



Cheers 2006

Jewell Family Newsletter

Volume 16

December 2006

Year in Review

Yeah, late again—what did you expect. This has been a very busy year, even if it has gone quickly.

We all seem to be involved in a hundred and one things through the year. Not that we mind.

This is now the 16th year of 'Cheers'. Probably about time we did something different, maybe next year.

About Us

Everyone is a year older (funny that), with Emily and Hannah hitting milestones at school (see inside).

Michelle and Stephen are both the picture of health. Yeah right.

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In Short:

- * Michelle changes career
- * Stephen doesn't
- * Hannah is 16
- * Emily is 11
- * Amelia is 9

Pool

Our pool was installed in mid-January while we were away on the Central Coast in NSW. It took another four months to get the fence finished and there is still plenty of landscaping left to do. Anyway it certainly got a work out last year and it has been very popular with the kids again this year.

Tripping

As mentioned, we spent around three weeks in January visiting Michelle's relatives and other friends in NSW. We stayed with her father, Terry, and Carol for about a week.

On the way home we spent 4 days in Blayney. It was interesting to see our old house all done up. It is ap-

parently on the market for around \$420,000. Nearly double what we sold it for. Good luck to them.

We all flew up to the Gold Coast in September for Michelle's mothers' 70th birthday.



Emily and Brian doing it tough on the Gold Coast

Home front

Michelle is determined to get a new kitchen. Stephen said that she could have it for Christmas, as long as he could do up the shed. Jury is still out on that offer.

Career Moves

Michelle has been a bit schizophrenic this year.

She continued to work as a midwife at the Horsham Hospital most of the year, with a few other things thrown in.

In June she took on a role as Clinical Educator for nurses at Ballarat Uni, working through the Stawell Hospital.

Even though Stawell is *only* 65kms down the road, the traveling got a bit wearing

(as did the cold at 6am).

So out that went out and in came a job as practice nurse with a new medical clinic.

She has been enjoying that so much, she has now left the hospital altogether and is working at the clinic 3 days a week.

Stephen is still at GWMWater as Operations Manager. No water, but plenty of work at present.

In February he applied for a

job as CEO of Northern Grampians Shire, also based at Stawell.

That didn't come off but the Shire have since tried to recruit him as Deputy CEO. He turned that offer down.

He has decided to stick with GWMWater for another year or two at least.

He is presently Acting CEO while the CEO is on leave. So no holidays this Christmas.

Year of Extremes

No doubt things aren't a lot different where you are. We are officially in the middle of a 1:1000 year drought. Not that anyone remembers the last one, so goodness knows how that's calculated. It has been a year of (unfortunate) extremes.

New Year's day started things off with a top temperature of 45°C. Stephen got up early to do a bit of concreting, to avoid the heat(!).

It was 40°C at 10am when he finished. He found it fairly difficult to get a decent finish on the slab—not that the base of a chicken house needs a good finish.

In June we had minus 7° and some awful frosts. It has cost us a fortune for

firewood this year.

So far this summer the temperature has fluctuated between a top of 15°C and 43°C during the day. Fan on one night, blankets the next.

It has also been the driest year on record. Of the 200 native trees that we planted in July/August, only one is still alive. Surprisingly, many of the 2-3 year old trees are doing very well.

The water situation is getting extreme. Most towns here are on Stage 4 restrictions, which basically bans water on gardens.

Like most people we are getting good value out of our bath water, using it to water trees and plants.



Our tree watering setup

We have a pump set up to get the remains of the water out of the dam and a small submersible which gets dropped into the bath each night. The only water we use at the moment gets carted to us.

The Knee Bone's Connected...

Now that both Stephen and Michelle are over 40 perhaps there should be an obligatory column telling you about the aches and pains suffered through the year. Or perhaps not.

Unfortunately Michelle did go under the surgeon's knife in July. She had a sore knee running, which she then hurt rather badly at dancing.

Funnily enough she claims it was obviously the running not the dancing.

She saw a surgeon who recommended

surgery. While she thought about getting a second opinion she kept dancing.

Finally she couldn't hide it any longer and had to get it operated on. It still isn't right, but she is still dancing. Go figure.

"It'll be okay.
I'm not having surgery.
Dancing doesn't affect it at all." -
Michelle during a delusory period

She has also been told a knee replacement is on the cards, not if but when! To say she is unimpressed is an understatement.

She has continued to dance on though, despite hardly being able to walk. That knee replacement won't be too far off.



Amelia off to camp

Girl Talk

Hannah turned sweet 16 this year. She has just finished Year 10 and is looking forward to Year 11.

Hannah has taken up ten-pin bowling and has issued a challenge to her father. Stephen has declined to date.

She has been out and about in the local community doing work experience at a number of businesses in town during the year. Now she reckons someone needs to pay her to work. Her plans for the extended Christmas break include sleeping and lazing around!

Emily and Amelia ran everyone ragged with gymnastics, dancing, choir, running and various outings here there and everywhere.

Amelia turned 9 on 3rd December and has just finished Year 4. She enjoyed her first school camp to Cave Creek near Beaufort in November. She has been dancing all year after giving gymnastics away.



Amelia, Emily and Hannah

Emily enjoyed a week long trip to Canberra to mark the end of her primary school days. She is off to high school next year, much to her delight.

She was lucky enough to get into the accelerated learning program at high school next year.

Emily has also taken up dancing. She was doing gymnastics as well until the times changed and clashed with other things.

Run Buddy Run!

We scored tickets to a rugby test in Melbourne in June and Stephen headed off down to Melbourne with Emily. Emily thought it was a great treat and thoroughly enjoyed a night in Melbourne, staying at a hotel, eating out, etc.

Running with the Horsham Running Club has become a bit of a family affair, with both Emily and Amelia joining the Club and doing a 5 kilometre start running course during September, October and November.

Surprisingly, they

stuck it out for the full eight weeks and completed their 5 kilometres runs in times of and 36 (Amelia) and 38 minutes (Emily).

Stephen is still enjoying his running and was elected President of the Running Club in February.

We all entered the Run for the Kids in Melbourne in April. Stephen completed the 14.7km course while Michelle and the girls did the shorter 4km course.

Stephen is still refereeing rugby on the odd weekend, although he has to drive to Ballarat or Bendigo to do it. Both are over 200kms. They are keen for him to go to Melbourne and referee every weekend. Just a bit too far.

Stephen managed to see one session of



Emily and Amelia after 5km run

the Commonwealth Games in March. The night that the 100m final was on. The rest of the family had to be content to see the Queen's baton relay when it came to town.

"1 minute running is a long time, 8 weeks is going to be a very long time" - Emily contemplating her running course

Animal Antics

The kids got a bit of a crash course in animal husbandry this year, as we added four new lambs to our little flock of sheep. The new arrivals were greeted with great delight by the girls although they weren't too thrilled about the prospect that we might be eating them later on.



There was much excitement in January when we got back from holidays to discover one of the hens had gone broody. Bad luck that 3 of the 4 chickens were roosters.

Later on, on being advised that we were getting rid of the roosters, Emily announced that if we killed them she was never eating chicken again. Luckily that didn't happen as the roosters mysteriously disappeared one day. She concluded that a fox got them.

We also raised a brood of Indian Runner ducks and most of them are drakes! They will also mysteriously vanish one day soon.

We scored another cockatiel—Albert—to replace Kevin (see last year's newsletter), courtesy of Steve's sister.

Funny bird, has a terrible sense of balance and falls off things, mostly his perch. He only seems to like Stephen, he chucks a hissy fit if anyone else wants to handle him.



Steve and Albert 'bonding'

Drop ins

The Visitors Book has been busy this year with family and friends dropping in.

Steve's brother, Philip, and his family house sat, fed the animals and project managed the pool installation while we were gallivanting around the country in January.

Steve's Mum and Dad came over for a flying visit in April, on their way to Kangaroo Island.

Michelle's sister, Nicola, and family came down from Sydney for Easter. Brett helped finish off the pool fence

and we treated them to one of the coldest Easters on record. The animals were a big hit with the two city kids.



Skye and Caitlin meet the sheep

Friends of Steve's came through in October and stayed a night. Alan and Beth were on their way back to Bundaberg after making their way around the country. It was good to catch up on gossip from Gladstone.

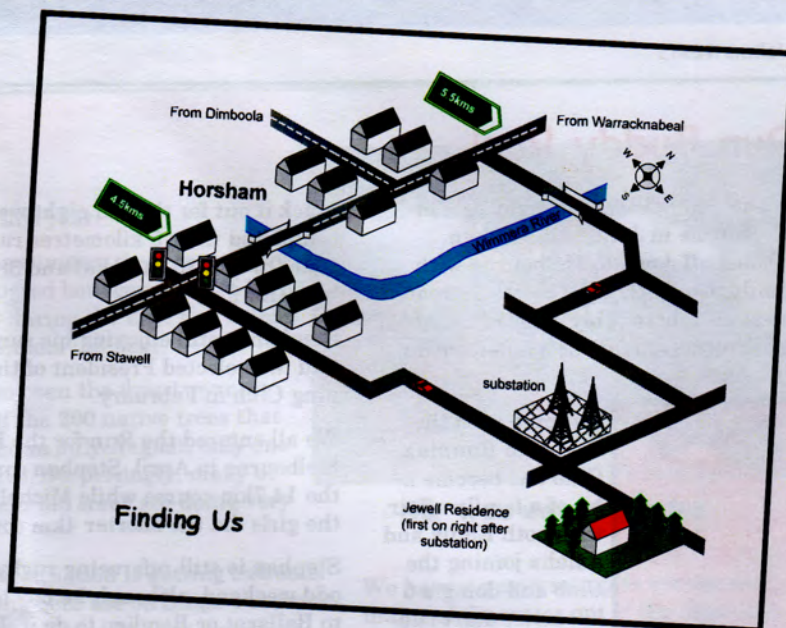
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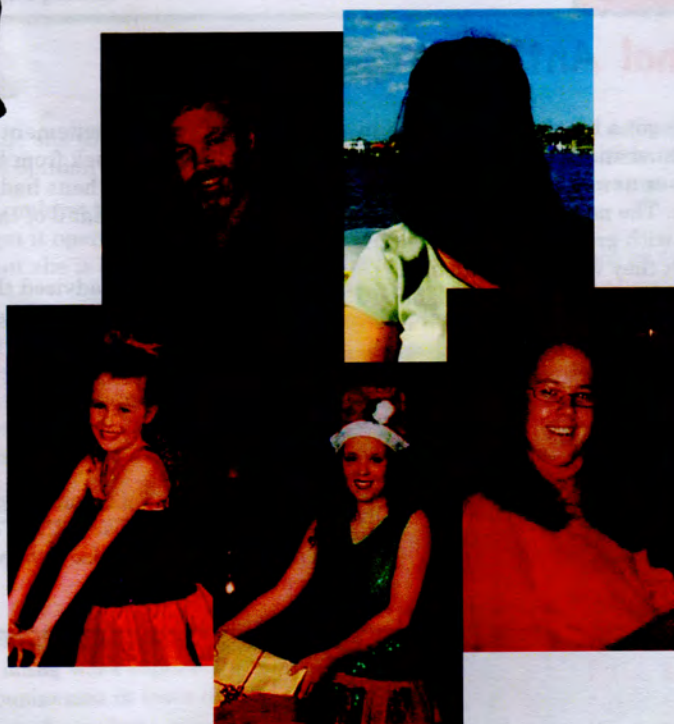
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Late Breaking News

Summer has claimed its first victims. Our two guinea pigs (Heidi and Ingrid) succumbed to the 43° heat last weekend. We had to find a cooler spot for the rabbits as well, who were not looking too flash.

June and Linton Knight (neighbours in Queensland) and their kids (Bryce 17 & Elise 20!) came through on their way home from holidays in Tasmania. Was great to see them & catch up on all the news from Gladstone.



Front 'lawn' looking very nice

