote, the recipient of the Society's 2000 Thomson Medal, and a distinguished geographer of Australia and arid environments, died on 24 February.

Dr Phillip Law, renowned Antarctic explorer, died on 28 February. Dr Law established Australia's three continental stations and explored extensive tracts of Antarctica. He visited RGSQ as part of ANARE's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1995.

# RGSQ Bulletin

April 2010

**Volunteer Days**, 1, 6 - 9, 12 April  
For: National Geographic Channel  
Australian Geography Competition

**Evening Meeting**, Tues 6 Apr, 7.30pm  
Speaker: Prof Roger Stone  
Subject: Predicting the Future of  
Queensland's Climate

**Social**, Fri 16 Apr 6.00pm  
What: Turkey Travel and Tukka

**Thomson Address**, Tues 4 May 7.30pm  
Speaker: Prof David Gillieson  
Subject: Dark Wilderness

**Weekend Trek**, 8-9 May  
What: A Walking Weekend  
Where: Maroochy Botanic Gardens plus

**Social**, Wed 26 May, 7.30pm  
What: Trekkers Reunion

**SEQ Geography Trail (1)**, 29 May - 2 Jun  
Where: Goomeri and Eidsvold

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