



PIRATE POINT POST



ALL SMILES: Emile Billett, ready for retirement.

— Picture by Madeleine Stirrat

Well-known identity's retirement

By **MADELEINE STIRRAT, JENNIFER ROWLATT, DREW COLYER, HAYDN BROWN and LUKE KELLY**

AFTER 37 years at Stockton PS, teacher Emile Billett is celebrating his retirement with a tour of Europe and a regular game of golf.

Stockton born-and-bred, Mr Billett entered the world at Sister Brown's Hospital, in Mitchell Street Stockton, in 1948.

While he was growing up he enjoyed doing a number of things including reading, going to the beach and playing sports, especially golf.

He went to school at St Peter's Catholic School in Stockton and went to The University of Newcastle.

Mr Billett said he had seen some significant changes to education during his teaching career, such as decreased class numbers, increased technology and changes in family units.

Mr Billett originally taught at Merrylands in Sydney but after three years he returned to Stockton.

His specialties at Stockton were computers and teaching maths.

Mr Billett taught at Stockton for so long that he taught some of the current students' mothers, fathers and siblings.

Every picture tells a story

By **LUKE JONES, LENNOX McKESSAR and HARRY WHILE**

THE Stockton Historical Society has given its community a blast from the past with a new mural, which was completed on March 4, 2007.

The mural was painted by a number of different community members, who ranged in age from eight to 80 years old.

Jean Purtell, one of the artists involved in the project, said the community's level of involvement was wonderful.

"[There were] people constantly streaming through helping," Mrs Purtell said.

Some of the helpers were from other areas and communities and had Stockton-born ancestors, Mrs Purtell said.

Through the mural, the historical society wanted to depict the early working history of Stockton and connect the past to the present.

The grand opening featured performances, speeches and special guests, including the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cr John Tate, and former state representative for Newcastle, Bryce Gaudry.

The mural features surviving miners of the Stockton Colliery Disaster of 1896; the Stockton Dinkum Girls, who raised funds for World War I; the school gardens of Stockton Public School in the early 1900s; and Callens' boat yard.

The Post interviewed mural



STEP BACK IN TIME: Holly McNamee, Lennox McKessar and Harry While in front of a section of the mural.

— Picture by Luke Jones

designer and artist Holly McNamee.

Ms McNamee is an English/art teacher who did her training at Adelaide Teachers' College.

She enjoys looking at features of buildings and highlighting these

features to others.

She did a lot of community work in Adelaide and when the opportunity arose in Stockton she jumped at the chance.

Organising and designing the mural took two weeks, and an

additional two weeks to paint.

One of the highlights of the opening was a special impromptu singing performance by three children from Stockton Public School, who wrote and sang a song to commemorate the day



HANDS UP: Dance instructor Rowena and students.

— Picture by Madeline Gray

Getting ready to move and groove

By **SHAMIEKA DUBOIS, SABRINA CROZIER, MADELINE GRAY and NAOMI DINGLE**

AS A follow-on from the Sports in Schools program held at Stockton PS in 2006, the school's kindergarten to year 2 teachers inquired about a new dance program from Australian School Dance.

The program caters for

children from kindergarten to year 6 in primary schools and years 7 to 9 in high schools. It runs for 10 weeks for a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 40 minutes for each lesson, and caters for 20 to 30 students per class. The cost for each child per lesson for the program is about \$2.

A special performance will given at the end of the program.

The Stockton dance instructor is Rowena. She has been dancing since she was six and teaching dance for seven years.

Rowena said her highest priority while teaching dance was to get the children moving, and keep the children's fitness levels up.

Rowena applied for the job because she is a qualified primary school teacher and also enjoyed teaching dance.



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Food and fitness for fellow students

Editorial

By **PAULA BURDIS, SEBASTIAN NAUDE** and **LIAM POTTER**

DO you think schools are doing enough to fight obesity and unhealthy lifestyles?

Many schools are doing a lot to fight obesity yet, according to research, childhood obesity levels have almost doubled in the past few years in the Hunter Valley.

This rise in the number of overweight children is disturbing because it causes health problems, which in turn can lead to social problems.

Australia is actually the second 'fattest nation' behind the US.

Stockton PS is fighting obesity in many ways.

The kindergarten classes have gross motor activities each morning. The year 1 and year 2 classes have daily physical education classes. Most children from kindergarten to year 2 also participate in the newly introduced weekly dance lessons.

Primary classes also have weekly sport lessons, individual class lessons and regularly compete in knockout competitions throughout the region in sports including soccer, netball, football and baseball.

At school we combine these physical activities with our healthy canteen. All schools must comply with nutritional guidelines. These guidelines have

been set down to ensure children are offered nutritional meals at a reasonable price.

Not only does the responsibility lie with schools, parents also need to play a vital role in the education of children's eating habits.

They must lead by example.

According to research, Australians eat only half the amount of fruit and vegetables recommended for good health. Parents need to introduce children to healthy food from an early age and make these foods readily available.

Parents should be encouraging children to eat healthily and discourage too much junk food.

Finally, children need to take some responsibility for their own actions. Children should be responsible for the type and amount of food they consume.

When they are hungry between meals, children should try eating fruit or vegetable sticks instead of biscuits or confectionery. They should also exercise more often, not just sit and watch television or play computer games.

The world has changed greatly since our grandparents and parents were young. Many modern inventions have made life much easier for both adults and children. However, modern computer technology has helped to foster children's inactivity, which in turn has led to an increase in childhood obesity.

We all need to look at our lives and our health choices. Be food wise, fitness orientated, outdoor active and a healthier, fitter nation we'll produce.



INTRIGUING: Irene Butterworth and historian Ross Craig at sign number seven on the ballast ground. — Picture by Nicholas Harris

Signs of history

By **GRETA RIGBY, OWEN BELLINGHAM** and **NICHOLAS HARRIS**

STOCKTON is an old and interesting place with a fascinating history.

Recently, the Stockton Historical Society decided to place signs around the community to tell its amazing story.

The Stockton Historical Society was originally formed in 1996, when a group of concerned community citizens formed a committee to research, document, and preserve Stockton's history.

This history began on September 7, 1797, when Lieutenant Shortland was chasing a government boat stolen by a group of four convicts.

The boat ran in to the beach; the convicts survived the crash, and scrambled from Lieutenant Shortland's clutches.

After a long day of searching, Lt Shortland camped out on what is now Newcastle Beach. He dis-

covered an incredible amount of coal. And so Newcastle and Stockton began.

The Stockton Historical Society's president is Irene Butterworth. Bruce Langford is the vice president.

It was Mr Langford's idea to put up the signs to show places of interest in Stockton.

The society has placed eight signs in different significant locations around Stockton.

They have produced a map and details of these locations for further information.

The Stockton Historical Society meets monthly at the Prawners' Club in Fullerton Street, Stockton.

The society also produces a quarterly magazine, which is available at Cellarbrations liquor store and the newsagency.

Stockton Historical Society also conducts guided tours. For more information, phone Ross Craig on 4928 1163.

Community efforts pay

By **BEN HJORT, VICTORIA NAUDE, KATHERINE BRACE** and **MADLYN VIAL**

THREE out of five inland swimming centres managed by the Newcastle City Council are heated.

Stockton pool is one of those three, thanks to a joint project between the Stockton community and Newcastle City Council.

The pool has been heated now for two seasons.

The heating of the pool cost approximately \$90,000 to install, and 15 per cent was contributed by the Stockton community.

The pool was vandalised in 2006. Vandals destroyed the heating by cutting the mat on the roof which absorbed the heat.

The community was disgusted by this act of vandalism. One person who was particularly upset was pool manager, Kim Flynn, who was also manager of the caravan park.

Ms Flynn had been manager of the pool for the previous 13½ months.

Staff such as lifeguards and the canteen workers spends approximately 12 hours daily at the pool, from 6am to 6pm. Newcastle City Council is not considering extending pool hours or open season.

The pool's average temperature is now four degrees warmer.

The Stockton Pool now attracts people from the surrounding community and wider Newcastle area for swimming lessons and general recreation.



— Illustration by Owen Bellingham

Spelling touchdown

By **RACHEL SMITH, ELOISE WELLER, REBECCA HOBSON-HUGHES** and **TANYA CARRALL**

ELEVEN-year-old Luke Jones, a year 6 student at Stockton PS, has interests in both spelling and football.

In 2006 he entered the Premier's Spelling Bee. Competing against 30 other regional finalists, he came in fifth place.

The winner of that competition was Elena Herrin, from Albury.

In 2007 Luke also competed in the Hotspell competition, against 176 other students from NSW, and he came in 10th place.

Not long after this, the principal of Stockton Public School, Ken Wilson, received a phone call from Channel Nine asking if Luke would like to be on the *Footy Show* in a spelling competition.

His partner was Matthew Johns, and his competitors were Paul Haragon and Elena Herrin.

Unfortunately Luke and Matthew lost by one point.



WHIZ KID: champion speller Luke Jones. — Picture by Eloise Weller

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