

# North Queensland Recorder Society



## Newsletter, February 2015

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### Next Play Day and AGM

The next Play Day and the AGM will be held together on Sunday 1 March 2:00-5:00pm at the usual place: St Joseph's School, Fryer St, North Ward. The plan is to have the play day, elect the committee for this year and have a short informal concert.

The concert may include Black Box items and pieces from the Play Day for the benefit of parents joining us for afternoon tea. If you have any pieces that you'd like to play under the umbrella of the Black Box, please bring them along.

Valerie Huston is our leader for the play day and the theme is **Lullabies and Wake-ups**, presumably alternating.

The main purposes of the Annual General Meeting is to elect the new committee, provide the financial reports for last year and get feedback from members. We need your feedback on the functioning of the Society and suggestions for changes and improvements.

Nominations for Positions on the Committee may be sent by email to [info@nqrs.org.au](mailto:info@nqrs.org.au) or presented in writing at the start of the AGM. New talent and enthusiasm, particularly, are always welcome on the committee so please consider nominating.

Positions on Committee:

- **President**
- **Treasurer**
- **Assistant Treasurer**
- **Minutes Secretary**
- **Committee Members**

Additional Roles:

**Newsletter Editor**  
**Play Day Coordinator**  
**Website Manager**  
**Librarian**

See the [Activities Page](#) on the NQRS website.

## **May Play Day**

The second Play Day of the year is planned for Sunday 17 May 2015. The leader will be Heather Coleman and the theme will be Animals. See the [Activities Page](#) on the NQRS.

## **Weekend Workshop**

Unfortunately the concert and recording commitments of Hans-Dieter Michatz made it difficult for him to fit in the Weekend Workshop in August 2015 and we, trying to avoid the AFCM Family Concert, were unsure of dates. We hope to have him as lead tutor on another occasion.

At the moment, we are waiting to hear back from potential lead tutors. Our preferred weekend is the 8-9 Aug 2015 but this will depend on the tutors. Watch the [Activities Page](#) on the NQRS website for developments.

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## **Busking**

Our choice of Médecins San Frontières and their fight against Ebola for fund-raising struck a very good chord with the public at Cotters Market. We raised an impressive \$192.20 on the day and later donations took the total to \$300.20. It was great to get such heart-warming support for a very worthy cause.

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## **Secret Men's Business**

Five years ago, while clearing out my mother's house, I found a descant recorder. I waved it around and said, "Look what I found." My wife said, "Get rid of it. I don't like that." I thought that taking it to the daughter's place for the grandkids to play with would be a good idea. It lasted about ten minutes there before it disappeared.

Since then, during our Christmas visit to Melbourne, the eldest daughter has waved it around, then it disappeared again. I had the thought that it may be a good idea to learn to play it, but it would have to be kept a secret from the wife because of her declared aversion to it. Of course, the recorder was nowhere to be found.

A plan came to mind. I would learn to play some tunes, probably Christmas carols, and then take the recorder out of the daughter's hand and surprise everyone. The family Christmas get-together is usually held a few days after our arrival in Melbourne, so I wouldn't tell them either. Another surprise.

Following our arrival back home from our 2012-13 vacation I continued to think about the recorder. Although I have had a desire to learn an instrument for about fifty years, I haven't been able to decide between the piano, classical guitar (probably the favourite), violin or cello and always baulked at the effort, time and expense involved. Thinking that, because the recorder was small and portable, it would be easy to learn (a big mistake). I went to the local music store and bought one.

I downloaded a book on how to play a recorder onto my Kindle "E-reader", but after a couple of weeks decided that was a bad idea. Following a bit of searching I found Malcolm Tattersall and organized lessons.

Right from the start I found the instrument a bit of a challenge. It was also a challenge keeping it all a secret from my wife. During my second lesson my wife rang from Adelaide (she was there for a wedding) and asked where I was. "I can't tell you." "Why

not?" "It's a secret." "You're not supposed to keep secrets from me." "Stiff, you'll find out a Christmas and I think you will enjoy it."

When she got home from Adelaide she cornered me and threatened me with all sorts of pain if I didn't tell her what the secret was. I once again said that she would find out at Christmas and I thought that she would enjoy it. Her comment was, "Bloody secret men's business."

Over the next few months I practiced all over town, in parks (including Bunnings' car park), at the bowls club, by the river and at the airport while waiting for planes and couriers to arrive (I work a couple of nights a week as a courier). I had some fun things happen while practicing. A little boy standing in front of me and yelling to his father "What's he doing, Dad, what's he doing?" People stopping to watch and listen. Several saying how they enjoyed the music and offering encouragement. A few saying that they had given up their instrument (piano, guitar and violin and trumpet) and saying they may have to get back into it. Feels good to have been a bit of encouragement. In the park one day I had a kookaburra land on the lid of my briefcase (less than a metre from me). He moved when I noticed him and went to sit on a tree root about two metres away and sat there for about ten minutes. My playing can't have been too bad.

In August I rang one of my sisters-in-law who I knew played the flute and had played the recorder and asked if she would to play some duets at the family Christmas party. She said that she didn't know where the recorder was and hadn't played her flute for over two years, so she didn't think it would be possible.



And along came our holiday in Melbourne. Officer in Charge of house and social life had organised that we spend the first couple of weeks at the youngest daughter's place

and that made it difficult to simply grab the old recorder out of the older daughter's hand and surprise the wife, daughters and grandkids. I told my wife what my "secret men's business" was and played my recorder for her. She was quite impressed.

A couple of days later was the family get-together, held on the farm of one of my sisters. What with seven brothers and sisters, their partners and kids along with some cousins, there were about thirty people there. Gillian, my flute-playing sister-in-law, came along with the flute in hand. We set ourselves up and played a few carols. Everyone was very impressed and complimentary – a wonderful success! Gillian was so happy she is now talking of getting back into playing again.

To finish, I would like to say thank you to Malcolm for his patience, sense of humour and his invaluable encouragement. The benefits of this exercise have been meeting lots of people and discovering that the challenge of learning an instrument is quite common. Physically, I have found that playing has provided some relief to the arthritis in my hand, which was an unexpected bonus. I can recommend learning an instrument to anyone of any age. Although it is challenging, it provides a good exercise for the brain and an opportunity meet like-minded people of all ages. But, best of all, it is fun.

*Our thanks to Ross Laughton for providing this delightful story of his experiences with learning to play the recorder.*

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### **Contacts and Links**

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