



Late-est News

Late and getting later, but better late than never. I have had a bit of a creative block this year and a touch of just plain lazy. It will be in the post by Xmas though.

Travel Review

We started off the year in Tasmania. Bit of a whirlwind tour of the island. The highlight was Port Arthur and the convict built bridges, while the low lights were missing the Cadbury factory because it was closed and the Cascade Brewery because it was booked out.

It was also a very cold summer and we froze our butts off. But we still had a wonderful time and left plenty of things to go back and look at on some future occasion.

In April we went to Bundaberg for a weekend, mainly because Michelle wanted to go to a craft show. We also ducked up to Airlie Beach for a few days in October and finally spent a night on Heron Island in November to attend a wedding.

Right now I am enjoying 3 weeks off to catch up with a few of those jobs around the place that just haven't got done.

Take this Job

Still in Gladstone, still at the Water Board. Not sure if I will say that again next year, as my contract runs out in

June and there is no guarantee that it will be renewed. The CEO had a falling out with the Board mid-year and resigned. Relationships between the Board and staff have been a little strained since then (to put it lightly).

On a more positive note we finished the raising of the Awoonga Dam wall in June, 5 months and \$26m under budget. Not a bad effort. It was a lot of work and hectic for the two years that it was on, yet rather satisfying to look back on now.

All we need now is water to fill it. In keeping with the rest of the country the Gladstone area is in severe drought.

Things are that bad that even big industry is on restrictions. My current priority is planning for a pipeline to be built from Rockhampton before we run out of water.

Sports Star

Hannah turned 12 in May and has had the usual busy year with sports, going to Brisbane, Mackay & Townsville for both school sports and Sporting Wheelies. She was as pleased as punch about picking up a sports award at the school presentations a few weeks ago.



Hannah also started Riding for the Disabled this year and now wants a horse. I told her she could have it if she was willing to feed it, look after it and saddle it herself. I'm still waiting on the decision on that offer.

Emily's Escapades

Emily was 7 in March and is in grade 2 this year. She is having a great time at school and bringing home top report cards. She is still enjoying guides and had a great time at her Guide camp for 2 nights.



She started playing netball this year (that's Em with the ball), her team is the "Groovers". I think they won one game all year, but winning isn't really why they play, they usually don't even know the score.

Amelia's Adventures

Amelia started pre-school this year and has taken to it like a duck to water. She turned 5 3 weeks ago and starts grade 1 next year.

She is dancing twice a week and is the proper little show girl. They had their end-of-year concert in mid December and the showgirl thoroughly enjoyed the limelight and prancing about on stage.

Michelle's Morass

Michelle's life of leisure as a kept woman lasted until April. The hospital kept at her about coming back and eventually she gave in. She is only doing work on a (very) casual basis. She works when she wants to and when it fits in with everything else. They have been that desperate that she has even been able to pick the hours she works. I want one of those jobs.



Family Fare

Michelle's father and stepmother came up from Sydney in February and we all went out on the Lake in the houseboat to celebrate his 70th birthday. It was quite relaxing except for the bit where Amelia fell out of the top bunk in the middle of the night and landed on me. Everyone was glad she was okay, I don't remember anyone asking about me.

My brother (Phil), wife Kerry & daughter Laura travelled up from Victoria in June and spent a week here. I think it rained just about all week and that was the last decent rain we have had.

In late breaking news - that's why this is so late, I promised to hold the front page - they have added a son to their collection, Thomas Alan being born on 17 December, weighing something or other and about so long.

Michelle's mother and stepfather also dropped in on us twice during the year, the last occasion to look after the kids while we enjoyed the weekend on Heron Island. Where would we be without the babysitters.



How Long?

For those of you who remember that far back, Michelle & I celebrated 15 years of marriage in August this year!

Michelle arranged a surprise night out including an overnight stay in a local B&B. Yes I was surprised, as I had been a tad busy and forgotten about it until the actual day (actually

I remembered at work and rang home to say happy anniversary).

In Memoriam

Unfortunately, I lost a long time subscriber to Cheers in October when "Granny Smith", or Bertha May Smith to her friends, passed away aged 92. She was the last of the grandparents and will be sorely missed. I flew down to Victoria for the funeral. She was predeceased by about a month by her younger brother Bill Rozynski, another subscriber. This is not helping my circulation figures.

Pet Parade

We promised the kids that we would get some pets this year, so the day we arrived back from Tasmania in January we bought the girls 4 guinea pigs. Fortunately we have been able to sell the offspring (there have been a few) to the pet shop.

We are now also proud owners of six baby chickens. They were a day old when we picked them up and my "fatten

for Christmas" remarks haven't been well received! I am almost finished building the chicken run, until then they are bunking in with the guinea pigs.

Other News

We drove to Blayney in July to do some odd jobs on our house as it had become vacant. We spent a week "camping" in the house while we carried out the work.

I made up a list of things to do, which turned out to be a bit ambitious (I think "ridiculously long" was Michelle's description) compared to the time we actually had there, but we did achieve quite a lot. The long & short of it is we have decided to place the house on the market as it is really not practical to have



an investment so far away, especially one that is high maintenance.

I built another cubby house mid-year, this time for young Laura. Delivered it to Blayney in July and Phil picked it up from there. I have also finally started rebuilding the girls cubby house, on an elevated platform with sand pit underneath. This was supposed to be the number one priority before Christmas until the need for a chicken run became apparent. It is now the no. 1 priority before New Year.

Until Next (This?) Year

Okay, that's it, no more room and no more time. For those of you on e-mail Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and have a great 2003. For the rest of you, send me your e-mail address and have a Happy New Year.

lots of love, Stephen, Michelle, Hannah, Emily and Amelia.