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## He's hooked on fishy tale

After Chasing mullet-named places around the world, Simon Varwell has put his fun to press, writes Rodney Chester

**P**EOPLE travel the world for different reasons. Scotsman Simon Varwell travels the world to visit places with the word "mullet" in the name.

Five years ago, when Varwell was in Queensland on his global mullet hunt, he first came to the attention of *The Courier-Mail*.

As Varwell says, it all started as a bit of fun. While travelling with a mate around eastern Europe, the pair developed a mullet league table to rank the number of outrageously bad mullet hairstyles they spotted.

A few years later, when he discovered there was a town called Mullet in Albania, the idea for a global quest began.

You know you're having a good trip when the joy is in the journey rather than the destination. For Varwell, whose quest has taken him to Ireland, Australia, England,

Canada and New Zealand, this is definitely a good trip.

So far he has ticked 14 off on his list of must-see mullets, and settled on travelling to 14 more. One trouble he's found is that people keep finding new mullets around the world, and to avoid a bit of a lark turning into a never-ending story, he's drawn a line in the sand against future mullets.

The media attention he received in Australia inspired him to turn his slice of fun into a book, *Up The Creek Without a Mullet*.

"The way I've been doing my mullet travels, it's like throwing a dice and you end up just having to take what you're given," Varwell says.

"I've been very lucky that they've turned out to be amazing places full of wonderful people."

When I last interviewed Varwell, I gave him some life advice that he quotes in the book.

"You need to find yourself a nice, simple girl who works in a fish factory and doesn't mind you disappearing round the world for long periods of time to go hunt mullets."

He took that advice, up to a point. He's now married, and plans to visit some of his wife's relatives in America soon. Fortunately, they live near a mullet destination.

In the book, Varwell reflects that he could be doing something more worthwhile. But he keeps meeting people who get caught up in the joy of doing something just for fun.

That has left him with another life lesson of his own which is the last sentence of his book.

And, to return the favour, we'll pass it on: "The world needed crazy people like me."

*Up The Creek Without a Mullet* is available through online bookstores, as well as in ebook format. [www.simonvarwell.co.uk](http://www.simonvarwell.co.uk)

### Halfway through his mullet quest

Of the 28 mullets on his list of must-see places, these are the 14 Simon Varwell has visited:

**Belmullet:** County Mayo, Ireland. Visited April 2004.

**Mullet Creek:** Dapto, NSW. Visited July 2005.

**Mullet Creek:** Wondabyne, NSW. Visited July 2005.

**Mullet Creek:** Narrabeen, NSW. Visited July 2005.

**Tiger Mullet Channel:** South Stradbroke Island, Queensland. Visited July 2005.

**Mullet Creek:** near Bundaberg, Queensland. Visited July 2005.

**Mullet's Farm:** Great Finborough, Suffolk, England. Visited July 2006.

**Mullet's Farm:** Barking, Suffolk, England. Visited July 2006.

**Mullet Creek:** Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Visited September 2007.

**Mullet Point:** Mahurangi Peninsula, North Island, New Zealand. Visited January 2008.

**Mullet Bay:** Motutapu Island, North Island, New Zealand. Visited January 2008.

**Mullet Creek:** Tabora, North Island, New Zealand. Visited January 2008.

**Mullet Channel:** Farewell Spit, South Island, New Zealand. Visited January 2008.

**Mullet Bay:** Cosy Nook, South Island, New Zealand. Visited January 2008.

**Plus one honorary mullet - Longueuil:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Visited September 2007. La Coupe Longueuil is Quebec-French for a mullet haircut.



**SHARNEE RAWSON**

EVERYONE seems to be in recovery from Halloween after harvesting candy over the weekend and constantly posting costume photo uploads to Facebook.

As a nation, we tried to reject the notion for so long but we're slowly caving in. I could imagine the pressure any parent with a small child could come under – when you're six or seven, why would you ever give up the chance to dress up and consume lots of sugar?

When I was 12 (10 years ago), trick-or-treating was restricted to the movies or horror stories you'd hear about American kids swallowing razor blades. I think one or two kids from my street were allowed to do it, and we'd give them the occasional sideways glance for the next few days in case they happened to cark it.

All of the lollies for sale these days seem to be tightly packaged for safe consumption and the culture of confectionery has radically changed as well – I used to hate the word candy with a passion, but it seems to be the norm these days and I even catch myself using it. "Lollies" makes me think of bags of Allen's Party Mix and 50¢ white paper bags, while candy is Willy Wonka, Reeces, Starburst and all the good stuff. Older relatives love to talk about going down to the corner store and coming back with fists of lollies for 10¢, but now that wouldn't even get you a red frog.

Growing up, my brother and I would beg for small household jobs to earn us a shiny dollar and we'd soon be down at the local store, poring over the large plastic tubs of assorted sugar.

Ghost drops, warheads, clouds, gummy bears, rainbow dust tubes and sour straps were all good budget options, with a few coconut roughs and pineapple lumps thrown in, while bananas and milk bottles were passe, having regularly appeared in the party bags of our (earlier) youth.

Nerds were a delicious luxury at \$1.20, the same price as 24 ghost drops. I loved the sherbet lollipops, a swirl of pretty pastel colours and good value at 20¢. Lolly gobble bliss bombs had a brief revival and grape-flavoured Hubba Bubba was the king of all bubble gums, trumping even the popular tattoo gum.

It was a game of mathematics and definitely taught us a lesson about quality over quantity. One time I went for too many warheads, when I really wanted nerds, and ended up burning my tongue from being sucked into yet another warhead-eating contest. The malic and citric acid was so strong that I couldn't taste for a day. Apparently they come with a warning now.

Back in the year 2010, coming home Sunday afternoon, I was struck with the frightening realisation that I had no sugar-laden treats to give any potential trick-or-treaters. I don't know what would have been worse: telling a little kid I had no candy for them, or having to hide in my room in case their interpretation of "trick" became a little too literal.

Sharnee Rawson was a *MasterChef* finalist and works at James St Cooking School. Twitter @SharneeR

## Scene(it)

### Flash welcome

A few years ago, inspired by the Tom Hanks movie *Terminal*, we spent a night at Brisbane Airport interviewing people who were passing through.

The experience left us with an appreciation of the folk you meet in the transit lounge. Airports are one of the few places where we are comfortable expressing emotion in public. We hug, we kiss, we cry.

And we make flash mob videos. This is a brilliant ad for something (T-Mobile, but that's not the point) where people arriving at



Heathrow airport encounter a unique welcome. Nothing says welcome like a bunch of strangers in an off-the-cuff performance. [www.facebook.com/tmobileuk](http://www.facebook.com/tmobileuk)

**Rating:**..... Sound of music

## Urbandrawl

### Deja boo

Wearing the same old Halloween costume to parties, year after year.

Oh, hell, there's Amelia in that same witch costume she wore five years ago. It's deja boo all over again.

Source: Urban Dictionary

## Twitter(ati)

### @capricecrane

Every time I almost think humanity will be OK, I see someone struggle with the self-checkout for 20 minutes.