

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR THE LUDWIG LEICHHARDT AWARD FROM THE BOWEN BASIN GEOLOGIST'S GROUP.

Naturally, Todd, my first duty is to thank you and the members of the BBGG committee. I must confess that I am not aware of who you all are nowadays, nor how I came to be nominated.

It is always gratifying to receive the recognition of one's peers – sort of like the 'player's player award' after a footy game.

Ludwig Leichhardt passed through these parts more than 160 years ago, and one wonders what he would make of it all today.

He would certainly find the going a lot easier and be proud that the land had been opened up for grazing, but he would be amazed at the development of the coal industry throughout Central Queensland.

If you think of it, we all owe something to men like Ludwig.

In my case, I can relate his efforts to our family history. Not long before Ludwig opened up Central Queensland, Governor Grey had shipped my great, great grandfather off to the land of the great white cloud with Lieutenant Hobson for the signing of the treaty to end the Maori wars. Over the ditch they call it the Treaty of Waitangi.

Back on this side of the ditch, settlers had eagerly followed in Ludwig's footsteps, enticing my great grandfather to leave home and settle in Mackay, then a boom town for sugar and beef.

Although the family eventually left these parts by WW1, I made a comeback of sorts when my mum and dad shifted to Bowen in the early 1950s, where I first became acquainted with the coal industry during a carefree childhood. It was hard for an inquisitive little tyke like me to miss the coke works a couple of miles down the road from our house.

Although we moved south again, I brought my family back as a young geologist to participate in the great story of this coal industry that Ludwig had started.

By the time I arrived in the mid-1970s, geology was still a lonely profession up here. You could count on the fingers of one hand the number of coal geos actually living in the Bowen Basin. In those days, there were only two big players, both borne-again construction companies, ie Utah Development Company and Thiess Bros Pty Ltd.

But this tiny critical mass of geologists would often get together at the pub over a few beers whenever someone 'a bit cluey' passed through. It was our only way of sharing ideas and discussing resolutions to the problems we faced. Many a critical tidbit of geological knowledge was learnt during those sessions.

Some time after my transfer from South Blackwater to Callide, I had the honour of escorting the renowned English coal geologist, Duncan Murchison (of Murchison & Westoll fame) around the Callide mine. As we took in the view of the surrounding coalfield from the top of a local peak (ironically named Mount Murchison), it dawned on me that there could many other eminent geologists willing to contribute their knowledge to minesite problems

So in 1978, I dared to invite all the minesite personnel working in the Bowen Basin to Biloela's shiny new civic centre, to listen to home-grown coal experts from CSIRO, ACIRL and various Australian universities. The mine geos were still outnumbered by mining engineers and surveyors.

The die was cast. Those academics kept rolling through. We had real problems to solve and they had the talent pool to solve them. By the early 1980s, the industry and government directed R&D funding via NERDDC grants. I was then at Curragh, and hell-bent on nailing some of that cash for a proposal by Cliff Mallett's team at CSIRO. It didn't get up because it was seen as too parochial. So we rubbed out the words 'Blackwater District' and replaced them with 'Bowen Basin' and got a guernsey the following year.

Voila! The BBGG was born. Our first meeting was at Curragh Mine in April, 1984. We had about twenty players that day. And in the audience here tonight, I can note another attendee from April 1984, Meryl Peterson.

One of the key outcomes of that first meeting was a commitment by the Department to compile a new 1: 1 million map of the Bowen Basin. It hit the streets a couple of years later.

Another was the decision to affiliate with the Geological Society of Australia to run Bowen Basin seminars every five years, kicking off in 1985 here in Rockhampton. A key ingredient were the poster papers documenting the latest work from all new mines and projects in the manner of the great AusIMM volumes of the day.

The very capable Alan Davies took the reigns and did a sterling job to maintain the momentum of the BBGG for the next decade.

That year, I shifted back to Brisbane to start my consultancy practice, but did stay involved via my duties with the Queensland Division of the Geological Society of Australia. And over the years I have attended all the major Bowen Basin seminars and as many of the regional meetings as I could. And Todd, it is heartening to see what you and your hard working predecessors have achieved.

I'm really stoked to know that the willingness of eager, young mine geologists to share their problems, thoughts and ideas has not diminished.

So what parting advice have I got for you?

1. The first one is from my dad. **'Whatever business you are in, remember it's the people business.'** Allow employees the freedom to develop. Give them room to make the inevitable mistakes by which we all learn.
2. **Let the data do the talking.** Whatever happened to fact maps???? Don't get carried away with interpretation. Become known as a methodical bastard. Geology is 90% sweat and 9% luck and maybe 1% brilliance.
3. **Always question the assumptions that underlie existing maps.** If anything, that is probably become my trademark ie attacking those areas where the geological mapping is not underpinned by hard facts, just assumptions.
 - a. Three decades ago it was the Callide basin.
 - b. Two decades ago it was the Blackwater district.
 - c. A decade ago it was the eastern edge of the Bowen Basin.

- d. This decade it was the south-western edge of the Bowen Basin.
 - e. But remember to question the maps I've drawn. I just ask that you be kind in your condemnation.
4. And for all the young, fresh, innocent and eager geologists out there who are probably wondering if their days sitting on rigs will ever end. Remember, you didn't come to drill post holes. We coined the term '**premature ejaculation**' if the drilling program had not encountered a known stratigraphic horizon.
 5. And lastly, **it's gotta be fun**

What challenges lie ahead for the BBGG?

I'll focus upon just one.

Our profession has prospered because it creates wealth. Because of this, it has learnt to weather economic downturns and crisis of confidence in the past. We have diligently addressed the scientific challenges as they arose.

However, we have largely ignored a serious challenge from another quarter. We have allowed the public's perception of our science to fall to an all time low and we are now playing catch-up and suffering the political consequences because of it. Indeed, our academic voice is being diminished worldwide

I refer particularly to the **theft of our science** as portrayed by those with political agendas such as the global warmists. I wonder at the stupidity that can endorse the Nobel Peace Prize for such inconvenient untruths.

Like all professional bodies that voice their disagreement, the BBGG would be condemned as aligned with the polluters. But as individuals, we need to be more courageous (like Professors Bob Carter and Ian Plimer) and not be swayed by the aggressive tactics of the warmists. Instead, question the assumptions behind the warmist statements. Encourage others to do likewise. Speak out whenever you have the opportunity. And do it in everyday language.

For instance, I like to remind people that carbon is the very essence of life, that none of us would be here without it. It is carbon's magical links with hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen that flips chemistry from inorganic to organic. NASA scientists seek its signature as the indicator of possible lifeforms on other planets. Why on earth would anyone want to tax the most important member of our periodic table of elements?

Anyway, enough of global issues.so what challenges lie ahead for me?

My current role on the board of a junior exploration company (Lodestone Energy) has given me the opportunity to go on the attack again (geologically speaking). This time, it's the perceived extent of the Surat Basin. Maybe we'll have some luck and add a few more deposit names to set Lodestone up for the next decade.

However, an immediate challenge arrives next summer, which will mark my fiftieth year riding the old malibu, these days mainly at Point Lookout on Stradbroke Island.

Semi-retirement has also enabled an old passion to re-surface, ie writing. I'm still an author on training wheels, but I do have two books out there - '*When The Tulips Bled*' and '*Brother Rats*'

both available from Copyright Publishing in Brisbane or else check out my website www.grimstone.com.au.

And of course, what is a man without his family. I'm married to a very special lady, father of two great kids, but grandfather of only one so far.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I humbly thank you for this award, and bid you goodnight.....

LANCE GRIMSTONE 1ST JULY, 2009