

Jim Creffield

I was born in 1950 at Woodford, in NE London, UK as the middle child between my brother and sister. At a young age my family moved to Erith in county Kent where I attended a strict boys' school for seven years. When I was 13, my parents decided to seek a better life for their family and migrated to Australia. We settled in Frankston, near Melbourne, where I attended secondary school and then completed my tertiary education at Burnley Horticultural College, graduating in 1970 with a Dipl. Horticultural Science, and with a profound interest in entomology.



After a stint in commercial plant propagation, I was hired as an assistant entomologist in the Wood Preservation Section of the CSIRO Division of Forest Products in 1971, ([interesting advert](#)) which led to my 35 year career there, followed by 5 years as a consultant contractor to CSIRO. At

first my immediate supervisor was Doug Howick and for 10 years we enjoyed a very close and productive working relationship resulting in numerous publications on both wood borers and termites. Other notable colleagues with whom I worked at CSIRO included Harry Greaves, John Beesley, John Barnacle, Laurie Cookson, Gary Johnson and John Thornton.



As can happen, I met the love of my life Judy, who worked in the same department at CSIRO, and we married in 1978. Judy later worked directly for Harry Greaves, which resulted in Harry becoming the most frequent visitor to my office or laboratory as he tried to track down Judy for urgent secretarial duties! That eventually changed, as in 1985 Judy

resigned to give birth to our first son, Alan. In 1987, the family expanded with the birth of our twin boys Scott and Glen. For those who remember old sitcoms, I have always referred to the boys as MY THREE SONS, and in a similar way life was very busy for us during those years. These days Judy and I live in the rural town of Mount Eliza, not far out of Melbourne.



Throughout my career, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with so many fine scientists, receiving valuable support and encouragement. For this I am most grateful. I was able to progress through into the scientist ranks, and also was active in the committee



leadership of the Australian branch of the Inst. of Wood Science (IWSc) for a number of years. As a result, I was invited to attend the official retirement function held for Professor John Levy in London, and I was awarded Fellowship of the IWSc in 1995.

While at CSIRO I was able to work with many fine Australian termite researchers, including Doug Howick, Tony Watson, Michael Lenz, Leigh Miller and Brenton Peters, and they became great mentors and close friends to me. I was able to travel worldwide frequently, particularly in the latter stages of my career as our entomological service work was viewed as an attractive source of funds. These global travels have allowed me to make many friends and contacts from both academia and industry, and have been an important



part of my life.

The first IRG meeting I attended was IRG14 in Surfers Paradise in 1983. Judy also attended IRG14, as Secretary to the IRG14 LOC, of which Harry was the Chair. I became an IRG member in 1993, and for 12 years I was a Convenor to a range of Working Parties including Biology of Termites, Biology of Insects, and Insect Test Methodology. I am a strong supporter of the IRG as it provides a unique forum for the gathering of experts in both industry and academia associated with wood protection research. My support is demonstrated by my frequent attendance at IRG meetings, with the upcoming IRG48 meeting in Ghent being my 26th, including the last 25 in succession. Judy has accompanied me to the last eleven IRG meetings.



One of the most enjoyable aspects of my career has been the field work on termites in Australia. Some of the test sites are located in remote areas, especially in the tropical North. On occasion there were opportunities to undertake some pleasurable side activities such as catching fish or mud-crabs, fish-tagging, stalking and capturing crocodiles and feral buffaloes etc. Needless to say, some of the activities were not appreciated by Judy. In particular, she was not into my handling of snakes and my swimming and/or wading through waters infested with crocodiles, tiger sharks and other dangerous marine life. One altercation with a feral cow buffalo and her three yearling calves led to the enraged cow charging our work party, but the cow preferred my young female technician, who is lucky to be alive today. I am also guilty of fishing at the edge of a creek not knowing that I was standing on a large man-eating crocodile slide (it was very fresh!), and on another occasion was fortunate not to have been bitten by a large, and highly venomous, 2m long king brown snake inhabiting the void beneath a small concrete pad that was part of a soil-treatment experiment. As I lifted the concrete pad the snake went for my ankle but I instinctively dropped the slab which pinned its head and allowed my very rapid retreat.



When I resigned from CSIRO in 2005, Judy and I formed our own consultancy company (Onwood Entomology Pty Ltd). As a consultant, I provide a range of entomological services to industrial clients in the field of wood protection and management of termites and other wood-destroying insects. This work also leads to being an expert witness in various legal actions and patent disputes.



While I am still keen and enthusiastic at remaining involved with entomological and wood protection research, I am now thoroughly enjoying being a grandfather to my 2-year old granddaughter Asher and 7-month old grandson Jack. I have a wonderful family and am most proud of the successes of our three sons. Along with Judy, I love them all.

My social activities include fishing, golf, snooker, soccer, table tennis and bush-walking. I also enjoy quality food and the occasional glass of wine, particularly red wine. Being an Aussie, I also am a staunch supporter of the Hawthorn “Aussie rules” football team.



Judy and I now travel extensively worldwide and thoroughly enjoy calling in on friends whenever we have the opportunity, good health permitting. We also enjoy our caravan trips throughout the local countryside and the opportunity to travel further within Australia.

In finishing, I am thankful to CSIRO and its management for their support throughout my wonderful career in science. I have made many close friends and contacts here in Australia and throughout the world. However, I particularly wish to thank Judy for her wonderful support, as well as two of my close colleagues who not only provided me with support, knowledge and friendship but also the encouragement and belief that I could add to the scientific knowledge on the biology, management and control of wood-destroying insects. So, Judy, Doug Howick and the late John Beesley - **Thank you!**

