



The
National Newsletter
of
The MiVAC Trust
November 2012



Bio-Distributors

**PROJECTS MANAGERS REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2012**

This year saw the commencement proper, of the Ban Xai Project. The winding up of our Cambodia commitment and the completion of the Kohai school project.

CAMBODIA. After much consideration the Trustees decided to close off the Cambodia account and curtail any further activity for the foreseeable future. Preferring to concentrate all of our resources on the Lao project until it is well established.

As a gesture of respect for the great work done in Cambodia by the late Mike Roberts a donation of \$1214 US was sent to the Jesuit Refugee Service to purchase 10 wheelchairs and contribute toward purchase of a specially built motor cycle for double amputee Tun Channareth. These gifts were dedicated to Mike.

KOHAI LAOS. Last year after the dormitory project at Kohai was completed we were asked to supply thatch for the walls of the primary school. As a result of this request my wife Dorene and I along with Sue and Ches Walsh made another visit in November 2011. We were armed with a \$1000 donation from Henry and Carmel Taylor.

On arrival and after the usual greetings by old friends, the Nai Ban and education director told us that they had been raising money from the students families. They asked if they could combine that money with the MiVAC donation to build permanent brick walls instead of thatch. Of course we agreed. The Walsh's' also donated sporting and educational goods and Judy Clarke an old friend donated a white board.

An inspection of the dormitories showed them to be neatly kept and fully occupied. The school population has increased from 400 to 720 in 12 months and now boasts its own noodle bar for the students and teachers.

BAN XAI PONG HOR AND HINMU PHEUNG

What a great start we had on this forward-looking project.

In just six months Ban Xai went from a patch of overgrown savannah scrubland to a recognizable farm. It now has a 22 x 6 meter wooden accommodation, office and stores building, a large cow shed, twin septic toilets, kitchen, watertank and shower. In addition to these, on the farming side, there are a thousand cassava plants, thirty bananas, peanuts, pineapples and a vegie garden. All of this enclosed by a four strand barbed wire fence. The icing on the cake is the electricity which was reticulated and connected in April giving us light and refrigeration.

Initially when Dorene and I occupied the building we had very little in the way of creature comforts. We built our own bed from timber had a pit dug for a long drop used candles for light and washed in cold water standing in a dish bringing memories of childhood past.

It was then that the first of our volunteers arrived. They arrived in twos over the next three months and at one time we had as many as six at one time. Their contribution was invaluable and I will name them here. Father and son teams Dave and Shaun Turner and Col and



Max Druce. Ex sappers Jim Weston and Bob (Locko) Loxton, Ex 7 Bn Infanteers Merv Hains and Bob Heeb. Naval Reserve Officer John Phillipson, all Aussies ,then there was Richard Ries from USA and his friend Vanh Peng from Thailand.

The work that these volunteers did for us was invaluable. Most of it hard back breaking labour in stifling heat. We owe them a personal debt that we cannot repay. Let it suffice that we and the villagers will never forget them.

As we progressed some of our plans had to change. Instead of moving the old school at Hinmu Pheung we were able to build a brand new one of double the size for the same cost due mostly to the help of our volunteers. Now twenty children who previously had to camp out at Ban Xai can return home to attend school.

The recruiting and employment of an in-country manager/interpreter and driver/assistant was probably our biggest step forward. Yang and Moua have proven to be invaluable. Both are young men and give the lie to our previous belief that young men could not earn the respect of village elders and officialdom. On the contrary they are both diplomats for the cause of MiVAC and looked up to by all who deal with them.

What is planned for next year? A continuum of volunteer on site supervisors has been organized by John Pritchard and Sandy their old-boy net has worked wonders and Johns "Volunteers Selection" and processing work is unsurpassable . If they are all as efficient as our current supervisor Michael Wiebler we are in for a boom time.

Thanks to Sandy's efforts we have gained a Rotary RAWCS No and they will join us in a major water project starting very soon and will be beneficial to BanXai and Pong Hor.

Last but not least we have agreed to take on another joint project This time with RENEW an American organization a bit like our own. They have asked us to join with them in creating a Mushroom Centre to benefit amputees in Quang Tri province Viet nam. We are working on the whys and where-fores at this moment.

May I take this opportunity to thank all donors and members for their support over this past year. Your help has made a difference to many peoples lives. May a little of the sunlight that you have caused to shine on others, shine on you.

RJ Steve Carroll Projects Manager MiVAC

MiVAC Ambassador

Kate Mulvany has a long list of accomplishments as an actress and writer. Her plays deal with some big issues such as warfare, genetics and politics. Kate is an accomplished actor who has played major roles on stage, film and television and she is an award-winning playwright.

Kate was Born in Geraldton, and her childhood involved many visits to hospital in Perth due to a form of kidney cancer and her illness had an influence on her taking up writing. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Curtin University in 1997. She began her theatre career in Perth and later moved to Sydney where she worked with the various theatre companies.

"The Seed" is her best known play and it tells the story of three generations of the Maloney family reuniting in a small apartment in England after a thirty year hiatus. Danny, a traumatised Vietnam veteran brings his 30-year-old Australian daughter, Rose, a writer also suffering from the after-effects of war, to meet her grandfather, Brian, a passionate IRA supporter. This intense drama explores the long, lingering aftermath of war and its detrimental effects on personal lives. It is a story that Kate is close to as it was mostly inspired by her own family with her father being a Vietnam vet suffering from PTSD, and Kate's own battle with cancer, possibly being linked to Agent Orange. Because it touched on personal family history Kate showed courage in facing her own demons. The play also has a humorous side.

Kate's successful career was interrupted in 2008 by the death of her partner, actor Mark Priestley, who took his own life. After his death she suffered a sort of breakdown.

It is obvious that Kate is a survivor. She has been through so much and yet always seems to come out on top. Although she feels things very deeply and has been shattered and full of anguish, she is resilient and strong.



David Murray's ride around Australia



Unfortunately my bicycle ride around Australia was ended when a truck traveling at 100 kph hit me some 40ks west of Ceduna in S A. I heard the trucks horn & moved to the left of the very narrow verge only to have the bikes trailer wheel hit gravel which resulted in my being propelled to the middle of the road as I couldn't return to the left & didn't know where the truck was I continued to the right hoping to go into the bushes on the right but ran into the truck which had by then run along side me & I bounced numerous times along the side of the truck before hitting the road. Injuries suffered breaks in right hand & pelvis etc. Cheers Dave M

Hi all. Just to update u on my situation. Looks like I'll be moved to Calvary rehab hospital here in Adelaide tomorrow. everything going to plan and I can now shuffle along with my modified crutches for about 30 meters with no help other than a hand to get out of bed and to stand. Only hiccup so far is the presence of a blood clot low down in my right leg, for which I have a daily injection in my stomach....really look forward to that...for possibly the next 6 weeks. To think this time last year we were returning from Everest Base Camp. Anyway looks like I'll be in rehab hospital for a couple of weeks before returning home to Sydney, by which time I should be well and truly on the mend. Things should be a lot easier when the pins and wires come out of my right hand and I'm able to use the damn thing. Also another 2 weeks and it will be 4 weeks since the accident which should see the breaks in the pelvis close to mending. Hope U are all well and enjoying yourselves. God a stint in hospital makes U realise how important good health is. Cheers for now, Dave M.

We wish David a speedy recovery and thank him for a wonderful effort raising \$15,628. A terrific result.

Ban Xai Site Project Managers

Here is a little about Michael Weibler

Michael is a Class of 80 graduate of RMC into the corps of engineers, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel when he left the Army in June 1997. During his military service Michael undertook a wide range of regimental and staff appointments as well as an operational deployment leading a demining team in Cambodia for 6 months in 1995. Since leaving the Army, Michael has worked most recently with the Thiess Group for nearly 14 years in a range of roles including project development, tender management and operations management in a wide range of engineering sectors. Michael is married, has four children and two grandchildren.

It is planned that **Hugh Hamlyn-Harris (from Lindfield Rotary)** will be taking over from Michael at the very awkward time of 13 Nov to 13 Jan. Thank you Hugh – MiVAC really appreciates your involvement.



Here is a little about Hugh. Hugh has a civil engineering background and has spent the latter part of his career in project management roles on communications, infrastructure and resource development projects.

He was born in Vanuatu where he spent his early childhood before attending boarding school in Sydney. Hugh's professional career includes a number of years working on projects in England, Zambia, the UAE and New Zealand. More recently, he has taken project engineering and management roles with Telstra in their mobile communications division and UGL Infrastructure division.

Hugh is married, lives in Sydney and has three adult sons.



Steve Carrolls Award

G'day gang. I am inclosing a copy of the Paul Harris Fellowship certificate awarded to me by Rotary Maitland for the work done in pursuing Mivacs goals. It is for service above self. Although given to me ,it should be seen as belonging to Mivac. The Ideals and actions of Mivac Members epitomises " Service above self". If you can use the granting of this award as a means of furthering our cause please feel free to do so . Regards R.J. STEVE CARROLL



MUSHROOMS WITH A MISSION

Quang Tri Province Vietnam.

In January 2011, I travelled to Vietnam with three other members of MiVAC to look at where we could fund a project. We visited the Central Highlands and saw the orphanages around that area; MiVAC helped the local orphans by funding the building of fish ponds, toilets and sheds.

A few days later, at Quang Tri, we visited a landmine, bomb disposal and training charity, called RENEW. Chuck Searcy, who is a former US Vietnam Veteran and International Advisor to Project RENEW met with us and introduced us to many of the staff, including a former Australian soldier who was training Vietnamese civilians to be bomb technicians.

From the training centre we were taken to a high school site which was being cleared of UXO's, and then on to Mushrooms with a Mission. We were impressed by this project because although it was a simple concept, in Chuck's own words "126 families of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) survivors, single women who head households and ethnic minorities are growing high quality mushrooms to earn a sustainable income and reduce poverty. These vulnerable farming families are provided with tools, material, training and grow houses to cultivate a variety of mushrooms. The program is designed to expand over five years and increase the number of participating families up to 1,000." The mushrooms are sold at a fair trade price and any profits are used to provide assistance for more ERW removal works in Quang Tri Province.

A Japanese NGO has donated special machinery that will enable the mushrooms to be grown better and with bagging equipment, air filters etc. This will allow more to work at the site.

The MiVAC Trust will contribute about \$30,000 toward the new shed to house the new equipment in partnership with Renew and the Humpty Dumpty Institute as well as the People and Government of Quang Tri Province Vietnam.

Rob Woolley.

So Sandy, please support us at www.mivactrust.org and feel free to pass this on to family and friends.

We are all volunteers at MiVAC and 95% of funds go to projects.

A special thanks to Michael Weibler for an outstanding effort on the Ban Xai project.

Take Action, you can assist and make a difference.

The MiVAC Team.