

Cheers 2009

The year that was....

Welcome to edition 19 of Cheers. It was going to be a bigger than Ben Hur special multi media edition this year. However we both know that will mean starting a bit earlier than mid-December, perhaps next year to celebrate the 20th edition. As usual, a brief recap on the year's events to kick off....

On the celebratory side, in September Hannah announced her engagement to long time beau Chris, more on that inside. Not so happily, Steve's father passed away in March this year after a long illness. Alan turned 80 last year and had slowly been going downhill.

Around the farm, a bad start to the year saw the sheep all sold before we went to New Zealand. A fairly wet winter saw us having to buy a bunch of new sheep to try and keep the grass back in check. We're a bit sensitive to the prospect of long dry grass after the fires in February.

The girls have had a big year at school and after school with netball, volleyball, band, dancing, camps and goodness know what else.

Life on the farm

It was the usual dry start to year, but fortunately we have had a reasonably wet winter. The call that the drought's over is probably a bit premature, as despite all the rain we've only just had the average, just seems wet after ten years of well below average.

After the welcome green tinge appeared it quickly became waist deep grass. The ride-on mower has been busier this year than probably the past three put together.

The Wimmera Mallee pipeline is all but complete and we expect to be connected to water by Christmas.

A trip to New Zealand for two weeks in January was probably the highlight of the travels, which also included a trip to Blayney in September, Michelle travelling to Sydney in November for a nursing reunion, Steve travelling to Sydney for a work conference and sundry other trips around the country.

As mentioned, Horsham was caught up in the horrific fires in February this year.

Our trip to New Zealand in January was the travel highlight of a fairly busy year.

Ten houses and umpteen sheds were burnt down in the space of a couple of hours. It got to about 500 metres from us but fortunately went just south. We did spend several anxious hours standing up on the dam bank keeping an eye on it just the same. All very exciting.

More news inside, not quite as exciting as the fires, but interesting anyway. Read on....

Cheers

Top stories...

- > Hannah gets engaged!
- > Emily captains school volleyball
- > Steve completes 2nd marathon
- > Hannah turns 19
- > Emily is 14
- > Amelia makes 12

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Amelia sitting, Fudge standing in the grass

School daze and more



Amelia in action

While both the younger girls did very well at school this year, most of the action seemed to take place away from school.

Amelia took up the saxophone this year and joined the school band, while Emily continued with her flute in the band.

Emily is doing the Duke of Edinburgh Medal as one of her school electives and (amongst other things) had a week long camp at Lorne on the coast.

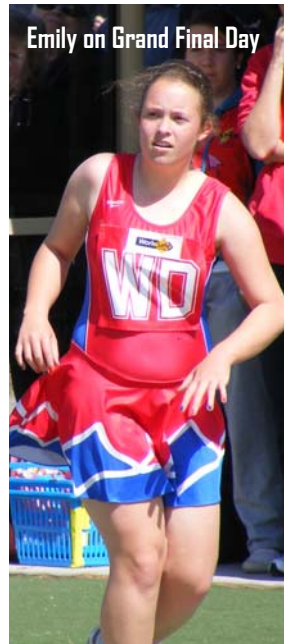
The week consisted of bushwalking, bike riding, surfing and other as-sorted activities. She loved it but might not have

survived another week.

Both girls continued with their dancing and both girls played netball for Kalkee in the Horsham District competition. Emily's Under-15s managed to make the grand final and despite putting up a good show went down in a close encounter.

Amelia has taken up debating at school and captained her team in the Rotary debating competition, winning the final. She was pretty happy with that.

Amelia also took part in the school musical this year and has vowed to participate in all of them while she is in high school. No doubt she will too.



Emily on Grand Final Day

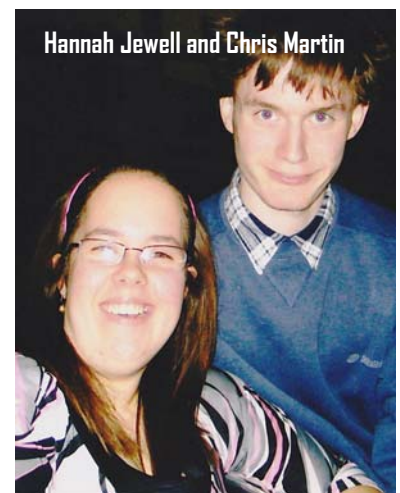
Hannah gets engaged

Yes you read right. Hannah certainly got our attention in September when she came home and announced that Chris had asked her to marry him. We weren't really sure how to react to start with, but we have gotten used to the idea now. Last year's newsletter marveled at her turning 18, now she has upped the ante!

Apparently there aren't any immediate plans to marry, that is a year or two off. We relaxed a bit when we heard that. Hannah wants to finish her TAFE course first, try and get a permanent job, etc. Very mature.

Hannah continued to work one day a week at GWMWater until about half way through the year. Then she got a two-day a week job with Community House in Horsham, doing various admin work. She finished up there in November. TAFE has also finished for the year now so she is back to doing what she does best, sleeping in until midday and watching a lot of TV. We also do a lot of chauffeuring, shuttling her between home and Chris' place.

"You just got what?" asked a shocked pair of parents.



Hannah Jewell and Chris Martin

Better in the long run

Steve decided to have another go at the Melbourne Marathon this year and got fairly serious about the preparation. Up at 5:30am for training runs in the middle of winter, 32km training runs on a Sunday and so on. Along the way there were also trips away for several half marathons and a 30km run in Melbourne.

He was fairly happy in October when he finished the Marathon in 3 hours 55 minutes, some 33 minutes better than last year and under the 4 hour mark. Maybe just one more...

After giving away the Rugby refereeing in 2007 he took it up again in 2009. The aim was just to help out with a tournament in Bendigo in April, but then he wound up doing games all around the country. He claims he isn't doing it any more. We will see.



The running calendar climaxed with the Great Australian Run in November. Steve was very happy after this, completing his first ever 10kms in under 50 minutes and finishing the entire 15kms in just under 1 hr 15 minutes.

Killer Bees strike

Have to make special mention of Emily's volleyball. She started playing mid-week volleyball this year and has really enjoyed it. They didn't have a coach so Steve stepped in and tried to help out.

The National Schools Volleyball Championships are held in Melbourne each year and Horsham always sends teams. This year they sent 5 teams, including two under-16 girls teams.

Emily was thrilled to bits to be named captain of the 'B' team and has just returned from a week in Melbourne.

They had a mixed week, winning



4 out of 9 games and finishing 17th of 24 teams in their division. Their big thrill was beating one of the highly ranked Queensland teams in one of the early pool matches.

Not a bad effort given that, with

the exception of one of the girls, they could have played in the under -15s and four of the girls could have played in under-14s.

423 teams took part and Emily has announced that—no matter what—she is doing it again next year.



New Zealand sojourn

Mid-January we headed off to New Zealand, minus Hannah. Hannah decided that she was 19 and didn't have to come on family holidays if she didn't want to. Fair enough we said.

We packed her off on a trip of her own to stay with Michelle's sister, Nicola, in Sydney, then it was onto the Gold Coast for a week with Michelle's mum, Jean and her husband, Brian.



Meanwhile the rest of us toured around New Zealand. First up it was the South Island to take in Fox Glacier.

Then we caught the ferry over to the North Island and travelled up to Auckland via Wellington, Napier and Rotorua. We stayed on a farm in Rotorua and that was magnificent. We still weren't used to green grass at that stage.

We also fitted in a couple of days in Paihia in the Bay of Islands.

Steve insisted that everyone take in the Kauri Museum and the Kauri Forest walk.

For the younger girls the highlight was probably the dolphins in the Bay of Islands.

We finished up with a few days in Auckland before heading home.

Hannah was eventually delivered home by Jean and Brian in their caravan in early February.



Steve's Dad passes away



Emily at Granya Scout Hut 2009

After 80 years Alan Caldwell Jewell finally called it a day on 1 March this year, passing away in the Tallangatta Hospital.

Alan grew up in Granya, a small town on the Murray River in Victoria. In 1961 he moved to Gilgandra in NSW to take up a sheep/wheat farm which he worked until 2001, when he retired to Tallangatta, just down the road from where he was raised. His health slowly deteriorated and he was a resident in the Tallangatta Hospital from mid-2007.

Alan had been active in the Gilgandra Historical Society and became active in the Granya Historical Society. After the funeral we all went over to Granya to have a look around and visited the Granya Museum, which was being tended by one of Alan's old school friends.

It was very poignant for the kids to look around and see all the old photos of the Jewell kids growing up in Granya in the 1930s and doing their after school activities. Calf Club was a bit of a contrast to tap dancing!

Alan was active in the Boy Scouts when he was in Granya and a Scout Master for some years in Gilgandra. The Scout Hut on the left was used by Alan in his younger days and has been refurbished in recent years.

Cheers 2009



Alan Jewell
1928-2009



Flowers....for me?

Working our fingers to the bone

Michelle is still working at the Tristar Medical Clinic and mostly enjoying it. She has looked at a couple of other opportunities but hasn't followed them up. She still works three days a week, but has changed her days and works Monday to Wednesday, enjoying a very long weekend every week. Some people have all the luck.

Steve's contract expired in October and he had to reapply for his job. There was some tension while that got sorted although fortunately he has been reappointed for a further 3 years, with a 2-year option. He applied for a couple of other jobs mid year, not wanting to put all his eggs in one basket. The other jobs didn't lead anywhere, so it looks like it is Horsham for another few years at least. The two younger kids are very happy about that, they have decided that Horsham is home until they finish school.

Late breaking news...

This summer's holiday plans include a couple of weeks in Sydney to catch up with Michelle's sister, Nicola, plus also her Dad, Terry, and Step-mum, Carol, on the Central Coast. Her Mum, Jean and Step-dad, Brian will also catch up with the girls while they are in Sydney.

Michelle and the girls will be heading off on their own though, sans Steve. Steve has been offered the role of Acting Managing Director for three weeks in January and feels it is too good an opportunity to pass up.

Michelle is not really looking forward to the drive to Sydney in her little Getz with all the girls and the luggage. Some negotiation may need to take place and a car swap for the week.



*~That's it for another year~
Have a great Xmas and a very
merry New Year.
Hope to see or hear from you
in 2010.*



Steve's speed...



Amelia's speed...