

the last year that my desk is now permanently under about two feet of papers. Nobody's offering to increase my pay, but I did score a trip to New Zealand in November to attend a conference on dams.



Plenty of fibres about junkets from others inside and outside of work, but quite frankly I don't feel at all guilty. The conference was worthwhile and I had an enjoyable 8 days out of the office. Michelle wasn't quite so impressed back home on single parent duty, so I had to bribe her with duty free goods.

Michelle quit the hospital in August and is working Mon - Fri 9 til 2. Not working out quite as well as planned, so she is leaving at Christmas time and plans to stay at home for a while and probably go back to midwifery on a casual basis.

Toolman Tim

I spent last Xmas - New Year break putting up a pergola-come-carport out the front of the house, plus providing labour under Michelle's direction for the installation of the pool out the back. The pool was a very popular addition to the backyard, although there isn't a lot of it left now (the backyard, not the pool).

I have promised the kids that they can have chickens and/or guinea pigs (we can't have cats or dogs at the Dam) as pets next year so I have been busy on making suitable pens. So far I have only done the guinea pig hutch. With the number of snakes/hawks, etc. around this place I need to ensure that it is pretty well everything proof.

The next job is reconnecting the cubby house. The plan was to put a new floor in the old one, but on ripping up the old floor the full extent of the termite damage indicated the need for a new cubby house, not a new floor.



ding in early May, but mainly it was due to time and travel involved. With all the extra work I have had on

Greener Pastures

My Mum & Dad finally hit the bullet and sold the farm in January. I drove down to Gilgandra for the clearing sale at the end of January, just to convince myself I wasn't dreaming. After 40 years at Gilgandra they have moved back to Victoria to retire. Not too sure how much retiring is going on, as Mum has launched into all sorts of projects to renovate and extend the house.

Visitors Book

Michelle's Mum & stepfather perched on the front lawn in their caravan over Xmas and New Year, followed closely by her Dad & stepmum in February. In August my Mum & Dad made the long trip up from Victoria for 10 days and we did all sorts of touristy things around the place. The bookings for 2002 have started already with Michelle's Dad informing us that he is coming back for his 70th birthday in February.

News from the Front

My brother Philip & Kerry became the proud parents of a baby girl, Laura, in January. I am the long-distance Godfather. Michelle's sister Nicola & husband Brett have just added number two (Skye) to their brood. The Xmas list is starting to get a wee bit out of control!

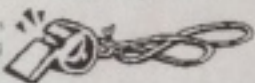
End of an Era

My sporting career seems to have come to a (hopefully temporary) end. I had to give up squash in April, owing to doing my back in again. This time it's a compressed disc, not a ruptured one. Thank goodness. The Doctor had the hide to tell me that it was a degenerative thing, linked to age. Obviously need to find a better doctor.

I also quit refereeing rugby in July. Sort of a combination of things, back problem didn't help, nor the fact that I love a lightning

in the last 12 months I have neglected the kids a bit and at least I can be home a bit more. Might do some refereeing next year, might not - haven't really missed it.

Michelle is still playing netball with the mid-wifery team. They call themselves "Baby-catchers" would you believe, and if you see them playing netball you would book yourself into another hospital for a delivery!



Family Frolic

We are heading off to Tasmania this year on a family holiday, via my reb in Tallangatta, where we will spend Xmas. We go over to Tassie on 28th December and drive around for 11 days, staying in cabins.

We will be visiting Blayney on the way through and going via Canberra on the way home.

Is that the Time?

This needs to be finished and sent pronto, so on that note I am out of here. Have a wonderful Christmas & fantastic New Year. Catch up with you next year!

Love Stephen, Michelle,
Hannah, Emily & Amelia.



Cheers

Volume 11



December 2001

Bye bye 2001

Issue 11 and still not banned by the censor! To say it has been a fairly busy year for us is an understatement. I personally wouldn't mind if a bit less happened in 2002. Perhaps it's just the whole age thing...

Murderous Milestone

Getting older is a fact of life and both Michelle & I hit the big 40 in April!

Rather than have a party or anything mundane we took ourselves off to New Zealand for 8 days - sans kids! We both managed to hurt our backs on the trip, just to prove that we really are past it. Michelle's Mum & stepdad looked after the kids while we were away, so they didn't really miss us at all.

We started off in Auckland and tripped around the north east end of the North Isle - Hamilton, Taupo, Rotorua, Tauranga, Coromandel and back to Auckland. Even managed to take in a Super 12 rugby match in Auckland on my birthday (what a coincidence I knew that was on).



Small Talk

The inevitable happened in September and the kids copped a dose of Chickenpox! Emily was the first to be "spotted" followed 2 weeks later by Amelia & Hannah (who has had them before). Emily got a relatively mild dose, but Hannah and Amelia copped a beauty. The epidemic went right through the local schools, only 2 kids turned up in Emily's class one week.

Hannah turned 11 in May and has had a fairly full year. She has also suffered a lot from knee and ankle problems this year owing to her twisted feet and gait problems, and may well face the surgeon's knife in the New Year to try and sort it all out. She is actually looking forward to surgery if it helps her to reduce the aches and pains.

Crash Bandicoot

Amelia turned 4 last week. She started 2001 off in her usual "get out of my damn way" fashion and was bounced off the trampoline and broke her arm on 1st January. She was in plaster for 4 weeks, but did that didn't really slow her down!

She started Kindy and dancing this year. Kindy is still going great guns and she is looking forward to starting Preschool next year. It's different in Old (surprise). Kindy is what is called Preschool in other States and vice versa. She enjoyed dancing while it lasted and had a great time doing a little concert. Loves the limelight!

Michelle decided to teach her a lesson one day recently and put her out of the car 1/2km down the road. Amelia just folded her arms and said she didn't care, she knew the way home and strode off. Michelle then had to demand she get back in the car. Might rethink the shock tactic approach.....

Athletes Anonymous

Hannah ditched Brownies this year, but made up for that with her involvement in sport. She went to Brisbane in July for the Queensland Junior Disabled Games, run by sporting wheelies and backed up in Sep-

tember for the National Junior Disabled Games. For the National titles she travelled down on her own and stayed in Brisbane in camp for 10 days. According to Hannah she didn't miss us at all because she was having way too much fun - but she seemed quite happy to be home at the end of it. She won gold medals at both games and set 2 new national records for her age group.

On the school sports side she managed to go through the local school and district school sports carnivals to win a place in the Capricornia side and another trip to Brisbane in early November.

Emily's Events

Emily started Brownies this year and loves it. She has attended various outdoorsy things like outdoor cooking and a weekend camp. A regular little Danielle Boone. We have to carefully guard the matches in case she has inherited any of my fire lighting abilities!

Em is having a fantastic time at school and seems to be excelling in all areas. She has won two awards this year. She won the school's National Science competition in her age group. She was quite excited about winning a science pack, so there were a lot of experiments carried out at home for a while. In October she was one of the local winners of the Water Wise competition. Her drawing will be on the 2002 Water Watch calendar (in case anyone was wondering what they were getting for Xmas, birthdays, etc.).

Working Weak

I am still at Gladstone Area Water Board. We are all generally enjoying life here, and not in a hurry to move. While things seem to be going well, contract renewal time is coming up in 2002, so I get to find out if the feeling is mutual.

The various projects I'm working on remain interesting, especially the raising of the Awoonga Dam. Have managed to pick up so many extra responsibilities in

Jewell a rare gem on track and field arena



Awoonga Rogues Gallery 2001



Amelia - January 2001



Stephen in New Zealand - November 2001



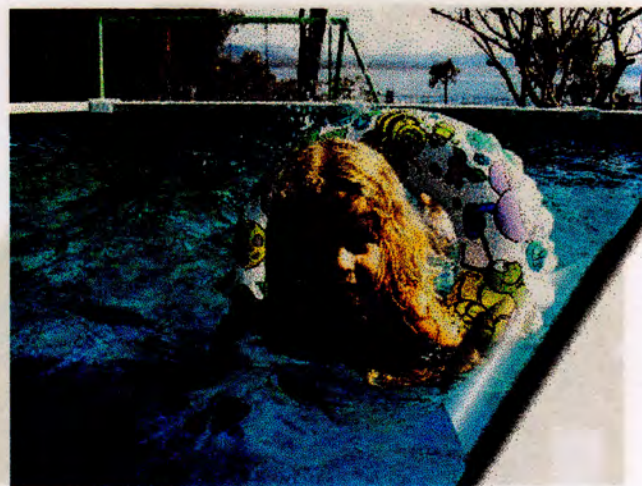
Emily receiving WaterWise prize - October 2001



Emily & Amelia at Amelia's birthday - December 2001



Emily, Stephen & Amelia - September, 2001



Amelia in pool - September 2001

Awoonga Rogues Gallery 2001



"May Glen" - January 2001



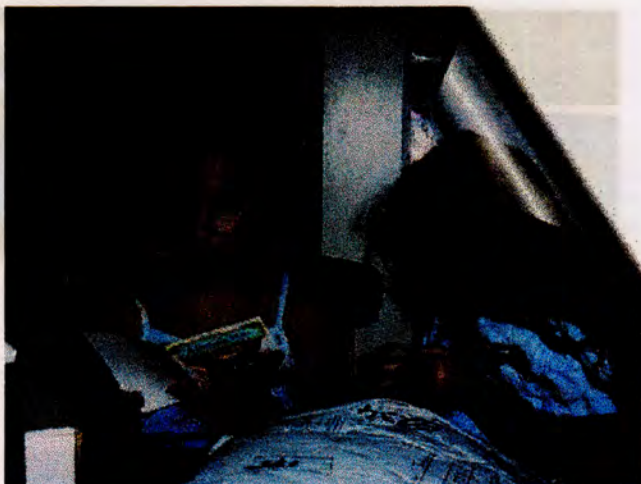
Amelia & Emily with Granma
& Granpa - September 2001



Hannah in pool - September 2001



Hannah, Granpa, Emily & Michelle at
Tannum Sands in September



Hannah & Emily at Hannah's birthday - May 2001



Emily off to school - July 2001

Awoonga Rogues Gallery 2001



Hannah shows her style - November 2001



Emily & Michelle at cookout - August 2001



Michelle & Amelia at Boyne River - August 2001



Amelia off to Kindy - February 2001



Hannah, Emily & Amelia - May 2001

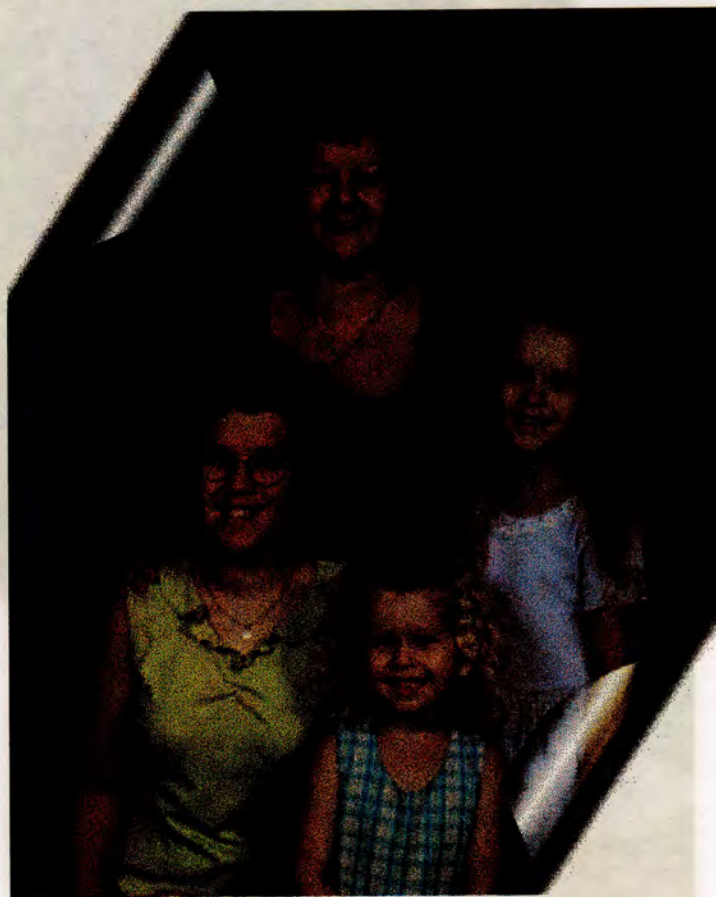
Awoonga Rogues Gallery 2001



Emily in pool - September 2001



Amelia, Michelle & Emily enjoying
the new pool - January 2001



All the girls - November 2001



Stephen & Amelia - July 2001



Granma & Granpa with Amelia & Emily - September 2001