



RGSQ Bulletin

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In this issue

- Lecture - Rajasthan
- Remembrance Day Activity
- Cape Town to Victoria Falls
- New Members
- Haddon Corner Revisited
- Tsunami Donations
- Toowoomba Trip
- Congratulations Nicola

From the President

I'm writing this in advance as I will be away for most of October, so I thought this might be an opportune time to take a look around the world and see how another Royal Geographical Society operates. I felt sure there would be some interesting comparisons with our own The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland and The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS).

Founded in 1929 RCGS is not quite as old as ourselves but I feel has a possible advantage in that it's a national organization. It's a pity we don't have an umbrella organization covering all geographical organizations here in Australia. *Australian Geographic Magazine* while national, is run commercially for profit by one of the largest media organizations in Australia.

The RCGS is "dedicated to imparting a broader knowledge and deeper appreciation of Canada, its people and places, its natural and cultural heritage and its environmental, social and economic challenges, and it's one of Canada's largest non-profit educational organizations" www.rcgs.org/programs/education/.

While the wording is slightly different their aims are very similar to ours.

I'm sure you're all familiar with Geography Awareness Week and Fellows within Royal Geographical Societies. The Canadians present a gold medal, ours is bronze. They strive to increase emphasis on geography in Canadian schools and recognize the need for greater geography literacy, and they finance expeditions, research and present illustrated talks across Canada on geographical subjects.

They produce a beautifully illustrated magazine *Canadian Geographic*, and are heavily involved in the Canadian Council for Geographical Education and run The Great Canadian Geography Challenge, Canada's largest student geography competition, and present a literary award for promoting geography literacy in Canadian education. Slight differences, otherwise all sounds very familiar.

The Canadian Council for Geographical Education has published the Top 10 Reasons to Study Geography. I would like to reproduce those 10 reasons here in our RGSQ *Bulletin*.

1. To understand basic physical systems that affect everyday life (e.g. earth-sun relationships, water cycles, wind and ocean currents).
2. To learn the location of places and the physical and cultural characteristics of those places in order to function more effectively in our increasingly interdependent world.

3. To understand the geography of past times and how geography has played important roles in the evolution of people, their ideas, places and environments.
4. To develop a mental map of your community, province or territory, country and the world so that you can understand the 'where' of places and events.
5. To explain how the processes of human and physical systems have arranged and sometimes changed the surface of the Earth.
6. To understand the spatial organization of society and see order in what often appears to be random scattering of people and places.
7. To recognize spatial distributions at all scales – local and worldwide – in order to understand the complex connectivity of people and places.
8. To be able to make sensible judgements about matters involving relationships between the physical environment and society.
9. To appreciate Earth as the homeland of humankind and provide insight for wise management decisions about how the planet's resources should be used.

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10. To understand global interdependence and to become a better global citizen (Royal Canadian Geographical Society).

Like the Thirteen Indicators of a sustainable community (reproduced in RGSQ *Bulletin* September 2010) promoting sustainability, these Top 10 Reasons to Study Geography are just as relevant here in Australia as they are in Canada and present a very useful tool when promoting geographical education to developing and enquiring minds.

The Canadian Society's financial resources and umbrella endowment fund supports a separate fund for teacher professional development, a fund for media content development, a separate fund for expeditions, and includes revenue from the publication and sale of *Canadian Geographic*, and the promotion and revenue from a Canadian Geographic credit card with limits up to \$100,000. The Royal Canadian Geographical Society resources are far in excess of anything The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland might even dream about.

By comparison The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Council, Staff, Committees, and our Members (past and present) can feel justifiably proud of all our considerable achievements. With limited resources we're definitely punching well above our weight.

Leo Scanlan

Lecture – Rajasthan

At the November meeting, Frank Birchall will give a presentation on: People-Environment Impacts in Rajasthan.

The presentation examines the problems and effects of a burgeoning population competing for scarce and scarcer resources in a harsh and a beautiful land. It is said that Rajasthan is both blessed and cursed.

The discussion covers how Rajasthan has been historically affected by wars, climate change, exploitation, (but enriched by trade), and now must overcome

developmental problems and continuing environmental damage resulting from poverty, exploitation, overutilization, changes, demands and cultural conflicts of people in a new age.

Frank Birchall grew up and attended high school in Mount Morgan. It was here he first began his love of geography. In 1962, he left and went to Melbourne the day after his Senior Exams finished and commenced work as a Cadet Cartographer, specialising in Geologic Mapping. Being a left-handed cartographic draftsman in the 1960s was a real drawback so he became a Landman with one of the oil explorers.

After the Cooper Basin Natural Gas Consortium was finally negotiated in 1976, armed with a new diploma from RMIT, he came to Brisbane and worked for a variety of export oriented manufacturers, travelling extensively throughout the globe promoting Queensland manufactured goods, but always with an eye for the geography of the lands he visited.

Frank and his wife Judy joined our Society two years ago.

Remembrance Day 2011

Friday 11/11/11 we will celebrate Remembrance Day with an appropriate activity.

We will meet at 9.30 am at the Yeronga Memorial Park Memorial Entry Gates in Park Road, between Villa Street and School Road, Yeronga. We'll stroll the 1 km along the Memorial Walk towards Ipswich Road, reading the many memorial plaques at the trees lining the walk, and pausing at the Yeronga State School Memorial Garden.

We will hear the story of one of these WW1 soldiers from a relative, then join the RSL Remembrance Day commemoration at the Cenotaph; this will conclude with the Last Post at 11.00 am.

We'll then drive to the Stephens Branch RSL Hall, at the rear of the Muddy Farmer hotel at the corner of Ipswich and Annerley Roads for morning tea, and to inspect their heritage Honour Boards.

Next we'll drive to Yeronga Services Club for 2 course lunch with tea or coffee (other drinks at own cost). The day should conclude about 2.00 pm.

The cost for this day, including morning tea and lunch is \$26 pp.

If you wish to travel by train, please arrive at Yeronga Station in time for the short walk up Killarney St to the Memorial Gates by 9.30 am. The Station is also quite handy to the Services Club for the return journey. Let us know if you are travelling by train, and car transport will be arranged to and from the RSL Hall and Services Club. Bookings close on Friday 4 November.

More details from Brian McGrath, email: brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com.

Brian McGrath

Cape Town to Victoria Falls

As a result of the exceptional interest in our current Royal Geographical Society of Queensland, Victoria Falls to Cape Town Tour visiting Southern Africa in April 2012, the Society has decided to conduct a second tour to take place in late August/early September 2012.

Our first tour starts at Victoria Falls and moves south through Botswana, Namibia and South Africa before finishing at the beautiful City of Cape Town.

On the way it passes through a number of national parks including Chobe, the Okavango Delta, the Western Caprivi Strip, Etosha, Twyfelfontein (known as Namibia's largest open air art gallery), the Brandberg massif, Cape Cross seal colony, Namib-Naukluft National Park, the Sossusvlei sand dunes, Fish River Canyon and Namauland – the famous flower wonderland.

It is anticipated that the August/September trek will travel in the reverse direction to maximise wildflower viewing.

The first Trek represents extremely good value at \$9,950 for 23 days. It includes all airfares, accommodation, meals, excursions and entrances to many national parks and associated

activities. We are currently in negotiations with the Safari Operator to run the second trek and don't anticipate any significant change in the overall cost.

We already have a number of committed trekkers on our second tour. Don't delay if you are at all interested. Contact Lynn Law at Travel Concepts on 3420 6397 or alternatively Mob 0419 779 448.

Leo Scanlan

New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming Neal and Prue Jenkins as new members. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable. We look forward to getting to know you at Society functions.

Haddon Corner Revisited

Unlike its predecessor in 2010, Haddon Corner Trek 2011 achieved its objective, we got there this time.

Seventeen trekkers in eight vehicles assembled in Quilpie, and met the Quilpie Regional Council for a formal presentation of a Visitors Information Board. The board was funded by RGSQ in recognition of the use of the Council's facilities during our 2010 tour. All then drove to Windorah some 300 km away for a pub dinner and rest before tackling the Haddon Corner leg of the journey. Windorah is a nice little town and the scene of our 2010 Forum.

We arrived in Haddon Corner about midday next day, after a fairly easy drive, and met our South Australian colleagues, who had arrived earlier. The plaque was mounted on the corner post, commemorating the 125th anniversary of each Society, and recording the RGSQ and RGSSA attempt (turned back by heavy rain) in 2010. We celebrated with Barossa port, supplied by our SA friends, and a pleasant evening was held, and included the native rats which were in plague proportions. Next day we set out to find the Kulpi waterhole, some short distance away, a beautiful place but with washed out tracks, not easy to

find. Some members left the Trek here to venture South with the South Australians.

The Trek then proceeded to Birdsville a long way to the West, another pub dinner that evening. The next two days were spent exploring Birdsville's many interesting places, before we tackled Big Red and the eastern edge of the Simpson Desert. This was notable not only for its scenery, but also for our protesting engines, flying sand and wildly lurching vehicles, a great day.

Headed East from Birdsville, back to Windorah where the trek formally ended. At this stage only four vehicles remained, all of whom headed to Charleville on the long drive home. Brian McGrath left the group to stay with his family, and the remaining members returned home from there.

The Trek was both successful, and socially very enjoyable. We did have the pleasure of achieving our goals, despite arduous driving and very long distances over rough roads, and variable terrain. The only casualty was one severely damaged tyre (mine).

Participants were very tired but already thinking about the next one.

Brian Mealey

Tsunami Donations

Members donated \$250 to the fund organised by the Association of Japanese Geographers to buy geography resources such as maps and globes for tsunami-affected schools. Our Society's Council agreed to match this, making a further donation of \$250 from Society funds.

Toowoomba Trip

What a fabulous day! We left Gregory Park at 8.00 am Sunday 25 September, after Brian McGrath thoughtfully organized our car parking arrangements. Upon arrival at Picnic Point, Greg Lewis and his two children, Emma and Thomas, joined our group. Greg became our local guide.

The first gardens visited included the Competition gardens in the Middle Ridge area of the Reserve and City Grand Champions. What a display of colour! Such a stunning variety of flowering annuals, bulbs, azaleas and clivias in gardens so beautifully landscaped.

Morning tea was enjoyed at Lake Annan before we continued to wander around the small, cottage, floral and Good Neighbours winning gardens in the Mt Lofty area.

We had time to relax and enjoy our picnic lunch on the deck of Alison and Greg's home. Here we were joined by some of our members from the Downs. During this time, we were fortunate to have the Chairperson from Friends of the Escarpment Parks, Hugh Krenske, inform us of the history and work of this community group in identifying problem plants such as cat's-claw creeper, madeira vine and privet and their efforts to eradicate these from the bushland parks.

After lunch, we had the pleasure of a guided walk through Boyce Gardens, a magnificent garden, rainforest and park covering 6 hectares. This was followed by a stroll through Queens Park and Laurel Bank Park. Here the floral gardens were at their peak for colour and arrangement. One of the highlights was the children's area. From the platform, you could see flowers depicting the nursery rhyme characters such as Humpty Dumpty and the Toy Soldier.

Thankfully our bus had a trailer, for we returned to Brisbane with many plants as souvenirs.

Jeanette Lamont

Congratulations Nicola

Congratulations to Nicola Stromsoe. Earlier this year Nicola was awarded our Society's Medal as the best University of Queensland student completing a degree majoring in geography. Nicola has now been awarded the Alumni's Graduate of the Year Award, one of only two students across the whole of the University of Queensland to achieve the highest possible grade point average.

Leichhardt the Botanist

Members may be interested in the lecture below. Rod Fensham spoke to our Society on his work on Leichhardt some years ago.

The Society for Growing Australian Plants (Q) will present the annual Bill Tulloch Memorial Lecture at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens Auditorium, Mt Coot-tha Road, Toowong, on Monday 14 November at 7.45 pm. The lecture will be given by botanist Rod Fensham, from the Queensland Herbarium.

The German explorer Ludwig Leichhardt is best known for his mysterious death in the Australian

desert, but he was also a man of substantial scientific capability. This talk will tell the story of his life in Australia in light of his botanical talents and discoveries and will reveal new secrets from previously unpublished diaries.

Rod Fensham does research related to the ecology and conservation of native vegetation. He was awarded the 2005 Sherman Eureka Prize for his research that contributed to regulations that phased out broadscale land clearing in Queensland. One of Rod's specialties is using historical sources to garner ecological insight and it is this work that has brought him into close contact with Ludwig Leichhardt.

Cooktown Symposium

The Cooktown Re-enactment Association has organised the Cooktown Symposium: Planning Towards 2020, the 250th Anniversary of the Landing of Captain Cook, 4-6 November.

"During this symposium, we will present some historically significant information about events that took place here during Cook's forty eight day stay. Factual evidence will be presented ... that has the potential to alter forever, Australia's history as we know it."

The RGSQ office has a copy of the programme and registration form.

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Lecture, Tues 1 Nov, Mr Frank Birchall
Subject: People-Environment Impacts in Rajasthan

Day Trip, Fri 11 Nov
What: Remembrance Day Walk + Lunch
Where: Yeronga

Meeting, Tues 7 Dec, 7.30pm
What: Christmas Party

Christmas Close
When: 22 Dec - 2 Jan

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