



Meets at 9.30am for 10.00am on the second Thursday of each month at Mt Claremont Community Centre, 109 Montgomery Avenue, Mt Claremont

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S TURRET



Dr Bryan Boruff, UWA

A good start to the year was made at our February Branch Meeting with Dr Bryan Boruff giving the 91 attendees a warning about the changes being brought about by the unbridled clear-felling suburban developments in the outer parts of Perth metro area, plus building of “McMansions” in inner suburbs, especially with regard to “Global warming”. On the other hand, some Local Government Authorities, eg Town of Claremont, were working hard to densely revegetate their parklands. It is up to all of us to push our LGA's to protect and upgrade our public areas and preserve trees at all costs.

There was a bit of a disappointing roll-up to the Men's Health special meeting on February 20th. I guess it just goes to show that it is women who drag along their menfolk to such events.



The Men's Health team with John & Geoff

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Thursday March 14th, 10am** Monthly Branch Meeting. The guest speakers at the meeting will be puppy raiser John and Ambassador Dog Eva of Guide Dogs WA, covering the work of the guide and assistance dogs and their training. Also attending will be their donation dog who you can feed – but not Eva. Also presenting will be a volunteer from Shenton Park Dogs' Refuge with yet another dog to cover their role in rescuing and homing abandoned dogs. Please bring photos of pets or better still email jpg's to Terry at [mylemms@bigpond.com](mailto:mylemms@bigpond.com)

**Friday March 15th, 2pm** Presentation by NSA General Manager Membership & Marketing – Sandra Philpott. Sandra, together with Kristie Forrest will present at Mt Claremont Community Centre to interested members of our branch and others from Perth Metro branches on the “state of the NSA nation”. Bring along your non-member friends, no charge.

**Friday March 22, 9.00am for 9.30am sharp** Excursion from Mt Claremont to Penguin Island and the Discovery centre by ferry, plus a wildlife cruise for \$55 total. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks or order a special one including bottle of water from Nicole Walton for \$10. Please advise if vegetarian or gluten-free is required. NB there is no café on the island so bring water, thermos or whatever. There are changing rooms if you're inclined to take a dip. Return to Mt Claremont at 4.30pm.

**Thursday April 11th, 10am** Monthly Branch Meeting. The guest speaker will be David Cohen, a journalist with “The Post” newspaper. Be prepared to grill him!

Anyway, Owen, from the Regional Men's Health Initiative, funded by Royalties for Regions, gave a great presentation in "Blokes Speak" style, stressing the importance of mental health. His two side-kicks, Glen & Ali, were very busy taking blood pressures, waist measuring (gulp) and handing out useful stuff. Look ahead to May for our next general admittance special meeting, subject and date to be advised.

The first outing for 2019 is to be an "overseas" picnic trip to Penguin Island on Friday March 22nd. The cost will be \$55 which includes ferry trip, admittance to Penguin Discovery Centre and a 45 minute glass-bottomed boat cruise to view sealions, dolphins, birdlife and marine habitats. Only a few places remain. Please be aware that once paid up for any of our events we cannot provide refunds except in the case of illness.

Contributions this month come from: Dean Giles, a retired metallurgist, by way of a new section – Member Portraits; and your editor, so that is two from the mining industry. We will be targeting other sections of our membership in future. So, anyone who has a story to tell please come forward (or else be dragooned) and to provide something in writing or be interviewed.

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## BUSH TALES

### Last beer at Ketombe – December 2003

This is a story of several days in the life of a mineral explorer at a remote mountainous, jungle-clad area, that we termed Meluak Project, in the interior of troubled Aceh Province at the far north end of Sumatra Island, Indonesia, where we had discovered extensive gold mineralisation in and about some kemiri plantations. There was a separatist insurrection going on by the GAM movement at the time in the north of Aceh.

The morning of December 15th, 2003, I spent lingering about the smoke filled lounge of the Hotel Danau Toba in Medan, capital of North Sumatra Province, with Project geologist Ricardo Pardede, a Batak ethnic and driver Jusuf, waiting for final approval to visit Meluak from the Gayo Lues Regent who was supposed to supply me with a police minder. Near midday this eventuated and we headed off, in our Ford Ranger, through the snarled Medan traffic, through the clogged market town of Pancur Batu, with its overflowing market, then up the mountain up to the top of the pass (elevation ~1500m ASL) and the resort town of Berestagi where the threatening sky portended rain storms ahead and the majestic dormant volcanic cone of

Gunung Sinabung, bathed in afternoon sunlight against a black sky, was a spectacular sight (its state of dormancy was rudely interrupted by heavy ash eruptions in 2011 that blanketed surrounding villages).

Travelling on into the valley of Lae Alas, the Heavens opened and cresting a ridge we were confronted by a fallen tree blocking the road – a common enough occurrence – but just as we pulled up a group of youths appeared from cover and offered to shift it for a few thousand rupiah. How fortunate we were and how convenient for it to be so easily disassembled and moved aside! We struck Kutacane city at nightfall and had a light dinner at a padang café. The weather meanwhile had deteriorated further. Just past there we hit a fortified roadblock manned by redoubtable Brimob personnel (heavily armed paramilitary police) but fortunately my police minder, Pak Dedy, knew them so we were allowed through into the teeming, rainy night – shortly to be held up by a power pole brought down by a landslip.



*Pondok Wisata, Ketombe, Aceh*

We eventually reached Pondok Wisata guesthouse at Ketombe about 9pm to be met with darkness (only slightly relieved by feint candlelight) which was due to either the fallen power line and/or Ibu Ingrid's (the Dutch lady owner) inability to pay the power bill on account of no guests in the then state of emergency. In the absence of Ibu Ingrid, who was reportedly at Kutacane teaching English in order to increase her income, her helper provided us with supper and even some music on his battery operated CD player – Bob Marley's "No woman no cry" comes to mind and this became Ricardo's theme tune for the whole trip.

The next day was unremarkable except that when I got back to Pondok Wisata, there was a group of half a dozen young European ecotourists in residence with a tour guide. They seemed to be unaware of the ban on foreign entry into Aceh.

Anyway, they had interesting tales to tell – especially the guide who related a tale of when escorting a Canadian guy up in the forest and camping out in a pondok (a small outcamp hut), being wakened up by a persistent scratching at the door. He got up to investigate and was confronted



*Terry & Ricardo in the jungle*

by a tiger! The panic caused the tiger to take flight and they lived to tell the tale. The tourists were caught up by officials from Kutacane and expelled with some angst created for Ibu Ingrid, who was accused of harbouring illegals. I got off due to intercession of my minder Polisi Dedy.

Ricardo and I, plus a couple of field assistants, trooped off the next day to inspect a newly discovered cliff face in a valley showing a spectacular volcanic breccia with good mineralisation signs including a lot of pyrite. On later assaying, however, only trace gold was noted. A pleasant lunch was consumed on a gravel beach. Walking back into the Kemiri plantations we observed a mini-hydro plant in a creek apparently not operating while waiting for spare parts.

We had just about crested a spur, still a kilometre or so from the nearest village, when we were confronted by an apparent army patrol of about 20 men. The outriders were clad in jungle camouflage uniforms while others were in civies and carrying heavy backpacks. Suddenly it dawned – they were in fact a GAM patrol – momentary sinking feeling – capture and taken hostage? Ricardo showed no panic and proceeded to sit on a log and offer the patrol leader a cigarette and enter into amiable conversation and there was a general smoko session, including myself.

Feeling a bit more comfortable I noticed that there was general relaxation and that not all were armed. Their automatic rifles, however, bore the insignia TNA – Tentang Nasional Aceh, meaning Acehnese National Army in defiance of TNI – Tentang Nasional Indonesia. At no stage did they show animosity to me nor did they inspect my backpack where I had a camera, my trusty, much travelled Swiss Army knife and several million rupiah in a wallet. We parted on good terms but I wondered about what might have happened if we had Polisi Dedy with us – would they have threatened him? They certainly would have confiscated the pistol that he carried.

At the end of the day Ricardo and I discussed whether to report the encounter. The patrol was headed south towards North Sumatra and would have had to pass heavily armed Brimob posts (although they were travelling in the forest). Ricardo thought that the backpacks might have contained ganja (marijuana) destined to a compliant police post over the North Sumatra border thence to Medan and possibly even Jakarta, ie a means of fund raising for GAM. At the end we decided that he should report it to the Gayo Lues Regent on leaving the area. Ricardo's chief field assistant, a Javanese, was somewhat traumatised by this event and quit the job! In the event, this turned out to be my last day at the project and that evening I particularly enjoyed my last Bintang beer at Ketombe, which Ibu Ingrid had managed to send up (Aceh by then was under virtual Sharia law), plus a Jogjakarta cheruto. When I left the area the following day I was pulled up by the police in Kutacane and quizzed about our activities, even though the project was outside their jurisdiction, but allowed to travel on back to Medan. Meanwhile, I can recommend Ketombe as a good, safe ecotourism locality.

### THIS MONTH 50 YEARS AGO

- In Toulouse, France conducts the first Concorde test flight.
- NASA launches Apollo 9 for 151 Earth orbits (10 days).
- London East End gang bosses twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray are found guilty of murder.
- The novel *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo is first released.
- Former United States General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower dies.



## MEMBER PORTRAIT - DEAN GILES



Dean Giles, Eagles fan.

Dean has been a member of the Floreat and Districts branch of NSA for a number of years and lives in retirement in Claremont. He is 90 years young.

Dean was born in North Adelaide, South Australia at 10.30am on Sunday morning, 06/01/1929, when his mother, on hearing the Cathedral bells

ringing, surmised that it was to be an ecclesiastical future for him. Not to be, however. On growing up through the depression, with his father having a safe job in the PMG Dept obtained after his service in the SA Battalion during WWI as a telephone technician, they lived in the foothills suburb of Glenunga. It just so happened there were some old silver-lead mines nearby which started a lifelong fascination for Dean in Re Metallica.

He started out his tertiary studies at the University of Adelaide in architecture but soon realised that was not for him and veered towards geology and on consulting with the Professor of Geology, Sir Douglas Mawson, he switched to the affiliated School of Mines from where he graduated in Metallurgy in 1951. He became a member of the Australasian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy and still is to this day. He was married in 1951 to Alysone and they eventually had 3 children.

His first job as a metallurgist was at North Stradbroke Island off Brisbane, where he was involved with the extraction of rutile and zircon from dune sand deposits. The family had a happy life on the island but in 1959 he shifted from there to join Mt Isa Mines to become involved with his favourite process, flotation. This involves crushing and grinding the ore from the mines (in this case bearing lead-zinc-silver or copper minerals), to a very fine powder and mixing it in cells with water and chemical reagents which, when agitated, produce a froth which selectively collects the desired mineral particles and overflows. This is then dewatered and dried for smelting and production of lead, silver, zinc or copper products.

He stayed with his family at Mt Isa until 1967, when, on hearing of the discovery of nickel ore near Kalgoorlie by Western Mining Corporation, he applied for a position with them and was accepted. To learn about the flotation concentrating of nickel ores he was sent to operations in Canada – also to learn from plant constructors to enable WMC to independently upgrade their processes in order to produce nickel metal. So, the Giles family had two more moves before eventually purchasing their own home at City Beach in Perth.

Further job changes saw him working for brickmaking and uranium concerns and ultimately for the WA Department of Minerals & Energy. This led to a position with the Perth Mint where he supervised the operations of the various State gold batteries around the state and their ultimate sale. He retired in 1992.

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