

Flash!

Divining Video/DVD Now Available

It was 1981 and a kid I use to know (with the same name as mine) raced to the TV to watch one of his favourite shows on Ch 7, *Great Mysteries of the World* with Scott Lambert. This time the show featured a story about testing water divining and starred a certain well-known Dick Smith. There was another man involved, a man with a white beard and glasses, who jumped about doing magic tricks and bending spoons. (It's odd how little James Randi has changed over the years — does he keep an ever-ageing portrait in the attic, perhaps?)

The scene moves forward eight years and the TV is tuned to Ch 9 and *A Current Affair*. More water diviners, more tests, a slightly older looking Dick Smith and a group calling themselves Australian Skeptics. Although the diviners were not the same as the ones on *Great Mysteries*, they could have been!

Another time, another place, and I find myself in 2002 watching yet more water divining tests, this time 'live', at the Mighty Mitta Muster. And this time I was behind the camera making my first documentary.

A final time jump lands us at Crestwood High School (Sydney) in 2003 as Ian Bryce, Alynda and I address a science class and video the proceedings. The topic? Water Divining!

The good news is that we have been given kind permission by Dick Smith and *A Current Affair* to use their videos. Dick had recorded the 1981 test as *James Randi in Aus-*

tralia, which was what was shown on *Great Mysteries*, but this posed some unique problems. It was recorded on 2 inch magnetic tape and after much searching by Barry Williams (another man with a white beard) and I, we discovered that the only company in Australia still with a machine capable of transcribing that old tape into a modern format

Stefan Sojka, is *The Great Water Divining Video*.

Although they probably did not realise it at the time, the 1981 Dick Smith/James Randi test was a moment of historical importance. It led directly to the formation of Australian Skeptics and also began our long association with the phenomenon of water divining, which, of all the paranormal claims that we have been asked to test, is by far the most

common. It is also probably the most widely believed of all such claims in Australia, though our tests can find no validity for it.

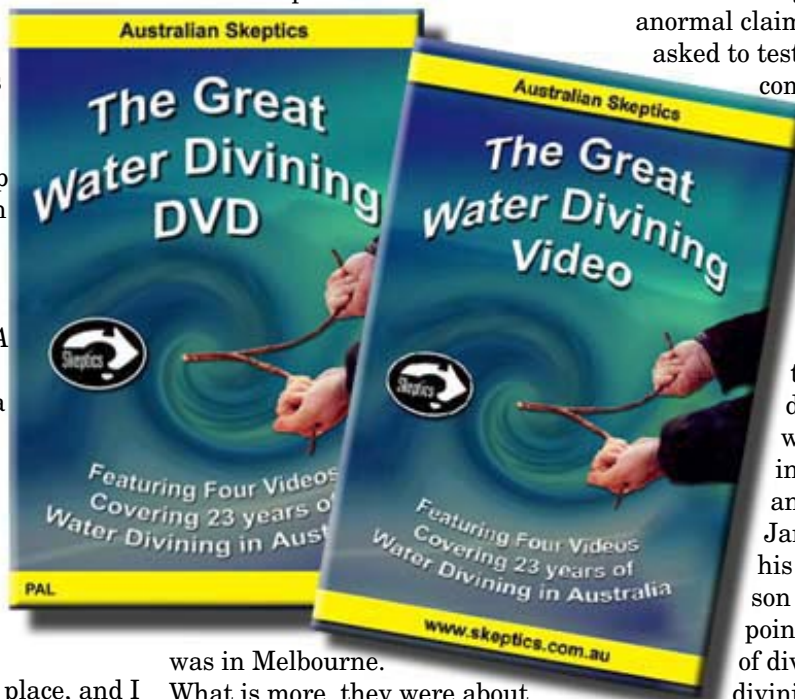
The video takes a fascinating look, over a period of 23 years, into the world of the water diviner. It is packed with observations and insights from diviners and Skeptics alike. See James Randi make one of his finest appeals to reason and the skeptical point of view. See all sorts of diviners using all sorts of divining rods in hopes of winning the tests. Hear some

amazing excuses for failure. See Dick Smith's changing hair style!

Richard Saunders

The Great Water Divining Video and DVD are now available directly from PO Box 268, Roseville 2069 or our on-line shop at www.skeptics.com.au.

At \$25 (Video) or \$35 (DVD - with extra features, including scene selection and photo albums), this is one collection no Skeptic can afford to miss.



was in Melbourne.

What is more, they were about to relocate and there was a possibility the machine would no longer be in use. We got the tape there in time (just), but then it was found that the original tape was beyond repair — disaster! However, I was able to digitally restore another copy, recorded by Barry as the program went to air all those years ago! The result, together with the Mitta documentary and an introduction including Crestwood High School and interviews with Dick Smith, Barry Williams, Bob Nixon and others, plus an original musical sound track by