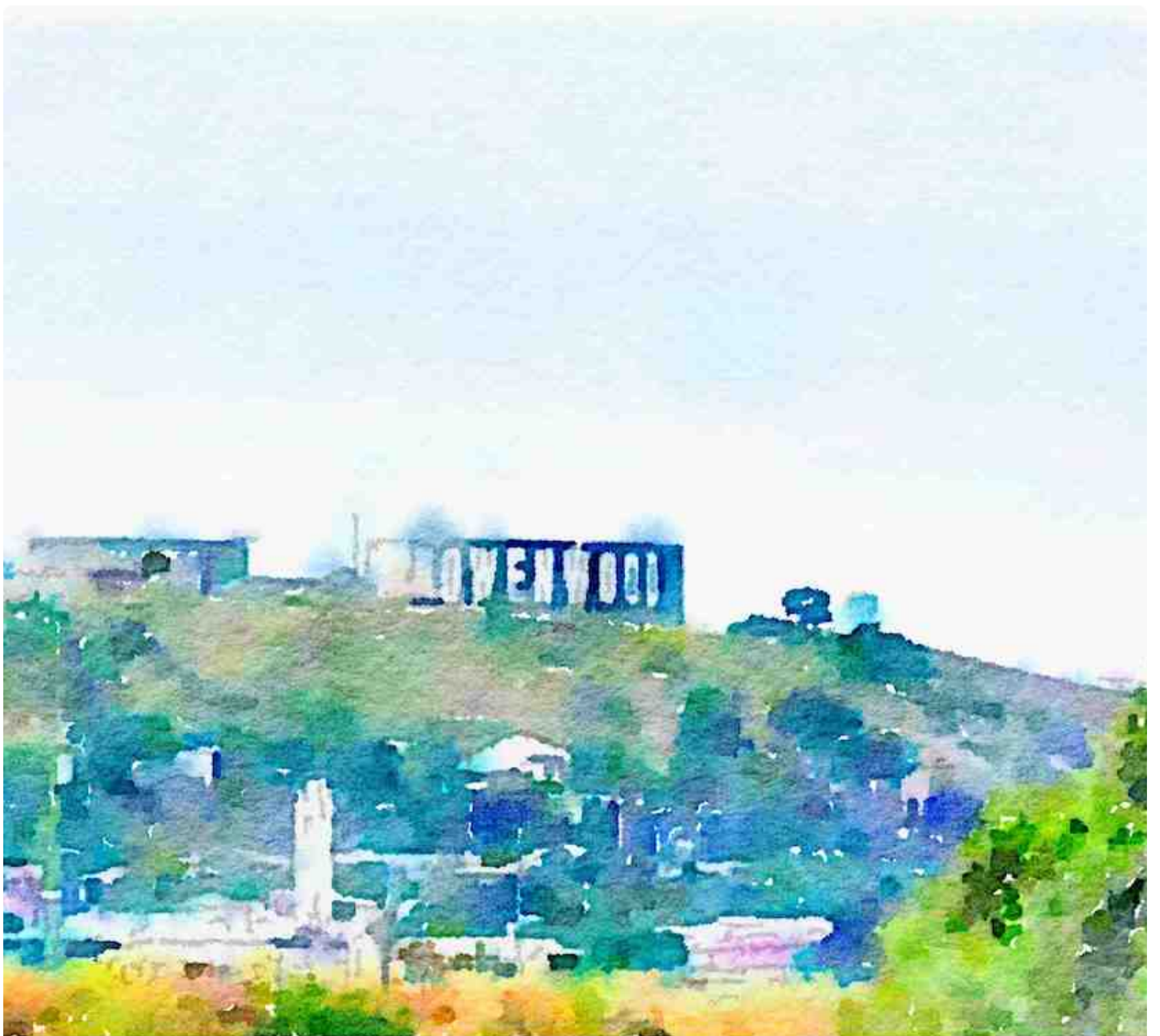


Ian Hughes

The Bowenwood Blogs



Bowenwood



Maybe it didn't end up the smash international success many locals hoped for. Maybe there's not much that's recognisably Bowen in there, but it'll be a while before we forget six weeks in mid-2007.

For six weeks, three hectares at the bottom of Bowen's main street were transformed into the set for Baz Luhrmann's movie Australia.

I was one of a hundred locals who volunteered to explain what was happening to the hordes who descended on the town for a look-see.

The Blogs:

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Originally published on another site that's long since gone belly-up, but preserved here for posterity.

So, what's the big deal?

Sunday, 20 May 2007



Apart from the presence of Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman, Baz Luhrmann, and almost every big name in Australian film over the past decade (or at least it seems that way)...

For a start, we've got a big-budget movie being filmed in the middle of a small country town in north-eastern Australia.

On Wednesday, I walked from the movie set to a local newsagent in search of liquid refreshment. It was too early to take the shorter/closer alternative and walk into the Grandview...

It was like walking back seventy years and shifting a thousand kilometres in two hundred metres.

Down THERE (pointing to the Front Beach), it's Darwin 1938. Right HERE (pointing to the ground at my feet outside the Coral Gem news agency), it's Bowen 2007.

If they were making the film in Sydney, a 400-strong film crew on a closed movie set in a studio complex would hardly raise a ripple.

There might be the odd news report in the entertainment section of the media or the odd publicity shot when filming started.

There would be the occasional story while filming continued, then the blaze of publicity around premiere time.

As the song says, *No one knows what goes on behind closed doors.*

Although the set is closed to the public and the media, you can see something of what's going down.

On Day One, you could see a bloke on a horse twirling a parasol.

He was apparently taking the mickey out of the aristocratic English gentlewoman under the white parasol.



There have been a goodly number of locals with time on their hands spending an hour or three standing outside the Grandview or on the other side of the toilet block at the Front Beach.



Over the past week, there have been at least thirty people outside the Grandview at any given time between eight-thirty and half past five.

When the shooting started on Monday, we had camera crews, reporters and photographers from all over the country looking for a story. I counted at least five TV crews that morning.

In their quest for better pictures, I gather that they made enough of a nuisance of themselves to be allowed on the set to film when the crew broke for lunch.

That didn't seem to be on the agenda when Mary Barltrop briefed the first lot of volunteers at five-forty-five on Monday morning.

After that, there were still media people hanging around on Wednesday morning.

I talked to one group who were figuring out how to get pictures of the cattle run next week.

Since you can stand on the edge of the set and see what's going on, those journos/photographers/whatever have been able to cover the shoot in ways that wouldn't happen on a closed set.

We're told that the crew numbers something like four hundred people.

Four hundred people wouldn't begin to put a dent in Sydney's hotel accommodation. They would have no impact on the number of people in the city. Here, the film crew alone represents a 5% increase in the population.

Then you have the reporters, people from out of town who've landed an extras gig, various other interested parties and the influx of tourists who've heard about the shoot.

That's the same impact as suddenly throwing fifty or sixty thousand people into the middle of Sydney - the sort of impact you get with the Olympic Games.

Doesn't happen very often...

They've accommodated some of the crew and most of the stars in private homes. The rest of the accommodation in town is (predictably) booked out.

They've apparently had problems with this weekend's Bowen Open golf tournament because there's nowhere for the golfers from out of town to stay...

The media coverage, of course, is all about the stars and the movie.

If you're looking for something along those lines, this might not be the best place.

There are plenty of places where you can find that sort of stuff (once I've figured out how to do it, I'll have a few links to other sites where you can get that sort of info, assuming you haven't done so already...

So here you'll find the musings of someone who was inveigled into volunteering to let people know what's going on on the movie set.

The gig involves:

- Explaining some of the storylines.
- Pointing out landmarks.
- Answering questions and, most importantly.
- Promoting the community.

The movie people will only be here for six weeks (not counting the eight weeks they've spent building the set). Much of the motivation for the volunteer program has been to ensure that there's some long-term spinoff for the town...

The downside? Not much, as far as I can see.

You're flat out finding a parking spot at that end of town during the day.

A few businesses might be adversely affected when they close off the streets next week to run the cattle around the block.

And you can't walk along the Front Beach (as if we don't have plenty of other beaches that are still open).



On the other hand, when we went down to pick up a pizza from Franco last night, we found the middle of town in semidarkness, street lights off.

Franco explained that he'd had to clear the shop at three o'clock that morning because he'd had enough and wanted to go home.

The cash flowing through the town has been something incredible.

Not just the ten thousand some people are picking up for renting a reasonably swish house to someone from the movie for six weeks.

The local petrol stations have been doing a roaring trade.

Many people passing by dropped into town to see what was happening with the movie, then decided to refuel here rather than at Guthalungra, Proserpine, Home Hill, Ayr or Bloomsbury.

But a couple of other points:

The set at the bottom of Herbert Street is supposed to be the most extensive outdoor set of its kind in Australian film history...

The movie has the largest budget for an Australian film (or so I've been told)...

A volunteer program like this has never been done on an Australian movie set. This figures since most films are made on a closed set behind the walls of a studio complex.

Here they're in the middle of town.

What's more, they'll be here for six weeks or so...

One down, five to go...

Thursday, 24 May 2007



There's no doubt that four o'clock is an ungodly hour to start the week's proceedings.

However, Warbo had informed me that he'd be on the doorstep at five-twenty.

I figured that the chance to move into the new day at a leisurely pace outweighed the risk of sleeping in and having to rush.

So I climbed out of bed, fixed myself a cup of industrial-strength coffee, and sat down to check my e-mail.

An hour and a quarter later, I was ready to go and check that I had everything I would need later in the morning.

In fact, once I was sitting on the front porch, I'd hardly selected a track on the iPod before the Warbo Wagon pulled up outside, and we were off...

Arriving outside the barricades, it was only a matter of ninety seconds before we were inside, rubbernecking through the predawn gloom.

We headed towards the catering tent where the rest of the morning's volunteers and breakfast were supposed to be waiting for us.

Around us, various trailers were disgorging the bits and pieces used to make a movie.

It was the first day of filming the Bowen segments of **Australia**, the new Baz Luhrmann movie.

Later in the day, we were going to be helping out with the PR interface between the film, the local community, and the hordes of out-of-towners we were told were on their way.

I'd hardly finished the cereal component when assistant location manager Mary Barltrop joined us.

She had the day's shooting schedule and explained they'd be making the call between the preferred fine weather schedule or its wet weather alternative at six o'clock.

After an assault on the massed ranks of sausages, bacon, mushrooms and eggs that had materialised during the briefing, it was off to the footpath outside the Grandview to work out how we would operate.

The original plan was to set up three posts with three volunteers. The coordinator would float between them, but a quick evaluation of the situation indicated only two spots where the public could see anything happening on the set. There was no way any coordinator could move between them without crossing the set.

Once the film crew indicated they didn't want anyone doing that, it was apparent whoever was handling the spot at the Front Beach would be left (more or less) to their own devices.

Transiting between the two posts would have involved compasses and cut lunches.

After we'd moved a tent to the Front Beach, it was back to the Grandview to assess the situation. Since the road was roped off at the end of the building, the spot for an Information table was obvious. From there, it was a matter of wandering around and waiting for the hordes to descend on us. Bearing in mind that it was still only about seven-thirty, it seemed like there was a while to wait.

We had a rough outline of what was being filmed, and the regular explanation (which I must have gone through sixty or seventy times through the week) went something like this:

Lady Sarah Ashley has arrived on a Qantas Empire Airways flying boat. She's stepped onto a pontoon, climbed the steps/ladder/whatever to the Darwin wharf (which was in Sydney) and comes into our picture about THERE (pointing to the blue screen on the Bowen wharf). She's not very happy since there's no one there to meet her. Hugh Jackman's in the pub, getting himself involved in a brawl. As she arrives outside the building, he comes flying through the window, lands on the ground in front of her, looks up and says, 'Welcome to Australia.'

Sounds relatively straightforward, doesn't it?

I arrived for my third stint on Thursday afternoon, and they were still shooting the fight scenes, though I gathered that the preceding bit was more or less completed.

Lesson #1: Nothing is as simple as it looks, and everything takes longer than you thought.

When I arrived for breakfast on my second stint on Wednesday morning, I found out exactly how long some things take - twenty-six takes of a thirty or forty-second sequence where a small Chinese boy playing with some pearl shells is told to look at the pretty lady (which turns out, in fact, to be a broom head moving from right to left behind the camera),

I used that story at least thirty times on Wednesday morning and Thursday afternoon. And I reckon I must have heard it another thirty times from the source of information - Uncle Tony, who'd been the small Chinese boy's minder.

Lesson #2: There's a lot of repetition in a gig like this. Once an introductory spiel is worked out, there won't be much variation unless someone comes up with a new question you haven't already covered in the standard version.

So that brings us to the next point: What did people want to know?

First, it didn't take too long on Wednesday morning to realise that plenty of people (mainly, but not exclusively, Bowen locals) had been there before. They knew more or less what was happening and were there to while away an hour or two, hoping they might see something interesting.

Talking to out-of-towners, once they knew what was going on, there seemed to be a couple of standard questions:

What is the movie about?

How much will it cost? and

What was over there before?

The first question prompted my quote of the week.

I was explaining to three female backpackers that the movie was about an aristocratic English lady whose husband dies and leaves her a cattle station the size of Belgium. The one in the middle interrupted, demanding, **AND HOW DID YOU KNOW I COME FROM BELGIUM?**

Questions about the budget produce a *not sure*. But at the current rate of progress, the final figure is likely to be closer to two hundred million than the various figures mentioned to date.

And what was there before?

Simple. Eight weeks ago, there was nothing between the retirement village and the backpackers' hostel except a hole in the ground and the telephone box underneath that shed.

Some other bits and pieces:

All the buildings on the set were prefabricated in Sydney and shipped north on the back of a truck. Most of them are just a shell, but there is a bar in the hotel and a bedroom upstairs...

The set is supposed to be Darwin in 1938, with buildings from Darwin and Broome between the late thirties and the early forties. Once they've finished with this version of the set, there'll be slight changes to turn it into wartime Darwin (1940 or thereabouts) with troop camps and so on. The final version will show Darwin after the bombing.

Week 2: Pamplona-By-The-Sea

Tuesday, 29 May 2007

(Or not, as the case may be)

After the excitement of the first week, Week Two saw things settle into a pattern that will, I guess, continue through the rest of the shoot.

A change in location on the set meant that the old viewing area on the footpath outside the Grand View was *out of bounds*. Once the barriers were moved further back, the public was much closer to the actual action, but that didn't necessarily mean that people had a better view.

At the same time, increased proximity gave a much clearer impression of the speed (and I use that word advisedly) at which filming actually proceeds.

While the action was centred around the jetty, distance prevented the observer from gaining anything more than a general impression. Once the shoot relocated to *Carney's Corner*, it was possible to watch from a distance of less than a hundred metres.

Incredibly, the building functioned as the Bowen offices of Queensland Transport throughout the proceedings.

As filming has progressed, the latest pastime for Bowen residents with time on their hands is to pop down to the movie set to while away an hour or two. You never know. Something might happen.

Proceedings rolling along at a glacial pace may be *as exciting as watching paint dry*. Based on last week's experience, in a race between moviemaking and drying paint, my impression is that paint is in the lead.

But there's only a short half-head in it...

And while attention shooting-wise Carney's Corner and the stockyards, there was really only one question that most people I encountered wanted an answer to?

When are the bulls running?

It was the first question I was asked when I reported for duty just before eleven on Monday morning. I'm sure it would have been the *topic du jour* on those two days if I'd been rostered on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Gossip on the streets suggested while the *rehearsals* had seen the cattle proceeding around the block at a gentle trot, the whips would be cracking once the cameras were rolling for real. The herd would be running for the last part of the circuit.

The general opinion from those *in the know* about cattle tended to discount strenuous bovine activity in the middle of the day. So mornings and late afternoons seemed the most likely times.

On the way down to the barricades on Thursday afternoon, I learned there had been a distinct lack of action on the bull-running front. While the overcast conditions might have suited bovine activity, the light wasn't going to be too good as far as filming was concerned.

The word went out tentatively when the clouds began to lift around three o'clock since nothing had been confirmed. There would have been a flood of mobile phone calls and text messages advising acquaintances of possible action.

When Security started moving people away from the area and the vehicles parked on George Street were being driven off, things were looking good.

Then came the complication. There was a silver car parked near a traffic island, and Security had been unable to locate the owner, so that put the kibosh on Plan A.

Plan B, which involved fewer cattle moving around the Grand View corner, was invoked. Still, if dramatic impact called for a herd moving around the corner at a fair clip, it seemed likely that there would be another attempt the following day.

Arriving onsite around ten-thirty on Friday morning, the light looked promising. Still, there seemed little likelihood of *Pamplona* till much later in the day. According to Volunteer scuttlebutt, most of the cars parked in yesterday's problem area were vehicles associated with the film crew, which removed one potential stumbling block.

Around twelve, the crew broke for lunch, the watchers dispersed for refreshment, and the place was practically deserted. At around five past one, I was quietly minding my own business on the Bowen Furniture corner when I overheard one of the Security guys speaking into the two-way. *They'll be around in forty minutes.*

Crossing the road to warn the rest of the Volunteer group about the prospect, I noticed a woman who seemed, for some reason, strangely familiar. It took a while to figure it out. She turned out to be the mother of a student I taught for about three days in 1976. In my humble opinion, putting a name to the face was a pretty fair achievement.

At least that activity gave me something to occupy my mind while the countdown continued. When one forty-five rolled past without incident, frequent inquiries regarding an ETA were invariably met with *Ten minutes.*

In the end, *Ten minutes* stretched to some time around three-thirty. Someone nearby suggested we were set for another disappointment when I noticed heads appearing over the crest on the other side of Jochheim's Pie Shop. Within seconds the mob came into view...

As they rounded the Bowen Furnishing corner, the whips were cracking. The last couple of photos in the gallery were taken just before they hit the red dirt beside the Grand View and the dust machine kicked into action.

Since my shift was well and truly over and the wait had been long and dry, visiting the Grand View for refreshments seemed like a good idea. It provided a closer view of the herd as they did the circuit a second time.

The Public Bar also provided a much closer view of the stars of the show as they waited for the mob to come around again, as well as a glimpse of a bloke headed towards the Dining Room. He looked *familiar* for some reason. When one of the hotel staff greeted him as *Mr Urban*, I decided if Keith was appreciably taller than Tom, Mr Cruise must be vertically challenged.

The highlight of the week: *You're Hughesy?*

Coming from someone I hadn't laid eyes on for about thirty-one years.

Quote of the week: *Have you ever complained about watching paint dry?*

One final observation: Despite all the hype around the filming, backpackers are still turning up and asking, "what on Earth's going on here?" The corrugated iron fence on the corner conceals a functioning backpackers' hostel. Does anyone fancy sleeping on the set of a significant movie production?

So, how come they're filming this in Bowen?

Sunday, 3 June 2007

Disclaimer

Parts of the following entry may be based on hearsay or on inaccurate recollections of conversations over twenty-three years where alcohol may or may not have been consumed.

The standard version of the Baz Comes To Bowen story is pretty straightforward. It goes something like this:

During his travels around Australia searching for a jetty that could be used in some film sequences, Baz Luhrmann visited Bowen. In the process of buying lunch became interested in the historical photographs on the wall of Jochheim's Pie Shop. Following a conversation with Merle Jochheim, a descendant of Captain Sinclair, who discovered Port Denison, Baz conducted a further investigation. Eventually, he decided to use the area around the Bowen Jetty to shoot a substantial part of the movie.

Anyone who wanted to go into a little more detail might consider the role of Bowen's high-profile and media-savvy Mayor, Mike Brunner, in the process.

When the movie Volunteers were called together for an orientation session, we were told that the set was the most extensive outdoor on-location set ever used in Australia. The size of the set that could be built at the Front Beach was a significant consideration in the decision to film **Australia** here in Bowen.

There are about three hectares on the site. As I've previously mentioned, one of the most common questions from out-of-town visitors during the first week of filming has been What was there before?

This brings us to the infamous Hole In The Ground.

Quite simply, as far as I can see, if there had been any major construction on the site, the movie would not have been filmed in Bowen at all.

When I arrived in town in 1984, the area across the road from the Grand View was railway land. The corner opposite the hotel was occupied by the Railways Institute Hall. Most of the block was occupied by a freight depot and goods yards, a legacy of Bowen's days as a working port.

Those buildings were removed when they rationalised the rail services in the nineties, and various suggestions about the future use of prime beachfront land were floated. There was a suggestion to relocate the RSL Club to the site. Various schemes involving cultural

centres or residential developments appeared in the pages of the **Bowen Independent**, usually sinking without trace shortly after that.

That sort of thing is hardly news to anyone with even a nodding acquaintance with the town's history. The influence of nay-sayers and pessimists in Bowen's past goes as far back as Robert Towns' proposal to establish a boiling down works to render ageing and uneconomic sheep into tallow.

When the citizens of the infant settlement rejected the scheme, Towns and his partners found an alternative site some two hundred kilometres north of here. They named the new settlement Townsville.

Over the years, several significant developments have been floated, from major industrial projects like steelworks and alumina refineries to plants to process the area's agricultural produce to detention centres for illegal immigrants.

At one stage, there was even a proposal to relocate the golf club to another site and place an extensive residential development on the prime beachfront real estate occupied by the golf course. And, after much to-ing and fro-ing over the Magazine Creek mangroves, a marina development got as far as a substantial hole in the ground before coming to a grinding halt.

There were, of course, exceptions to the rule. My arrival in town coincided with the winding down of the construction of the export coal handling terminal at Abbot Point, which had brought a short-term boom. I suspected suggestions that Comalco is coming through the eighties were based as much on maintaining inflated property values as on any likelihood of somebody developing an alumina refinery.

Every time the prospect was touted, there seemed to be an equally strong counter-current of *It'll never happen, and we like our little town the way it is, thank you very much*^.

Finally, in the late nineties, the place hit pretty close to rock bottom when the Merinda meatworks closed. While that was a disaster in the short term, a couple of positive developments came out of it.

By 2000 research had identified several projects around the shire which would provide a basis for future growth. For some reason, an outside developer with capital arrived in town.

His first project was a shopping complex close to the existing commercial centre. This development left many locals shaking their heads and expressing the usual opinion - *It'll never work*.

Their scepticism was probably justified based on previous experience, the closure of the meatworks and the number of vacant shops in the commercial centre. There was more

than one I told you so when several shops in the complex remained empty for some time after construction had been completed.

However, while this was happening, other properties around town were being acquired, and other projects floated. The most ambitious of them was a condominium-style apartment block, motel and retail complex located on the Front Beach across the road from the Grand View.

Given its history as an industrial site, the ground needed to be cleaned up before any development could proceed. There were issues regarding possible contamination of the waters of Port Denison, so it wasn't just a matter of gaining approval from Bowen Shire Council. Various other government agencies needed to be satisfied. Anyone with a nodding acquaintance with processes involving bureaucracy knows that those processes don't happen overnight.

And while those processes are in progress, it's happening, more or less behind closed doors, away from the eyes of the general public.

While the contaminated soil was being removed and initial excavations made, potential buyers were supposed to be queuing up to buy off the plan. In the end, although the preliminaries were more or less out of the way, the number of potential customers fell short of the number needed to finance the first stage of construction, so the project lapsed. We were left with a hole in the ground.

In hindsight, that's just as well. If it had been developed in any way, Mr Luhrmann would probably have been making his movie elsewhere.

Ironic. It's more than likely that the *We like our little town the way it is* crowd played a substantial role in preventing that project from coming to fruition. At the same time, they created a situation where their town may never be the same again...

So there are a whole number of factors that happened to coincide to bring the movie to town.

As the old saying goes, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

It was a disaster at the time. Still, without the closure of the meatworks, we wouldn't have seen the local business community get its act together and go out looking for projects that would kick things along.

In the wake of the closure, searching for people willing to commit money to projects in the town meant that we had outside capital coming in when property prices were down. So one guy with a bit of vision was able to buy up several significant sites around town.

Of course, in hindsight, he probably got them at bargain basement prices, but at least the guy was willing to spend the money.

If the prices had been a little higher, he mightn't have been able to buy so much, and he wouldn't have ended up with the same number of possible projects.

That's significant. If he'd put all his eggs in one basket, the basket would probably have been close to the Front Beach.

As it turned out, he had several areas he could develop. He didn't have to tackle them in any specific order and could afford to put a fence around the hole in the ground and wait.

If the site had been sold to anyone else, we would have seen some development there, and the whole Bowenwood thing wouldn't have happened.

So, while the standard version of events gives a lot of credit where credit is due, the story behind the filming of **Australia** ties up many threads that weave their way through Bowen's history.

Hopefully, once the cameras have stopped rolling, the tents have been dismantled, and the site has been cleared, we'll be looking to a more positive future, not returning to the mindset that has held the town back in the past.

Week 3: It Ain't Over Till It's Over...

Tuesday, 5 June 2007

They (whoever they are) claim that if you stand in one place long enough, the rest of the world will eventually pass by.

That may or may not be true. However, recent experience suggests that if you stand on the edge of the movie set long enough, you'll encounter most of the population of Bowen and a substantial number of out-of-town visitors.

Pamplona continued was the theme for the start of Week Three. While the cattle were headed out of town by week's end, their continued presence provided plenty of motivation for people to turn up in anticipation of the running of the bulls. That delivered frequent opportunities to spend a lengthy period talking to people I hadn't seen for (in some cases) years...

And if there's not much happening, at least there's usually someone to talk to.

As usual with such things, a sort of pattern emerged pretty quickly when it came to the running of the bulls. The herd completed a couple of laps of the circuit early in the morning before the cameras were sent elsewhere to film other sequences. Once the crew broke for lunch, the speculation about a repeat performance would start. Towards the end of the afternoon, some action would ensue. However, towards the end of the proceedings, it was rarely the sort of action the spectators hoped for.

After last Thursday's incident, when a silver car parked near the corner of Herbert and George Streets prevented the mob from doing their lap, the barriers stayed in the cattle-running positions.

Sure, they *could* have been moved to allow a better view of proceedings for spectators and a better chance of motorists finding a parking spot close to the middle of town.

But if they were moved, they'd have to be moved again so the cattle could do their thing.

The stubborn gent who refused to move his car earlier in the week probably ensured that things stayed that way until the bull-running sequences were well and truly out of the way. Well done, that man (not).

However, it would be impossible to leave the subject of downtown Pamplona-By-the-Sea without a word of praise for the cattle minders.

The prospect of seven hundred head of cattle moving through the streets of town was probably regarded as a serious incident waiting to happen in some quarters. The fact that

those activities passed almost without incident reflects great credit on the stockmen who supervised the herd as they went through their paces.

As previously intimated, the filming has brought all sorts of people out of the woodwork. On Wednesday afternoon, I got an interesting perspective on the Pamplona thing and a few other issues from the guy who used to run the news agency closest to the movie set.

He'd been anticipating problems as the herd went around the block and suggested the lack of incidents was due to the number of times the mob had gone around. And from his comments, I gathered he'd had a bit to do with mustering somewhere along the way.

As I left the Grand View with a couple of schooners under my belt, I had to move a bit more quickly than I would have preferred. The herd came around the corner to have another go at the sequence that was being filmed.

As the herd moved into position, several spectators took advantage of their relative proximity to the cattle to take a few photos. I suspect they were too close to the herd for someone's comfort because suddenly, Mr Jackman appeared, heading towards the crowd outside the Westpac bank. That prompted a change of focus for the photographers.

There you go. The celebrity as a decoy...

Once Hugh had disappeared and the excitement had subsided slightly, I caught up with one of my fellow Volunteers. She would prefer to remain anonymous, so I'll say that I've known this particular lady for twenty years. Her son captained one of my school cricket teams.

If you've known someone for that long, you've probably seen them in different moods. Still, I don't recall anyone being quite as excited as someone was on Wednesday afternoon.

It probably had something to do with the fact that Hugh apparently made a beeline for the nearest person wearing a Volunteer shirt. Guess who that was? he asked rhetorically) and then used her pen to sign several autographs.

After the event, the implement in question was fondled as the incident was recalled, leaving me with one image that would take some time to forget. Have you ever seen a pen being sniffed in the same manner that a connoisseur might savour the aroma of a high-quality hand-rolled Cuban cigar?

Once Hugh departed, we benefited from a brief course in Celebrity spotting for beginners - not that the instructions were too difficult to predict...

First, You've got to be out and about. It's no good sitting at home complaining that you haven't seen anyone famous. You've got to be out there, actively looking.

Second, remember to have the camera, pen and autograph book on hand, just in case. I gather someone doesn't leave home without them.

Third, keep your eyes peeled and make sure you can recognise faces. That takes me out of the picture unless I start reading the sort of magazines that feature wall-to-wall paparazzi-sourced photo spreads...

Last but not least, make sure you've got plenty of time.

That last point was reinforced on Friday afternoon.

Once the cattle sequences had been finished and the herd was gone, the crew started converting the 1938 version of Darwin to the militarised 1940 version.

When I arrived for my stint on Friday morning, substantial numbers of Bowen High's Year Twelve cohort had been recruited to swell the ranks of the 19th Infantry Battalion. They had been practising parade drills on the hardstand outside the Sailing Club.

Who knows? They might even be marched around the set under the watchful eyes of their sergeant-major. The prospect of a bit of badinage from the Grand View footpath while members of Hughesy's 1999 Year Four class marched past was something to look forward to with gleeful anticipation.

You can imagine the sort of thing. *Get in step Jones (or whoever). You look like a swagman...*

Unfortunately, when four o'clock rolled past and Madam started becoming restless, we headed away to buy weekend provisions.

And missed Jack Thompson by about ten minutes.....

With Week Three sandwiched between the Bowen Seafood Festival and the launch of Queensland Week, one wonders how many celebrity sightings were missed over the two days. Filming continued on Seafood Festival Saturday, so it would have been understandable if the celebrities were somewhat thin on the ground.

On the other hand, last Sunday's Queensland Government-sponsored complimentary breakfast drew a fair crowd to Hansen Park. They were treated to a few words from Baz Luhrmann, who stayed around for an hour or so, signing autographs and posing for photos. At the same time, his wife and children enjoyed the old-style rock & roll from the stage, apparently undisturbed by the public. The eleven-year-old Aboriginal boy from the movie wandered around the place doing what you'd expect eleven-year-old kids to do at events like that.

One wonders how many others were there, quietly doing their own thing unnoticed by the rest of the crowd...

Week 4: More of the same...

Thursday, 14 June 2007

Things settled into a regular pattern with the cattle safely out of the picture at the end of Week 3. There had been a noticeable decline in local interest in what was happening on the set.

That's hardly surprising, given the distance between the general public and the cameras (when they're working)...

Plus, of course, there's the inevitable influence of the novelty effect wearing off. So there's a movie set at the bottom of the main street. What's so unusual about that?

Early in proceedings, locals were inclined to drop by when you're in town to see what's happening.

Recently, unless something is happening here and now, most locals can't be lured into hanging around for a couple of hours on the off chance of a celebrity sighting. Been there, done that...

When I'm on my daily circuit around town, I'll invariably drop past to check out what's happening. It fits so neatly into the route I've followed for years - Post Office, bank, news agency, Jochheim's, Retravision, Magees, Powell Street, home...

Just slot a diversion of a hundred metres between the newsagency and the pie shop, and there you go...

But I doubt if I've spent much more than five minutes in the area on any day when I haven't been rostered on for Volunteer duty. I've been averaging two shifts a week, and I must admit, on the days when I have been "on duty", there hasn't been much to hold my interest once the shift ends.

However, any lapses in local interest don't mean that the flow of out-of-towners has subsided to nothing. According to the **Townsville Bulletin**, there have been over six thousand travellers with their details logged by the Volunteer group. As someone involved with the volunteer site, I know how hit-and-miss the logging has been, so the actual figure could be double that ...

If that sounds a bit narky, it isn't meant to be. Day to day, the Volunteer set-up changes as barriers are moved back and forth depending on where the cameras are operating.

On days when the footpath in front of the Grand View is open, logging visitor details is relatively straightforward. People walk past a table on their way down to the front. While

that makes information-gathering reasonably straightforward, it still doesn't mean that whoever's looking after the book will catch everybody as they go past.

On a Grand View footpath day, the Volunteer bit is relatively easy. I tend to wait around the table till some obvious out-of-towners arrive, walk them down to the front, describe what's happening, point out a few things, and answer questions. Once their interest turns to photographs, I drift back towards the table, searching for someone else to talk to...

When the barriers are further back, keeping track of arrivals is much more challenging. Back when the footpaths were lined in anticipation of Pamplona, arriving at any definitive figure would have been downright impossible.

On those days, information dissemination becomes a matter of wandering across to people you don't recall having sighted before and trying to engage them in conversation.

So, here are some observations based on conversations with the visitors I've spoken to. They're not necessarily a representative sample of the ten thousand or so people who've passed through town so far this month.

First, plenty of people have been here before and make a point of stopping in Bowen on their way north or south. However, just as many have looked across from the highway and decided to keep going to Townsville or Mackay.

Second, while we think of Bowen being the focus of considerable media attention, a surprising number of people turned up without realising there was anything out of the ordinary occurring in town.

Now that's hardly surprising where people like backpackers are involved, particularly early on in proceedings before word of mouth started circulating through the backpacker hostels.

Plenty of bemused travellers wondered what was going on and whether their accommodation arrangements were still valid back in the first couple of weeks.

Some backpackers staying in the hostel behind the corrugated iron fence don't seem to have noticed anything untoward while the set was under construction.

The older couple from Devonport I spoke to last Friday spent the night in town without realising there was a movie set at the bottom of the main street. I was mildly amused to be told, "We called our son in Townsville to let him know we'd be there a bit later today. He asked us whether we'd spotted any celebrities. We didn't know what he was talking about."

Third, while there's been a boom in the local accommodation scene, people have had to stay in Proserpine or Airlie Beach because they couldn't find a place to stay in Bowen.

This, of course, brings us to the economic impact on the town.

Some figures from the **Townsville Bulletin**:

Two million dollars were spent on accommodating the film crew.

Another one-and-a-half million or thereabouts went on renting locations, offices and storage space.

The same again went on constructing the set and security around it.

And I shudder to think of the size of the grocery bill the catering department has run up.

Talking to my mate, the butcher, last Friday, he's had to call in just about every favour owed since he went into business thirty-something years ago. Still, so far, he's been able to supply everything he's been asked for.

Like everything else, the economic impact varies according to several factors. One is proximity to the movie set. Another is whether you can supply something required, like large quantities of dirt, to create bomb craters.

But more of that next time, along with (hopefully) an account of what happens in the meeting of the media tarts next Sunday.

Week 5: They burned down the church five times...

Monday, 18 June 2007

The things you have to do to get bombed these days...

It used to be so simple. Take a loaded wallet, put on the *falling-down gear* and head off to the nearest licensed water hole. As one of my cricket coaching acquaintances observed, *What's the use of getting all dressed up if all you're going to do is fall over?*

Several hours later, there you were...

It's much more complicated than that these days, especially if you're making a movie...

After the Queens Birthday long weekend, things were pretty quiet when I arrived for Volunteer duty on Tuesday afternoon. They were making a few structural adjustments at Carney's Corner, and piles of dirt in assorted colours were lying in the middle of the street.

I imagined someone from the set design crew shopping at the local earth-moving contractor...

We'll have two metres of that one, three metres of the greyer one over there, one and a half metres of that one...

As the afternoon wore on, the facade concealing the Queensland Transport office on Carney's Corner was being moved outwards. Some of the artwork on the display boards provided by the movie's art department depicts Carney's Corner on fire. So it seemed reasonably likely that the Fisheries Patrol were not in favour of seeing their office space go up in flames along with the facade...

When the cranes started to move a couple of wrecked vehicles into position in the bomb craters, it was apparent we would end up looking at a scene of considerable devastation.

This seems hardly surprising, given that the raids dropped more bombs on Darwin than were used in the attack on Pearl Harbour. And the town came under attack another sixty-three times after 19 February 1942.

A bit of basic research suggests that most of those raids occurred during the day, but since burning buildings look better at night time, that's the way the filming has gone this week.

On the Volunteer orientation day, it was pointed out that the set contained things on the ground in Darwin and Broome between the mid-thirties and the early forties. Things were there because they fit into the storyline, and the chronology might not be accurate.

The Pearl movie theatre is based on the outdoor theatre in Broome rather than anything in Darwin. It is showing **The Wizard of Oz** even though the film had not been released in Australia at that time.....

So if nighttime bombing is going to work better on screen, nighttime bombing is the way to go...

Nighttime shooting provides exciting viewing for anyone lucky enough to live on a hillside overlooking the set. On Tuesday afternoon, I was informed that the church down on Mission Island had gone up in flames no less than five times and that the cross on top presented quite a spectacle each time it went up in flames.

Not that any of that is visible from the Little House of Concrete. Vacant hillside allotments were way outside the budget when I was in the market for somewhere to build ten years ago. So we have (to paraphrase Elvis Costello) a very fashionable hovel snuggled cosily into a hollow rather than the mansion on the hill (Thank you, Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen).

By the end of the week, despite the devastation around the set, the police station, from what I can tell, has remained more or less unharmed. The reason? Unlike the rest of the set, where buildings are (more or less) shells, there's an actual building underneath there...

With the nighttime shooting, there's not much to see during the day, at least from a local's point of view. However, the crowds of out-of-town visitors have continued more or less unabated.

A week's worth of overcast days with threatened or actual drizzle helped keep the locals indoors as well. However, the suggestion that southern visitors like ex-AFL footballer Dermot Brereton brought it with them was wearing thin when I made it on Friday morning.

The lack of fuss when Mr Brereton arrived to film a report for Channel Nine's **Getaway** was typical of how out-of-town celebrities have been treated over the past five weeks. A few nudges in the ribs, the odd whispered aside, but people left them alone (more or less) to do their thing.

Of course, if the opportunity presents itself, it's possible to go further. As we moved away from Media Tart Central on Sunday afternoon, Warbo recounted his encounter with Hugh Jackman at the gym. An observation that Mr Jackman's personal trainer was trying to kill him was apparently met with the suggestion that he wasn't too far off succeeding...

Similarly, a conspicuous lack of fuss accompanied sightings of former Queensland Reds player Steve Kefu at Bowen State School's Big Baz-aar on Saturday.

A request to meet the movie Volunteers preceded Queensland Premier Peter Beattie's presence in town on Sunday. He might have avoided some of the media spotlights if it hadn't.

That, however, would probably have been totally out of character for a self-confessed media tart.

Protesters at McKenna Hall kept Mayor Brunner away when the Premier met the Volunteers' Number One Media Tart at the inevitable photo opportunity.

Mike's no slouch in that department and would have completed the Media Tart Trifecta.

As I left the Grand View after lunch, Cristian explained his position in the middle of the front row with a shrug of the shoulders.

Well, you heard them, and they called for short people to go to the front...

Yeah, I retorted. And if we had someone else in a wheelchair, we could have used the two of you to bookend the shot rather than having someone hogging the limelight again.

The shrug I received in reply seemed to suggest that such is life...

Week 6: My Wife Thinks I'm Pregnant

Monday, 25 June 2007

With Sunday's excitement out of the way, Monday morning's weather suggested if last week's cold snap in Dermot Brereton's luggage, he hadn't taken it with him on the way out.

Or maybe our illustrious Premier was responsible after assorted protesters attempted to rain on his parade at Sunday's community forum at McKenna Hall.

Regardless of the prevailing weather conditions outside the Little House of Concrete (a very warm and comfortable hovel), I'd just finished gathering my stuff. I was ready to head downtown around ten-thirty Monday morning when the phone rang.

It was one of the other Volunteers rostered on for the middle session inquiring whether, given the weather conditions, I thought it was worth reporting for duty...

As it turned out, the continuing flow of out-of-town visitors meant it was worth turning up. Still, anyone harbouring doubts on the subject would have felt their scepticism was justified. The wind and drizzle persisted throughout the day, but that didn't stem the flow of visitors.

If that seems strange, most of the people I spoke to during the week were in transit along the Bruce Highway. They had called into town to see what was happening. Many others were there due to travel arrangements they'd made some time back and would be heading here regardless of the weather conditions.

So, regardless of the weather, they kept on coming.

Arriving on the scene to find that the footpath in front of the Grand View was open to the public, I encountered Warbo. After the predictable remarks about brass monkeys in the choir's soprano section, the conversation turned to the blog. I pointed out that plenty of space was available if he decided to send me the odd photograph. Which he duly did.

After that, it was time to stand around, spot the visitors, and engage them in conversation. Repeat until the end of the shift.

From time to time, the conversation was interrupted by a brief flurry of activity on set. For most of the morning, it seemed like there was something like a wrecked jeep (or some similar vehicle) in the street beside Chinatown. From time to time, it would burst into flames, prompting all the other military vehicles in the area to drive 'round in various directions. After ninety seconds, the fire would die as the cars returned to their original

positions. After a short break, the flames would flare again, and the process repeated itself...

As twelve o'clock rolled around, Warbo headed homeward for warmth, and my thoughts turned to the prospect of lunch.

Now, I must admit to a more than passing interest in the catering arrangements here. When the first batch of Volunteers wandered arrived on site back on Day One, the spread we found was spectacular in the extreme. One Volunteer suggested it was a better spread than the all-you-can-eat buffet breakfasts at resorts.

Later in Week One, a visit to the same location for lunch revealed a similar generosity in the catering department. I'm sure I wasn't the only one rubbing his hands at the prospect of a substantial reduction in the weekly grocery bill if access to the area continued.

So there was understandable disappointment when I learned that access to breakfast was a late scratching. However, Volunteers from the morning shift were welcome to drop in for lunch at the end of their stint.

Then again, since breakfast was between five-thirty and six and there would not be much action on the Volunteer front till eight-thirty or so...

So things on the catering front weren't too bad at first. However, it seemed that lunch at Volunteer headquarters was substantially delayed on days when our Resident Media Tart was rostered for a morning session.

And then, once the shooting schedule switched to nighttime, the flow of comestibles ceased altogether.

Until last Monday...

When I found a space at the table outside the Grand View to attack the contents of the styrofoam container, I noticed the security detail on the corner tucking into the contents of a similar vessel.

Then, with my lunch out of the way, I wandered back to the front.

Ten minutes later, I was talking to a couple of attractive German backpackers when one of the other Volunteers arrived on the scene in search of our friendly Security bloke.

He seemed to have quietly vanished from the immediate area.

Fearing the worst, I inquired whether there was any cause for alarm.

No, she replied. They've delivered another lot of lunches, and I thought he might like seconds...

Promising to pass on the message when Security was re-established, I returned to the previous conversation.

Five minutes or so later, a familiar figure hove into view. I dutifully passed on the message and was informed that a double dose of lunch meant he was disinclined to front for thirds.

The words were barely out of his mouth before the lady Volunteer appeared on the scene, pointing out that there was plenty of lunch available should he feel inclined to indulge.

No thanks, was the reply. I've put on ten kilos since I started here, and my wife thinks I'm pregnant...

Given the weather, I was disinclined to walk home at the end of the shift. I waited for a lift home which arrived at the same time as our Ace Star Spotter. She wanted to know whether we'd spotted John Jarratt, who had apparently walked straight past me, cunningly hidden under a pink umbrella.

I hadn't, which tends to support the suggestion that, when it comes to star spotting, I'm barely out of the Novice category...

Wandering down to the Volunteer area during the daily lap around town on Tuesday, I was somewhat bemused to note the absence of our Resident Media Tart.

I told him on Sunday afternoon that a new blog entry with Cristian content was imminent, and I wanted to gather some feedback.

He had been conspicuous by his absence throughout Monday. My arrival on Tuesday coincided with the changeover between the morning crew and the midday shift. I wondered whether Week Five's entry had, perhaps, been the source of some embarrassment...

Not a bit of it.

When I reported for duty on Wednesday around eleven, he was there, large as life and twice as dangerous. He seemed to be out to combine his position atop the dizzy heights of Media Tartdom with a career as a paparazzi...

Unfortunately, sometime on Tuesday afternoon, the front of the Grand View came into shot, so the barriers had been moved back around the corner, which meant that there wasn't much to look at. However, the continuing stream of visitors meant there was no shortage of people to talk to as Mickey's big hand headed towards lunchtime.

Shortly after lunch had been delivered, the flow of visitors diminished to a trickle. Without any other significant topic for discussion, the conversation turned to the subject of Hughesy's blog.

Various people were writing down the relevant URL when one lady stated that it wasn't much use to her since she didn't have access to a computer...

Within seconds, Resident Media Tart was brandishing an eleven-page printout extracted from his display folder, excitedly pointing to a passage on Page Two.

That's me there!!

From this, we can establish that, like any good Media Tart, he keeps his collection of press clippings up to date. Of course, he is only too willing, given the slightest excuse, to share them with the broader public.

Given the lack of visible action, I headed home at the earliest opportunity, grateful that I hadn't drawn another time slot later in the week...

Prevailing weather conditions meant that the front door of the Little House of Concrete remained firmly closed on Wednesday afternoon. Sometime after seven o'clock, a distant popping sound attracted my attention, and I ventured outside to see what was happening...

A fireworks display for Nicole's fortieth birthday...

Thinking back to the afternoon, I hoped the couple I'd advised to head up to the top of Flagstaff Hill had ignored the weather and ventured up there. That's undoubtedly where the fireworks seemed to be coming from, so I would have been interested to know what else they would have seen.

Once again, a case of being in the right place at the right time? Since I wasn't there, I'll never know.

Thursday dawned on the wettest, bleakest and most miserable weather we'd had for the week. I counted my lucky stars as I contemplated the luxuries of reverse-cycle air-conditioning.

Similar considerations must have been going on elsewhere since I gather there was a ring around, and Thursday's Volunteer roster was abandoned. Not that anyone would have blamed them, except for a tiny technical detail.

Thursday was the Mackay Show holiday. Plenty of people decided a couple of hours in a warm vehicle was preferable to a day traipsing around a country show. Even if it was going to necessitate a walk around Bowen in less-than-ideal conditions...

Many of us are familiar with the workings of Murphy's Law...

If something can go wrong, it will. And when it does, it will go wrong at the worst possible moment...

That sums it up rather well. The one day the Volunteer program is scrapped turns out to be one of the busiest for six weeks.

One Volunteer, however, decided that regardless of the conditions, she would turn up...

She deserves a medal as big as a frying pan...

A short visit to the area on Friday provided further blog feedback and an offer of additional photographs to add to the gallery. They arrived on a USB chip on Saturday morning. As usual, with these things, there was one minor technical detail.

There are more than five hundred of them, including shots of Wednesday night's fireworks display. They form a substantial chunk of the various photo galleries hereabouts.....

Week 7: She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain...

Monday, 2 July 2007

And so we come to the end of this little saga...

With the Bowen filming completed, we can move back to normality. Now, all we need to do is to work out what normality is...

One thing is for sure - what people in Bowen will regard as normality in the future will be substantially different from what we've known in the past. Not that the difference will necessarily be something you will be able to put your finger on and say There it is...

Or, on the other hand, maybe it will...

Looking back over the last week, the flow of out-of-towners continued even during the previous three days' filming. Still, I started to pick up a new theme in their comments...

I thought this was finished a long time ago...

In other words, in the initial wave of media exposure, the message that filming would run for six or seven weeks went missing in action.

In a way, that's hardly surprising. If the movie was being made under normal circumstances, they would have been working on a closed set somewhere like Fox Studios in Sydney. There would have been the initial blaze of publicity. After that, the crew would have quietly gone about their business. The outside world would have been none the wiser unless something totally out of the ordinary occurred.

Under normal circumstances, if the crew needed to venture to a spot where they'd attract media attention, they'd be there just long enough to get their footage before they bolted back behind closed doors.

As the song goes, no one knows what goes on behind closed doors...

Since the set was at the bottom of Bowen's main street, it's hardly surprising the past few weeks created a plethora of memories, digital images, rumours, yarns, autographs and random sightings. They'll probably take some people months to collate and sort out...

Standing around at the end of Week Six, one of the other Volunteers mentioned that he had some more pictures I could add to the Gallery if I felt so inclined.

Sure, I replied. E-mail 'em to me, and I'll throw some in there with Warbo's stuff...

Can't do that, was the reply. Too big...

And when Blue arrived on the doorstep Saturday morning, USB chip in hand, I found out he was right. We added over five hundred images to the little library I'd managed to

accumulate. That's five hundred items with obscure titles like "movieset270407 035.jpg" that need to be identified, sorted and figured out what to do with...

Talking to the Resident Media Tart and the Ace Star Spotter on Wednesday afternoon, I found they'd acquired similar quantities of digital data. Fiddling around with that little lot should keep them busy for a while, and heaven only knows what'd happen if they got to the I'll send you mine if you send me yours stage...

They aren't, of course, the only ones.

Resident Media Tart pointed out one guy snapping away madly with the comment he's got twice as many as me. So if people were going to start collecting and collating, they could be at it for years...

If I'm short of something to do, I could probably keep writing these entries for the next couple of weeks while the set is dismantled and the cleanup gets underway. There are, however, other fish to fry. So unless something exceptional goes down over the next fortnight, this will be the last episode in this series. There will be other entries about all the different interests indicated at the top of the page as time goes by...

Clearing the set away started well before they'd finished shooting. On Monday, the display boards that showed various visualisations of what the set would look like were packed up and despatched since a truck left for Darwin in about an hour. There's no way that its load would have comprised three artwork boards.

The lack of Volunteer commitments prompted 'Er Indoors to suggest a road trip to Townsville on Thursday. On the way back, a Winnebago or similar vehicle emerged from the gathering dusk and headed northwards. Of course, I'll never know whether it was Nicole's or Hugh's trailer. However, judging by its size, it could well have been...

From that, I guessed that the "Crew area" around the Bowen Band Hall would probably have been totally dismantled within twenty-four hours of filming being completed. After all, if they were going to start filming in Darwin on Monday, the trailers would need to be on the road ASAP.

Which is more or less the way it turned out. The security fences were gone as we pulled into the supermarket car park on Friday afternoon. There was nothing to suggest the area had ever been anything other than a typical Bowen street, a touch on the wide side but otherwise unremarkable. The site they'd been using for costumes and makeup still had tents in evidence, but today the fences had gone from there, so I guess the tents won't be far behind them.

We had our final flare of media coverage last Tuesday when a crew from Channel 7's **Sunrise** program were in town and filming the crosses to the weather reporter. That's her standing beside Warbo in the photo.

The event also provided a chance to pay out once again on Resident Media Tart. If Yours Truly looks somewhat less than totally grunted, the footpath outside the Grand View is not the most desirable place to be at five-thirty on a cold, wet Tuesday morning.

And as they crossed back for another weather segment every half hour or so, the crowd grew, regardless of the prevailing meteorological conditions.

History of insanity in the family? What history of insanity?

Once Wednesday's Volunteer stint was finished, I would have been quite happy to have stayed home where it was relatively warm. Still, the prospect of action on the set provided the opportunity to join the Warbys for a drink in the Grand View. At the same time, we watched the preparations for the final night shoot through the pub windows...

And we were back there on Friday for the Volunteer get-together. Officially we were there to say goodbye to Location Manager Mary. Still, there would also be an opportunity to sing some Volunteer songs.

Before filming, we'd been told that a Volunteer song set to the tune of She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain was needed, but no one explained why.

After some prompting from Warbo, I'd submitted one, though what it was going to be used for remained a mystery. After a long session with an online rhyming dictionary, I'd finished one version of it in Week Two. Still, when I went back to it last week, I decided I could do better, so a revised version went in...

And, apparently, the revised version won. At this point, it's not precisely clear what winning involves, but it won, so I guess I can count that as part of my fifteen minutes of fame...

And, thinking about it, the song is probably the best way to finish this little saga. So without further ado, here's Hughesy's Bowen Volunteer song. The tune, as previously indicated, is She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain.

They were going to make a movie in the town

And before too long, the word had gone around

They'd be filming on location

And Baz's next creation

Would be bringing crowds of people gathered round.

*They'll be heading into Bowen in their hordes
And heading along Herbert Street towards
The set where Baz created
The movie that is fated
To be mentioned for Academy Awards.*

*So the call went out for some Bowen volunteers
Some people in retirement and their peers
to distribute information
to the wider population
And the tourists that the film brought into town*

*They've been coming down from Townsville, and the flow
Of people was continuous, and so
The tourists've been hearin'
From the people volunteerin'
All the info that they thought they ought to know*

*The crew soon numbered ninety-something strong.
And for six weeks they've been talking to the throng
That's been flowin' into Bowen
Where the population's growin'
Commutin' while the shootin' rolls along*

They've been coming from all over as they swarmed

Towards a destination that transformed

A vacant lot in Bowen

To a movie set that's showin'

Lots of detail, as the Volunteers informed

And when at last the filming's finished here

The film crew might be leaving, but it's clear

All of Bowen will be waitin'

For the movie they're creatin'

When they're finished, though it's going to take a year

.

So over the last two months, there've been

A tidal wave of visitors who've seen

The volunteers explaining

What the film set's been containing

And details about Bowen in between

And so here's to the Bowen Volunteers

It's something we can talk about for years

It's something that we've lapped up

And the memories are wrapped up

With the shirts and hats we'll keep for souvenirs.