Classroom Happenings:

Curriculum Improvement: At the end of February I attended the United in Our Pursuit of Excellence Principals Conference in Brisbane. The first United in Our Pursuit of Excellence conference was held in February, 2011. Since the initial conference all state education schools across state have had explicit improvement agendas to improve the educational outcome for all students enrolled in public education. In 2013 Queensland state schools will implement a research-validated pedagogical framework to support the excellent teaching and learning practices that are occurring.

NAPLAN data confirm that Queensland students have made the most significant gains in student achievement of all Australian states in the past two years. Improvement in reading / comprehension has been one of the focuses across our region. Stonehenge students are continually improving with all students who have undertaken NAPLAN achieving in the upper two bands, the highest levels available. Lower stakes data - sight words and PM benchmarks - are used to measure improvement for the younger students.

In 2013 our school explicit improvement agenda will include Explicit Instruction, writing and improvement for general capabilities in the 5 areas of NAPLAN assessment as well as reading.

Last year signaled the introduction of the Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics and science. This was the first time that all states in Australia taught common curriculum content. At the commencement of this year History was included in the suite of AC subjects common across Australia with the remaining KLA’s still under development. These will be introduced as they become available.

History: History will be taught at Stonehenge in terms 1 and 3. The Year 1 history focus is present and past family life. Chloe and Brodie have been leaning about similarities and differences in family life by comparing the present with the past and they have been learning suitable words to describe the sequence of time. Heath - Year 4, has been investigating first contacts, looking at European exploration and the settlement of European people in Australia.

Year 5 student, Tahnee has been investigating Australian colonies and the development of British colonies in Australia in the 1800’s. She is investigating the economic, political and social motivations behind the developments, particularly the establishment of Morton Bay in Queensland.

Year 6 students are investigating the development of the Australian nation and how the nation changed throughout the twentieth century.

Sandra
On Wednesday morning we had an impromptu visit from the Klaus Menzel - the camel man when visited the school. Klaus had returned to the Stonehenge area to collect his camels, Snowy and Willy from “Swanvale” where they had spent the summer months.

During the three months that the camels were spelled at “Swanvale” Klaus kept himself active bike riding around Tasmania. When travelling with the camels Klaus walks alongside his car and talks to them. No doubt he would be encouraging them keep their mind on the task of pulling and instead of stopping to graze.

Klaus told his very captive audience that he has been on the road since 1969, first using a pushbike as his means of travel around Australia then progressing to a variety of vehicles towed by the camels. Snowy and Willy have been with Klaus for the last 10 years and currently tow a small white ute that contains all his earthly possessions.

Klaus unharnessed the camels for the students to have a closer look at them. Willy was more content to nibble on the plants while Snowy was in the limelight. Klaus told the students that Snowy loves having the area behind his ears scratched so he sat patiently while all the students waited in line for their turn to give him a scratch, rub his nose and offer a few words of encouragement.

Klaus is very proud of the fact that he no longer has a power bill something that many people would envy in this time of every increasing electricity charges. Klaus runs his fridge and computer off his three solar panels using an inverter to convert the power to 240volts.

All too soon it was time for us to return to the classroom and for Klaus to continue on his journey. We are very grateful for Klaus for talking to the students.