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BACK TO COOLUM IN OUR CENTENARY YEAR

This was a club room full to the brim with more than 70 years of lifesaving talent, who between them have saved dozens, if not hundreds, of lives of Coolum Beach swimmers.

Coolum Beach Surf Life Saving Club's Centenary Back to Coolum gathering of past and present lifesaving talent on that October Saturday afternoon will long be remembered as the most successful of "clubbie" reunions to date, setting the benchmark for many more to come.

Fittingly the club's patrons, this special triumvirate of Ron Want, Keith Peterie and a still very active patrol captain in Dave Cush, were among those celebrating with plenty of lively yarns, which grow more colourful with the years. Ron and Keith, now in their late 80s, between them had together saved the club from almost folding in 1949, to now see it thriving with more than 80 honoured guests enjoying the hospitality of the newly updated members' common room.

As this annual reunion, created by Dave to link the club's rich living past with its present-day membership, was reliving memories of the famous post patrol "keg in the shed" bonding sessions, down on the Gold Coast modern day club members were earning podium finishes in the masters and junior sections of Coolangatta Gold endurance event. While 400m away on the southern stretch of beach, Patrol Captain Wayne Porter and his troops were keeping a 100-year tradition of no lives lost between the flags well and truly alive.

Just the week before more than 80 volunteers had been on duty over the three-day Queen's Birthday weekend looking after bumper end of school holiday crowds without missing a beat. Club president Ian Norman is one of the club's golden oldie lucky Patrol 13 team headed by "Cushie", touted as the oldest living patrol team in Australian lifesaving. Ian is a relative

"pup" of this team, having joined the club as a junior in 1974 and since then has been basically keeping on, keeping on with his patrol duties and active competition.

It was Ian's "privilege" to welcome the 100-year gathering before heading down to the Gold Coast for Coolum's ongoing assault on the Coolangatta Gold on Sunday. He messaged after the Gold wrapped up: "Well done to the long course teams today. Five teams in total – two bronze medals and some great racing."

The marvellous reality for a surf club celebrating 100 years of volunteer service between the flags, is that the club is undergoing an increasingly strong resurgence of surf sports competitors, led by its veteran and masters ranks who are inspiring a fresh wave of juniors.

Among the surf club's many special guests this day is the daughter of one of Coolum Beach SLSC's supreme beach sprinters and most faithful servants, the late and great Alan Casey. Leanne was sharing her memories of her many good times at the club with the likes of Keith and Ron, who are both still sharp of mind. As well, former clubbie Liam Daly, son of former Life Member the late John Daly, and brother to local lifeguard and Life Member Michael, had made the trek from the Northern Territory where he serves Australia's Customs and Border Security Service.

Other welcome returns were from Life Member Michael Gibson now of Hervey Bay and Max Bartho, who joined the likes of Back to Coolum stalwarts Lou Hesse, Life Members George Sakrzewski, Warren 'Mopey' Gifford and Ian Swan for an afternoon of banter.

This special occasion was marked by the official unveiling of its historic 100-year celebration mural created by former club nipper and local world-renowned artist Blair McNamara. Blair's dad, Bill, a former Metropolitan Caloundra lifesaver who moved his family to Coolum Beach in the early



1960s to enjoy the bigger surf break, passed away only recently aged 92. Bill drove the move to establish the first local Nippers called the Coolum Darts, back in the late 1960s, and Blair's artistic flair has long centred around preserving Coolum Beach's beach culture. So the Nipper, turned hardcore surfboard rider, was a perfect fit for this artistic celebration, focusing on the club's strong characters in juxtaposition around its famous 1960s clubhouse designed by recently deceased Life Member Peter Lambert.

President Ian said in his welcome: "It's fantastic to see so many current and past members here, and a particular welcome to our life members. "It's been a great year, this season has been coming for a long time, 100 years obviously, but we've been planning this for three to four years." Ian said some of the highlights of the Centenary year including the club returning to compete in its traditional club cap colours of sky blue, red and white and re-establishing a march past team that competed at the Australian titles.

The Back to Coolum Day was the last formal celebration of the Centenary, which kicked off in April with the Centenary Celebration launch, followed by the Centenary awards dinner in May and then a community beach day in August embraced by hundreds of well-wishers. "The feedback from the public was very positive," Ian said. "It's been a great privilege to be President of the club for Centenary season. "The club is in good shape, upstairs continues to trade well under the stewardship of (Supporters Club President and Life Member) John Ellingsen.

Ian said the club's operation today with a multi-million turnover, was a far cry from the days when he and other members had to sell meat tray raffles at the Regatta Hotel in Brisbane and Marcoola's Surf Air. He said the club employs about 70 people and has about 14,000 social members. "It puts down close to a million dollars a year (to the active club) to keep us running," Ian said. One of the club's biggest assets is its 2.5 hectare parcel of land on Coolum Yandina Rd bought recently to help free up valuable space at the clubhouse. "We've got good patrolling gear, we've got a new (rescue) ute, a brand new side-by-side (patrol) vehicle, we're about to buy a new bus and we've got new IRBs. This club is what it is because of the people standing here in this room and the people who have come before us. We are proudly a volunteer organisation. Every (patrol season) weekend some 70 or 80 people stand on that beach to patrol the beach. The level of commitment that we get from our current and past members is astonishing. I thank everybody in this room for what you've done for the club. It is what it is because of what you've done. Here's to the next 100 years of Coolum Beach Surf Club. It's been a fantastic year that I'll never forget, so thank you very much Centenary (Organising) Committee."

Centenary Committee chair Kate Stockley has the final word: "What a journey it has been to get to the end of our Centenary Celebrations. I have heard nothing but positive feedback on everything that we have delivered."

SHINING AT THE COOLANGATTA GOLD

While most people were looking to chill out on the Queen's Birthday long weekend in October, Coolum Beach clubbies were preparing to launch their biggest and most successful assault on the seriously challenging Coolangatta Gold.

More than 50 competitors and support crew headed to the Gold Coast after a block of solid training sessions to take on both the long course and the short course events. Coolum Beach struck the jackpot of gold, silver and bronze in the



short course and two bronzes in the long course, with our young guns, the Coolum Kooks team of Kye, Griff, Lachie N and Hudson with a top podium finish.

The Coolum Saws of Greg M, Andrew S, Lachie S, Katie J took silver. The girl power struck bronze for the Coolum Kats team of Kat Egan, Jodie W, Emma R, Meg N, while the Coolum Clubbies took bronze with James B, Jarrod, Anthony W, Steve R winning bragging rights over Coolum Red (Bobby, Chris A, Ric, and Captain Mick) by a minute.

The Coolum Chicks of Tam, Janina, Jodie W, and Els also took bronze and the special effort of the day went to husband and wife team of Andy and Caroline Johnson for taking bronze.



As well the club cadets in Nic, Ollie S, Isaac R, Lachie S were awesome, racing the elites to finish in sixth, while the Coolum Crew of Mick N, Greg W, Terri R and Ian N finished in fifth.

The extra special effort of the day belongs to Nippers Emily S, Ronan N, Esme J, Clare C and cadet Locki R who conquered the Youth Challenge. This was all a great lead into the competition season, with the winter cobwebs blown away. It was not long before the spotlight was on the youth brigade again with a band of juniors heading up to the U8-15 Carnival at Rainbow Beach.



SURF SPORTS FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

If racing flat out across the sand and churning through the surf sets was a test of character, then the Save Our Savers (SOS) annual appeal many of our club competitors took part in at local shopping centres was a real test of their dedication.

Coolum clubbies young and old rattled their collection tins to put a huge grin on the club's former long-serving Treasurer and President Ian Norman for the SOS. Ian said not only is the \$4000 collected a great pick up, it pays enormous dividends in building club spirit.

This ties in well with club's resurgent competitive edge that was on display, again in the junior ranks, last month at Dicky Beach Surf Carnival. For the likes of Jacob, Tarj and Kaia, it was their taste of surf events. There was plenty to cheer about as well with the U12 girls for making the swim final and the U12 girls and U13 boys on making the final in the board rescue on Saturday. Sunday saw the U15 boys take bronze in the sprint relay, finish fifth in the board relay and sixth in the surf team events. Then in late November, 32 pumped Under 8 to Under 10 Nippers attended their first carnival on Sunday at Noosa Main Beach.

The proud team leaders gave special mention to Josh F who competed for the first time in the boards. "He was challenged by the tough conditions but never gave up until he was across the finish line showing true resilience and determination," was their proud call.

Coolum Beach is to host its first ever Summer Training and Skills Week to be held Monday January 20 to Friday January 24, which is open to Coolum SLSC U9-U13 nippers and U14-U19 cadets and youth. The aim of this event is to offer our nippers and cadets/youth a unique opportunity to boost their beach and ocean skills and receive vital training and competing tips from an experienced group of surf lifesaving professionals.

And to top a busy first part of the season off 12 of the club's newest volunteer patrol recruits completed their Bronze Medallion assessment. As well three of the club's youth members have earned their Surf Rescue Certificate holders and have completed their Bronze medallion. None of this happens by chance. As the club rolls forward, it has its dedicated band of trainers and assessors who give up many hours of their time.

The club will run another Bronze course **commencing January 7**. Anyone interested in joining Coolum Beach's volunteer lifesavers on patrol on the weekends from September through to May should **contact the admin office 5446 1148**.

Not to be left out of the action, the high energy IRB racing team offered all the novices to find out for themselves what this rubber ducky racing buzz is all about. The "come and try day" held in November was a real eye-opener for a couple of keen young junior crewies who share the same need for speed to pull off these daring surf rescues. A second "come and try day" is scheduled for mid-December.

BOATIES LEADING THE WAY



Our boaties are never far from the surf action and last month saw the new look Coolum Beach Surf Boat Rowers tackle Round 1 of the Navy Series at Mooloolaba with four crews turning out.

Fickle Mother Nature served up four seasons in one day with a 25 knot north easterly wind, over 30 degrees,

a hail storm, followed by a cold snap after the storm.

The Coolum Beach crews were the Reserve Grade Men, U19 Girls, U23 Girls and the ever-reliable Smiley Grinners. The Smiley Grinners had a hard

day at the office but the U23 girls made it into the final and finished fifth crossing the line in a tight finish with Kurruwa and Noosa Heads.

The U19 girls bagged a fourth after a close finish with Met Caloundra with the promise of much more to come as this was the first carnival for the girls and they did the club proud. The Reserve grade men made the final and finished second after leading for most of the race but just could not dial up a runner when it counted to get them across the line.

MERMAIDS AND WISHES ON THE BEACH

Yes, there be mermaids at Coolum Beach, you just have look for them with someone special, someone who knows they are the most fabulous of all the ocean's wonders.



It was club captain Mick Sell's absolute pleasure to ensure our lifesavers caught up on the sand with the Make-A-Wish Australia team, who make all things possible for children bravely facing everyday challengers that make out annual skills tests seem like a walk in the park.

Jazmyn and her family came to Coolum Beach from South

Australia on holidays, looking for a change of pace and proof that mermaids not only exist, they are incredibly friendly, especially to children in special need.

But her wish was one of a kind. Jazmyn's wish was to become a mermaid and restore another mermaid's powers. "Although she contracted meningococcal B four years ago, Jazmyn still deals with the pain every day," the Make-A-Wish people said. "We're so proud to have helped make this wish come true with @makeawishaustr."

Armed with special mermaid-detecting binoculars, Mick and some patrol members were able to spot a small pod of these beautiful beings by the water's edge. "With the help of Patrol 9 and the Make-A-Wish team, Coolum Beach found a mermaid and her dream come true. Great effort from everyone involved," Mick said. To see Jazmyn's magical mermaid tale unfold head over to the Make-A-Wish Australia site.

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MEET THE TEAM



Not all accountants are desk-bound pen pushers, and at least one new Management Committee face at Coolumbeach who knows his sums, has a sense of extreme adventure.

Energetic Shane Mackenzie, who has stepped into rather large shoes of former club Treasurer and new President Ian Norman, is one of those adrenaline junkies who likes to row surf boats. He joined up for his bronze in 2017.

When he's not out rowing he can be found patrolling on Team 8 and oh yes, his day job is looking after the finances

of Stockwell Development, a dynamic development team headed by former Mean Machine Olympic swimmer Mark Stockwell who built and owns Noosa Civic among his property portfolio.

Here's a rundown on Shane in his own words:

"I grew up and finished school in Roma, in Western Queensland. Water sports not much of a thing in a town with not much water, so I had played a fair bit of tennis as a kid. I hadn't had much exposure to surf until a few years ago. I moved to Brisbane when I was 17 and started doing a bit of rowing, originally at UQ. A few years ago a mate suggested trying rowing surf boats, which seemed like fun but to be honest I wondered whether driving to the coast all the time was going to be a bit of a hassle. I got hooked – the rowing is great fun and the surf club vibe is great to be part of. Naturally, part of that is lifesaving and patrols, which I enjoy immensely because at the end of the day it's hanging out with your mates on the beach."



"I'm an accountant by training and lead the finance team for Stockwell Developments, a Brisbane-based property investment business. When I got word that Ian Norman was stepping up to President from his long-held Treasurer seat, I thought it'd be a good fit and great way to get more involved in the club. We've got a great committee that works well together and is truly a pleasure to be part of. I'd love to be part of it for many years to come so stay tuned."

"As far as the mechanics of my entry to lifesaving, it was a bit last minute and I'd missed the bronze course at Coolumbeach, so I did my training at Kurrawa, on the Gold Coast. It was a great course, and doing it at another club was a good way to meet a few people who I wouldn't have otherwise met and naturally I run into them at every carnival now. I'm in Greg Bott's patrol group 8. To be honest I've never had a patrol that has been too eventful – probably a product of good preventative work. The standard stuff, kids that fall over in knee deep water and panic, but that's about it."

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Club captain Mick Sell is a man of few words but plenty of action as he buzzes about making the Energizer Bunny feel weak at the knees.

So here's an update as we approach the busy Christmas and New Year period between the flags from Captain Mick's corner:

"The efforts of the patrol captains and their teams where our flags are set up for safe swimming, plays a big part in having a safe beach. To date there have been just a couple of minor rescues and a suspected spinal injury that was outside of the flags. Great work from Patrol 1 with their care and attention until the ambulance arrived."

"Patrols are going well with most of the patrols having good numbers on the beach, and our recently finished bronze courses will top up numbers of our smaller patrols. Our training team of assessors is doing a great job with our skills maintenance for the members to be able to continue patrolling each season and other courses that continue to up skill our members."

"As for Coolumbeach West, or new club facility on Coolumbeach-Yandina Rd, Fred's Shed is coming along nicely and is looking great. We recently had a clean-up and are getting ready to finish the driveway to get in the property, also sorting the access around the outside of the shed. We're close to having a working bee out there with the members which will include enjoying a barbecue and a drink after a day in the gardens."

And the message from Mick and his team – stay safe, keep vigilant, enjoy each other's company and make the most the many benefits the club has to offer.



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