

Spirits of patrols past to take us into the future

PETER GARDINER

Welcome to the Coolum Pulse's Field of Dreams, well to be more precise, Flags of Dreams.

You may well remember the Kevin Costner classic movie where he answered the call to build "it", a baseball diamond out of nothing, and they came.

"They" were the long passed-on greats of the game who would emerge from the corn fields to play ball again as young men in their prime. Well Zinc cream yourself up, sit on a towel and we hope you appreciate the show of club spirit.

Looking into those determined eyes of Jack Morgan as he poses for the camera with his family on an all-too-familiar Coolum Beach, more than a 100 years ago, did he ever dream that this was possible, as we count down to surf life saving club's Centenary Celebrations in 2019?

That the little swimming club this pioneering council lifeguard helped breath life into at Coolum Creek would morph into a vibrant community hub, complete with an unblemished track record for saving lives between the flags. Jack and his followers have made a real difference, while establishing a local relevance most organisations can only dream of.

If we were able to pop Jack into an IRB, driven by club president Fred Stokes, with club captain Frank Liberato as crewie, after arriving on the beach unannounced, and could ask to take the founding father of Coolum Beach SLSC for a spin, how would he react?

Like most people of vision and perception, especially to this man who had trained in fairly new Royal Life Saving methods in Sydney, before heading north to make a go of things as a Coolum pioneer, I doubt he would have batted an eye.

"Hi Jack," Fred says in his usual friendly drawl, "would you like to see the fruits of your labour 100 years on? I tell you, it's well worth the ride in this IRB... that's an inflatable rescue boat."

"I thought you'd show up one day," Jack says, "this craft is a little shorter than the whalers they've been using down south, but this new-fangled IRB motor seems to be sound enough."

"It does the job just nicely, Jack," Frank says, "we can get to patients a lot quicker than using a belt and reel. In fact, we only use the surf reels on special historical occasions, like our club's upcoming Centenary Celebrations next Easter."

Fred says: "We'll just take you around to the bays for a look see, while the volunteer patrol sets up for the morning and then we might be able to show you some of our modern methods. But first we have to contact Coolum base on this hand-held radio of our movements."

Jack: "Can I have a go? I've heard of this device being used by Marconi."

Crewie Frank says: "Press in this button and hold it a little away from you mouth until the beeps say its right to transmit. Then you say 'Coolum Base, this is Coolum IRB, we're about to go on a routine patrol, will advise of water population when we return'."

Jack is a natural, like a duck to water. He reassures his wife Nellie and excited children he'll be fine, he's just exploring the future of lifesaving in Coolum.

Just before they launch, Jack: "So we made it, the club I mean. I believed deeply we would. Well, we had to if this gem of a place was ever going to take off. We had to make the beaches safe for the holidaymakers to come and then stay so one day Coolum would prosper."

It would be touch and go there for quite a few years, as Jack struggled to get enough regular men trained up and able to do the special holiday patrols. It wasn't always possible to get the Royal Society men up from Brisbane, but Jack was always looking ahead, never back.

Jack says: "Fred, just think of what it will mean next Easter in 1919, when we have hundreds of campers here. I've been putting aside some of my lifeguarding payment from the council towards a surf reel, we're going to put on the grandest show of life saving to get this place going."

Fred says: "You've done really good, Jack. Thousands of lives have been saved right here on Coolum since you and your boys started all this. There can be no greater reward than that, Jack. As president of a club with more than 240 active patrol members and a tonne of little nippers in training to be lifesavers in the lead up to the

2019 celebrations, I just want to say we'll always be in your debt. It's our job now to make damn sure that know one ever forgets what you blokes have done and ensure this place will be as safe as can be when the sets turn treacherous."

By the time Fred, Frank and their special guest patrolman Jack Morgan return to the beach, the red and yellow flags are in the sand, the patrol arena and sun shade is in place. Standing alongside the rostered patrol members are a few ring-ins.

Champion belt man from the 1930s Spencer Browne is standing strong as teak in his old one piece examining one of the rescue tubes with a modern day clubbie. Looking even more rugged is Ernie Berg, whose legendary feats around the surf club, and at war for his country, will live for as long as the club's collective memory stays strong.

Ernie, a gifted all-round sporting natural who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp, hops on a Malibu rescue board and heads out into the solid break silky smooth. These are the men that the Nambour Chronicle back in the 1930s would idolise



When our past and present join forces for our Centenary Celebrations during 2019

Ernie, a gifted all-round sporting natural who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp, hops on a Malibu rescue board and heads out into the solid break silky smooth. These are the men that the Nambour Chronicle back in the 1930s would idolise as "the Sun gods of the Pacific" because of their mastery of the surf break compared to most mere mortals.

Up on the main clubhouse veranda deck, present day supporters' club president and life member, John Ellingsen, a master surf boat rower for the SOCs crew, is showing around the club's outstanding early secretary, who steers the club on its first steady course for expansion back in the 1930s.

GNB Job, or Norrie, was a canny banker and administrator who served the club as a faithful servant for many years and was finally awarded the first ever life membership before passing on the surf club baton.

"John I have say, I'm a little taken back by some of your modern methods – there are women in this clubhouse! They were strictly forbidden in my day, but the boys did their best to get around that one," Norrie says in his smart three-piece suite.

"Norrie, it was the same in my day at first, but it's changed since we allowed female bronzies. The place has moved with the times; this is no longer an inner sanctum for all the boys from Brisbane who made their way up here to patrol all weekend and go home lobster red from patrolling or mucking about on the beach all day only to have their skin peel off mid-week. Then they'd do it all again next weekend. They were never more alive than right here on this sand. Nowadays, most of the members are locals, in fact lots of families, who just hang round downstairs in the common room and on the front terrace."

Norrie looks aghast at the bar that will soon be doing a roaring trade after opening hour.

"Strictly no alcohol, John, those were the hard and fast rules and watch out for anyone who stepped out of line."

John: "Of course Norrie, Coolum was basically teetotal in your day ... in my early days the boys would have to hitch a ride from Stafford up to Yandina Pub, rehydrate for a few hours before getting to the dry clubhouse as best they could. Some slept in the railway carriages at Yandina and some hitched a lift with the milko the next day.

The great Keith Peterie, who is still a club patron, reckons they used to have a five-gallon keg in the fork of a tree on Saturday night at Point Perry, while Poodles Kemp and the crew in the later days had a keg in the gear shed and some mighty fine singalongs. There was also a party house where the boys would

"As far as I'm concerned, Jack," Cushie says, "it just doesn't get better than this, day in, day out."

Jack seems a little restless.

"I must be getting back to the family Dave, there's still lots to do before we can take it a little easier, before the club and the members to come have what they need to do what they do ... what they love to do."

Cushy shakes the club's founding father's hand, as 13 long-boards and their young tearaway lifesavers frozen in time, pose for their local immortality in a gear shed long gone.

"If only we could freeze ourselves in our prime, Jack, because the real pay-off for all that vigilance and service comes with a bonus – the best bloody times of your life."

The clock is ticking to our big year

Well the "shot clock" is ticking down to the Coolum Beach surf Club's greatest moment after 10 decades of wonderful events.

The club's Centenary Celebrations are going to be something special. All active members should feel really privileged that they are serving on the scene at this pivotal moment in time. So a countdown clock and Centenary Celebration page will be added by the club's IT whiz Jarrod Sweetman to the club website.

There will be a series of special Centenary events now being fine-tuned by the organising sub-committee, but a spine-tingling sense of occasion should come on Easter Saturday, April 20 with the official launch of Celebrations.

And the planets and stars have all but aligned, with this date as it is just one day out from when the whole club entity is considered to have got rolling, April 21, 1919.

That was on Easter Monday at Coolum when a whole bunch of Royal Life Saving Society of Queensland members, who were camped in Coolum, presented a surf life saving reel to club founder Jack Morgan.

They had spent the long holiday weekend putting on beach gymnastic displays and rescue demonstrations to the delight of holiday crowds and had declared somewhat optimistically that no safer beach existed. In May next year, the Centenary Celebrations will be the main focus of the club's annual presentation dinner so watch this space for the special features on this night of nights at the Coolum Civic Centre. After that, there will be a major Centenary Community event in September followed by a real return to our past roots during the early October Back to Coolum celebrations with a special heritage theme. A special Centenary Celebrations logo, featuring a surf reel and the club's iconic futuristic shark tower built in 1960 and sadly demolished in the 1970s due to salt damage, is being refined for a final approval from the surf club Management Committee.

Centenary celebrations sub-committee spokesman Ian Norman said: "We will also seek SLISA approval to compete in the original sky blue, red and white strip in season 2018/19 to recognise the proud"

Ian said that the club has also set up a Past Active member category to reach out to all past members and provide a way for them to stay connected.

"These are the people who paved the way for the club today and it is important to keep them involved," he said.

Ian said work is underway to ensure the all sections are fully involved in the celebrations and there will be an update to the club's history book *Breathing Life Into Coolum Beach* by its author and active member Peter Gardiner, with a planned reissue featuring a special edition centenary cover. And there is a range of other special touches that the sub-committee is working on with the support of the club Management Committee.



let their hair down, but we won't go into the more racy details."

50 years plus club veteran Dave Cush, the embodiment of all that has gone before, is walking up the club ramp after a swim with the social swimmers the 79ers. He turns to a dripping wet, Jack Morgan, who has made the swim out and back with these new-fangled flipper fins.

Special trophy for surf hero as our Coolangatta Gold teams fire

OUR history is not something that sits stale and dusty buried on a storage shelf in the club annals.

This club's proud legacy is a high level of surf safety, that is a living, breathing testament to past members' dedication, which should be informing all future generations of Coolum Beach SLSC volunteers.

For proof of that, look no further than a decision to name the club's premier lifesaver trophy in honour of club war hero and legend Dick Lugge, who lost his life during the club's infamous Black Boxing Day tragedy of 1948, trying to save distressed swimmers.

Earlier this season one of the of the biggest turn-outs the Back to Coolum day instigated by life member Dave Cush back in 2007, saw this major announcement. The decision to rename the perpetual trophy Dick's honour was fittingly made with his descendants as special guests. Also there sharing their memories of Dick were his fellow patrol members that day, life members Keith Peterie and Ron Want. Keith, Ron and Dave (our three club patrons) made Dick's niece Crystal, sister-in-law Evangeline and other family members present, feel right at home. Club president Fred Stokes graphically recounted the tragic circumstances on that day highlighting the extreme bravery shown by Dick in such nasty surf conditions. Three of the five bathers in trouble were saved but sadly a local man from Buderim and an interstate tourist from Victoria could not be rescued. So if there is a common bond, a surf lifeline connecting club members down through the ages, it is one of re-

newal and dedication. And this year Dick, and all who have gone before, would be proud as punch of the competitive spirit coursing through the veins of Coolum clubbies, made up of youngsters and seasoned surf veterans. Under "Sgt Major" Mick Nagle, the nippers and a hardy band of board paddling, beach running and surf swimming competitive types have training weekday mornings, while the regular Sunday surf swims are back thanks to Show 'Em No Mercy Steve Stockley. This season was pure Coolangatta Gold for a record number of our surf club members tackling the iconic Gold Coast event, with the Coolum Blue Team (190 years) finishing a fantastic second in their teams age category. The Blues and the Masters Red (140 years) threw out a challenge to test themselves against some of the fittest surf sports athletes in lifesaving.



The Blues of Mick Nagle, Andy "Dicky Knee" Johnson, Ian Norman and Bryan Campbell took not only bragging rights against Coolum Red, but won a carton of liquid refreshments for finishing better in their respective age groups. Coolum Red's Chris Atkinson, Mick Sell, Bobby Le Roux and Andrew Saw finished a hard-fought fifth in their age category that saw them pitted against former great champions. They were joined by six keen juniors in James Sweetman, Ronan Nagle, Locki Rahui, Lachlan Saw, Lachlan Nagle and Alex O'Conner who competed in the Youth Challenge 300m run, 400m swim, 400m run, 500m board and then a 50m run.

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Surf events are pumping

Coolumb Beach SLSC continues to make a name for itself as a champion venue to host big surf events.

Already this season, chalk up a huge effort by club volunteers to stage the Australian Navy Series Surf Boat Carnival and the Ocean 6 series featuring the Nutri-Grain Ironman series on the same weekend.

And our always competitive "surfies" featured strongly in the the State Lifesaving Surf Board Riding Titles with Coolumb's Harvey Jackson taking out bronze in the Under 11 final, Tobias Crew was unlucky to finish 4th in the Under 12s final with Lachlan Andrews also 4th in the final of the Under 13s. In the Under 14s boys division, Finn Walsh surfed extremely well and came away with silver while Toby Andrews finished with a bronze. Jodie Waring made the final of the women's over 40s short board, with lightning cancelling the final mid-way through.

Not to be outgunned, the Coolumb Beach Chums Reserve Grade women's surf boat crew has been selected to represent Queensland later this year as part of the state surf boat team.

The Chums, made up of Sophie Gruhl, Phoebe Child, Erin Smith and Rachel Reiser with Pat McGuire as sweep have been leading the way all year. The girls have dominated their division a huge achievement for a first-year crew who six months ago had not stepped into a surf boat. Simply "oarsome".



presented to his partner Shelley by club president Fred Stokes. It was a fabulous afternoon of complimentary food drinks and live music and the verdict was everyone got something out of the event organised by Steve Stockley with the help of wife Kate. Special thanks to Stone and Wood boutique brewery for their fluid hospitality and for Ian and Paul Norman's efforts in the bar with thanks also to Wayne Porter. Sisters Santosha and Nirvana Le Roux received a special early leave pass from patrolling duties on the beach to join fellow cadets Hazel Cullen, Zanthé Ireland, and Amie Taylor to assist with serving the happy guests. List of winners: \$5000 - Lloyd, \$1000 - Tim, \$500 - Jenny, \$100 winners - Bryce, Greg, Luke, Isis and Terry.

Andy's handy chopper rescue

Our very own Westpac Rescue Helicopter fly-boy Andrew Mills has been lauded for his hand in the rescue of two young swimmers caught outside the flags at Mudjimba.

The volunteer rescue crewman was winched down for his first rescue in the chopper, after spotting the swimmers in trouble.

"While it was my first time, it was familiar territory because of the training, they were pretty happy to see us," Andrew (pictured left) said.

"They were pretty nervous but okay.

"They hadn't taken in too much water, but we did cop a bit of a flogging from the surf while we set the harness up.

"By the time we got them back to the beach they were pretty shaken up but not hurt.

If we hadn't of been flying passed who knows what would have happened?"

Pilot James Orrom said: "I am awesomely proud, we work with a great team from a variety of backgrounds and he did a great job." Job well done to Andrew, the popular Patrol 6 co-captain.



200 reasons to plan for patrol arena

It was a case of Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Lloyd, Lloyd, Lloyd! As the Surf Club celebrated its second annual 200 Club \$5000 raffle giveaway, on Australia Day

All proceeds will go towards a new you-beaut patrol arena. Lucky Lloyd Cahill took out the top prize with the cheque being



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