

Auld Lang Syne

What the dickens does that mean? Welcome to Cheers! for 1996. Yes, we are minus the greeting card again, stick this on your tree (or in the toilet) and do your bit for conservation!

Renovators dream

Something actually happened. The old garage was pulled down in April to make way for the new one. In June I finally had the slab poured and the shed delivered. My brother, Philip, dropped in for a weekend to help me put it up. We only got the frame up, owing mainly to driving rain. The walls, roof, etc. have been creeping closer and closer to being finished since then. I have about seven sheets of iron to put on the roof now and its all done. I seem to get about one sheet of iron on each weekend on average.

I finally put new bannisters in the stairs. About 20 were broken and had been replaced with square ones.

They are now back to the original. I finally finished the bath too.

I had to stain some timber and put in a seal around the rim, but its only been two years since that one was started.

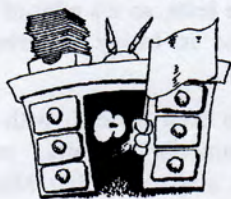
The girls finally got a decent sandpit, which should save

Cheers!

plenty of money. Now I just throw a bucket of water at them and yell "Shark" whenever they whine about a trip to the beach. I have built a couple of new bookshelves, to replace the couple I gave to Philip in lieu of paying him to help with the garage.

Blessed are the little children....

Numero uno was finally off to "big school" in February. Hannah has enjoyed it so far. Her reading is going really well, and



her writing is getting fairly good too. Best of all, Michelle gets six hours relative

peace while Hannah is at school. She even became a two-second TV star when SBS did a short documentary on Blayney School.

July also saw Hannah in hospital to have grommets inserted into her ears. She had a lot of ear infections and was quite deaf. As soon as she got home she was wanting things turned down and was telling Emily not to be so noisy! What would a year be without hospital?

Hannah also had some orthotics (medical term for plastic thing you stick your foot into) made for her during the year. They go on the bottom of her feet, over her heel and up her calf to below her knee, and are done up with velcro straps. They

are to stabilise her feet and ankles and support her as she walks. She has improved heaps in the three months she has had them and is finally starting to walk a little on her own.

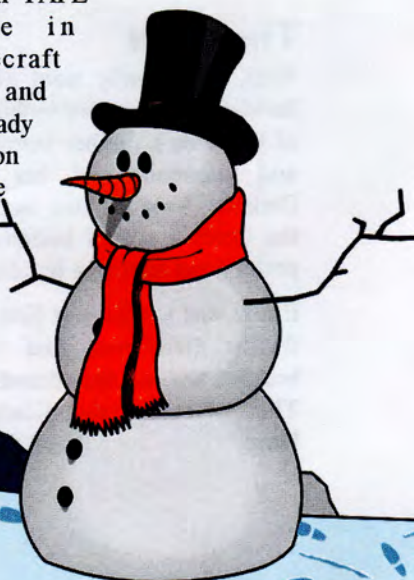
And then there's Tas (aka Emily), so called because she reminds us of the Tassie Devil character on Looney Toons. There are two speeds for this one, flat out and even faster! She is a madcap, ratbagging 19-month old into everything, including a fall down the stairs a month or so ago. She is also very good at climbing onto chairs, tables and even up ladders if you don't watch her.



She had a 12-month assessment at King George V Hospital in April. She passed with flying colours, assessed as above average for both her chronological and corrected age in all areas. They don't want to see her until she's three. Sometimes neither do we (well we do really). Thankfully, this kid and Hannah are chalk and cheese as far as medical problems go.

Study?

Michelle has finally finished her two-year TAFE course in needlecraft skills and is already back on the books. She is



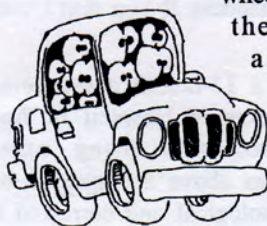
doing an Emergency Care Course through the NSW College of Nursing. Probably in anticipation of me falling off the roof of the shed.

I started a Graduate Diploma in Information Technology through Central Queensland Uni, but have only done one unit thus far. It sounds flash - it has something to do with learning how to fix your own toaster.

Working hard

I finally managed to get Michelle back at work and earning her keep. She is doing casual work at Blayney hospital. It's only three blocks away, which is nice and convenient. She has been getting a fair bit of work, and not sharing the proceeds with me - typical. I do get to see plenty of the girls on the weekends so it works out pretty well really.

Now she is raking it in, Michelle finally got rid of her 1980 Mazda and bought a brand new car! Its a Hyundai Lantra wagon. We were having a bit of trouble getting the



wheelchair and the stroller and Hannah's walker in the boot of the

Mazda. She thinks she is pretty flash.

Nothing much else has changed. I am still at Central Tablelands Water, looking around with interest at other jobs, but no-one has been silly enough to give me one yet. We will have been in Blayney for 6 years come May.

Time out

Well, we actually went away for a holiday this year. We took advantage of Michelle's mother being overseas and commandeered her place at Berkeley Vale for two weeks during the October school holidays. It was pretty good having a holiday house.

Emily was tentative at first, but then finally discovered that she likes beaches too, on the second last day. Then of course she didn't want to leave.

Now all I hear is "when are we going back to the beach Dad". Looks like I better fill up those buckets again.

In the family tree

Another branch on the old tree. Barbara delivered one Stuart Lloyd Hawkins in October. A new baby brother for Kenneth. Barb's hands will be fairly full with a new baby and an 18-month old!

Mum has had a couple of trips to Victoria this year to visit with her mum, who has also had some hospital stays, and also to stay with Barb before the arrival of her new baby.

Dad hasn't had the best of years. He had several trips to Sydney for numerous test



to try and find out what is wrong. Parkinsons Disease was suspected. No dice on the tests, so it's a bit of a worry. Still he is happy pottering about the farm.

Philip has also been quite ill with a bout of pneumonia recently, rumoured to be acquired doing Malcolm Fraser impersonations.

Michelle's mother and her husband Brian have just returned from overseas. They enjoyed a 9 week sojourn to Europe, visiting Scandinavia, UK, Portugal, Spain and Morocco.

Michelle's father lost his job when Exicom (who made Telstra's phones) went bellyup earlier in the year. He has had a couple of odd jobs since but nothing permanent. His wife was made redundant from her job after 18 years. She has managed to pick up work again fortunately.

Other news



The cat is no more. He had some nasty disease which turned terminal after I hit him on the head with a hammer. He is now under the garage slab.

I ran for a position on the Credit Union Board in October. But they wanted people who knew how to look after money, not spend it.

On the bright side, I did get elected to the Blayney Public School Council in May.



Cheerio

This year Christmas is in Blayney. We decided that it was time to stay home. Last year by the time Christmas and New year were over we needed a holiday. Not this time! Everyone comes to us if they want to join in the good tidings. And heck, if they don't I drink all the beer - either way, let the good times roll.

Another year ends, another newsletter rolls off the trusty laser. Here's hoping these jotting's find you well and ready to tackle 1997 with gusto, whoever gusto is.

Like the new format? Always on the lookout for new ideas.

Merry Christmas.

Late breaking news...

