

Cheers!

VOLUME 15

DECEMBER 2005



BIG NEWS OF THE YEAR

- Hannah is 15
- Emily is 10
- Amelia is 8

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The Year in Review

What's this? "Cheers" and its still December. Yep, in a break from recent tradition we thought we might send out the newsletter before Xmas. We were a bit late getting started last year, so hence a bit late getting finished.

I expect No. 15 to be in the mail by mid-December, famous last words.

Its back to the future a bit, way back to 1991 and the first newsletter. Instead of two separate "His and Hers" newsletters, Michelle has decided she wanted to combine newsletters this year.

This is either because of the high standard set by Stephen in content, design and production,

or it may be related to the fact she didn't get hers out at all last year after chucking a hissy fit.

She figures a single newsletter has a chance of getting to people by Christmas (Ha, Ha in the background).

Briefly, Stephen is still working for Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, now known as GWMWater, which is a bit easier to say.

Michelle is still working part-time at Horsham Hospital as a mid-wife and full-time at home as a wife. She was on the casual list, and is now a part-timer. The only real difference is that as a part-time employee she has some guaranteed shifts.

The girls are doing very well in school and out of school with various activities and busy social lives. Michelle seems to spend a lot of her time in the car ferrying them to and fro.



Amelia admires
a full dam

Old McDonald had a Farm E-I-E-I-O

There is something about having a few acres that just begs you (well Stephen) to fill it up.

In January we acquired a couple of Indian Runner ducks and a Muscovy. Then it was a hen and chicken, followed a few months later by another bunch of chooks and a pair of bantams was added to the fold in November. With poultry goes a chook run and chook house. Its really twice as big as it needs to be, but we may acquire more.....

We also acquired two guinea pigs to replace the rabbits that died last year and about a week

ago we got two more rabbits (not sure what they replaced). New pens and hutches naturally follow new animals.

Our latest acquisition is a cockatiel, named Kevin. We found him on the side of the road and snaffled him. So far he has cost us a fortune, with a new cage and Steve has just finished building an aviary (buying one would have been way too easy).

In late **breaking news** Kevin has busted out and was last seen heading east. If you have seen him, please call.

We still have Fudge the dog and

Tigger the cat. Tigger has proven to more than a champion mouser, routinely bringing home rabbits, mice (on occasion two at once) and birds. We had to lock the cat flap to stop him surprising us with his little finds.



Kev's cage—minus Kev

Busy Little Beavers

Work around the house continues unabated. There is always something for us to do. It is a matter of priorities—his or hers!

We have built a block wall around the garden beds in the front. Looks great, still a lot of garden left to do though.

Steve also put in a built-in robe in the main bedroom and completed the chook shed and run, plus an aviary to accommodate Kevin the cockatiel.

We (the landscapers) are

paving an area out the back at the moment and (the builder) is building a roof come per-gola over the pavers. It is all half done at the moment, but inching forward.

Had the electricians here last week, putting in a whole heap of new power points and adding a few extra circuits.

We are adding a pool to the equation too, just waiting on it to be done. It was all going to be done by Christmas, but

apparently Christmas is now in January sometime.

It does look like we are set to stay here for a while. We can't afford to move. We told the kids that the pool was their Christmas present and they seem happy enough with that (thank goodness).



Garden beds take shape, shame about the lawn



“What do you mean—you can't find the sheep. Go and have another look. 9 sheep don't just up and vanish” Stephen Jewell—shepherd

Little Bo Peep

Earlier in the year we borrowed 20 sheep to help clean up the grass on the 6 acres we don't mow. This was fairly successful, though there is a limit to how often you can expect people to lend you sheep.

We had decided to buy some of our own, but couldn't find an agent willing to talk to us about 6 sheep. We did find some in the paper though, and purchased 9—very

friendly, ex-pets.

They had only been here a week when they all went missing. Couldn't find them anywhere for days.



Lost Sheep

**\$50
Reward**

9 Sheep In total

- 5 x-bred ewes
- 3 x-bred wethers
- 1 young Dorset ram

Wandered off from 256 Horsham Lubeck Road, Riverside on Thursday evening, during storm.

**Stephen or Michelle Jewell:
5382 3939 or 0418 727 936**

We even made up a little flier to drop around to all and sundry, when Steve and Emily spotted them in a paddock down the road.

They are back home again—for the moment.

Visitors Book

We have enjoyed several visitors in the past year.

The door is always open for friends and family to pop in and say hello, especially if you come bearing gifts!



If your picture isn't here then probably neither were you (or maybe you're just not very photogenic).

The 'sisterhood'



Life Down South

We have settled into life in Vic reasonably well. Michelle keeps hankering for Qld and the sunshine ALL year, not just in summer.



Emily at snow

We went off to Falls Creek for a quick ski trip in July. The girls had never been to the snow (not counting when they

were little in Blayney) so it was a bit of a thrill for them. Hannah wasn't interested in getting cold and opted to stay in Tallangatta with Steve's mum.

The girls had some ski lessons and got right into it. By the second day they were confidently tackling the beginner slopes and even skied all the way back to the car park at the bottom. Two days was enough to break everyone in. Maybe we'll go again next year.

Both Emily and Amelia are doing trampolining and both have also just finished swimming lessons.

Thought perhaps they should be able to swim a bit if we are getting a pool. Both are also talking about taking up netball next year, but only at the expense of something else.

Steve started back into refereeing rugby again (yes they do play down here). The closest games are Bendigo and Ballarat though, so there is a bit of traveling. He only did half a dozen games, doing more may mean traveling to Melbourne and that is asking a bit much.

Beijing here we come!



No Need for Speed



Stephen raised the bar this year and decided to get fit. He joined the Horsham Runners Club and did a 12 week course, (running 3 times a week) and at the end of it ran 10kms (in 54min)!

He kept trying to convince Michelle that she could do it too, to no avail. On the day of the 10km run Michelle

and the girls went to cheer Steve on. Michelle remarked that most people running the course didn't exactly look like super athletes and so she also decided to give it a go.

She battled on and managed to complete her 10k run (in 1hr 16m) in early November, so now we both run three times a week with the running club.

Mostly we run between 6-8 kilometers, with a longer run on the Sunday morning (yes

Sunday morning). We have taken to going in fun runs and Michelle has had her photo in the paper. Its amazing how clothes suddenly fit again.

We are willing to divulge our secrets—for a price?



"They all look fairly ordinary don't they?" Michelle Jewell—motivation al speaker.

Kids Korner!

Talking of legs! Hannah's legs have finally healed after her massive orthopaedic surgery in November 2003. It took 19 months for the right leg to properly

heal. She is firing on all cylinders now though, and continues to improve with her walking.

Hannah turned 15 this year and acquired a mobile phone for her birthday. She is now the queen of the text messaging.

She has also started work experience and has had two "jobs", which she actually got paid for much to her delight. She has worked in two offices in town and has received excellent appraisals. One place even extended her time from 5 weeks to 10

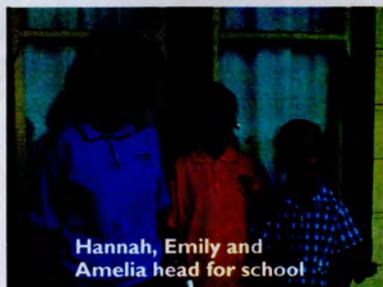
weeks work, much to her excitement. More money in her pocket and slightly less out of ours!

Emily and Amelia were both in the school musical this year, "The Blue Mermaid". It was a great production and they had a ball. They both want to be the stars next year and are aiming to have "leading" parts!

Emily had her first trips away from home, with two school camps during the year.



Hannah at mini golf

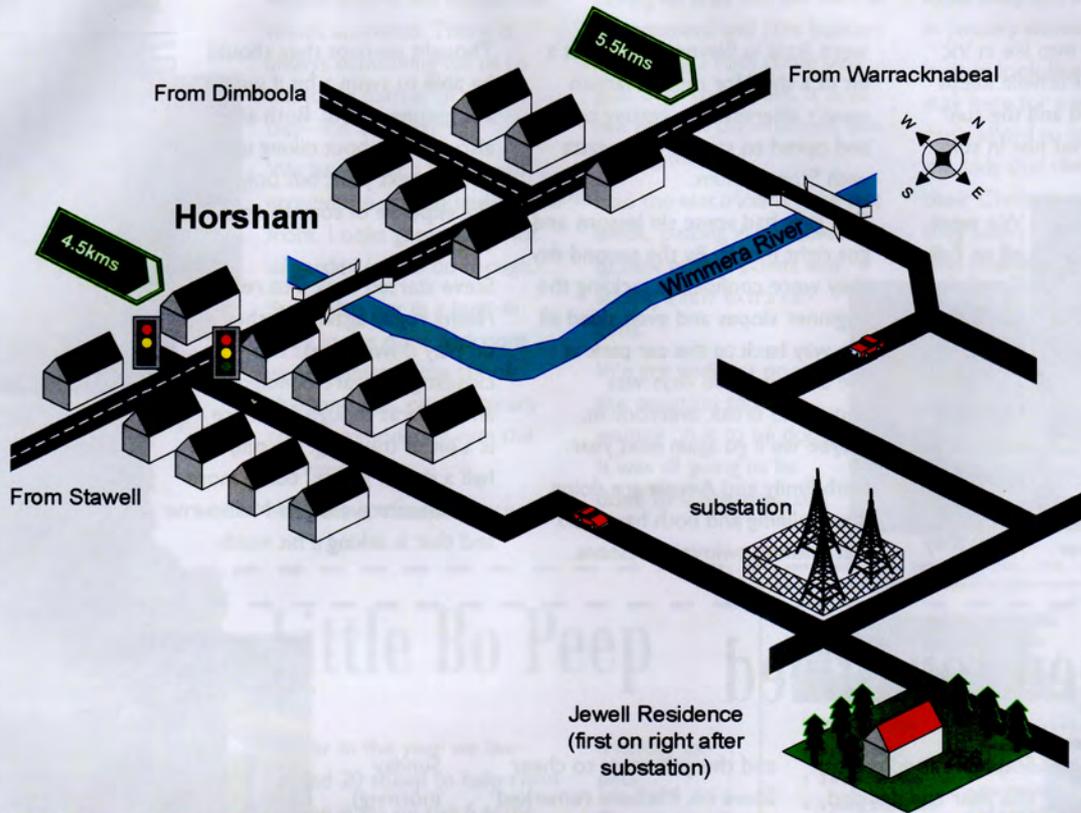


Hannah, Emily and Amelia head for school

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Final Word

We are home for Christmas this year as Michelle is working. We will have an early Christmas with Michelle's mum and step-dad when they arrive mid-December then a late Christmas with Steve's family when we travel over to Tallangatta between Christmas and New Year.

We are off to NSW for a couple of weeks in January to catch up with Michelle's rels up there.

Michelle has been busy studying to be a lactation consultant, lots of



Chicken Run AKA "Stalag 13"

assignments, exam in Melbourne and finally a good pass. Not sure where that will take her, but it certainly kept her amused.

Stephen has finally finished his MBA—we think. It should have been finished last year, but he hadn't taken one of the core subjects, so had to do another unit.

We have just had out annual dam fill via the Wimmera Mallee channel system. Place looks a bit more livable with some water about.

During a fit of spending earlier in the year we bought a new bedroom suite. Hannah thought this was a great idea, as she got our old double bed. The deal is that she has to vacate if we have visitors. If you want to keep sweet with Hannah, stay away. Also bought a new lounge suite and banished the old one to the games room. Stephen

wanted a recliner, which we finally got three months later. The kids are not amused—they are not allowed in it!



Merry Xmas and have a Happy New Year from all of us—Stephen, Michelle, Hannah, Emily and Amelia.