

----THE ----
RADIO ACTIVITY
 ----NEWS BULLETIN----

For information of Ex.Radium Hill Community and families

Official Organ of the Radium Hill Historical Association Inc.

February 2003

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This newsletter design is in keeping with the original style used in Radium Hill and was produced by June Kakoschke

The next Radio Activity News Bulletin will be published in February 2004

Hello there,

Yes, 2002 was the “Year of the Outback”, and what a year it was.

A severe drought, strong winds, and dust storms that reddened the sky for days certainly tried the mettle of those folk in the bush.

The Committee, would like to thank all those people who gave donations, sent letters of thanks, made phone calls, offered best wishes, and helped support our efforts in any way. It’s just great and really appreciated.

I recently spoke to Orlando Bertocchi in Perth, regarding some Radium Hill information. His letter of reply contained the following sentiment “---how many common friends we remembered in a few short minutes, --we do remember them alright and by remembering we honour them”.

Yes there will be a **Reunion in 2006** to commemorate 100 years since Radium Hill was first mined. 2004 will be the 50th. year since Radium Hill was officially opened by the Gov. Gen. Sir William Slim in 1954.

The following pages outline some of our activities and contain items of interest and humour for your enjoyment.

Happy reading, keep in touch, spread the word, till we meet again.

Best wishes to you and yours.

.....

Kevin Kakoschke
 Feb 2003

DIAMONDS?

A diamond indicator Kimberlite dyke has recently been identified West of Radium Hill, a Lat.32.4130 & Long.140.5120 This is good news for those ladies who believe that **diamonds are a girl’s best friend.** Perhaps on a future trip to Radium Hill they may get lucky and find one. Best wishes.

BIRTHDAYS

The more mature (older) we become the faster our birthdays seem to arrive. **Mrs. Messenger** was 95 in July and **Art Baillie** turned 95 in Oct. Are they our two most senior ex- Radium Hillites? **Alec Smith** (the artist was 90 in Oct. and still conducting art classes whilst **Jean Schroder** (formally the A.I.M Sister Jean McKay) was 90 in Dec. By the way **Bob Blake** will soon celebrate his OBE (over bloody eighty) birthday Congratulations to you all.

EASTER 2002

What a holiday weekend. It had everything, excitement, sadness, a bit of drama, and a touch of the unbelievable thrown in for good measure.

On the Wednesday just prior to Easter the first holidaymaker started arriving. The ants around the campsite area were sprayed and the cemetery trees watered. Because “Jim’s Mowing Service” (Jim McDiarmid) was unavailable we were lucky to obtain “Malcolm’s Mobile Mowing Service” (Malcolm Sampson) did a neat job mowing the cemetery

bindii lawn despite the dusty conditions. Thanks Mal.

BURIALS

Because the ashes internment services were going to take place lunchtime Saturday, everybody bucked in to weed the cemetery grounds and rake the gravel pathways. Well done. The ashes sites were concreted on the Thursday and Friday.

That funeral service in our Radium Hill Pioneer's Cemetery was one of the most moving I have ever attended.

June read a eulogy for her parents mentioning that where John Williamson's song said "home amongst the gum trees" her mother and father would be "at home amongst their golf holes" of the Radium Hill golf course on which they both loved to play.

To the strains of, "Time to say goodbye", the ashes of Sam and Mary Thomson were laid to rest by their daughters June Kakoschke and Irene Thomson.

A granite headstone with a photographic tile of Sam and Mary attached, together with a bronze plaque was placed over the grave. A small verse on the plaque reads; -

*"Thomson was our name,
Scotland was our nation,
Radium Hill was our home,
And Christ is our salvation."*

The golfing sand wedge clubs used by Sam and Mary were crossed and fixed behind their headstone with the words, "Anyone care for a round", on an adjoining tablet.

Unfortunately due to ill health, Shirley, Norm Clarke's widow, was unable to attend the service for his symbolic internment. Norm had been an electrician at Radium Hill and a pair of pliers and screwdriver were buried with him just in case there was a power failure up above. After the eulogy

and the playing of "The power of love," a granite headstone with a photographic tile of Norm on his motorbike together with a bronze plaque was placed over his grave. Part of the engraving on the plaque reads, "*Radium Hill where his life in Australia began*". Shirley was able to visit the site in late August and later wrote, "--- the right place, it's beautifully kept and peaceful. I don't think you can improve on it".

Peter Harratt did a terrific job videoing the two services and the families of the deceased would like to pass on their thanks to all who attended.

On **Saturday night** there were 35 folk yarning around the campfire and feasting on Dean Fettke's freshly cooked damper. Phil. Sampson, a big boy at 6'4" and 22+ stone caused a stir when he sat on the garden setting seat and destroyed it. We need another seat.

"Up the Creek"

After lunch on Friday we were at the cemetery when the U.H.F. crackled and a voice said, "You are not going to like me Kev, I think I've done something wrong". I said, "Is that you Andy". The voice replied, "No it's John". As it turned out John Krecu had driven down the old Power line track and then turned right,-- up Olary creek. Every one was alerted via U.H.F. As the convoy of vehicles approached out of the dust, John's mate Manfred, (over from Germany) exclaimed, "The whole ----- town has come to help us". Yes, they certainly were up the creek, their 4WD bogged to its underbelly in soft black gunk. No worries, with plenty of shovels, tree branches, a strong rope, and a cruiser, they were out of the ---- in no time flat. Videos of the episode are great. It was just a

little too windy for Manfred to give us a paragliding exhibition.

On the **Sunday night** Ron Tame was going to show us some 1950's video footage of Radium Hill. Unfortunately it had been recorded on long play and he had only brought a short play system with him. "Oh, if only we had a long play system here we would be able to view it". Tim Sampson piped up, "I think I've got one in the back of me ute". He had. We did. Unbelievable!

Monday, and a tag-a-long drive out to the Maldorky Ranges. Some 47 vehicles of a 4WD club had churned the track into bulldust up to 18" deep just 2 weeks previously. Swans, cygnets, over 250 wild goats, and other wild life certainly made the drive worthwhile. A chap spent a week recently just studying a pair of "endangered" Peregrine falcons nesting in the old Main shaft concrete ore bin. There is another pair nesting in a gum tree at our campsite.

A SHOWER ANYONE?

During Easter 2003, we hope to complete and christen the installation of a shower shed as a special request from the girls. Our present showering enclosure comprising coloured plastic sheeting around a frame enables a person's showering silhouette to be seen from some distance away, depending on the direction from where the sun is shining. An understanding Maurice Francis of Maldorky Stn. has O.K'd the shed. Thanks Maurice. Rex Phillips has donated the shed and Bill Davis the shower cubicle. Thank you both.

MUSEUM

A Perspex-domed display stand containing Radium Hill sample.

of Davidite and Carnotite from Sir Douglas Mawson's collection has been installed in the Museum. Early 1900's photo's etc. will also soon be installed on a vertical stand. The windows have had U.V. light protective membrane applied to them, which will help preserve our displays. Members of the International Packard car club recently called into the museum and were impressed with what they saw. Two ex-Radium Hillites Emilio and Jean Del Testa (nee Jean McKenzie former A.I.M. Sister at R.H.) visiting Oz from White Cairns in N.E. Scotland eventually located the turnoff into Radium Hill via Tikalina Stn. and called into the museum on their way out. They were delighted with the museum, it's memories, and when Jean saw the plaque on the A.I.M. hospital site with her name on it she was "over the moon". Her letter of thanks ended, "who knows we might make it for the Centenary Celebration in 2006"!

Those Who Served

This list of those who served in the armed forces of their country now has **146 names** on it and still growing. Please send us the names of those folk who you believe may have served. The end result will be a fitting tribute to them. Thank you.

Born In Radium Hill

Of the 117 babes born in the R.H. A.I.M. hospital we now have the current address of nearly 80. If you can provide an address please contact June with the details. Thanks to all who have helped previously.

WE WERE RADIUM HILL

What a great response in bidding for this terrific book. Gavin Mudd was the keenest bidder and it was knocked down to him for \$169. Other books have also been kindly donated by Reinhard Bletsch and Vince Ierace, Owen

Reeves of the Olary Hotel is a new owner. Many thanks to all.

COMMUNICATIONS

When visiting Radium Hill we usually communicate to either Tikalina (Ch 30) or Maldorkey (Ch 15) Stns. and sometimes between ourselves via the U.H.F. radio system. **Good news!** Telstra has upgraded the McDonald Hill repeater station so that it is now possible to ring anywhere, anytime, from Radium Hill **IF** you have a **C.D.M.A** mobile phone set. June recently checked various locations around the townsite and reported that the best reception was on the top of Tank Hill. At the "School ground" campsite the reception can fade a bit. **Text messages can also be sent and received.** This technology certainly beats the old peddle wireless that we used when the mine first started and helps break down the barriers of isolation. Of course its strange to hear the jingle of a mobile phone ringing in Radium Hill, somehow it seems to be at odds with the tranquillity of the place.

RAIN

Only about 18mm. or 3/4" of rain has fallen in the Radium Hill area between Oct. 2001 and Dec. 2002. Coupled with unheard of strong winds it has been blowinggg dust. The dams are dry and many sheep have been sold off. The water in Gall's Well and bore has been pumped almost continuously for months to water stock on both Tikalina & Maldorky Stns. This is in sharp contrast to Feb.7th 1997 when 13" fell in the one day and flooded the whole countryside. Keith and Jenny Treloar of Wiawera Stn. have been carting household water since Feb. last year, a far cry from the flooding of '97. To put a positive spin on it, every day that it doesn't rain

means that it is one day closer to when it will.

WATER

Mark Francis was recently cleaning out the dry dam near Hugger's old place and opened up an old water soak. He mentioned that he had nearly finished cleaning Bottom water dam further along the watercourse. I tried my water divining wires a Hugger's and sure enough they indicated water. At Bottom dam they also indicated water, maybe another 2' to 3' deeper than already dug. Mark dug another couple of feet and yes, water soaked in. Coincidence, no. I checked with Dora Wilkins and she mentioned that her father had initially sunk the dams back in about 1936 and was handy with the "wires" when selecting dam sites.

PUBS

Barb and the late Rex Medhurst's son Callin is the new owner of the Yunta Hotel. If you like hamburgers with the lot I can thoroughly recommend their special. Yummy. Barb is also preparing a R.H. display for the bar area. Owen & Trish Reeve are the hosts of the Olary hotel. They have really changed the interior décor. Their Saturday night schnitzel special is very good value. Both hotels provide good overnight accommodation and drinks if you are travelling that way.

WAS IT, OR WAS IT NOT DIVINE INTERVENTION?

As you may be aware when Radium Hill closed down all the buildings were to be removed and the sites levelled, all that is except the staff mess V.I.P. quarters which were purchased by Maldorky Stn. The Catholic Church was stripped of all salvageable material and the wall:

were to be demolished. With a roar of the engine Ray Stokes of Orroroo guided his big Cat D6 bulldozer into the double doorway of the Church to bring down the huge concrete lintel that spanned the opening. **Well it was the last thing that that bulldozer attempted for quite a while.** With a sickening crash and a big cloud of dust the lintel lobbed on top of the bulldozer smashing the radiator and engine. A pregnant silence followed. Nobody was game enough to have another go at it. The walls of the Church still stand today, maybe as a monument to Fr. Shields and to the volunteers who built it. God only knows.

A verse from a Colin Simmich (Rad. Hill truck driver) poem highlights the site clearing ----
 "And now the site is clear again.
 Each has gone their varied way,
 But those who have a yearning to
 Can visit Radium Hill any day!"

Pat Ireland (nee Pengilly) usually types up Colin's poems. They both reckon they will be down from Qld. for the 2006 Re-union.

OBITUARY

Regretfully a number of our friends have passed away since our last newsletter including: -

- Clayton Enid, Pt. Broughton, S.A.
- Ding George, Adelaide, S.A.
- Drazil Stephanie, Adelaide, S.A.
- Haensch Manfred, Cobar, N.S.W.
- Kakoschke Cyril, Adelaide, S.A.
- Mansfield Ern, Minyip, Vic.
- McKee Rhonda, Adelaide S.A.
- O'Donnell John, Gin Gin, Qld.
- RudgeSue, nee Phillips), Adelaide, S.A.
- Schenk Maureen, Canberra, A.C.T.
- Stocco Guiseppe, Adelaide, S.A.

To their families we offer our deepest sympathy and condolences for their loss

XMAS FUNCTION

The Committee Xmas social held at Frank & Margot Binkowski's certainly was a riot of fun. Every one brought along the makings of what was to be a sumptuous feast including turkey, ham, Xmas pud and all the trimmings.

For entertainment, I got the ball rolling by reciting the poem, "I'm my own Grandpa", followed by a skit complete with skins, about a "cunning fox" and a "lucky black cat" who saved their skins in the bush. Corny?

Margot then stole the show as a be-jewelled, sultry, seductress, "Marlene Dietrich" complete with black top hat, fishnet stockings, 12 inch cigarette holder, and singing "Falling in love again" while perched on a stool. Wow! She completed her act with "You do something to me". A real live torch singer.

Then it was June Kakoschke's turn as "Tina Turner". With a wild mane-like hairstyle and a black wet-look mini skirt she bumped, ground, and gyrated, while blasting out "Simply the best". Eat your heart out Tina,-- what a performance.

Margot, complete with a colourful grass skirt and lei, then danced and swayed to the rhythm of some Hawaiian Hula music. Great. It's a pity that a larger venue is not made available so that folk in addition to the committee can also attend these Xmas Socials. They're terrific.

- **STOP PRESS** — An "Entrance Portal" is being constructed for the Radium Hill Pioneers Cemetery

MEMORY JOGGERS

A number of folk will be camping at Radium Hill this Easter 2006 (Easter Fri. 18th.Apr.). Join in the Working Bee and have a fun holiday with us. Video's of the "R.H.Entertainers" will be shown.

- Please send us the name and address of childrer who were born at the Radium Hill A.I.M hospital
- Please send us the names of those folk who you know may have served in the Defence forces of their country.
- Please contact June our Secretary if you have heard of any ex- Radium Hill resident who may have passed away.
- Centenary of Radium Hill Easter 2006 re-union Back to School and A.I.M births
- Mary Black (nee Raymond) mentioned tha 2004 will be 50years since the official R.H. opening in 1954. Suggestions fo recognizing this event ?
- If you intend calling into Radium Hill please write or phone both Andy Treloar, Tikalina Stn. via Olary Ph.08 80911529 **and** Maurice Francis Oulnina Stn. via Mannahill Ph.08 86505901.
- If unable to contact June or myself by phone leave a message with Margo Binkowski who will pass it on.