

Mission accomplished for another busy season

PETER GARDINER

By now the steam is rising off the gentle winter swells up Stumers Creek way as the sun slides out of the water behind the bobbing shark nets. Soon, whales pregnant with all sorts of possibilities will be free-wheeling their way up to the Whitsundays, grateful for some Coolum Beach R & R off Point Perry. They'll give fin-slapping high fives to the dawn.

Out in the break, Coolum Beach SLSC clubbies Paul and Jo Hampson are gliding their SUPs onto the glassy waves, relishing this winter downtime. In a while they'll be relaxing up on the Esplanade, drinking in some Raw Energy java with Cath Duncan and others all relaxed and comfortable since the final flags down at the long Labour Day weekend in May.

Another clubbie Paul Gallagher pumps his lycra-clad legs on his early morning ride headed for The Caf. The rubber duckie rev heads are ready to hit the water for their winter racing season of mad dashes and mock rescues, while Dan Rogers works out in the clubhouse gym ready for the next surf boat season.

In the surf club carpark, the right honourable Poodles Kemp, Coolum Beach SLSC ambassador at large, has commandeered the entryway and is using his trusty "leaf blower", which sounds like a 747 warming up, to try and hold back the sands of time always creeping up on his precious parking bays.

Welcome to the off-season, and with the annual awards night dinner just done and dusted at the Coolum State School hall, we trust the 2017-18 season hangover is not biting too hard.

Here's your chance to rest up and restore your enthusiasm for arguably the biggest year in the club's history since its foundation in 1919 — the Centenary and all its celebrations.

Out on the clubhouse sun deck, club president Fred Stokes is ... well, what else, but stoked at the season just successfully completed and excited by what lies ahead.

Take it away Fred: "This past season has been a very successful one in many crucial respects. We have built in both the numbers of members and awards in our patrol teams.

"Over the past season around 200 of our members have performed in excess of 11,445 volunteer patrol hours. I'm very proud that our club has again maintained the reputation of zero lives lost between the flags and commend our club captain Frank Liberato, patrol captains and patrolling members for their vigilance and service.

"We have had some excellent Buhk-Wilks patrol inspection results which can only result from solid training through our chief training officer Gail King and her TAF team along with clear

leadership from our management committee and section heads. "Behind the scenes, we have been working towards our Centenary Year of 2019 and beyond by focusing on some key areas. We are very close to achieving our goal of securing a second property for the surf club, which will help alleviate our major storage issues.

"The admin office and gear shed spaces have been reviewed and improvements have been made with plans underway for the re-development of the lifesaving facilities downstairs.

"Surf sports interest and participation have seen a marked increase this past season with our surf boat section bucking the trend by increasing in size and depth.

Masters beach and surf have also seen growth with strong representation at branch, state and national level.

"We are very proud to have both state and national champions crowned this past season and look forward to seeing even more participation next season from nippers through to masters in all aspects of surf sports."

Club captain Frank thanked "all you dedicated members that make this awesome club what it is. A friendly, joyful, giving group of people within the Coolum community".

"Always willing to go the extra mile if need be. Thanks everyone, from our up and coming future lifesavers (nippers), to our youth (cadets) already on the job earning their stripes, to all our active seniors and particularly our patrol captains that are the pillars of our patrol teams, our trainers and assessors, for the endless hours they put in, not to forget our coaches whose efforts give our member honed skills and confidence to face anything the ocean throws at them on patrol or in competition."

Frank thanked all the committees, from the lifesaving committee to the supporters committee, "right through to our

awesome nippers and of course our admin team" "I would also like to thank the supporters club staff for their hard work that earns the funds that provide our vital quality rescue equipment. "Preventive action is what it's all about, I'm sure you'd all agree. "Vigilance, quick action, cool heads and good communication within the patrol team and with the public in general."

This season all this resulted in just 15 rescues for the whole season—a remarkable statistic (and one that must be close to an all-time record) given the rough conditions. There were more than 11,400 patrol hours logged by 240 active patrol members and almost almost 69,000 beach visitors to watch over. All up there were more than 9800 preventive actions. "Looking forward to seeing you all between the flags next season" in other words—job well done, plenty more to do.



Club captain Frank Liberato has praised the efforts of Patrol 11 led by veteran patrol captain Peter Hopley for their super April response to three beach emergencies on the one patrol.

The first was a dislocated shoulder, the second helping medi-vac a man who had fallen off a cliff at Third Bay and the third was confidently retrieving a swimmer with a suspected spinal injury.

Split seconds that really counted

The Coolumb Beach SLSC has been touched by its past in a very moving way, with an echo of a rescue resurfacing, to show how life changing the outcomes of having those beach guardians down between the flags can be. Club admin officer Shane Urban received an email from a Karen McKechnie with the subject line: Article re rescue of Thomas Durey, 1938. It has this report attached:

Boy Rescued from Sea at Coolumb Beach
NAMBOUR, December 19. 1938



Stan Costa, of Burleigh Heads, who, with Alf Williams of Southport, has been elected an honorary life-member of the Surf Life Saving Assn. of Australia.

A fine rescue was performed at Coolumb Beach yesterday. During a lull in the championships of the North Coast branch of the Life Saving Association, Thomas Durey, seven years, son of Mr. and Mrs E. C. Durey, of North Ann, got in a gutter and was being quickly swept out to sea. Mr Tan Costa, the State superintendent in examinations and instructions in life-saving, happened to be handy, and he at once dashed into the water fully clothed. A powerful swimmer, Mr Costa soon had the child safe on the beach.

Any delay on Mr Costa's part might have been fatal, as already huge waves were breaking over the boy, who soon recovered,

however. At the official opening of the championships later, Mr H. F. Walker M.L.A., spoke of the incident and said it showed how efficient the lifesavers were. Mr Costa was cheered by spectators.

Karen wrote: "Hello Shane, My Uncle, Tom Durey, passed away on Tuesday 13 March and I am planning to write a short story about a landmark event of his life for his memorial service later this month.

Thomas Durey, aged seven, was rescued at Coolumb Beach in December 1938 by Mr Stan Costa who was at the beach on official duties as the Superintendant of SLSQ during a North Coast Branch Surf Lifesaving Championship.

"I have enclosed a copy of the newspaper article from the Brisbane Telegraph of 19 December 1938. Thanks to the strong swimming skills of the lifesaver, the rescued boy went on to live a further 79 years and had a productive and happy life.

He served in the air force, qualifying as an electrician and lived and worked in rural and regional Queensland. Uncle Tom was a father, grandfather and great-grandfather."

And there you have it highlighted in red, what a few splits seconds and ensuing critical minutes of caring during and after a surf rescue can lead to. A second chance at life where a boy lives to grow up, serve his country in the air force and start a loving family. The actions of one lifesaver results in a 72-year bonus gift, treasured by at least three generations.

Sadly, the club has no record and even the club's walking histor-

ical memory bank in life member Keith Peterie has no recollection of this rescue.

Keith, who would have been aged just six at the time of this incident, says around this time his family had moved in to town after their farmhouse at the back of Coolumb burnt down, so he was not at the beach as much.

Extensive searches of the Nambour Chronicle issues around this time failed to find any mention of the incident. There is one report that mentions Coolumb beach hosting the branch titles earlier, but there is no mention of the rescue.

Iconic tower is back for Centenary

It once was the most imposing sight in Coolumb, towering over the beach like a sci-fi sentinel and now its essence has been captured as an enduring symbol of 100 years of volunteer lifesaving at Coolumb to be celebrated in 2019.

And this mighty look-out tower of the Coolumb Beach Surf Life Saving Club, which succumbed to concrete cancer in the 1970s, lives on in spirit as part of the just released Centenary Celebrations logo of the surf club.

This soaring structure was seen as an architectural marvel when the Premier of the day Frank Nicklin proudly opened Coolumb Beach SLSC's second clubhouse in April 1962.

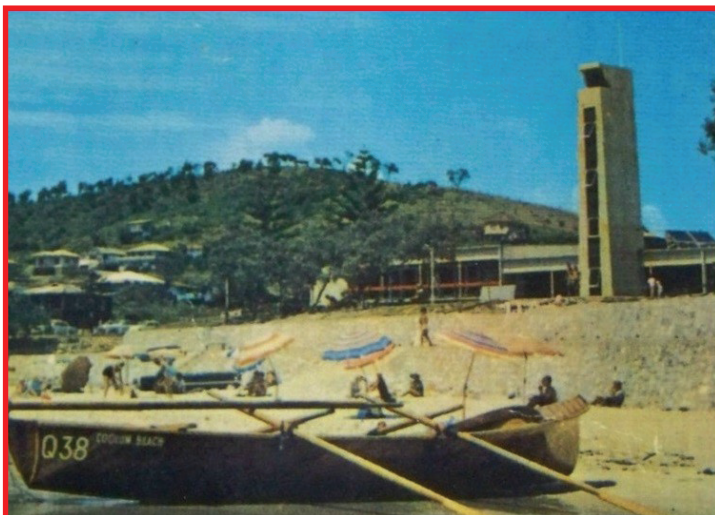
The club with its lofty landmark was hailed as setting a "new trend in surf design" with Premier Nicklin described this key Coolumb Beach facility as one of the most modern clubhouses on the Queensland Coast.

Now the "shark tower" forms the '1' in the '100' design of the Centenary logo and will feature strongly as the club builds up to its start of celebrations in April next year. This has been added to the already impressive Coolumb Beach SLSC logo with the curling breaker forming the C. The logo also incorporates other major heritage symbols with an iconic surf reel and the club's red patrol cap. And to the club's defining tagline "The heart of Coolumb since 1919 ... your club for life" has been added under the 100 symbol ... "a century of service".

This logo will feature heavily in the branding of the Centenary Celebrations to feature major social events involving the Coolumb Beach community and the club's many supporters. "

As one of the oldest clubs in Australia, 2019 is a great opportunity to not only celebrate the efforts of everyone who has made the club what it is today but to also look forward to the next 100 years of keeping Coolumb Beach safe."

Centenary Celebrations committee chair Kate Stockley said.



Soaring symbol now history

"I look forward to an amazing season as we celebrate our Centenary and encourage every member to be actively involved in the celebrations."

There will be the official launch over Easter 2019 to coincide with first lifesaving patrols at Coolum 100 years earlier, the Centenary Annual Dinner in May, a Centenary Gala Community Event to kick off the 2019 surf lifesaving season in September and the club's biggest ever Back to Coolum Day members reunion in October 2019.

And no doubt there may be some spicy yarns about that old look-out tower, for not only did it spot sharks and help save countless lives, but quite possibly new lives were conceived in there.

In those days when women were strictly forbidden in the clubhouse and most certainly the bunkhouse, the shark tower was the lifesavers' version of lovers' line, after dark of course.

The club will also launch a range of Centenary merchandise to recognise the milestone including items on sale to the public and as a treat for the club's growing band of surf sports competitors, a special "back to the future" competition strip for season 2018/2019.

Kate said this will take the club back to its original sky blue, red and white heritage colours of the club.

Club officials are now going all out to contact as many past members as possible to ensure as many eras of service to the community are represented at the celebrations.



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Champion efforts one and all

Coolum's end of the 2017-18 lifesaving season came not with a whimper, but a flurry of frantic and inspiring activity.

And despite the last patrol Labour Day Monday turning on some bucketing rain, club officials like surf sports officer Ernie Burrows are rubbing their hands with glee and saying bring on next season. Of course, while the supercharged Coolum IRB racing team is just getting started on its winter competition assault for its quest for gold medals at all levels, the club beach and surf gladiators are resting up after a huge season on the boards, with the tube, in the surf boats and scooting across the sand. Bad weather made staging the club championships a test of endurance in itself, but perseverance paid off. Of course, the highlight of the morning is always the bragging rights due to the winner of the Acer Cameron board riding showdown with the usual suspects like Fred Stokes, Jarrod Sweetman, Steve Stockley and Ian Norman battling it out to impress the judges Bruce Dunne and Gail King.

In challenging swells, the final came down to a margin of only five points between fourth and first with Michael Sell finally taking out this highly coveted event. This event was immediately followed by the Kennedy Cup club swim which had been hotly contested all season. For a 50s something Ian Norman, there was barely time to catch his breath after battling out the final of the Acer Cameron. Ian and the rest of the field had to negotiate a solid swell and northerly sweep before lining up again the next week for the grand finale. Because of the rough conditions, the club championship round consisted of some left field events such as the Beach Tube Rescue, Beach Board Rescue, Tug of War and the Dash for Stash, plus the foot-powered Boat Rescue across the sand in mini replica surf boats. The winning team announced at awards night was Patrol 7.



The club is riding a competitive high having taken out 4 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze at the Aussies in Perth for surfing. Bruce Dunne kept his amazing winning streak alive defending his national longboard title for the fourth year in succession.

And surfing talent Finn Walsh beat some amazing grommet talent to blitz the 14 years shortboard title. Jodie Waring reigned supreme in the short and longboard events with Patty Lynch snaring silver in the masters longboard while Toby Andrews took bronze in the 14 years shortboard final.

The lightning-fast master's beach relay team of Heidi Dunne, Emma Rahui Kate Tomba, and Jodie Waring clinched silver, while Kate came within a whisker for snatching the flags gold.

Silver is still a dazzling colour to hang around her neck. Despite not coming home with medals despite some strong performances, the surf boat crews are determined to ever to be back bigger and better at the Aussies next year at the Gold Coast. Surfboat sweep Patrick McGuire said the first timers have lapped up the big comp vibe of the Aussies and are good to go again.

And just to round of the season, the weekend after the volunteers put down the flags for the season, some very keen Coolum Beach SLSC ocean swimmers led by swim coach and life member Brett Glister really put themselves outside their comfort zone. Brett and five other clubbies

did the 11km Island Charity Swim from Mudjimba, around Old Woman Island and across to Mooloolaba.

Makes you exhausted just thinking about this major fundraiser for the Nambour and Currimundi Special Schools. Brett and Ian Norman did the entire swim solo, while Monique Hirsch, Louise Talman, Evie Nocher and Janina Cook did the teams event, and everyone loved the calmer sea after weeks to of lumpy swell. With next season taking in the surf club's Centenary Celebrations, there will be plenty of willing competitors looking to somehow top all these fantastic efforts.

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