



# RGSQ Bulletin

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## From the President

### Victoria Falls to Cape Town

Little did I realize when I first joined The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland in 1987 that our Society was not only a great educator regarding geography, but a great motivator as well. I knew right from the very beginning that the RGSQ programme of 'Geography on the Ground' provided all the motivation I needed to become involved in many of the domestic and overseas treks that have become a permanent fixture in our yearly calendar.

Our recent trek, 'Victoria Falls to Cape Town', was no exception, with loads of excitement, possibly more than expected. Too much to report, too little space!

Southern Africa has a multitude of interesting geographical features, both physical and human. Victoria Falls, where our trek began, is undoubtedly one of the natural wonders of the world. On our second day in Africa we ventured along the watery path on the Zimbabwean side of the Zambezi Gorge and managed to get positively wet through from the constant rain and mist generated by the enormous volume of water tumbling over the falls.

On our second day on Safari, we set out from Chobe Marina Lodge by boat to view the extraordinary wildlife of Chobe National Park. All the shutterbugs on hand certainly had a field day on our sunset cruise that afternoon. Outstanding were Chobe's elephants, always an interesting spectacle.

Moving on next afternoon we cruised the banks of the Kwando River in Mudumo National Park, lush with riverine forest, marsh, and plentiful birdlife. Next day, crossing over into Namibia along the Caprivi Strip we were to cruise the channels of the western border of the Okavango Delta, one of the world's largest inland water systems.

The highlight of our next stop, N'Kwazi River Camp, was the interaction with local villagers situated opposite Angola on the bank of the Kavango River. The human dimension of geography was on display here and our own blatant consumerism came to mind when comparing their material possessions to ours in the western world.

Etosha National Park took up the next three days with our stay at Namutoni, Okaukuejo and Halali camps. Game drives in this area were truly exceptional. On entry to the park it seemed giraffes were everywhere. Just a few hundred yards inside one was quietly contemplating from the centre of the road in front of the vehicle, and later on we were to see six and seven at a time. On one memorable afternoon in Etosha, we witnessed a very large herd of zebra (some hundreds

strong) and further on a large assortment of hundreds of animals all around two resident waterholes. It really was Africa at its best. Despite our guide's best efforts both the lion and the leopard were too elusive to grace our digital screens. We did, however, on our last night in the park witness seven rhinos drinking at the waterhole at the back of the camp – I suspect that would be a really unusual occurrence these days.

Twyfontein, Namibia, produced some outstanding mountain scenery and of course the White Lady art painting, one of thousands in the Brandberg Damaraland area. Cape Cross Seal Colony at the head of the Skeleton Coast was noisy and smelly but has to be seen to be believed – literally thousands of seals – the lazy, the infants, the argumentative, the play group, the surfers and the lifeguard – they were all there, and it was absolutely fascinating.

Sossusvlei Desert Tented Camp was truly a beautiful spot to stay overnight and the following day the 'red dunes' area of the Namib Desert was one of

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the more spectacular sights in Namibia. Our arrival at the Canon Road House and a further 20 minutes drive revealed the 550 m depression of Fish River Canyon, some outstanding views from the rim and more brilliant photo opportunities.

Ai Ais / Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, Namibia, ushered in a comfortable overnight stay and dip in the 65° spa in the Ai Ais Resort managed by the Namibian government. Our journey on to Okiep, an old mining town and then on to Cedarberg through the citrus growing area around the Orange River, and our overnight at The Old Village were all interesting destinations in their own right.

Shanty towns at Orange River, South Africa, and later driving past the extensive 'townships' on the fringe of Cape Town were to provide a glimpse of both the past and present racial divide and the extreme wealth divisiveness of Southern Africa.

Victoria Falls was a spectacular beginning to our trek and Cape Town, Table View Beach, Table Mountain National Park, and Table Mountain were to provide a fitting end to a very memorable trek.

I would like to thank Jenman Safaris and Travel Concepts for their organization, and all my fellow travellers for their company, participation and good cheer.

In conclusion, I look forward to a display of some of the extensive photography that is sure to be the subject of much conversation and reminiscing in the future.

*Leo Scanlan*

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## New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming new/rejoining members:

Pat Comben and Rosie Catt;  
Alexander, Silvana and Ross  
Peeber; Gavin Warren

We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable. We look forward to getting to know you at Society events.

## June Lecture – Local Gov't

The scheduled June lecture is by Mrs Melva Hobson, on the topic of *Geography in/and my Life as Mayor*.

Unfortunately at the *Bulletin* printing deadline, we have been unable to reconfirm this. If the speaker changes, we will update our website and email members on our email list. Members are also welcome to ring the office to check.

Melva Hobson was Mayor of Redland City from 2008 to 2012. Her background is as a geographer. Melva was a geography teacher from 1965 to 1997, including a stint as a Landcare Education Officer with the Dept of Primary Industries. Following her school teaching career, she branched into community education, extension and communication with the Dept of Natural Resources, and again with the Dept of Primary Industries. Melva is a past President and life member of the Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland. Her honours and awards include the Public Service Medal awarded in the 1995 Australia Day Honours.

Despite ongoing academic debate about the contribution of geography in public policy, it is hard to imagine a more relevant area of application than local government. A local government area is a slice of the earth that includes a range of natural and human environments and is often based on arbitrary boundaries or key geographical features.

Local government's responsibility and accountability in Queensland for planning includes city planning schemes, master and structure planning, recreation planning, development assessment and community and social planning. These planning instruments and policies heavily influence the physical shape of our communities.

For Melva, it is vital that public policy makers fully understand the relationships between the different elements of our local government areas. Whether it is balancing rapid urban growth with an appreciation of the fragility of the earth's surface and a commitment to sustainable development, addressing the social

needs of community or supporting the economic activity of ambitions of our main street businesses, it is no longer sufficient to view decisions and their impacts in isolation.

An example in Redland City is the structure planning for an area designated for residential living for 2700 people in a location with high ecological values.

Addressing the complex planning and social issues for this area required consideration of a physical environment that includes Ramsar sites and waterways, future implications of climate change, spatial planning for recreation, cultural and community facilities, and implications of transport planning, including vehicular transport, cycleways and walking paths. Ensuring a balance of housing types while understanding residential needs, population densities and distribution, are just some of the considerations that extend to wider regional implications for access to employment and public infrastructure.

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## Gov't House Open Day

Her Excellency, the Governor of Queensland, Ms Penelope Wensley AC is hosting an Open Day at Government House on Sunday 3 June to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen. This will be a community fair of Queensland volunteer and community organisations with displays and activities to enjoy.

Society members, family and friends are invited to attend. Gates are open from 10am to 3pm. Please call in and see us at the RGSQ display.

*Brian McGrath*

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## A Cathedral & the Gardens

What: A walk in the City Botanic Gardens, lunch and tour of St Stephens Cathedral

When: Tuesday 10 July 2012

Cost: \$18.00 (includes donation to Cathedral and lunch)

Wear: walking shoes and sun-smart gear

Book: with the office and pay by 3 Jul

Meet: by 9:50am at the rotunda near Albert St/Alice St entrance to the Gardens.

The Brisbane City Botanic Gardens are listed on Queensland's Heritage Register. Established in 1828 to provide food for the early penal colony, its vegetation collection now includes the first native plants to be formally planted in Queensland.

With the official opening in 1855, curator Walter Hill was appointed the first superintendent. He set up an active planting and experimental programme trialing crops from around the world to determine their suitability for the sub-tropical climate. He trialed mangoes, pineapples, papaws, custard apples, sugar cane, ginger, coffee, various nuts, grapes and tobacco. He also established an ornamental collection.

The Gardens underwent a major redevelopment in 1987. Plant-scaping and further development was carried out in 1989 with the construction of the mangrove boardwalks and the Riverstage.

We will then head down to the Pig and Whistle for a light lunch (drinks and desert are also available at own expense).

Lunch will be followed by a guided tour of the Cathedral lasting approx 1½ hours. The Foundation Stone of the Cathedral was laid in 1863 but only a section of the foundations date to the 1860s. In 1874 the incomplete Cathedral was blessed and dedicated. The gables and spires were added in 1884. The restored, renovated and extended cathedral was rededicated in 1989.

To the right is the restored St Stephen's Chapel, which contains a shrine to Mary MacKillop. Fondly names 'Pugin's Chapel' (after the designer), this is Brisbane's oldest church building. It was blessed and opened in 1850. Its architecture is Gothic Revival.

If you would like to join us for lunch and the Cathedral only, please register this on booking.

Friends are welcome.

*Audrey Johnston*

## **Underground & in the Skies**

This event has proved very popular with members. Bookings have now closed. The details below are included for the information of members already booked.

Meet at 10am at the Legacy Way Tunnel Visitors Centre, 80 Jephson Street, Toowong for morning tea, a talk about the Tunnel project, and to view the displays. There is 2 hr free parking in the Wilson Parking area next door. It's a short walk from Toowong Railway Station, and transport has been arranged for some members between the Visitors Centre and the Planetarium.

12.15pm Buffet Lunch with tea/coffee /juice in the Botanicals Restaurant, Mt Coot-tha Gardens.

1.30pm view Transit of Venus (see next column). Telescopes will be set up outside, cloud permitting. Transit concludes at 2.45pm. Attend the 3pm Show in the Planetarium.

Trek concludes 4pm. There will be time before and after lunch and in the late afternoon to see something of the Gardens.

Enquiries *Brian McGrath*  
brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com

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## **Maritime Museum**

On Wednesday 8 August 2012, a visit is planned to the Maritime Museum at Southbank. Arrangements have been made for us to have lunch at the Southbank Institute of Technology Restaurant for a 2-course luncheon (main & dessert) before returning to the Maritime Museum. We will meet at 9:30am and it will be a full day to take in all that the Museum has to offer. Cost for the day will be \$35 and bookings must be made with the office by Friday 20 July 2012.

*Kay Rees*

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## **Bumper Sticker**

We have had some more RGSQ bumper stickers printed (on hopefully longer lasting vinyl). Pick one up at the Society, or contact us if you'd like one posted out to you.

## **Millmerran Festival**

### **Last Chance?**

The Society has organised a weekend at the Millmerran Camp Oven festival. A very interesting programme is planned for 5 to 7 October— more details later.

Accommodation at Tony & Dawn Smith's Millmerran Village Caravan Park, phone 07 4695 2020, email mvcaravanpark@bigpond.com is in great demand and will not be available much longer. If you intend coming, book your accommodation now – mentioning you are part of the RGSQ group – for the nights of Friday 5 and Saturday 6 October. If you miss out, there is an alternative temporary camp ground in the showground; enquiries email dtwidale2@bigpond.com.

Please let the RGSQ office know when you have booked.

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## **Transit of Venus**

On 6 June 2012, the planet Venus will pass in front of the Sun. This event is referred to as the Transit of Venus, and will not occur again until 2117.

In 1769, Captain James Cook was commissioned to conduct survey observations of the Transit of Venus, and was instructed to search for the Great Southern Land thereafter, leading to the British exploration of Australia. Cooks' survey observations were part of a large scientific expedition to compute the scale of the Solar System. Subsequent expeditions coinciding with this repeated astronomic event were conducted in 1874 and 1882. This work was a foundation of modern geodesy which impacts our lives in so many ways today.

This scientific method of measuring the size and shape of the Earth has now been superseded by GPS, satellite remote sensing, high accuracy gravity sensing and other highly precise, space-based measuring techniques. These measurements and techniques provide a framework – enabling scientific observation of climate change, sea level rise, mass water transport, and global tectonic motion studies for earthquake prediction.

They also provide the basis for mapping applications – from land, mining and engineering surveying to smart phone apps and GIS functionality. The convergence of these new high performance measurement technologies and unprecedented computing power has enabled what is termed the 'Geospatial Revolution'.

The Transit of Venus will be visible in Australia and observed at numerous locations. This event provides a great hands-on opportunity to revisit history while looking to the future, and to introduce a generation of inquisitive young students into the world of surveying and spatial information.

Educational events are being organised around Australia, coordinated by a committee of the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, Queensland Branch.

For more information, including an interesting article on surveying in Antarctica by RGSQ member David Carstens, see the project website at [www.transitofvenus.com.au](http://www.transitofvenus.com.au)

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### Queensland Places Website

[www.queenslandplaces.com.au](http://www.queenslandplaces.com.au)  
Check out this website containing over 1100 entries on all the places in Queensland, including cities,

suburbs, towns and villages, that have now or once had a population over 500. Prof Peter Spearritt (Uni of Qld) included information on its development in a lecture to our Society a while ago.

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### Giddy from Kicowera

Toni Sherwin from Kilcowera Station, where we camped for 2 nights on the Haddon Corner Trek in 2010, has advised of the wonderful season the property is experiencing, and inviting anyone in the area to call in and see. [www.kilcowera.com.au](http://www.kilcowera.com.au)

*Brian McGrath*

# RGSQ Bulletin

June 2012

**Open Day**, Sun 3 June, 10.00am  
Where: Government House

**Lecture Meeting**, Tues 5 Jun 7.30pm  
Speaker: Melva Hobson **to be confirmed**  
Subject: Geography in/and my Life as Mayor

**Day Trek**, Wed 6 June, 10.00am  
Where: Legacy Way and Planetarium

**National Final**, Tues 18 June, 11.30am  
For: Australian Geography Competition  
Where: Foxtel Studios, Sydney

**Scientific Study**, 25 Jun - 23 Jul  
Where: Pungalina, NT

**Lecture Meeting**, Tues 3 Jul 7.30pm  
Speaker: Mike Shapland  
Subject: Disaster Management in Qld

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