

FIELDS OF GOLD

Over the years, as you've no doubt noticed, I've mentioned Gympie, the town where I spent my childhood and teenage years. Gympie is famous for its gold field; for its gold-mining history. Many of the town's historic buildings are registered on the Queensland Heritage Register. So far, I've managed to dodge the Register. Free as birds, our childish adventures were often enacted on old mullock heaps dotted throughout town. By that stage, the majority of the mullock heaps were covered by vegetation. The heaped rock piles were the waste rock from which the gold had been extracted during mining activity. The mullock heaps were popular places for Gympie kids to play. We were also always on the look-out for mundic aka pyrite; commonly known as "fool's gold" or "mundic". We called it the latter. Every time we found pieces of mundic our excitement was enough to fool an unaware onlooker that we'd discovered a nugget of gold. Mundic was everywhere. It could be found in the loose gravel at the edges of the roads and streets. If a piece was spotted stuck in the tar in the bitumen, it didn't last long there. The nearest makeshift tool was put to use to dig out the golden pieces. I think every kid in town had a container of sorts filled with mundic sitting on their duchess. As a trading commodity, mundic was on par with comics as fair currency.

While on the subject of gold...are you aware we have an operating gold mine up here on the mountain? If you're not, I'm here to inform you that we have. I ask for nothing in return for divulging this important information – no comics or mundic are required. I spread the word because it shouldn't remain a secret – be an unknown fact. I'll even tell you where the gold mine is. Most of you won't need a map. You probably pass it every time you go out. I do.

Our mountain gold mine is known as "Roslyn Lodge". The residents and staff are gold nuggets and gold bricks...every one of them. Among the residents therein has to be a gold mine of wonderful, interesting stories; stories that should be recorded, and shared. Four residents of Roslyn Lodge have more runs on the board than the legendary Don Bradman, who had a test batting average of 99.94. The four residents to whom I refer have hit and passed the century mark – a noteworthy achievement, indeed. Our Roslyn Lodge "centennials" are centurions – deserving recipients of extravagantly-designed championship gold belts. Over their 100-plus years they've mixed it with the best; no doubt, at times, with the worst. They've wrestled obstacles along the way; fought many battles - won some; lost some; drawn others. When faced with adversity, they never gave up. They are worth their weight, and more, in gold. Each have loved, been loved, and are still loved by family and friends. The four grand elders - two ladies and two gentlemen - along with the other residents at Roslyn Lodge are fortunate to be in the hands of the caring, considerate, compassionate staff, all of whom, without fail, greet you with a smile. Every one of the staff has a heart of gold...treasures...gold bricks, one and all.

Golden Soup: In pot, drizzle 1tbs x-virgin olive oil; bring to med-heat; add 1 chopped onion and 3 minced garlic cloves; cook until fragrant. Add 946ml water and 2c veggie stock; bring to boil; then simmer; add 1x2cm piece peeled ginger, 2c chickpeas, 2c kale leaves, 1c chopped carrots, 2tsp turmeric, 1tsp black pepper and 1/4tsp salt; cook 10-12mins. Add 2c egg noodles; cook al dente; add 1/2tsp cayenne, and juice of ½ lemon, optional. **Golden Curry:** Boil 500g halved new potatoes until tender, about 25mins; drain well. Do similar

with 250g carrots cut into chunks. Sauté in large pan with a little olive oil, 1 large brown onion, cut into quarters, and broken apart; add potatoes and carrots; add 3 crushed garlic cloves, 3-4tsp turmeric, 1tsp coriander, 1tsp chilli flakes, 1tsp ginger, 400g can coconut milk, 1tbs tomato purée, 3tsp chick-stock powder, and 400g can chopped tomatoes. Bring to boil; season; add 180g quinoa with 300ml just-boiled water. Simmer, covered 30mins; stir often. to ensure nothing sticks. Halfway through cooking, add 400g can drained, rinsed chickpeas. Add 150g spinach towards end of cooking time; stir it in until it wilts. Once the quinoa is fluffy, not crunchy, it's ready. **Honey Gold Chicken:** Preheat oven, 190C. Make a rub – 1tbs x-virgin olive oil, 1tsp turmeric, 1tsp dry mustard, salt and pepper; work well into 6-8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, cover all surfaces. Whisk together 3tbs whole grain mustard, 3tsp Dijon mustard, 3tbs hone, 2tbs chicken stock powder, salt and pepper; set aside. Heat large oven-proof skillet on stove; then add a little olive oil to skillet to cover surface. Sear chicken on both sides until golden and crispy. Drain excess oil; then pour over the honey-mustard sauce. Place in oven; bake 30-40mins. **Gold Milk:** Blend at high speed 2c milk of choice, 1tsp turmeric, 1/2tsp cinnamon, pinch of ground black pepper, tiny piece peeled ginger, or 1/4tsp ginger powder, pinch of cayenne (optional) and 1tsp honey or maple syrup. **Lee George**