

Newspaws

Summer issue For, of and by Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism staff December 1988

Great life in the great outdoors



Word from the Under Secretary

Our Department is now one year old. The Divisions of Corporate Services and Environment have their organization structures in place. Conservation's structure will be announced in the new year.

I appreciate that change and reorganization is often accompanied by stress and anxiety.

I have tried to minimise this for all staff and while we have not always been successful you can be assured I want a Department with a happy staff in satisfying jobs.

I have been very conscious that in any reorganization it is not possible for satisfy everyone who will be affected. Jobs, management, and priorities must change.

I appreciate the support shown by the department's staff during this year of change.

To those who feel threatened I can only attempt to reassure you that I understand your feelings.

Bear with us. Give the organization a chance to succeed. Then make an honest assessment of our performance.

Working for the Public Service is becoming more challenging. The public is more critical. We are being asked to do more, and our resources are tighter.

Thank you for your efforts during the year. We have been able to achieve a lot in spite of the difficulties. I look forward to meeting the challenges of 1989 with your support.

Our Brisbane-based staff will be located mainly in one building. This will help improve communications.

The Division of Environment will be working under new legislation. For you in this Division is the challenge of development an integrated approach to environmental management.

We must develop a positive public image for the Department. In doing this, we must work from the considerable positive work that has been done by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, Brisbane Forest Park, and environmental agencies.

In doing this, we must be aware that we can be our own worst enemy.

If a minority bad mouths the Department, they will drag it down. Positive attitudes will produce positive results.

I wish all of you the best for Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Stan Wilcox

Caught on the job, believe it or not, recently were Chris Lahey (Q.NPWS, Moggill), left, and John Gilmour (now Assistant Director (co-ordination and planning) in Environment).

Chris was press-ganged with 25 other staff into becoming a warder or prisoner for the St Helena Island re-enactments the day the Duke and Duchess of York were to visit.

He became a convict in the kitchen stirring the bones to make soup in a copper boiler on an open fire.

John was out spying in the Tasmanian World Heritage area during a meeting of the Australian Environment Council standing committee meeting at Cradle Mountain National Park.

Conservation for tuning

Fine tuning to develop the organizational structure of the Department's Division of Conservation is under way.

Revised structures will be developed for the Brisbane head office first. This will aim at providing a better service to regions and cater for the new Recreation Areas Management Act.

The review should give regional directors more autonomy for all aspects of management in their regions.

The broad framework for this to happen should be established by mid-December.

Next year, the review program will extend to the field and regional offices. This will parallel the wages award development.

The Environment Division's structure was finalized recently. The Division has three branches each servicing a program.

- Operations Branch is concerned with day to day contact with industry, local authorities and the public.
- Policy and Technical Support Branch includes environmental monitoring, data management, in-depth investigations of pollution incidents, and computer services.

- Co-ordination and Planning Branch provides environmental overviews of major development projects.

When new appointments are finalized, assistant directors and other staff will develop action plans for each branch.

These plans will guide the transition from old functional groups to the new approach of multi-skilling and multi-disciplinary teams.

Teams will develop individual goals and identify priorities and timetables for their implementation.

'Family' to live under one roof

Latest word is that the Environment and Conservation head office 'family' will be together and living under the same roof by the end of February 1989.

The postal address for all occupants of 160 Ann Street will be PO Box 155 North Quay 4002. Telephone numbers will change.

This is the timetable to shift:

- On 21-22 January all in the State Law Building with the Assistant Director (Organizational Services), the Marketing and Commercial Operations Section, and the Assistant Director (Financial Services).

- On 28-29 January all remaining staff from MLC Centre and MLC Court buildings.

- On 4-5 February staff shifting from Kantara House.

We will take seven floors of the former MIM Building, levels 13-19, and half the ground floor. The Minister and top staff will occupy Level 19.

Director (Corporate Services), Assistant Director Administrative Services, Information and Media, and Records will be on Level 18, with Assistant Director Organizational Services and staff, Marketing, Computer Services, Personnel, and Technical Services below.

On level 16 you'll find Accounts, Property Management, and Word Processing. The Environment Division will take all of Level 15.

Despatch, Library Services, part of Conservation and possibly part of Environment will be on 14.

Remaining Conservation staff will be on 13 with the shopfront and main public contact area on the ground floor.

Sections with sensitive equipment or equipment requiring special facilities should advise Roger Newnham on ext. 75492.

'There is no need for anyone to get flustered during this move,' Roger said.

'The Department of Works has everything under control!'

Broad Recreation Act in place

After eight months' research and preparation, the Recreation Areas Management Act passed through Parliament last month.

The Act aims to facilitate greater public awareness, enjoyment and appreciation of Queensland land and waters.

The Act was developed based on experience gained through administering the Fraser Island Public Access Act and the Brisbane Forest Park Act.

The project team involved in drawing up the legislation was chaired by Rod Arnott (Director, Corporate Services), and included Tony Charters and Noel Dawson (Conservation), Norm Clough and Barry Wolgast (Forestry), and Robyn Hesse (Environment).

Copies of the Bill were circulated in the Department.

Contrary to some comments, the Act does not represent any erosion of conservation or other land management practices.

It goes to great lengths to protect proprietary rights and responsibilities. Sections which contain specific limitations and safeguards are Sections 6, 12, 14, 16, 20 and 25.

Additionally, the Act will cover only areas declared through a formal process which includes a statement of intent.

The range and style of recreation available on any declared area will depend on factors including conservation value, existing uses, proximity to city or town, and physical characteristics such as topography, vegetation and climate.

Only a relative few recreation areas will be declared but they will be in key areas.

Over time, the emphasis on management of these areas will be evidenced by high standard facilities, a concentration of effort on educational programs, and a diversity of recreation options appropriate to the site.

Staff who have visited Brisbane Forest Park or Fraser Island will be aware of the high standards to which I refer.

Many initiatives and efficiencies of the Recreation Area network will flow to other recreation areas under the portfolio.

The Act will be administered through a Board consisting of Mr Tom Ryan (Conservator of Forests) and Mr Stan Wilcox (Department Under Secretary).

This Board will be advised by Q.NPWS and Forestry representatives who will participate in Board meetings.

Typically, Recreation Areas will be within easy access of a large population base and be large enough to be a viable management unit.

Several landowners including the Queensland Government, local authorities, and private owners of freehold land may be included.

State forests, and national and environmental parks will form the greatest proportion of Recreation Areas.

Work on the marketing of the Recreation Area network is proceeding and will be linked to the overall portfolio marketing.

Tony Charters
Acting Assistant Director
(Recreation)

Lynne trainee finalist



Most will be aware we have been employing trainees under the Australian Traineeship Scheme for a couple of years.

Lynne Corrie, a trainee in the Head Office typing section in 1987/88, was appointed to a permanent position as a result of her performance.

Recently Lynne was advised she had been judged as the most outstanding trainee in the commerce and management industry (State

Public Service), and was also selected as one of five finalists for the Trainee of the Year Award.

Unfortunately, Lynne was unsuccessful but we congratulate her on her achievements and for making it to the finals.

Lynne (pictured above) received a framed certificate and trophy, and the Service as the employer also received a certificate.

Joanne Shambler

Psssst...

Life is one long holiday, at least from Friday, 23 December, to Tuesday, 3 January.

The Department will close its operations from 28-30 December with officers having two days taken from recreation leave and receiving one day without debit.

Local arrangements are being made to ensure facilities used by the public are open or certain emergency services are available.

Staff required to work will be credited with one day's leave.

A black-covered autograph book with the name E. Berry, Ridge Street, Northgate, inside the front cover has gone missing from desk of Michael Quinn (Enquiry Counter).

It contains the names of musicians and cricketers, and is of great historic and sentimental value.

Should it be left on the desk soon, no questions will be asked.

Think now about the 1989 Melbourne Cup! The committee which plans the year-long sweeps and drawing function in Brisbane has need of some hands.

Contact Joanne Shambler, ext. 75203. She's hoping for bigger and better things under the Department's one roof.

Faces of Konrad Beinsøen (Maritime), Ivan Smith (Rosslyn Bay), Dean Brake (Mt Isa), Don Duffy (Cardwell) and Rob Graham (Magnetic Island) missing, gone to greener fields.

Names behind those faces

The following staff changes have occurred since the last issue:

Appointments — David Paton, ranger, Gladstone; Leanne Anderson, admin. asst., Gladstone; Graham Inglis, executive officer, Brisbane; Leslie Felderhof, interp. officer, Cairns; Carolyn Pratt, admin. asst., Cairns; Michelle Wigan, graphic designer, Brisbane;

Temporary appointments — Shan Vasudevan, clerk, Brisbane; Patricia Evans, journalist, Brisbane; Daniel Short, clerk, Brisbane; Paul Storey, biologist, Brisbane; Murray Evans, zoologist, Rockhampton.

Rings, bells and yells reports to hand include: Rod Hancock (Toowoomba) engaged to Madonna O'Connell; Kim McBean (H.O. Accounts) engaged to Mark Davis; Rob Hughes (Moggill) engaged to Manon; Kylie Schwieters (H.O.) engaged to Craig Webster; Tanya Wienert (Chief Office) is now Mrs Colin Maitland; Cherry Berney (Typing) now Mrs Ross Daly; Sharon Jameson (Stores) married Brendan Mahony; Jenny Curnow (planning) married Glen Fergus; Sandra Green (Tech. Services) now Mrs Richard Chamberlain; Vic Bushing (Moggill) made the social pages when he and Vera Chalmers married; Carolyn Sanders (Moggill) and David McFarland planning to wed this month; proud parents in Central Region include Peter and Barb Slaughter, and Gordon and Vicki La Prakk; Olwyn Crimp (Maritime) proud mother of Ethan Thomas.

Certificate of Merit received by the Service recently for its entry in the Community Planning section of the Bicentennial Awards of Excellence conducted by the Royal Australian Planning Institute.

The award was for the Flinders Island Group National Park management plan, prepared by Grahame Walsh.

The entry, prepared by our landscape architect Peter Savage, covered the plan and the subsequent construction of boardwalks and interpretive signage.

Major award went to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for its zoning plan for the Mackay/Capricorn Section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Promotions — Rob Speirs, manager, marketing and commercial; Lyn Gough, senior management services officer; Jim McKittick, management services officer; Lewis Hayes, regional admin. officer, Pallarenda; Paul Curtis, regional admin. officer, Cairns.

Transfers — Vicki Breeze and Tracy de Vries, Education Department.

Resignation withdrawn — Jacki Kina, admin. asst., Brisbane.

Resignations — Dean Brake, Paul Kummerow, Tina Dalton, Graham Burst, Malcolm Dunning.

Atmospheric concentrations of a number of gases including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) are increasing.

These gases have an important effect in trapping energy originating from the sun, in the form of heat, near the earth's surface. This is called the 'greenhouse effect'.

The increased concentration of the greenhouse gases leads to a warming of the earth's surface and the lower atmosphere and further changes of climate.

Involved in all the predictions are a number of uncertainties but experts have estimated that in the next 50 years average temperatures in Queensland will rise two to four degrees.

Summers will be wetter, winters drier, and extremes of drought and flood more frequent.

Sea levels are expected to rise between 20 and 140cm.

Looking at 'greenhouse'

The Queensland Government has set up an inter-departmental committee to prepare a data base on the greenhouse effect.

The aim of the committee is to collect information and undertake any planning to minimise any economic and social costs.

As part of the committee, a number of working groups have been formed to investigate aspects.

This Department is involved with the conservation and environment working group and the coastal issues working group.

The first group has examined the potential environmental effects and has determined priority action. These include:

- integration of conservation and development;
 - retain options for future use;
 - focus on causes as well as symptoms including anticipatory action;
 - undertake research and accumulation of knowledge; and
 - community education.
- Queensland's flora and fauna may be severely impacted by climatic change.

Extinction of species and habitat reduction will lead to a decrease in biological diversity.

Tracey Fitzpatrick

Inspection next

On 28 October last, the proposed Parks and Wildlife Employees Award was filed in the State Industrial Commission.

During the month before, joint discussions were held with the Australian Workers Union, the Queensland Professional Officers Association, and the Merchant Service Guild of Australia.

Some alterations to the proposed award and supplementary arrangements were made following these discussions.

A preliminary hearing was held on 11 November.

A further hearing is scheduled for 15 December to finalize an itinerary for inspections throughout the state.

These are necessary to determine the work values of the proposed classification levels.

As the Director of Conservation pointed out in his memo to Q.NPWS staff on 10 November, the development of the new Award and the consequential review of wages staff will contribute significantly to the development of the Division of Conservation.

Lester Harth

Long service

During the recent new wages award seminars there was considerable interest in the justification for including the long service leave provision in the Supplementary Arrangements rather than in the Award.

The following explanation is offered:

All Crown employees covered by State Awards are entitled to long service leave on full pay in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The entitlement under this section is 13 weeks' leave for each completed period of 15 years' continuous service.

This entitlement is subject to amendments pursuant to any provision of law, an industrial agreement, or other agreement.

Cabinet decided in the mid 1970s that all long service leave entitlements for wages employees appointed under Section 17 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act be aligned with the provisions afforded under the Public Service Award - State, at the rate of 1.3 weeks on full salary for each year upon the completion of 10 years' continuous service.

It is therefore advantageous to staff that long service leave provisions be included in the Supplementary Arrangements rather than the new award.

Tim Boyle

What a day for that St Helena jinx to strike



Trevor Vollbon in earnest discussions with the two guard commanders for rapid changes to the rehearsed program minutes after the hovercraft failed.

The morning dawned bleak, somewhat overcast, with the promise of a stiffening wind.

Peering through the thinning gloom from our floating overnight quarters, St Helena Island National Park gave us no hint of the events that were to unfold on this day, 6 October 1988.

The Royals were visiting you see. Nothing had been spared to ensure that this second time on which the Service estate had been graced by such eminent dignitaries would go off without a hitch.

Planning had started months before the official opening of the very newly-restored chief warden's quarters and the recognition of spending Bicentennial (read taxpayers') money on a number of St Helena projects.

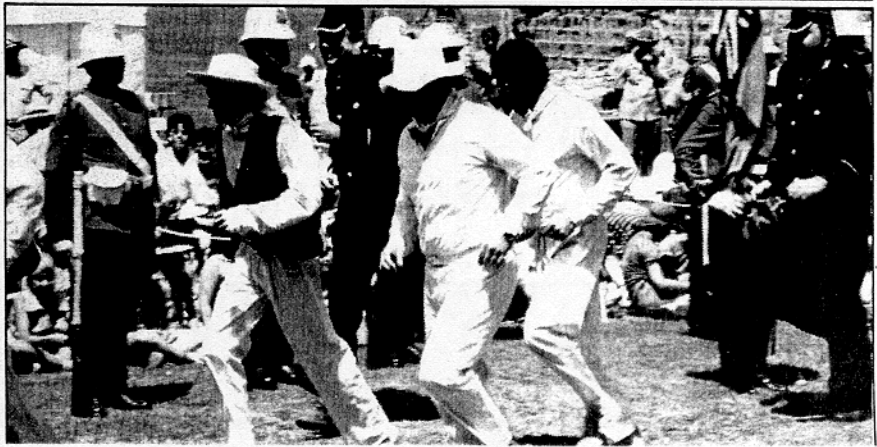
Even the new jetty, a Harbours and Marine/Service co-production, was to receive Royal patronage.

A relatively well-known southern celebrity, one R. Hawke, had been tipped for the job but his chances faded badly when opposed by the Duke and Duchess of York — Fergie and Andy to we uncouth colonials.

Reaction among regional and head office staff at this dramatic elevation in importance alternated between euphoria and horror.



1924 International fully restored by the Government Garage to the status of an elegant bus which proved invaluable for transport on the day.



Warder for the day Glenn Wessling chases his convicts during a 'mass break-out' which just happened to pass guests assembled for the Royal occasion.

Visit planners fell into trap

A Royal advance party, not unlike those used by the armed services, descended on the island months before to inspect our handiwork, pace out the parade, find itself bogged in a horse-drawn carriage, and inhale some fine St Helena red dust.

Eventually a 50-minute sojourn was deemed appropriate for the occasion. Brave people, those Royal planners.

Given their experiences at St Helena, one would have thought sufficient omens were present for them to consider a cancellation, particularly with the abundance of centres for the handicapped, schools of the air, intact champagne bottles, rural councils, and unplanted trees clamouring for Royal attention.

But not so. Therefore, a team of hardy, nay terrified, staff proceeded to pull together an event of Biblical epic proportions.

Re-enactments were called for and not just a few. The Royal way was to be strewn left and right with the most undesirable elements of a 19th century penal institution.

'Show them our best' was the brief. The call went out for all men strong and true to come to the aid of the party. (This was a re-enactment of pre non-sexist policies.)

Enter closet floggers, Public Service malcontents, and frustrated Royalists from the department ranks.

Uniforms were a problem until HM Wacol Prison did what prisons do well and made some.

The next problem was props: Where to find 30 sticks of sugar cane (stolen), cream cans, wooden wheelbarrows, hay bales, pitchforks, cane knives, cut-throat razors, railway sleepers and lines, sledgehammers, stockwhips, a flogging triangle, a cat o' nine tails, a 15-pound lead shot, and enough cabbages, pumpkins and carrots to mock up a veggie patch, not to mention a co-operative calf?

Food was simple. Call for three catering quotes, hire a massive marquee, and sit back and relax. In reality it took two months.

One enthusiastic officer (who asked not to be named for fear of Mafia reprisals) chose to reproduce samples of three prison menus in vogue at the turn of the century.

Butlers in Brisbane's Myer Centre now refuse to serve people bearing photocopies of such menus.

Music was required, live music. The travelling military tattoo flogged the brass bands so the Police Pipe Band got the nod (without the intervention of Lewis, Herbert, Hin ...).

Next priority was boats. A flotilla to impress Sir Francis Drake was assembled. (In fact our boat sleeping quarters were probably designed by him.)

Vehicles were nicked from regional officers without the nouse to deflate their tyres.

The day before the Grand Event, a Noah's Ark barged the necessary to the island — two horses, a cold room, a loaded four-tonne truck, a 20-seater bus, countless four-wheel-drives, three portaloos, 20 bales of hay, and 15 staff.

Then there was the would-be Royal carriage. How our hearts fluttered at the sight of the gleaming black and red Victoria coach, drawn by two immaculate white arabs (horses).

Then 100 of the world's finest media stood poised to record the historic occasion.

A Pinkenba bait shop offering special deals on chocolate-coated ice creams and freak wind gusts brought the best hovercraft technology to a halt.

The Police Department gained great publicity for their two-way radio network via which the Yorks opened the building remotely.

Children waved flags at the radio and the PA microphone, international reporters were seen swimming back to the mainland, and any day the IRA will claim responsibility.

PS An anonymous lady reporter and ex-district ranger Kummerow are reported to have officially opened the jetty in the absence of the travelling Yorks. What a fitting end for 6ft of quality ribbon in Harbours Marine red and green!

Damian McGreevy



Pamela Harmon-Price and Tim Moore appeared unhappy about the fine display of St Helena history and relics for visitors to the newly-restored chief warden's cottage.



Peter Chapman's moustache helped give him a very impressive appearance as a warder, also involved in the 'chase' on the day.

Q.NPWS Far Northern Regional Director Peter Stanton has some very real concerns about the mistaken views of some on basic matters of ecology and management. This is an article which could be the first of what could be a series of informative articles from this very experienced and most respected officer.

Catastrophe of caring

The phrase 'love something to death' never seemed more apt than when applied to those who, over the years, have given expression to a deeply ingrained abhorrence of fire in the forest, in all its forms, resulting in actions by land managers to suppress it.

The end result has been change of ecosystems, and even their disappearance, on a massive scale.

What we inherited 200 years ago was a land whose ecosystems were intensively and systematically managed; whose habitats in all their forms were the relatively stable end product of land use practices shaped by ritual and tradition.

And we have changed all that in our time. It is inescapable that our changes have been universally disastrous in terms of loss of species.

Evolution cannot proceed fast enough in two centuries to lead to a diversification of life forms. The trend is inevitably downwards.

The less adaptable species are disappearing as changes faster, perhaps, than any in their evolutionary history, overwhelm them.

Our concern with the direct threat to natural systems by man's activities has largely blinded us to the more subtle changes taking place within them.

Aboriginal man's main tool in the management of the landscape was fire.

We as a society have largely ignored the striking significance of that fact, and have allowed our protective attitude towards our

native ecosystems (where we occasionally have them) to be coloured by inherited attitudes from other climates and other cultures.

We in the Service, as land-use managers, should not be so blind.

Throughout the state from the western desert to the wet tropics, I have found incontrovertible evidence of gross changes in ecosystems, and on a large scale, as a result of reduced fire frequency.

These changes have more often than not led to a simplification of ecosystems, to a reduction in diversity, and, in the total picture, to a loss of habitats.

To my mind these changes are not good.

In Salvador Rosa (Carnarvon), the beautiful open woodland that Major Mitchell saw has been invaded by cypress pine.

In the wet tropics and on Cape York Peninsula it is difficult to believe surveyor's descriptions of 'beautifully grassed open forest country' at the turn of the century where now is found what to the casual eye is a rainforest.

On Long Island in the Whitsundays a 1938 photo of a grassy Eucalyptus alba woodland is in a location that today cannot be photographed; it is a young closed forest made impenetrable by lantana.

The greatest changes are occurring in the



wet tropics and parts of the south-east of the state.

Aerial photo evidence reveals that in some areas the progression from open grassy sclerophyll forest to sclerophyll vine forest has occurred in as short a space as 30 years.

The wet sclerophyll forests are under threat as is the magnificent diversity of the remaining wet tropical lowlands.

Throughout the state where overgrazing has occurred with reduced fire frequency, or has directly caused it, there is a massive regrowth of woody species.

Not good news for the grazing industry, but probably just as disadvantageous for some of our mammals and birds.

I have long been concerned that in much of the Service there is distaste for the use of fire.

Often we have spent huge effort in extinguishing fires that we should have let burn.

Too often our attitudes are coloured by those situations where fire has been harmful, such as wildfire under extreme conditions and very heavy fuel load as occurred at Woodgate in 1969, or the repetitive fires that have laid bare rainforested hillside from Mackay to Cairns.

I would venture to say however, that throughout the state, in the last few decades, much more harm has been done within the national park systems by too little fire than by too much.

To overcome the neglect of years, the Service has a massive job ahead of it.

We, in the Far Northern Region, have made a belated start, but it will take years of experience using the same staff before we can feel confident in what we do; and there will be mistakes.

The problem is so complex that the programs developed are likely to be park specific.

We do not, unfortunately, have the luxury of detailed research to guide us, and we cannot afford to wait for it.

Beyond our own problems however we will have a massive job convincing park users, long accustomed even to our own proselytizing to think otherwise, that fire has any legitimate place in the national park system.

Without a sensitive approach to their feelings and great care on our own part not to make the mistake of over-severe efforts, we will fail to gain acceptance for our much needed programs.

J.P.Stanton



Most people have never heard of the word 'spectrophotometer', let alone tried to use one.

Not so lab technician Patti O'Shea, of the Division of Environment, who sits in front of one every day.

Patti uses the machine to determine amounts of lead in air.

Every six days samples of suspended particulate matter in the air are taken from permanent monitors throughout Brisbane and brought into Kantara House in Mary Street.

In the laboratory, the samples are dissolved in acid and sprayed into the flame of the atomic absorption spectrophotometer where some of

the lead ions are converted to lead atoms.

Radiation from excited lead atoms is passed through the flame where it is specifically absorbed by the lead atoms present.

The amount of radiation absorbed is proportional to the concentration of lead atoms in the flame.

The spectrophotometer is calibrated by spraying solutions containing known amounts of lead into the flame under similar conditions.

Finally, the amount of lead present per cubic metre of air is calculated to determine whether the air quality conforms to criteria designed to protect human health.

Playing 'Smell of the Century'

We assume that only the nose knows when it comes to detecting and evaluating intensity of odours.

At Air Pollution Control, we use all sorts of noses — cherry pickers, buttons, hooks, bulbous, and regal! We do however reject the supersensitive and the numbnose.

Yes, we actually use the living organ in a scientific test that works much like the TV game Sale of the Century.

As yet, we haven't stooped to using noses from the recently deceased attached to electrodes and a computer.

We have our test panel noses attached to 'living' public servants. (Some might say that if you are a public servant you are not really living.)

Basically, 'Smell' is played by three players at a time, with nine players in all.

The MC asks each player to sniff into a funnel and at the first sign of detecting a smell to press the button.

Once you take your places and gingerly start to sniff the air coming from your funnel, you are at the mercy of the MC.

He can, if devious, throw a couple of dummies and when you have settled down drop a big one on you. Or he can sneak up and grab you by the throat, sorry, nose!

The ultimate aim is to establish how many times the odorous air can be 'watered' down with clean air and still be detected

by five out of nine players. The dilution factor becomes 'odour units'.

'Smell of the Century' is spoiled a little because you don't get to see one another's faces.

The exercise is carried out in a 'polling booth' type arrangement — fair for the test but not as much fun.

There is a comparison in degree and volume between odour and heat.

A match has a high temperature but cannot heat a whole room. An odour source with high odour units, say 800, would not pose a problem to the general atmosphere if it were coming from an itty bitsy pipe. Col Griffin



Players Kris Stone-Tolcher, left, Rob McMillan, and Carol Watkins show how the test funnels are used.