

community
corner

Organisation: Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre

Interests: supporting the local community

Contact: phone 4099 5518

PARENTS with children aged between eight months and two years old are invited to join a new playgroup at the Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre on Wednesdays.

Babies and toddlers along with their mums or dads will be able to join the playgroup, which will run during the morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm, complete with plenty of activities to keep them entertained.

Family support worker Deb Delaney said the playgroup will offer a stimulating environment for babies.

"The group will offer a range of early learning experiences including storytelling, songs, rhymes, indoor and outdoor play for the under twos," she said.

Ms Delaney said the weekly event would also provide a much-needed outlet for parents.

"The Wednesday Playgroup will allow parents to get out of the house, chat with other parents, make new friends and discuss ideas and the joys and frustrations of parenting," she said.

"Playgroup is about learning through play in a fun and caring environment and a time for mums and dads, carers and grandparents to meet together once a week



for interaction, support and fun."

The Wednesday playgroup hopes to fill a need that was recognised for a group that could cater for babies that are less mobile.

While the Neighbourhood Centre already catered to new parents with a meeting held each Thursday and another for older children up to five years old on Tuesdays, there was nothing on offer for toddlers in between in age.

Parents are asked to bring along a morning snack or lunch for their child and a \$4 donation to assist in covering costs of the group.

Anyone interested in joining the new playgroup is welcome to come along next Wednesday at 10.30am. For more information call Deb or Jo at the Neighbourhood Centre on 4099 5518.

■ **Are you part of a community organisation which is doing great things? Email the *Gazette* at gazette@tpd.newsltd.com.au to let us know so we can feature your group in Community Corner.**

Pedals power 33,000km trip

■ HOLLY ROBERTSON
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A COUPLE of pints in a London pub have turned into an epic 33,000km journey across four continents for two unlikely Aussie cyclists.

Jules Cooper, 33, and Jess Macaulay, 25, decided to turn their backs on the traditional 22-hour plane trip from Heathrow to Melbourne and have instead taken "the long way home" relying chiefly on pedal power.

Completely inexperienced, apart from the occasional ride to and from work, the adventurous couple set off cycling the length of South America, through Europe and from China to Singapore.

The 18-month trip has at times tested their resolve and relationship but both say they never looked back.

"It was good going into it not knowing what to expect because if we'd known how hard it was going to be we might've talked ourselves out of it," Ms Macaulay said.

They rode into Port Douglas last week on the final leg of their journey, the 7000km from Darwin to Melbourne, after taking in the sights of



Still pedalling: Jules Cooper and Jess Macaulay are on the final leg of an around the world journey Photo by HOLLY ROBERTSON

Cape Tribulation, Mossman and Julatten. Mr Cooper said he was taken aback by the generosity and kindness of people in the Douglas region as he had been in many communities around the world.

"My tyre was held together with fishing line and when we got on the (Daintree) ferry and the people had already heard about us from other cyclists," he said.

"They contacted the bike shop people, his wife works in the ice cream factory, and she hunted around for a tyre for me and said, 'If it's no good I'll take off my own tyre and give it to you', then she came and delivered it to us."

As part of their ride, the

couple are raising money for Ardoch Youth Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation working to provide better education opportunities for disadvantaged Australian students.

"We were staggered because we've been around the world in some of the poorest countries but there are a lot of kids in Australia who need help of their own," Mr Cooper said.

The twosome are trying to show the children, who follow their progress online, that anything is possible if you work hard for it. To make a donation or follow their progress visit www.julesandjess.com.

Blast from
the Past

Relief effort: Blanket day outside the Mossman police station in 1911

Photo supplied by QUEENSLAND POLICE MUSEUM

Jail time even harder

MOSSMAN'S first crime was the theft of three horses on February 19, 1878, dealt with by police from Port Douglas.

In 1883 Senior Constable Michael Portley was put in charge of the Mossman River and Daintree River Native Patrol, and finally land was bought for a police station in July 1897.

But the accommodation was poor and prisoners were often chained to a heavy log and left in the rain.

Part of the Port Douglas police barracks was transported to Mossman in 1904 and a new police station, court house and residence were built in 1929.

Police were responsible for native welfare from 1897 until the 1960s. This included the regular distribution of blankets.

When Bill Thomson was presumed murdered in 1886, Mr R. O. Jones, Mossman's first Justice of the Peace, was called to the scene at Ellendale.

Thomson's wife Ellen was found guilty in Townsville and is the only woman to be hanged in Queensland.

There was no court in Mossman until February 1899 when the Court of Petty Sessions opened to process minor matters without a jury.

It dealt with petty criminal cases and land, hotel, traffic, civil and family matters.

In 1964 when such courts were abolished it became a Magistrate's Court.

In 1991 the Mossman Court House and cells were replaced.

The Douglas Theatre Arts Group moved the old buildings to Port Douglas where they became the Clink Theatre.

■ **The Mossman heritage walk is a series of 16 photoposts around the town which was launched recently by the Douglas Historical Society. Heritage walk maps are available from the Gazette office in Port Douglas, the Cairns Regional Council's office in Mossman, local tourism information offices or the Court House Museum in Port Douglas which is now open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 1pm.**

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Fact 003

More than one third of the Australians who died of swine flu were healthy before getting the virus.[†]

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[†]State and Territory Hospital Data, compiled by the Department of Health and Ageing. *GPs may charge a consultation fee.



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