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John Coutis and Leanne Crofts set off from the Ipswich mall on their fundraising walk. INSET: the couple with Gavin Pingel, Dave Lyons, John Coutis (back) and 4118 Club president David Dunster at Tuesday's luncheon at Greenbank RSL.
Main photo: Michael Holman OC0904HC

Coutis puts life into perspective

By **Hayley Campbell**

BAD hair days become a thing of the past after listening to what John Coutis has to say.

Nicknamed "halfy" because he has half a body, the international inspirational speaker from Springfield captivated the Greenbank RSL audience of Browns Plains 4118 Club members on Tuesday.

From the minute he climbed on to an elevated table at the front of the room, the crowd was rapt.

In less than hour, 35-year-old Coutis defined the term "Aussie battler" and prompted a few to say they would "never complain again".

President of the 4118 club, David Dunster said: "John has no legs and half a spine due to having Spina Bifida — nonetheless he's gone on to achieve more than anyone could ever dream of — he just never gives up."

The audience shared laughter and some shed tears as he told how, in one instance, he was tied up and thrown into a wheelie bin which was set alight by school bullies – right up to his life today, where he travels the world with fiance Leanne Crofts, whom he will wed on November 27.

"Motivation lasts 10 minutes where as inspiration lasts a lifetime," he said.

"If I can inspire one of you to get of your backside, then it's been a damn good day."

The couple, and Leanne's son, Damian, this week returned from an Ipswich to Gold Coast walk which raised almost $100,000 for research into hydrocephalus, amputation and fibromyalgia — three of the conditions their family lives with.

A desire to "move forward" and "not hold grudges" gave him the power to keep on achieveing his dreams, he said.

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