



# RGSQ Bulletin

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

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## From the President

Dear Fellow Members,

I hope you are continuing to stay safe and well as we move into the next stages of coping with the COVID-19 virus. It is now clearly evident that, fortunately, Australia and New Zealand have done very well compared to many other countries. At the time of writing, Qld, SA, WA and the NT have had very few or no new cases for a couple of weeks. Check out the number of cases on the [RGSQ home page](#), updated daily by the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center (worldwide totals) and by the UQ-Qld Centre for Population Research (Qld totals) by clicking on the graphics or links at <https://rgsq.org.au>.

### Re-opening RGSQ premises?

Now that the Queensland government is lifting some restrictions, the RGSQ Council is considering when we could start to re-open the RGSQ premises. Initially, this would only be for 2-3 volunteers at a time who would feel comfortable about coming in to Fortescue Street to continue working on some projects e.g. the library, maps and archives collections and AGC scanning. This would also be dependent on staff presence. We will review the situation at the June Council meeting. In the meantime, we certainly intend to be vigilant, stay at home where possible and await the results from the easing of restrictions especially around Southeast Queensland. It is to be hoped that we do not see a dreaded "second wave" of cases.

### A meeting of three Society Presidents

I am sure many members are utilising technologies such as Skype and Zoom to connect remotely with family, friends, work colleagues and networks in other clubs and societies. On 27<sup>th</sup> April, I had the opportunity to connect with the President of the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia. We had planned to have a three-way presidents' meeting via Zoom involving RGSQ (Iraphne), RGSSA (Leigh Radford) and the Geographical Society of NSW (Rae Dufty-Jones). Unfortunately, the Zoom hook-up failed and so, instead, Leigh and Iraphne had a phone meeting. Later, Rae contributed to our conversation notes. While all three Societies have suspended activities at least until July, we have been trying to keep our respective members engaged during the "stay at home" period via publications and online activities.

Here are some examples of what we are doing and ideas for the future:

- Both RGSQ and RGSSA have initiated publication of new short newsletters: "MemberConnect" (RGSQ) and "Keeping in touch with Geography" (RGSSA). These newsletters include members' letters from home, interesting snippets of unusual geographical facts, links to videos, podcasts, short quizzes and crosswords.
- All three societies are continuing their regular publications: RGSQ monthly *Bulletin*, RGSSA's bi-monthly *GeoNews* and GeogSocNSW's *Australian Geographer* journal.
- We are posting more resource materials on our websites (e.g. video talks, podcasts) capturing lecture presentations via Zoom to share with members and encouraging members to utilise more of these online resources.
- Younger members are increasingly connecting and utilising postings on Facebook.
- Iraphne has been phoning around RGSQ members to see how they are going at home. Leigh has videotaped a short personal communiqué to RGSSA members - see this on the RGSSA home page at <https://rgssa.org.au>. Iraphne is also preparing a short video message to RGSQ members ... watch this space!

We will aim to hold a three-presidents' meeting twice a year (April and October) if not in-person, via Zoom.

We can facilitate opportunities for our members to visit each other's respective Societies individually or on interstate Society trips e.g. RGSQ may include a visit to Adelaide in September 2021.

Members' ideas on any of the above are always welcome.

With best wishes

Dr Iraphne Childs, President

# UPCOMING EVENTS

[www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)

## What's On?

### JUNE Thomson Oration

#### “What Makes Geography Geographical?”

Presented by Alaric Maude

Please note, the lecture will be organised later in June. We are working with Alaric to bring you the lecture in an online format, either as a recorded video to access through the website or YouTube or as an online webinar. More information about this will be emailed shortly.

### What's happening on Council?

On 19 May Council had another online meeting using Microsoft Teams with eleven Councillors “in attendance”. Thanks again to John Tasker for setting this up. Reports were received from Iraphne Childs (President), Chris Spriggs (Treasurer), Lilia Darii (Business Manager), the AGC (Kath Berg), Pamela Tonkin (Property) and Young Geographers (John Tasker). Matters discussed included:

- RGSQ has now received PAYG subsidy and JobKeeper support for Lilia and Bernard
- When to open up RGSQ premises to volunteers and members following staged lifting of COVID-19 restrictions – see note in this Bulletin
- IT maintenance support and renewal of contract for service
- The Lambert centre trek has been postponed until September 2021
- The May Bulletin and MemberConnect #2 newsletter have been circulated to members
- Plans for more online activities for Map Group, following the successful Webinar on spatial technologies presented by John Tasker on 14 May
- A range of excellent initiatives by the Young Geographers

### Get to know your Councillor

#### Dr Annie Lau

I am Annie, one of the new councillors elected to the RGSQ council in 2019. I joined RGSQ in 2017, shortly after moving to Brisbane to take up a position of Lecturer in geography at the University of Queensland.

I chose to study Geoscience and Geography because I was intrigued by the power of nature when I saw footage of natural disasters on the news. After the Indian Ocean Tsunami, I spent days reading about the mechanisms of plate movements and earthquakes along the subduction zone, and on why tsunami waves are so deadly and destructive. It is interesting (and exciting) that years later, I have become a coastal geomorphologist researching tsunami and storm impacts and lecturing in the Environmental Hazards at UQ!

Another reason I love geography research is that it brings me to some of the most beautiful places on the planet. As my research focuses on coastal changes, I get to spend

time on reefs, beaches, and coastal dunes for data collection. I identify and analyse sand and boulders transported by waves to reconstruct the long-term (sometimes thousands of years) storm and/or tsunami history. The size, distance from the source location, and coral fossil age of a large boulder thrown up by strong waves (like the one in Photo 1) can help us estimate the magnitude of waves, the age of the event, and sometimes, to determine whether the waves were generated by a storm or tsunami.



I was born and raised in Hong Kong. The current coronavirus pandemic brings back a lot of memories of the SARS epidemic in 2003. Schools were closed for a month around Easter that year. As home Internet was not common in those days, students like me did not have to attend online lessons but could enjoy a real holiday; while adults could not “work from home” but had to go to work wearing surgical masks. There was no “lockdown”, but the high fatality rate of more than 10% heightened our fear and perception of risk so the streets were empty. I had not left my home for a whole month. I can testify that the hygiene habits that I acquired then, e.g. hand washing for 20 seconds many times a day, stayed with me until now. With this, I believe improvements in personal hygiene are happening worldwide, and some good habits will stay with us after the pandemic to make the world a better place.



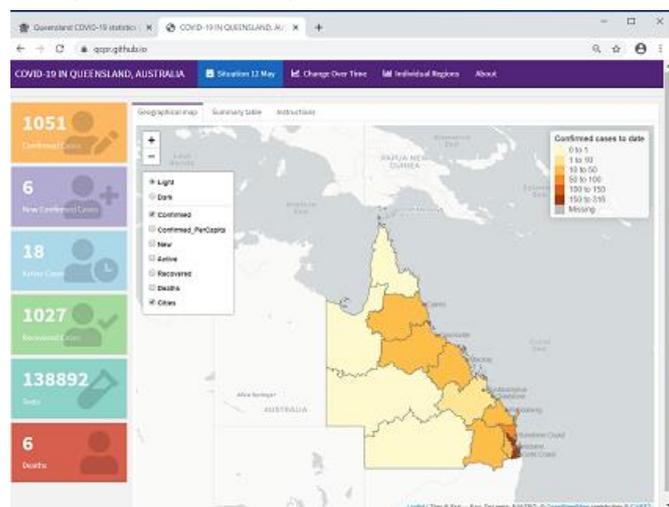
#### Photos courtesy of Annie Lau

(1) A local field assistant and I (left), standing in front of a huge boulder that was thrown up onto the reef during the passage of Cyclone Winston (2016) in Fiji. Behind this reef, the Levena Village of Taveuni Island was badly damaged by wind. (Geography trivia: Taveuni is one of the few places on Earth that the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian, or the International Date Line, if it does not zigzag around countries, cuts through)

(2) This was taken in Hong Kong but not related to any epidemic/pandemic. In 2018 and 2019, I coordinated and taught in a field trip course in which I brought UQ students to Hong Kong to explore various issues in the topics of geography, environmental management, and urban planning. My colleague and students were wearing masks here because we were visiting a sewage treatment facility that is housed inside a rock cavern (a way to create space in a hilly and high population city). The masks cannot actually block the smell, but only to make us feel less exposed to the unpleasant air!

## UQ researchers launch Queensland COVID-19 tracker

Dr Julia Loginova and Dr Pia Wohland-Jakhar (with assistance from several others in the Queensland Centre for Population Research)



Screenshot of the QLD COVID-19 dashboard showing geographical distribution of confirmed cases of COVID-19 across Hospital and Health Regions in Queensland based on publically available data provided by Queensland health.

The first case of COVID-19 in Queensland was confirmed on January 28<sup>th</sup> 2020. Three and a half months later, as of May 12<sup>th</sup>, a total of 1,051 cases had been confirmed in the state. Like many Queenslanders, we have been trying to track the development of the COVID-19 spread across the state. Queensland Health has been releasing daily updates on this ongoing public health emergency in a table format since March 19<sup>th</sup>. Using these publically available data, we developed an interactive dashboard to visualise reported cases in Hospital and Health Service regions across Queensland.

The dashboard is hosted by the Queensland Centre for Population Research at the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, the University of Queensland. It was launched in early April and is updated daily. The data are visualised using packages of statistical computing and graphics software R and can be accessed on the GitHub pages using the following link: <http://qcpr.github.io>. The dashboard provides Queenslanders with a user-friendly tool to understand the spatial distribution of infections and recoveries across Queensland and track changes over time based on a reliable data source.

The importance of geography in understanding and communicating the COVID-19 epidemic cannot be overestimated. Visualising and mapping data in appealing and interactive ways allows trends and patterns to be more easily seen, especially when checked frequently. This explains the popularity and impact of the interactive dashboards and visuals developed by government agencies and universities across Australia as well as Johns Hopkins University and the World Health Organization. Geographic and dynamic visualisations might not provide answers to the most pertinent questions about the impact of COVID-19 on people's lives, but they help to cope with the uncertainty that many are experiencing by being able to evaluate the risks of transmission in their local area.

*The Society* was featured in the latest issue of My Village News magazine. The magazine gave us permission to reproduce the piece in the Bulletin. We hope you enjoy it!

Find out more about My Village News:

<https://myvillagenews.com.au>

<https://www.facebook.com/myvillagenewsbris/>

<https://www.instagram.com/myvillagenewsbris/>

### “Global Curiosity, Local Headquarters”



With a global climate crisis and a pandemic sweeping the world, we need geographers now more than ever.

As Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (RGSQ) President Iraphne Childs said, Earth is the stage upon which human activity takes place, and an awareness of our theatre is vital.

The Society, of approximately 300 members, is a group of curious modern explorers. Based in Spring Hill, the RGSQ host and orchestrate activities for people interested in the world around them. The Society runs in-house public lectures on the first Tuesday of the month.

It's an active group supported by volunteers and special interest groups. “We do quite a lot,” Ms Childs said.

“There's a group called the Map Group – they're working through and cataloguing the maps in our collection.” “Last year they did a very interesting field trip, they went to Toowoomba for four days and saw great collections, including an amazing private collection featuring some very rare historical maps.”

The Spring Hill headquarters also houses its own array of incredible artefacts, some deemed nationally significant, like kit owned by Sir Thomas Mitchell, noted explorer and the first Surveyor-General of New South Wales: his paint box, camera lucida, pistol, and shoulder belt.

The team is also instrumental in delivering the Australian Geography Competition to school students across the country. “They've just sent out the question booklets – it's one way we're helping to promote our discipline in schools,” Ms Childs said.

In fact, Ms Child's memories of the competition in years gone by are highlights of her involvement with the society.

Winners from the school-based tests go on to compete in a field-based competition (coupled with adventure activities) in the lead up to the International Geography Olympiad. “One year, we took the kids out in light aircraft

to monitor whales and dolphins; we've been snorkeling in Sydney Harbour and found seahorses; we went for a camel ride around the Noosa shore – amazing things.” Ms Childs said the Society welcomes new members and encouraged folks to sign up via the website at [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au) or to come along to a RGSQ event to see what it's all about.”

Photo courtesy of My Village News; published with permission from My Village News.

## Reflection Following President Iraphne Childs Visit to The Royal Geographical Society of South Australia (RGSSA)

By David Carstens

It was most interesting to read the report of the visit to RGSSA by President Iraphne Childs and husband Ralph, which was published in RGSQ Bulletin, March 2020. It prompted me to re-visit my report of a similar visit in 2008. The visit is recorded in the RGSQ Bulletin in October 2008 (see RGSQ Bulletin October 2008 adjacent column). Iraphne's 2020 photographs embellish the understanding of the scale of the RGSSA Library and the two stories complement each other. I was certainly impressed by my visit in 2008, when I met with the, then, President Rod Shearing. It is also noted that RGSQ acknowledged and congratulated Rod Shearing on his award of the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2014.

The long association between RGSQ and RGSSA is highlighted by the recollections inspired by the two reports. One current activity with this association is the (hopeful) Trek to Lambert Centre which has now been postponed to 2021. The involvement of RGSSA in the establishment Lambert Centre is most topical (see piece on “Pols of Inaccessibility” adjacent column).

In the story of the 2008 visit, reference to Colonel Light's Level has a significant relationship to the recent RGSQ Map Group visit to the Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum in March this year. The interesting inspection of Colonel Light's Level revealed that the crosshairs, critical part of the instrument, were missing. Discussion included the description of the need, and method, necessary, often enough in the field, to replace the crosshairs. The standard crosshair was a spider web. Instructions of the day were “First catch your spider”. The rest is to affix the web into the graticule frame and re-collimate the level. Included in the survey equipment viewed at the recent visit to the Museum, was a small wire contraption, about 120mm long and in the shape of an elongated “Y”. This, as was explained by the enthusiastic Curator, is the necessary equipment to deal with spider and web. The web is wound around the prongs, and this enables careful placement of the web into the graticule frame. I have no information whether this repair has been applied to the RGSSA Museum Piece.

While in Adelaide I also purchased and hold a copy of “The Branch Without a Tree”, the RGSSA Centenary book. This publication, like RGSQ's “A Dream in Trust” is a mine of information covering association over 100 years. Of interest to me is that the author of that book (and Member of RGSSA) is Ken Peake-Jones. Ken is known to me as an early ANARE Expeditioner, although I have never met

him. He served with ANARE at Mawson in 1959, just before my time there. In the RGSSA history, Ken highlights the Society's considerable and long-term interest in Antarctica, as does ‘A Dream in Trust’ for Queensland. The “branch” in Adelaide had strong associations with the Antarctic from early days and especially through Professor Douglas Mawson, at the University. I am sure that there is a copy of the RGSSA ‘The Branch Without a Tree’ in RGSQ Library.

### RGSSA

While spending a week in Adelaide recently, Kathryn and I visited the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia. We met the President, Rod Shearing, the Office Manager, Margaret Duggan and the Librarian, Kevin Griffin.

The facilities for the Society within the State Library are most impressive. The office room and library room are at the North Terrace end and on the top level of the impressive 19th Century building. This library room is similar to the RGSQ Library and is catalogued by the Society.

The full extent of the Library is what impresses. The whole of the top level of the State Library Reference area is taken up by the RGSSA Library which is not housed in the small library room. This large part of the Library is catalogued by the State Library. The holdings include “The York Gate Library”, purchased by RGSSA in 1905. This extensive coverage of world geography contains original manuscripts by Sir Joseph Banks (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1766), very early maps, drawings by famous explorer artists, and early Australian records of discovery. Of three volumes of Hawksworth's account of voyages to the Southern Hemisphere, two are devoted to Cook's voyage in the *Endeavour*.

Kevin Griffin brought out Colonel Light's surveyor's level for examination. This was quite a highlight of the visit. It led to a discussion about the spider-web crosshairs in the instrument, which were broken. Apart from this fixable condition, the instrument was in excellent working condition.

The total area covered by the Library was astonishing. As can be gleaned from the RGSSA bi-monthly news, there is some threat to the tenure of the area provided to the Society and negotiations are on-going. The Society in South Australia does not have freehold tenure as in Queensland. Many of the individual parts of the Library holdings are valued at millions of dollars.

David Carstens

### Poles of Inaccessibility

Quite a few members will remember that to celebrate Australia's Bicentenary, our Society had the then Queensland Department of Geographic Information calculate the geographic centre of Australia. It was named the Lambert Centre after prominent surveyor Dr Bruce Lambert. The point was calculated as 25°36'36.4”S, 134°21'17.3”E and was the focus of our 1988 trek.

Our “geographic centre” has another name – “pole of inaccessibility” – that is, the point furthest from the coast. It was first used for the point farthest from the coast in the Arctic Sea in 1920, then transferred to the point in Antarctica farthest from the sea, and is now used for other areas.

D Garcia-Castellanos (ICT Jaume Almera, Barcelona) and U Lombardo (Universität Bern) have recently made their own calculations of the Poles of Inaccessibility. They are most interested in the Eurasian one, which is of course the farthest from the sea. Acknowledging the uncertainties from the ambiguities in the definition of coastlines, they calculate it to be at 45°17'60”N 88°8'24”E in the north-westernmost Chinese province of Xinjiang, approx 2514 km from the sea.

By their calculations, Australia's Pole of Inaccessibility is at 23°10'12”S, 132°16'12”E, 928 km from the sea. Even allowing for the uncertainties in coastlines, especially with the estuaries in northern Australia, this seems quite a difference.

And if you're interested, the point most distant from land, the Pole of Inaccessibility of the Pacific Ocean, is at 48°53'24”S, 123°27'0”E (well about there, they don't seem very good at converting decimal degrees to degrees, minutes and seconds). This is approx 2690 km from Moto Niu (Easter Island), Maher Island (Antarctica) and Ducie Island (Pitcairn). This point even has its own name – Point Nemo. Didn't that get a mention in the last *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie?

You can read more about Poles of Inaccessibility in the library copy of *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 123 (3) Sept 2008, 227-233.

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David Carstens, President, RGSQ 2012-2014

# Redcliffe's Bridges

by Audrey Johnston

## The HORNIBROOK HIGHWAY

Until 1935, to travel from Brisbane to Redcliffe one went by water on the "Koopa" or via Petrie. Then followed the opening of the Hornibrook Highway, a toll bridge until 1975. It was listed in Queensland Heritage in 1994. Fondly called the "Humpity Bump Bridge" by locals because the surface was buckled, and water splashed over it during windy spring tides. By 1979 it was considered beyond economical repair. The arches at both ends and a few posts remain beside a newer fishing platform.



## The HOUGHTON HIGHWAY

Opened in December 1979 the Houghton Highway replaced the Hornibrook.

With a length of 2.74 kms, originally it was intended to be of two lanes for traffic with a third lane for pedestrians and cyclists. However, with a significant increase in traffic, the highway was converted into three traffic lanes.



## The TED SMOUT MEMORIAL BRIDGE

Opened in July 2010 this is the most easterly of the three bridges, all crossing Hays Inlet and the Pine River where they enter Moreton Bay. This carries three lanes of traffic with a separate pedestrian and cycle lane across Bramble Bay and includes an extended fishing platform. Its cost - \$315 million. Until March 2013 the Houghton and Ted Smout bridges were the second longest bridges in Australia. *Photos courtesy of Audrey Johnston.*

References: Hornibrook bridge

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornibrook\\_Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornibrook_Bridge)

## CONTRIBUTORS

David Carstens, Iraphne Childs, Audrey Johnston, Dr Annie Lau, Dr Julia Loginova, Dr Pia Wohland-Jakhar, researchers from UQ - Qld Centre for Population Research, My Village News

## PHOTOGRAPHY

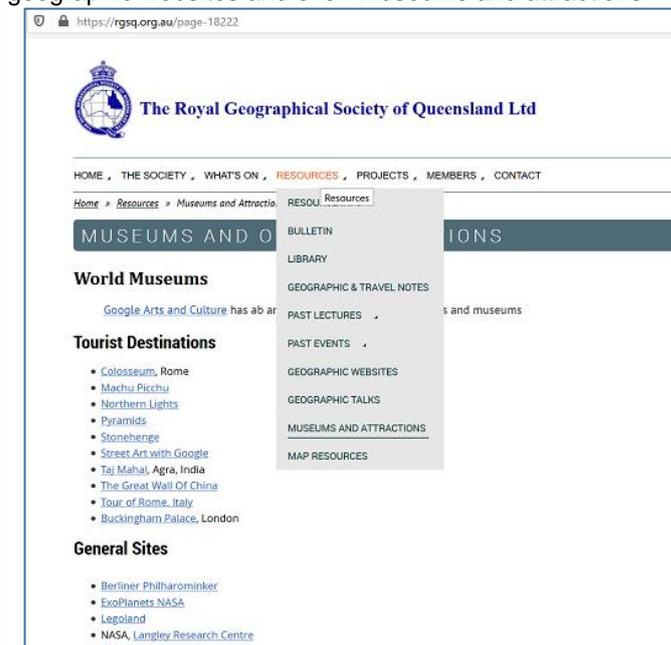
Audrey Johnston, Dr Annie Lau, My Village News, UQ - Qld Centre for Population Research

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We have much pleasure in welcoming *Stephen Schwer, Me Yusop Rosilawatie, Ayeisha Sheldon, and Moira Anne Thompson* as new members of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.

**RGSQ Website:** [www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)

If you haven't checked out the [Resources](#) page on our website, you should! The page is an invitation to explore anything from past lectures and events to maps, other geographic websites and even museums and attractions.



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## ■ Current Office Visiting Restrictions

At the last May Council, it was agreed that to help with the scanning of Australian Geography Competition answer sheets no more than five (5) people (including staff and essential volunteers) can be at 'Gregory Place' – RGSQ premises at Spring Hill, at any one time. Physical distancing and increased hygiene measures are also in place until at least 10 July 2020 (proposed Stage 3 easing of restrictions). This will be reviewed at the June Council. Please be aware of the directions issued by Qld Health that people aged 70 and over are strongly encouraged to exercise judgement and consider the need to go out. Find out more at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/home-confinement-movement-gathering-direction/help>.

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The June Council will meet on the third Tuesday of the month.

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