



The Queensland OTU Scheyvillian Newsletter

Prepared on behalf of the QUEENSLAND CHAPTER

*"Fade Away With Dignity
But Drink All the Funds First"*

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A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL SCHEYVILLIANS

FEATURE ARTICLE

RATS, what am I doing here?

By Lang Kidby (1/67)

This is an abridged version of Lang Kidby's travel journal (The Bhutan Bugle No.5) to the remote country of Bhutan nestled between India and Nepal. I so love this story that I thought it should be shared with you all. We know how ingenious Lang is when it comes to getting out of sticky situations (remember his exploits on his very famous trip from Peking to Paris in the re-enactment of the very first car race across the continent in 1907). This is another example of his wonderful ability to think out of the square. Read on and enjoy true Ozzie wit and humour.



This Bugle No. 5 is based on my most interesting trip so far on this job. There are two areas in the east of Bhutan which are so remote that the reasonably large stores and the schools they serve have not been visited by either the Bhutan Food Corporation (BFC) or the UNWFP for over two years. After a bit of pressure I goaded the WFP into trying to get a permit for me to visit and of course the 'very difficult' turned out to be very easy.

With nothing more than a rocky track winding its way through the jungle, we did not get out of second gear for most of the way. About 7km of the track is along a stony riverbed which, when flooded in the wet season, cuts Nganglam off from the world for 6 months of the year. No Australian truck owner would allow his vehicles on this track.

The highlight of my whole time in Bhutan occurred about an hour into the journey. As we pitched and rocked at walking pace over the rocks we rounded a bend and there, not 100 metres away, was a large Bengal Tiger. He was idly padding down the track as we stopped. The Tiger continued towards us until he was 30 metres away and, without any recognition of our presence, angled off to the left and faded into the jungle. Best animal sighting I have ever had!

At last we climbed into a narrow valley and arrived at the original Shangri-la. This mediaeval village is straight out of "Lost World" (without the singing). The town is jammed between jungle-clad hills but, unlike the Swiss Chalet appearance of much of Bhutan, every building here was unpainted wood. The people wore a different tribal dress and our vehicle was the only one in town. I created quite a spectacle as it was 18 months since a westerner had been in the area.

I was very glad of my good sleeping bag that night for the icy winds sliding down from the mountains made it mighty cold on the floor of the cane hut in which we were accommodated. The FCB store man, who lives a lonely existence by himself, made a great effort to cook us a nice lentil (almost certainly pilfered WFP lentils) curry with rice. He also produced a bottle of surprisingly good Bhutanese whiskey to warm us by candlelight.

Next morning, we went to his very well kept store to check his stocks and see the condition of the building. They had a serious rat problem. I counted 6 rat cages around the warehouse (these are wire cages about the size of a shoe-box which catch the rats, without harming them, for subsequent relocation. The store man flatly refused to use poison or conventional traps). When I asked why none of the traps had bait in them, there was a ten minute discussion before we eventually got to the bottom of the story. As a very devout Buddhist, the store man thought it was unconscionable to trick the rats into the cages. If you deliberately start lying, even to a rat, your whole life becomes a lie and you will never reach enlightenment.

I thought about the problem for a moment and asked the assistant store man to put the following proposition to his boss. What if we had tiny little signs printed – in Bhutanese and Hindi because, being so close to the border, we could not be sure of the rats' nationality – and fixed on the front of each cage "DANGER, ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK". The bait would be placed in the cages and the rats, in full knowledge of their actions, could make their own decision to enter or not. The store man's conscience would be clear.

As the assistant store man earnestly tried to explain the cunning plan to his boss, the blank face and glazed eyes told me he was stunned by this stroke of brilliance from an expert brought across the world at great expense to the UN. Then again, perhaps he thought I was a complete cretin. Whatever his thoughts, as the 2IC continued earnestly with hand waving and pointing to the appropriate place for the signs on the traps, I was taken with a fit of the giggles which recurred from time to time for the next 2 hours.

The rat problem was solved to the satisfaction of all present.

Lang Kidby (Professional Adventurer)

Newsflash: *Lang and Bev are in England where Lang has been asked to fly a Vintage Beechcraft in the Farnborough Air Show. (What an Honour – A Great thrill and another landmark achievement).*

OTU ASSOCIATION MEMBERS RALLY TO SUPPORT A WORTHY CAUSE FOR A MATE

Brian Vickery – Class 1/66

In October 2007, 4 year old Tysen Vickery (the grandson of Brian and Carole Vickery) was diagnosed with cancer after seeing a doctor about what was thought to be an insect bite. Tests found that Tysen's right forearm was destroyed by cancer and he had 16 tumours on his lungs. Tysen's condition was diagnosed as Ewing's Sarcoma, a rare cancer of the bone.

Since then Tysen has had surgery to remove the bone in his forearm and replace it with bone from his leg. He has also endured eight rounds of chemotherapy at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Apart from the terrible emotional strain on both the parents and grandparents – not to mention the ordeal of little Tysen himself – it goes without saying that the medical and other costs involved in Tysen's treatment are horrendous.

As a result, Brian approached the OTU Association in the hope that some support could be generated for a fundraiser being arranged for Tysen and his parents. Brian is the Secretary of his local Surf Club which undertook the task of running a benefit night and a substantial prize for a raffle was required.

Although such a cause is outside the charter of our Association, Mick Hart and a few of the Queensland Chapter guys got going with the job of doing something about Brian's request. As a result of their combined efforts, a cheque for \$700.00 was forwarded to Brian. In addition, a prize was offered for the Surf Club Raffle of dinner for two at the United Services Club and two tickets to 'Phantom of the Opera'.

A great effort from this small bunch of OTU Association members who rallied to support a mate in times of dire need.

Thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, little Tysen experienced his greatest thrill. At only 4 years old, Tysen is a V8 Supercar fanatic and idolises driver Craig Lowndes. Thanks to the Foundation, Tysen met Craig Lowndes and was given a tour of the Triple Eight Team Vodafone garage at Queensland Raceways in Willowbank. Tysen chose his SpeedRacer outfit especially for the occasion and even got to sit in the driver's seat of Lowndes' car.

The OTU Association salutes the courage and spirit of this little boy and wishes him a full and permanent recovery.

A POST-SCHEYVILLE SUCCESS STORY

John Robertson – Class 1/71

After leaving school at 15, John Robertson learned his trade at Falkner Chains, a well known Brisbane-based chain maker. John's dad and grandfather had also worked at Falkner Chains.

In 1970, John was drafted and claims that his time spent in the army was the best two years of his life. He says that "It showed me there was more to life than just Falkner Chains. It gave me a sense of urgency and when I got out, I started my own business at age 22".

Thirty five years on, the firm of John L Robertson had ten branches around Australia and was a success story. So much so that, although the business was never on the market despite being approached by different suitors over time, John was approached in 2007 by Jeminex (60 per cent owned by an AMP private equity fund). As a result, the business was sold for an undisclosed sum to Jeminex who outbid Westfarmers for the now-named Robertsons.

John said that after 35 years running his business, it would be "nice to be able to sit back and watch the younger generation take it through. Frankly, I'm 58 in January (2008) and I'm a dinosaur. I've worked hard but the way they run businesses these days is not how they did it last year. It's a changing of the guard, it's a different era. But I didn't need the money as I've got a fair holding in real estate and own all our properties around Australia, so the money was a bonus".

John's eldest son, Todd has been the operations manager for three years but has been promoted to general manager under the new ownership. John said that Todd had always wanted to sit in the boss's chair but told his son that he would have to work "twice as hard to prove you are half as good".

Mark Allison, the chief of Jeminex said at the time of the sale that "Robertsons came up as the best option because it's a national business, been around for a long time, got good people and it's got strong technical competencies".

Sounds a bit like John has applied a few of the skills from his Scheyville experience, doesn't it!!

MICK HART THE PIKER

Mick Hart – Class 2/69

After much coercion and the promise of a great time by all and sundry on a trip to the North West of WA on the Adventure ship Orion, Michael arranged for three couples along with Patricia and Michael Hart to spend two weeks sailing the N-W coast of WA, the last frontier in Australia.

The week before departure, our intrepid leader had to pull out of the trip on medical grounds as a skin graft strategically placed on his noggin to keep his huge intellect (brains) out of the sun decided not to take. Several weeks earlier Mick had been diagnosed with a melanoma on the scone which was of the nasty type and it had to come off. The operation was a great success but the skin graft wouldn't take due to the incompatibility of the donor site. His head objected to

contracting Zacharies disease. That is, his head would look Zachary like his bum where the skin graft came from.

So three couples, the Williamson's (4/70), the Collie's (Michael's work Colleague) and the Foley's (ring-ins from the North/Western Suburbs) who had only met for a couple hours at one of Mick's famous barbeques headed off on the trip of a life-time without their fearless leader who was the common point of contact for all.

Well, we thought, stuff it – let's live the OTU motto to the fullest *"Fade Away With Dignity, But Drink All the Funds First"*. So most of the crew did but the Williamsons let the side down by not drinking all the funds. Linda Williamson did the right thing and tried to eat all the oysters on the ship's seafood buffet but ran out of luck when one was a little off. The doctor arrived to administer her with the healing touch via an IV drip and a bloody great needle. Mind you, nothing keeps Linda down and she was up at 8:00 am the next morning to go on a helicopter trip over the Mitchell Falls.

The trip was a huge success and we hope that Mick will get the opportunity in the near future to see this most amazing part of Australia – the last frontier in this part of the world. It holds breathtaking scenery, ancient aboriginal art, wildlife which is very close up and personal (e.g. crocodiles, whales, turtles, big fish and every bird variety you could wish for) plus helicopter flights over deep gorges and spectacular waterfalls. What else could you ask for in an adventure holiday off the beaten track?

P.S. Michael's skin graft has finally come good and he is back at work.



Even the aborigines knew of Zacharies disease



Hunter River estuary north-west WA

OTU ASSOCIATION (QLD CHAPTER) CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2008

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Comments</u>
9th October	Monthly Luncheon	Fridays Restaurant
*13th November	Monthly Luncheon	(Tim Fischer) United Service Club
11th December	Monthly Luncheon	Fridays Restaurant

***13th NOVEMBER LUNCH**
SPECIAL GUEST – TIM FISCHER

Although all Scheyvillians are equal in every respect, there are some who have pursued rather different careers to others and been very successful in doing so. For this reason, such individuals will always have some interesting stories to tell – particularly over a beer or two.

Tim Fischer (Class 3/66) is such a character. Tim is both a Vietnam veteran and a political veteran and he has agreed to join us at our Queensland Chapter lunch on 13th November.

Make Tim feel welcome by coming along and saying ‘G’day’ to this bloke who is one of us but has also been one of them (apologies to all in that great white building on the hill in Canberra)!!

A NOTE OF WARNING – be sure to wear your Scheyville badge as Tim always wears his and berates those who don’t. The USC rules do not permit denim being worn within their premises.



Tim Fischer (3/66)

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT APPROACH **REUNION OF SCHEYVILLE CLASS 4/66**

Following the successful reunion held at Terrigal in 2006 for the class 4/66, it was agreed to keep the momentum up by arranging another one within the next couple of years.

The driving force was once again that terrier CSM Mal Robinson, who kindly offered the shearer's quarters at his property Ellerslie half way between Enngonia and Weilmoringle in outback NSW as the headquarters for the operation. Ellerslie is a 70,000 acre plus property with over eleven kilometres of its boundary doubling as the New South Wales/ Queensland border.



Left to Right: Jim Briers, Dita Briers, Barry Ellison, Mary Ellison, Sheran Fisher, Nancy Robinson, Jamie Fisher, Mal Robinson, Chris Shepherd, Doug Dick, Peter Fletcher, Marilyn Fletcher, David Taylor, Annie Taylor



The hot spring "spa" and BBQ area in the bush

The chosen weekend was 18-21 July 2008 to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee running of the famous Enngonia Race Meeting.

Doug Dick was first to arrive on the Wednesday, having taken the smart option of flying in from Adelaide in his light plane. After sighting the excellent smoke signals from the ground, Doug skilfully put down on the bush strip next to Mal's house. Mal's wife Nancy had organised an 'emu bob' in the preceding days to clear the strip of any large stones and other debris that may not be compatible with the plane. Any local livestock were encouraged to give the strip a wide berth during the landing by methods that are better not gone into here.

Thursday saw the arrival from Canberra of Peter Fletcher, Barry Ellison from the Gold Coast, and David Taylor from Tasmania. Jim Briers navigated his way in from Port Stephens on Friday, as did Chris Shepherd from Eumungerie.

On both Thursday and Friday nights a BBQ was held at the popular "spa", a brilliantly constructed bathing arrangement fed by the steaming hot continuous running water from an artesian bore only a few kilometres from the house in the middle of the bush.

What could be more enjoyable than enjoying several refreshments, eating some local produce cooked on a home made BBQ (an old silt scoop), having a bath in the very warm soothing

waters, looking up at the clear night sky and listening to numerous versions of the escapades at Scheyville – in a place so remote that most Australians will never get within a month's march of the place.

Saturday dawned crisp and clear, promising a good day at the local races.

By mid morning we were ready to set off for the highlight of our weekend. Our convoy made its way through the bush, arriving at the Enngonia race track in time for pre-lunch drinks at the Members Bar. The crowd soon swelled to several hundred more than the usual population of around 50 or so and we counted ten light aircraft parked next to the landing strip conveniently located adjacent to the 1600 metre post on the race track. A sumptuous lunch provided by the locals was washed down by many more drinks. Our host Mal, a committee member of the race club, doubled as barman at the Members Bar and judge of the actual races, the irony of which was not lost on the members of our group.

It was about now that we were joined by Jamie Fisher, BSM of our senior class 3/66. Jamie is now a well known resident of Nyngan, only a 400 km spit down the track from Enngonia and he had gladly accepted our invitation to join us for a couple of days.

Peter Fletcher took Nancy Robinson's advice to back any grey horse, much to the derision of the other more "knowledgeable" racegoers in our group. All sorts of other ways of picking the winners were used, however in the end, the three grey horses did indeed win and Peter Fletcher made sure the four bookies went home without the shirt on their backs. All others in our group either came out in front on the day or suffered only minor losses. All in all, a brilliant afternoon's entertainment was had by all.

After the races we returned to our bush retreat, hunting the kangaroos, emus and goats off the road as we wound our way through the bush, the sun slowly setting and the full moon turning the sky into a sight to behold.

A BBQ tea at Mal's son's place, Dunsandle only a couple of kilometres down the road proved to be a great time to catch up with some locals and others that had made their annual journey to the races. A group of four including Jamie Fisher, Jim Briers, Dave Taylor and Chris Shepherd decided it was time to solve all of the world's problems. It was much closer to reveille when the lights finally went out and the kangaroos and emus could roam the camp with impunity.

Sunday dawned a little milder and after a substantial bush breakfast, it was time to do the daily run with Mal to check the troughs and dams that keep the livestock watered.

Then it was off to Dunsandle again for a BBQ lunch. Mal showed us his extensive LP record collection (over 2,000), several old cars awaiting restoration and other bits and pieces collected over many years in the outback.

A short mid-afternoon storm (a real rarity in this neck of the woods) saw us return to our camp for more reflection on the events of forty odd years ago. These recollections were interspersed by several stirring renditions of bush poetry and tales by host Mal.

Monday dawned crisp and fresh, ready to make our respective departures to all corners of the country.



The hot water system for the showers & spa



Doug Dick wondering if he'll get his plane out of here...

Our many thanks go to Mal and Nancy for providing a unique setting for this reunion. Their huge efforts to provide the accommodation and make us welcome helped make the weekend one which will be long remembered by all who were lucky enough to be able to attend.

It was unanimously agreed by all present that with many of us now in or near the “retired” stage of our life, we must make this getting together a regular event. Plans are already being hatched for the next one, at a venue yet to be determined.

Chris Shepherd 4/66

The Pirate of Pens/Ants

Geoffrey Butts (Buttsy to all and sundry) of 1/72 was repatriated back to old mother England for his crimes in OZ to live a life of hardship and debauchery on the good ship lollypop (Alias the Black Pearl) a 66 foot Narrow Boat plying the canals of England. Below are a few tales relating to a visit from Peter Pursey and his wife Helen earlier this year.

Despite popular myth, The Black Pearl is not all about raping and pillaging on the bounding canals. Sometimes it is just about socialising.

I recently had the pleasure of a visit by Peter and Helen Pursey. I was moored up at Foxton Locks at the time which is about a 2 hour drive from Heathrow and is an interesting spot for anyone who has not seen the canals as it is a flight of ten locks up a short hill. The first day following their arrival we made the 5 mile cruise along the canal to Market Harborough for lunch. It takes 7 minutes by car and 2 hours on a narrow boat. (These days I live life in the slow lane).



Buttsy & Helen with Black Pearl



Black Pearl on the high seas

The next day we used Peter's car to visit Warwick Castle. Any one visiting England should make it a priority to make the trip to Warwick to see the castle which is about an hours drive from London. It is now owned by the Madame Tussaud Company so they have lots of their wax figures throughout which give it a more realistic feeling than most historic buildings. The basement floor is set up to depict the castle going through the preparation for a forthcoming battle about 500 years ago. On the top floors they have the scene preparing for a party and visit by the Prince of Wales about 100 years ago. A visit to the castle will take at least a half day. Warwick is only about a 20 minute drive from Stratford-upon-Avon so the afternoon saw us head down that way for a wander around. Anyone wanting to visit the Royal Shakespeare Theatre can forget it for now as it has been demolished. The rebuilding is scheduled to be complete by 2010. Still we got to see the local church where Shakespeare and his family have been buried in front of the altar. Hope they were dead at the time!

One great benefit of having the Pursey's visit is that they are both keen and talented chefs and cooked gourmet meals both nights. Prior to coming to England they had been in Paris so they came accompanied by Krug champagne, Pate de Foie Gras and Sauternes. Gee, life is tough on the canals. 😊

Guess I better get back to my stressful life. Cya,
Buttsy

Now that Buttsy has beaten me to the draw I should add a para on the canal adventure. The dreaded 'Pearl' is no ordinary boat; it has heating, washing machine, a shower better than most UK B&Bs (that's not hard) and lots of hot water with good pressure. Buttsy also has the full furnishing approach, a very large fridge – well stocked with various vintages, a freezer and a gourmet pantry with everything for the canal chef!! The only thing that's missing on the big black pearl is the machine guns!! Buttsy is an extremely generous host and nothing was left to chance – although he does relish the odd trip to a wet lunch and visiting delis and bottle shops. Anyone contemplating a great holiday and a very stress free few days should try canal boating – it's impossible to rush....aahhh...the memories. Helen and I had the 'best' time and it's a great experience with a terrific host.



Buttsy & Peter Pursey at Market Harborough Helen & Buttsy with the herb garden

Have added a couple more pics of Buttsy and his herb garden with a couple of free loaders who just lobbed up on him!!

Newsflashes (Vale)- Larry Moon and Doug Leeden

Geoff Moon has just advised that Larry (the bat) Moon, our most famous and revered RSM, passed away on the 20th September in his sleep. The funeral was held at the Pinnaroo Lawn Cemetery on Wed 24 Sep at 2pm. To quote Geoff “Dad talked about you (Gary McKay) often. Scheyville was a large part of our family’s life”. The funeral was a great tribute to Larry with hundreds of friends and family turning out to pay their respects.

Our condolences go to the Moon family and with great fondness and respect; we will remember Larry’s contribution to the lives of many Scheyvillians.

Doug Leeden passed away with a heart attack in his sleep over the weekend of the 13/14 September, in Perth. Ben Leeden, Doug’s son, advised that the official service will be held in Melbourne on 4 October in a quiet ceremony for Doug’s family at Box Hill. A memorial service was held on the Gold Coast on 19 September which was a wake at his favourite watering hole to celebrate his life. Doug would not have wanted it any other way.... Our sympathies and condolences go to the Leeden family and our memories of Doug as one of the “true characters” will linger on.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR **QUEENSLAND OTU SCHEYVILLIAN NEWSLETTER**

As mentioned in the first edition, the need to produce this Queensland Newsletter has come about by the inability of the latest committee to produce the more formal Scheyvillian Journal. Until that situation changes, we aim to produce this newsletter quarterly in July, October, January and April.

If anyone has an interesting article or note or knows of the whereabouts of one of our Scheyvillians who has lost touch with the group, please drop a note/e-mail or phone Owen Williamson or Bernie Carney (contact details shown on Page 1).