

W's antipodean correspondent, like David Powell, has had a paper selected as Article of the Month for the FIG website. He has also been out and about meeting more of Australia's record-breaking sportsmen and women, some of whom are even surveyors!

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Yours truly with Olympian yachtswoman Karen Gojnich.



Femme fatale's disguise is our gain

By John F Brock

While writing this article I am less than a week away from leaving downunder to travel to Cairo for the FIG Working Week to be held there between 16th and 22nd April 2005.

My Cairo paper chosen as FIG article of the month

I was somewhat stunned when the CEO of FIG Markku Villikka notified me that the paper I had submitted for presentation at the upcoming Working Week in Egypt had been chosen as the FIG Article of the Month for March 2005. This recognition of a high contribution to the Profession of Surveying was introduced in July 2003 to feature "high-level papers from all over the world focusing on interesting topics to all surveyors."

TV Surveyors and femme fatales

I am always thoroughly delighted when I get to see some of the very popular television series showing some sort of surveying during the episode. Such shows as "The X-Files" and "Stargate – SG1" are but two such world renowned shows which have featured surveyors in quite a bizarre fashion but I could scarcely believe my own keen eyes when my brother procured a DVD collection of the show "Alias" starring that incredibly delish femme fatale Jennifer Garner. In one startling programme her character Sidney is filmed carrying out some road surveying as a front for her surveillance which culminates in her locating and tracking the suspect security van and then leaving all of the equipment behind to abseil off the overhead bridge down onto the moving vehicle to cut her way through the roof and throw out its occupants. Quite peculiar but great stuff. Then just when I thought I had experienced it all last Sunday night the new series of the "Battlefield Detectives" was premiered on Australian television on the ABC and there they were as large as GPS stations trudging around the site of Napoleon's insurrection at Waterloo – our own James Kavanagh and Danny Schnurr! Congratulations boys – you did a tremendously interesting job with your expert and most valuable analysis of this iconic battleground.

Harrison's No 1 on loan

London's Greenwich Observatory recently allowed the replica of Harrison's chronometer No. 1 to be on loan to the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. I just happen to be a Foundation Member of this world-class storehouse for the artifacts and history of sea exploration and I was particularly delighted to observe such a healthy interaction and trust between these two superb historical showpieces.

On the harbour with three Olympians

Never let anyone tell you that surveyors do not have a great life! Three days before our dinner with Bill Brown (see below) my business partner Rod Fitzgerald and I took eight others with us on a 12 metre yacht around Sydney Harbour and we were accompanied by three Australian Olympians for the trip. Daniel Collins won a bronze medal in the K2 kayak class at Atlanta (1996) following this up with a silver medal in Sydney in 2000 and fourth in Athens last year. Karen Gojnich had competed in yachting at the 1988 and 2004 Games while Thomas Whalan was one of our Athens 2004 Mens Water Polo players who finished ninth in the competition. We later had dinner with these very fine young Australians at the Cruising Yacht Squadron where we noticed that our rather jovial and cheerful behaviour seemed to contravene the club's directives of abstinence from fun (obviously the "f" word in that establishment!).

Bill Brown's test jumper

Towards the end of last year at a charity dinner Bob Linke and I bought the signed and framed Test jumper of Bill Brown who is the oldest living Test Cricket Captain. At another fund raising cricket night on Friday March 11 last Bob and I donated this splendid item of memorabilia to the Bradman Museum at its inaugural Official Dinner in the presence of the wonderful 92 year old legend himself who related some marvellous stories of playing cricket with the world's greatest cricketer "The Don". The MC for the night was none other than one of our other great cricketing captains, Mark Taylor who held the equal highest Australian Test score of 334 with Sir Donald Bradman until Matthew Hayden bettered this total last year with 380 against Zimbabwe. By the way Mark Taylor holds a Bachelor of Surveying Degree from the University of New South Wales just from where I also happened to graduate.

