



# STORIES ACROSS THE GENERATIONS



# Stories and Skills – Across the Generations Project

The Stories and Skills – Across the Generations Project has been implemented by the City of Belmont with funding from the Department of Communities through the Age-friendly Communities Innovation and Implementation Grants Program.

The City of Belmont expresses its thanks to the volunteers who have worked closely with the ‘storytellers’ to capture their story and share their skills. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Professor Loretta Baldassar and Anne Mette Andersen from the University of WA and Rhuwina Griffiths, Author and Life Story Writer.

And most importantly of all, we thank you the story tellers, for the privilege of sharing your lives with us and the lessons we have learnt.

*Telling stories is not just a way of passing time. It is the way the wisdom gets passed along. The stuff that helps us to live a life worth remembering.*

— Rachel Naomi Remen



SUPPORTED BY



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**



# ANNA MRKIC

## STORY OF MY LIFE

Co-written by: Zahra Ibrahim



In Subiaco on the 13th of April, 1951 in King Edward Hospital, I took my first breath as a newborn. I was brought up in Belmont and have been there for the past 60 years. I lived with both my parents Licia and Biagio and my two brothers John and Adrian.



Our very first house was really old so we decided to knock it down. The house ground is now being used as bed and breakfast. We then moved to our second home in Keymer Street and I've been living there ever since.



My parents came from Italy as migrants to Australia. They wanted to start a new life and so they were happy coming to Australia, particularly Perth as it's a quiet and peaceful city. At that time my mother was pregnant with my brother John. She sailed the ship while carrying my brother which gave her the opportunity to arrive in Australia before the baby was born.

In 1956, St Maria Goretti's Catholic Primary School in Redcliffe was established and that was the year I started going to that school. I appreciated the school so much as I got

along with everyone pretty well and made amazing friends that I still meet-up with until this day. Back in the day, we used to go over each others' places and have different competitions amongst ourselves. We had a twisting competition once at Cheery's place. She was one of my closest friends. You could say she was my best friend. I ended up coming first place in that competition and I earned a doll as a prize. There was also a sports event that occurred at school which was a running activity and since I loved running, by the end of it I got awarded a yellow sash for coming runner-up.

I really enjoy my art classes that are with the organisation, 'People Who Care' in Guildford. I truly appreciate the ladies there, including Anne and Christine who are support workers and Kath and Linda who teach art skills. Art is something that I have always enjoyed doing and will forever enjoy doing. The art pieces displayed on these pages have been painted by me through the support of People Who Care, who I wish to acknowledge and express my thanks.



'The Last Supper' is one of my most favourite and important art pieces. This painting means a lot to me. When I'm feeling down or upset I just admire this artwork and I suddenly feel so much happier. I also have one of Mary and it is also one of my absolute favourites. It makes me feel at peace with myself as I'm praying and feel devoted to her. Creating these different paintings evokes a certain feeling which I cannot express enough in words. I make



a living from my work so I can spend even more time doing what I love.

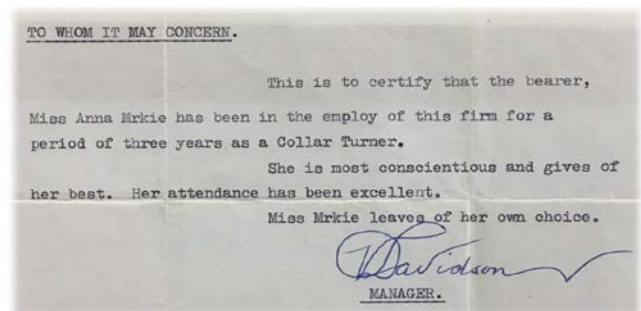


*Collage of my paintings*

Although there aren't many children in my family, there is one very special young boy that I can proudly call my nephew. His name is Blake. Since he is the only child in the family so far, you can imagine how close we are. We do nearly everything together from playing to reading books. Oh boy does he love his books. He'll flick through the pages and know exactly what he's doing. On the 29th of March, I will be meeting a newborn which will be a girl. This will be the first young born girl in the family for 60 years. Her name will be Abby Matilda.



During my younger years, I worked at clothing manufacturers R.A Davidson & Son PTY LTD. My job was to prepare all the collars so that they could be fitted on the garments. There were bundles and bundles of them to prepare. I must say I got paid pretty well and since I was doing extra work I got a bonus. I was very respected by my boss and he was very proud of me as a worker. I never wanted to miss a day of work as I was very happy going in there.



Later on I retired to do nursing as I wanted to learn something new and expand my skills. On the 11th of November 1993, I decided to apply for a position in nursing. When I got accepted I was very excited and amazed because that meant I could start a new life as a nurse. My pharmacist helped me get into this job as she recommended me into this position. My position in nursing was aged care which meant I had to look after the sick who were very old. I made their beds and gave them their breakfast. I was really loyal to my job and everybody appreciated me.

I ended up retiring to be with my parents and to support them. I was even called up to Murdoch but I told them I couldn't because I had commitments to look after my mum and dad. Having these skills as a nurse made it so much easier to take care of my dear parents.

Licia Mrkic, my mother, was born in Trieste, Italy on the 4th of December 1925 and passed away on the 5th of August 2015. My mother and I had many treasured memories together as we did everything from preparing meals to celebrating important occasions together.



*My mother.*

One day, however, my mother became very ill. She could barely use her hands so I helped her out with all the cutting and lifting. I eventually got really sick. I was diagnosed with pneumonia which was a very serious lung infection. I was so weak to the point where I needed walking sticks to support me. With my condition I could've got people to come and help out but I didn't as I wanted to be the one to support her. I still prepared all the meals, as well as cleaned the entire house all by myself, and I didn't mind for a second because I loved her and I was willing to do anything to help her out. However my mother's condition became so bad that it got to a point where she had to be taken into hospital. Unfortunately I couldn't be there for her at the hospital as I was too ill, however my brother John was and he stayed with her all day. Her last words to me were over the phone and she told me to "get better". It was very hard for me to accept all of that because I'd been there for her for so many

years. I felt emptiness when she was gone. I couldn't speak to anybody as I was grieving.

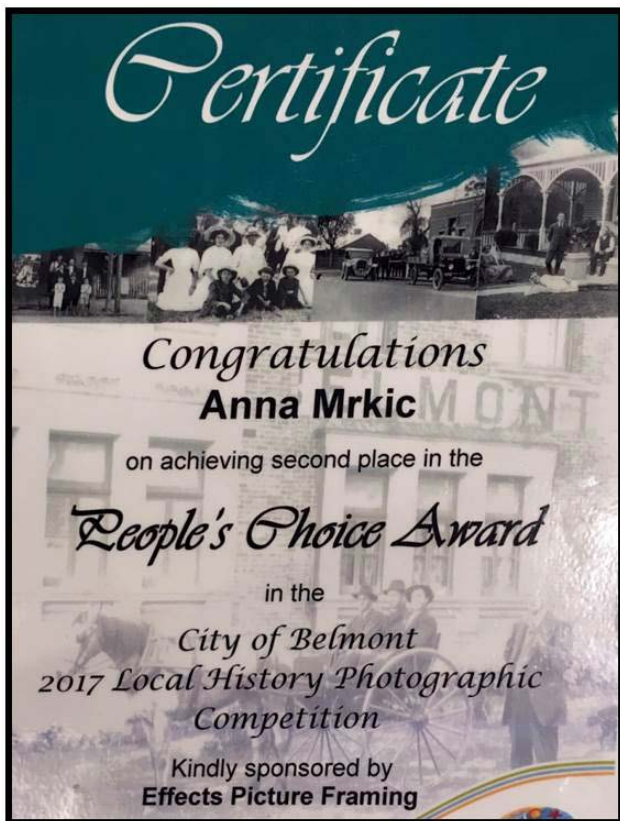
My father, Biagio, was born in Zadar, Italy which is where he met my beautiful mother Licia. On the 2nd of December, 1918 my father was in the First World War navy. The car on his uniform represents him taking all the people across the other side of the country. The anchor represents the water. My brother John was also there for my dad when he was in hospital from morning until night. One day John went to go visit him when the hospital rang me at around 8am in the morning and told me that my father had passed away. Since my brother didn't know yet I told them to tell him quietly and calmly. I got to the hospital after he passed away. It was really hard for us to adapt after going through all that but we managed. My father was buried in Guildford, Perth alongside my mother and uncle. May God rest their souls.



*My father.*



In 2017, when I visited the Council in the City of Belmont, I got recommended to join the Local History Photographic Competition. So I went and put up a family tree that I had sorted into photo frames and made it look perfect. Later on I found out that I was awarded second place for the best picture framing. It was such a great honour to be involved and to have experienced what I did that day.



*My certificate prize.*

Harman Park (right) is my leisure centre where I spend my days with my friendship group. Everyone is so close together and helps each other. Lindsay and Joe look after me and they're the most beautiful people you could ever ask for. Anne is in charge of us and she's so easy to get along with. Those are the days that I most appreciate being there with my friends. I do exercises on Friday mornings and enjoy them a lot. It puts me on my feet and gets me ready for the day.

The very first ball that I ever went to was the SRC Fascinator Ball, which was on the 27th of June, 2012. It was located in the Astral Ballroom which was in the Burswood Entertainment Complex. Martin Brian Yates organized the wonderful ball and he was also the photographer. The second ball that I went to was one of my favourite balls out of all the ones I've been to, which was the Seniors in Wonderland Ball. It was also located in the ballroom in Burswood. This event took place on the 19th of June, 2013. My very last ball was the Seniors Masquerade Ball. This took place on the 8th of June, 2016 also in the Astral Ballroom in Crown.



I've been honoured to be with Zahra Ibrahim in creating this storytelling project. It has meant so much to me being with her. It's been tremendous getting it together and working with her along the way. She has got so much charm and confidence in herself which made me open up to her even more. It was not hard because I had her as my tutor to guide me along.



# BRENDA WHITELEY

## SNAPSHOTS OF MY LIFE

Co-written by: Rona Abutorbush





I was born on the 9th November in 1940. This is the only photo I've got of me as a child with Mum and Dad at the seaside in Blackpool. Both of my parents were from Ireland. My father, James Tarpey, came from County Mayo on the west coast of Ireland, which has stunning scenery and a rocky coastline looking out across the Atlantic Ocean. My mother's family immigrated to England before she was born and my father moved to the UK as a young man hoping to better himself.



*Mum, Dad and I at Blackpool.*

My father James was a bricklayer by trade, and while he got a lot of things wrong he always provided for his family. He fought in WWII and when he returned, that's when he started to be violent to his family. I know he was on the Burma Railroad which was one of the most hellish places in the world and where over three thousand Australians died.

I'm guessing that he came home with PTSD. After the war no-one knew what that was or what to do, so Mum and us kids were the victims of his rages.

My dad never smoked or drank although my mum, Doris O' Brien, did both! My mother worked in the ammunitions factory and was the salt of the earth. She always did the best she could for us and tried to shield us as best she could from Dad's rages.

I had an older sister, Delia, who died of diptheria when she was 6. People don't get diptheria anymore because of the vaccine but when I was growing up, lots of people I knew had it and quite a few died as a result. I was 4 when I got it and like my sister, I was sent to the Grassington Sanitorium to recover. There wasn't any treatment as such, you either got better (in other words you got lucky) or you didn't and that was that.



*My sister Delia and I.*

My brother Christopher was born in 1950. Chris and I used to take the brunt of my dad's violent temper and many a time Mum and I would take him to the hospital after he'd got beaten up as we didn't want the neighbours to see or have to explain it to

the local doctor. Christopher now lives in London and married a Columbian artist with whom he had two daughters. One works for a fashion house and does hand sewing on designer garments while the other works for a Dutch bank.



*That's me and Chris in the photo.  
I'm wearing my first communion dress.*

My sister Linda was born 18 years after me. She was lucky as she had the middle aged father who had mellowed. As she was the baby of the family, she was spoilt and she was very manipulative at getting what she wanted. Linda and I never got on and she now lives in Leeds. She's been married three times and has two sons from her last husband.

My family lived in Bradford in Yorkshire when I was growing up in an almost totally Irish community. It was a grim place to be in the 1940's as after the Great Depression and the WW2 there was lots of unemployment. People came to the city looking for work but many ended up in the work houses which were straight out of Dickens. We were really poor but when I compare myself to others around me, we always had food on the table so we weren't at the very bottom of the pile.

Once a year we'd have new clothes bought for us at Whitsuntide (or Pentecost) which is seven weeks after Easter. We'd wear our new clothes and go round and show them off to neighbours and friends. They would put a penny in a pocket and say, "I wish you well to wear them." These clothes had to last us

a year and when our shoes wore out, we'd put cardboard in them and hope we didn't get it wet.

Our house was a two up and a two down, with a backyard that you walked through to get to a toilet which was shared with several other houses. We lit gas lamps in the house when it got dark and would take a candle upstairs to get to bed.

I remember there used to be lots of marching – whether it was the unions or processions – and the men would get the day off work.

I think people today would be shocked at how dirty our clothes were as washdays were once a week. Sunday night we got in a tin tub for a bath and that was it for the rest of the week! You could see a tide mark on our wrists and neck!

School was okay and I was very good at maths but being a bit plump I never had any boyfriends. When I left school, I went to work for the Associated Weavers, a carpet factory in Dudley Hill as a weaver. It had been set up by a family called the Abrahams and went on to become the world's largest producer of Axminster woven carpets. For me, starting work was all about earning some money so it was a very exciting time. While I was working in the day, I studied at night, doing a Pitman's shorthand and typing course. I'd hoped to find secretarial work but I found it all too dull, so I packed the night studying in and just focused on my day job.

Round about this time my parents had saved up enough money to lease their first pub and soon they had three hotels and pubs in Dewsbury, Bradford and Armley.

When they'd made their money doing this they bought a village store in Sherburn-in-Elmet. I left my weaving job and went to work for them in the shop. I found out years later that my father never paid my full stamp which you need if you're going to get a pension in the UK and he never paid



me any more than the other staff he employed so, no love lost there!



*LEFT: This is me looking the bees knees in my best dress with a rose corsage on the collar. I must have been going somewhere special!*

I met John when he started working for my father in the shop. I was 21.

John was one of 14 children. John and

I got married in 1964 and we had a traditional wedding. John had to convert to Roman Catholicism before we married so we could have the service in a RC Church. John's four sisters and my sister, Linda, were the bridesmaids.

We had a sit down lunch in a hotel in Boston Spa after the service and then went on honeymoon to Devon. We drove there in a turquoise Mini Minor which was a bit of a head turner in those days!



*Our wedding day.*

We never had any grand plan to go to Australia. One day I'd had enough of the snow and the cold and said to John, "Let's go," so we packed our suitcases and off we went as 10 pound Poms.

I was 29 when we left the UK. We arrived in Perth with nowhere to stay and had two nights accommodation in the Britannia Hotel on William Street (that was part of the Government's package) and after that we were on our own.

We rented a flat in East Victoria Park for \$75 a week and luckily found work almost immediately. John worked laying asphalt on the roads and then found work at the Casino where his training as a mechanic got him work repairing vehicles.

I found work delivering bread for the Tip Top Bakery and when I finished my deliveries, I'd go back to the flat and take on my second job for the day as the caretaker. Busy, busy, busy.



*Working with Tip Top bakery.*

We never planned to settle in Perth so when we'd saved up enough money we did some travelling around the country to see what it was like. We went from Perth to Darwin and then down the east coast where we stayed in Cairns for a year. John got a job working on road construction while I packed meat for a slaughter house. Our next stop was Sydney where we spent another year working. John worked on the roads while I worked in Arnotts Biscuit factory. The factory had a policy that they never put two people who spoke the same language together as that way we'd work harder and not get distracted talking. When we left Sydney our plan was to motor slowly back to Perth, but

in Adelaide I realized I was pregnant so that cut short our leisurely travels.



*LEFT: Peta is born in 1972.  
RIGHT: Craig is born in 1974.*

We bought our house in Rivervale in Gibb Street in 1972, for the grand sum of \$14,000. After eight years we'd paid off the mortgage, something that we were very proud to have done.

John worked for the WA Gravel and Paving Company in Bayswater where he repaired all sorts of vehicles until he retired.

I had a mix of jobs to fit in around bringing up the children when they were small. I worked at Burswood, McPhersons (as a picker in the warehouse), at the Lottery Kiosk in Belmont Forum as well as washing tourist buses. I was never bored! I worked for Big W for 25 years and am still with them as a part-time store greeter. They've been a great firm to work for.

John wasn't a great traveler when he got a bit older so although we did a few trips together (and we went back to the UK fairly regularly to see the family) I used to go off on holidays by myself after the children left home. I've been to Egypt, Vietnam, South Africa, New Zealand, China as well as travelling around a large part of Australia. John always said he had a holiday at home when I was gone!



*Travelling around Australia.*



*I don't think we usually had such large drinks when we went out!*

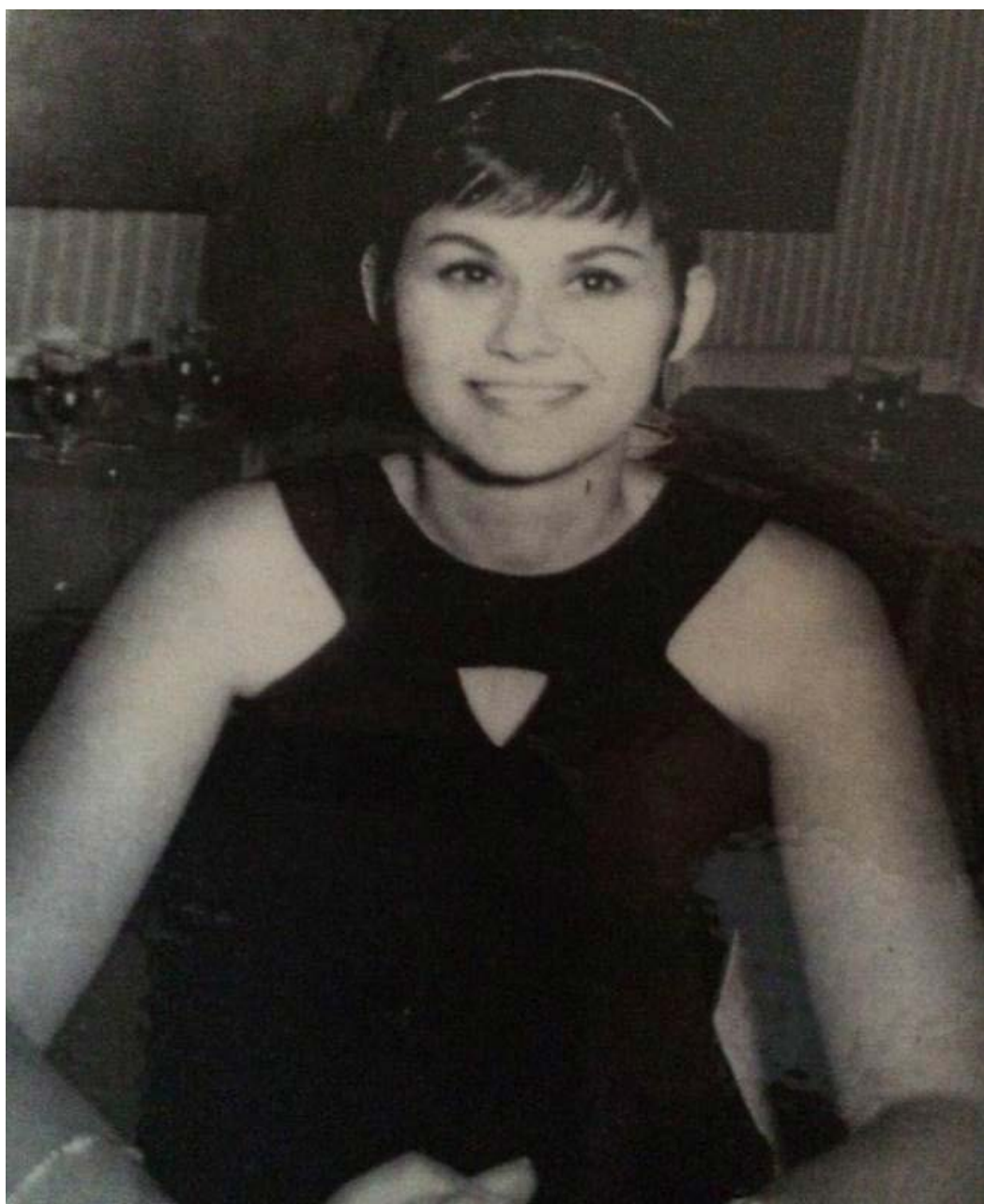
John died of cancer of the esophagus in 2010 after putting up a brave fight over two long years. I miss his company and the good times we had together but I can't bring him back, so life has to go on.

In 2015 the kids persuaded me to move house and I bought a house among four units in Wright Street in Belmont. I love it there. I was a Councillor at Belmont Council for 10 years which was a wonderful opportunity to see how a local government works. I was also a volunteer at the Royal Perth Hospital for a good few years as I enjoy talking to people and helping out where I can. I reckon I've had a good life and I'm happy with my lot. What more can I say...?



# THE CHERYL MARKS STORY

Co-written by: Edward Brine



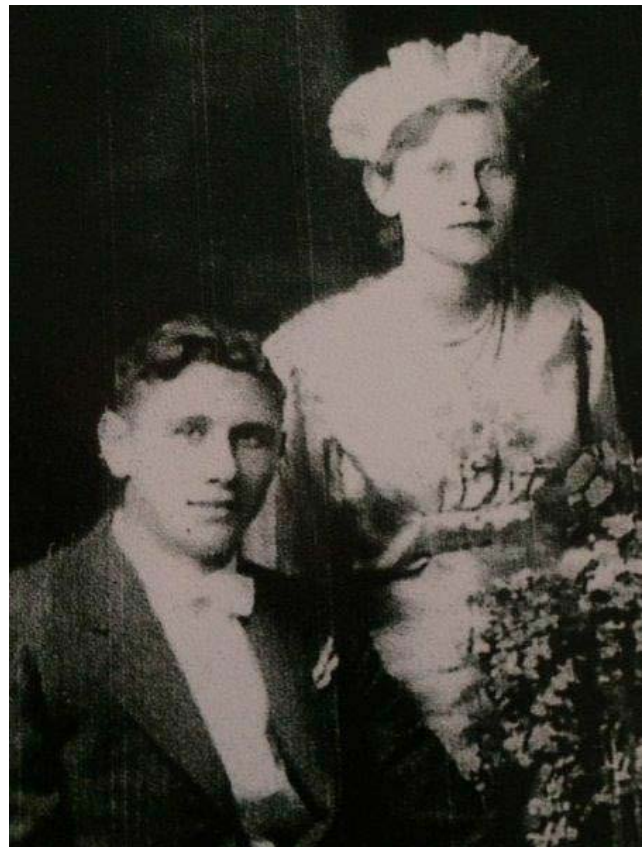
I have written this in loving memory of my mother and my hero, Gwendoline, who was named after a racehorse, and my father Cliff, who served in the army and airforce and spent most of his life in Concord Repatriation Hospital in Sydney. Cliff loved horse racing and his nick name was 'Perc the Punter'. This always amused me, because he never had more than a shilling or two to bet with. His cousin was Darby Munroe, the greatest jockey Australia has seen.

I was born on the 26th October, 1941 at the Tamworth Base Hospital, and three days later my mother walked with me under one arm and a small suitcase under the other to the main road. She waited two hours until a horse and sulky gave us a ride to Attunga, another four hours away. Attunga is a tiny town of several hundred people just north of Tamworth in New South Wales. Attunga means 'a high place' and is known mainly for its agriculture, limestone quarries, and lime kilns in the hills.

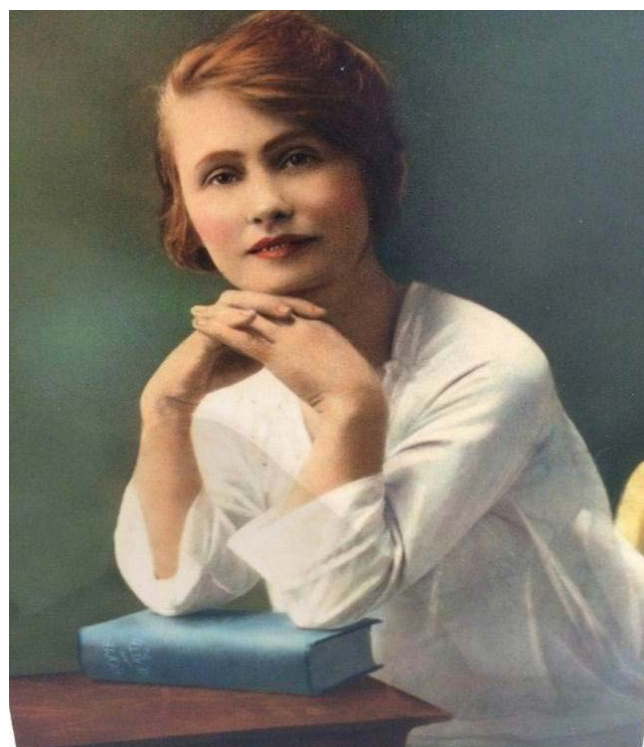
The first ten years of my life was spent here. I attended Attunga Primary School, Woolomol Primary and Tamworth High School, leaving at Year Nine to pursue a career in fashion. Being born in the country meant a lot of things to me and set a compass for my life early on. I learned to work hard and enjoy doing it. This ethos has carried me since and has allowed me to navigate through many challenges and build a wonderful life.

My mum and dad were married on Christmas Eve in 1938. They went on a bus with relatives from Attunga to Tamworth and got married in the church. After the ceremony, they went for a counter meal at the hotel and then to see a movie. They celebrated their wedding at Christmas lunch the next day.

My brother Joe was born in October 1939 and I arrived in October 1941, while Dad was away at the war.



*My Mum and Dad.*



*My grandmother.*

My mother's father had been killed in a railway accident when she was a baby. Her mother had remarried and had five children before she died of tuberculosis in 1944.



The shock of her death had spurred Mum's stepfather to abandon the children, never to return. At this time my sister Jane was born and Mum suddenly found herself with eight children to rear. She was only 23 years old.

Later my brother John and sister Jill were added to the family, followed by two orphaned boys my mother felt sorry for. There were now 12 children. Dad had been injured and after the war was forced to spend most of his life in Concord Repatriation Hospital in Sydney. People were struggling to survive and Mum only had the child endowment to live on. To keep the family, Mum worked at the local hotel doing washing and cleaning.



*Dad and Joe.*

Dad's parents had died young leaving us on our own to survive as best we could. We lived in an old weatherboard rented house in Attunga. In the winter we covered the walls with newspaper stuck on with flour and water paste and then removed the paper for the hot summer. The house had two bedrooms, a sitting room that was used as a bedroom and a kitchen with a wood stove. A lean-to was at the back with a dirt floor and a small tub. To wash and heat water there was a 'copper' in the backyard and the toilet was a corrugated iron shed with a wooden seat over a pit, which had lime thrown into it. In the kitchen was a table and the chairs were kerosene tins. We had three beds, two for

the children, one for Mum and Dad. Our mattresses were made of horse hair and the children slept three at the top and three at the bottom. When we were babies we slept in a suitcase. There were no blankets, only 'woggas' made of clean wheat bags with material on the outside.

Our water was supplied from a rain tank, which ran dry every summer and forced us to cart water from a nearby creek and windmill. To wash you either lined up, one after another to use the tub or went to the windmill. The crockery we used were tin plates and mugs. As luck would have it we were connected to the electricity. We didn't have many clothes. They were all hand-me-downs from other people and we seldom had shoes.



*Dad and John.*

Food was very scarce and Mum had to make our bread, which was called damper. We had bread and drippings (fat) a lot and sometimes cracked eggs given to us by a poultry farm. Mum would make a hole in the middle of the bread, then break an egg into it and fry it. It was called 'toad in the hole'. Boiled rice with milk was the diet sometimes for days if we had nothing else. If Mum had eggs she would make rice puddings and at other times she made 'dough boys' out of flour and water with treacle (similar to golden

syrup) on them as a meal. They also went into stews without the treacle. On some occasions Mum would borrow a hand mincer and buy a cheap cut of meat to make mince rissoles or a mince pie baked in the oven with mashed potato on top. We had barley soup made with shanks and sometimes tripe, brains or liver, which were cheap. Now and then we had a baked leg of mutton, but usually we lived on rabbit cooked about ten different ways. I loved baked rabbit. Without rabbit we would never have survived.



*School class photo - Attunga 1951.*



*Attunga School.*

When Dad was home from Concord Hospital, where he spent six months of each year after the war, he would borrow a railway trike and go to the river fishing. The fish he caught were big 'yellow bellies' and Mum would stuff and bake them.

We loved it when it rained, the mushrooms would be everywhere and we would walk for hours picking them. Occasionally we had special treats like jelly and custard set in the well and Mum's delicious scones. Sometimes Mum made toffee as a treat and we had chicken twice a year, Easter and Christmas. To make jam we would borrow a horse and cart and go blackberry picking.

For Christmas our present was always an orange and two boiled lollies. Christmas lunch was chicken, Mum's Christmas cake, pudding and trifle with green and red jelly on top. On Christmas Day the whole family would climb aboard the railway trike and head to the viaduct to be with all our relatives and other families. We had a beautiful day swimming and eating.

There were no toys or books so our entertainment was hopscotch, marbles and rounders (softball). At times the adults would join in. At the creek we had an old tyre attached to a tree and we would swing from it and jump into the creek.

On Sundays we all went to Sunday School at the church in Attunga. Now and then the circus came to town and although we couldn't afford to go, we loved watching the animals grazing around the outside of the tent. Some of the older boys would sneak in under the tent and watch for nothing.

Twice a year the travelling picture showman Terry Toon would come to town with his picture show. We had no money for this either, but he still let us in to sit on the floor. It was always interesting, with the reel breaking down all the time and Terry having to mend it. We loved it. The Attunga Public Hall was the centre of social life in the village. In 1976 the scenes for 'The Picture Showman' were shot inside the hall. We never had a radio, but a lady called Nanna Cook let us listen to hers.





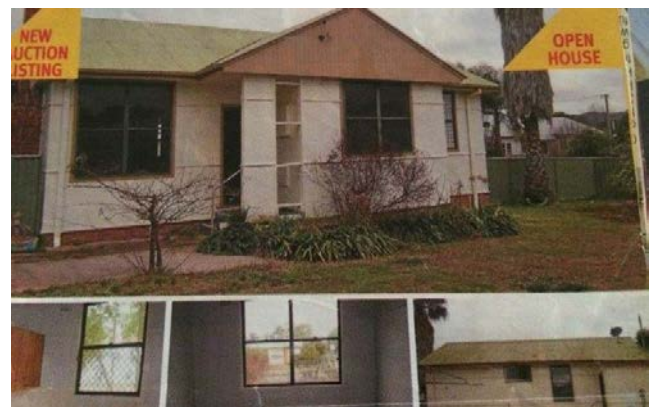
*Cheryl and Mavis.*

When I was twelve, we moved from Attunga to Woolomol (now known as Oxley Vale) to live in an army hut. Woolomol was only three miles from Tamworth and we made the trip in a horse and sulky. Our belongings came later on a truck. The huts were built for soldiers during the war and a repatriation hospital and jail were close by. They were built in pairs with a co-joined wall. The front hut was attached to a ramp which ran around the whole camp, and the back hut fronted onto an open space. The ramps led to a communal shower block and a communal toilet block. The laundries were at the back, not far from the back huts. They were built in blocks of about 50 each. The huts had one long room at the front, which was used as a kitchen and sitting room, followed by a hallway with a small bedroom on either side and another long room at the back. We lived in one of the back huts. The army depot had a primary school and local shop with a phone box nearby. We were about three miles from Tamworth and we could easily walk to the nearby river. Buses ran frequently and it was wonderful.

My mother was lucky and got a job in Tamworth cleaning the police station, baby health centre and the service station three times a week. On Sundays I would go with her on the bus to help clean. The police were aware of my help and always left lollies

for me at the station. On our return home, we would spend hours making biscuits for our school lunches the next week. My mum's brothers Ray and Barry had left home to work - Ray to become a jockey in Newcastle and Barry to be a drover with her cousin. Her sisters, Lerline and Gloria, now had work as housemaids at stations.

Life had become easier and we remained that way for the next three years. Barry finished droving and returned home to work with three of the boys at the starch factory (flour mill) in Tamworth. Brother Joe went to work at the Electrical Commission. There were still nine children at home living in the army hut with Mum and Dad. Food was more plentiful and the boys were still trapping rabbits and catching fish in the river. I was now the eldest girl at home and Mum was still working, so I was expected to help her with the housework and washing. I did the ironing with a black iron on top of the stove. The boys started paying me sixpence to clean their shoes and iron their clothes. It was my first pocket money. I also went with them to watch brother Max play football and occasionally to a Chinese restaurant in Tamworth. Except for Dad's illness we were all well and happy.



*Our house in Tamworth.*

Hooray! Such excitement, we were offered a State Housing Commission home in South Tamworth. It had three bedrooms, lounge, separate dining room, kitchen, bathroom and laundry. We couldn't stop looking at the bathroom; we now had our own bathtub with a shower over it, vanity and toilet. Pure

joy! The bus stop was just two doors away and although there were still eleven of us at home it was great. I was now fifteen and decided to leave school to find work. Work was hard to get at the time and I feel that divine intervention was involved to get me a job at Grace Bros Department Store (later Myers). The job was in the ladies section called Kimbas and there were three of us, who were also the models at the fashion parades.

I met my husband, Bill, at the local town hall dance. He was a farmer and his family was extremely wealthy. To save for our wedding in 1960 I took a second job at night, waitressing at the motel. Our home was a wheat, sheep and cattle farm called 'Carinya' owned by his mother. Within a year he argued with his family and we packed up the Holden and moved to Sydney. In Sydney we lived in a shared house. I worked in a ladies store and Bill did a welding course to become a welder. In 1963 his mother paid cash for a beautiful house, 7 Shaaron Court Arncliffe, furnished it and gave it to us. His family were wonderful people. Unfortunately, Bill had a bad temper as a boy and with alcohol it became worse. Our social life was very good. We enjoyed horse racing and we went to see all the overseas acts that came to town. Frank Sinatra was my favourite.



*Outside my home in Sydney .*

Dad was still in and out of Concord Repatriation Hospital and I spent a lot of time visiting him. We also visited home every Christmas and Easter.



*Off to work in Sydney.*

In 1972 Bill's grandmother died and left her money to her seven grandchildren. Our share was 40,000 pounds. This was a lot of money at the time. We decided to sell the house in Sydney, build a set of units in Tamworth and live in one of the units.

Bill started drinking more and became more violent. In Sydney I had no one to turn to, but in Tamworth Mum was only 10 minutes away. So I left everything and went home to live. The divorce settlement left me with \$10,000. Most of the money was deemed to be from Bill's family and not applicable to me, but this was enough to buy a new car.

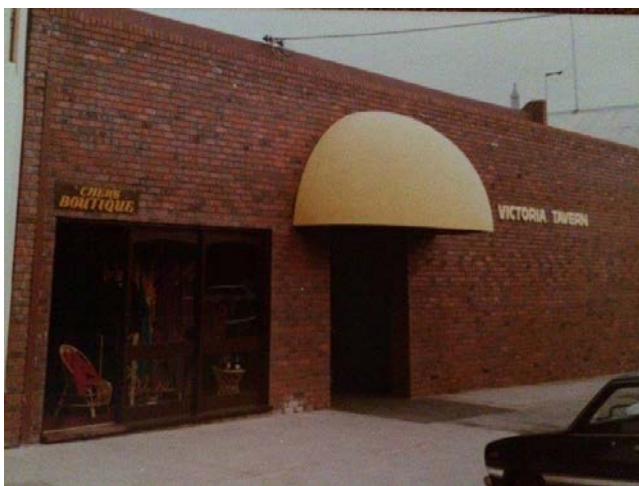
I was now working and felt free at last from the violence I had endured in Sydney. Today this is called domestic violence. Soon after the divorce Dad died. This was a blessing, because he had been in agony most of his life and had tried to end it all several times.

In 1975 my cousin Kathy was coming to Perth to visit her sister Lyn for a holiday. I decided to go with her and I drove across the Nullarbor single-handedly, because Kathy couldn't drive. It was a long drive and there was a 100 miles of dirt road in those days. In Perth Kathy and I did a bar course



and got a job at the John Barleycorn Hotel.

One of my workmates, Lyn McNeil, whose husband was a detective, was moving to Kalgoorlie to live. Through them I got the job in 1976 as area manageress for Auto Motels and Hotels and moved to Kalgoorlie to manage the Victoria Tavern. This was a great success and I decided to expand. At the front of the Tavern was an unused large room, which I turned into 'Cher's Boutique' with the permission of the owners. They were so pleased with my work ethic they gave me a long lease on the room allowing me to sell the lease when I left. Even though I had staff for the tavern and the boutique, my work was long and hard, so I bought a racehorse for fun.

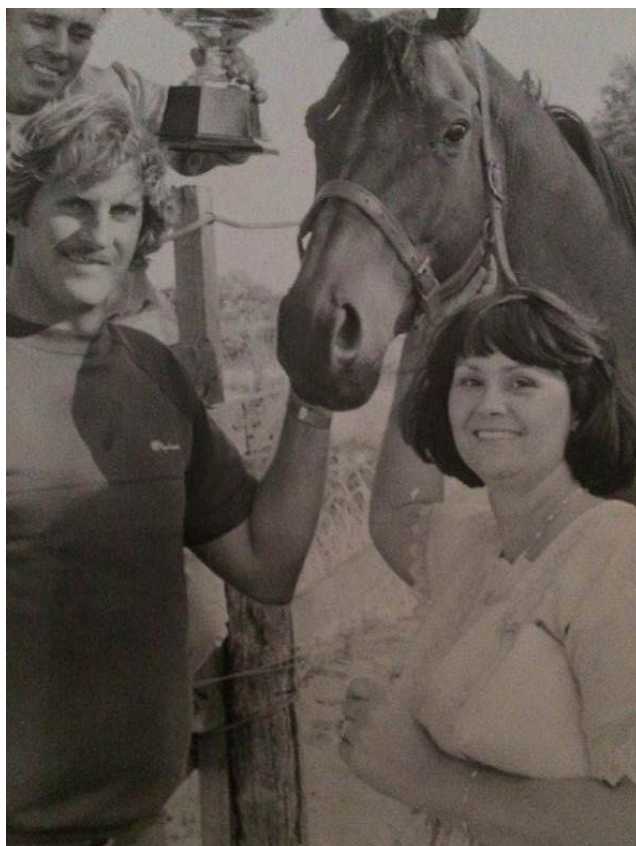


*Where I worked in Kalgoorlie.*

The horse won twenty races, so I bought another four and they won races as well. I was very lucky.

My mother would come over for a few months a year. She was a wonderful help in the tavern. After many years I decided to give up the Auto Motels work, sold my boutique and leased premises for a coffee lounge. The coffee lounge was a great success. However, by this time I decided to move back to Perth and consequently sold the coffee shop. With the money from the boutique and the coffee shop and my savings, I was able to buy a new small house in a cluster of eight in Belmont. I had made friends with the Wagg family and Paula was

the first lady jockey in Australia and rode my horses in Kalgoorlie. She is now a horse trainer. I started going to the races every Saturday with the Waggs, Paula and her boyfriend.

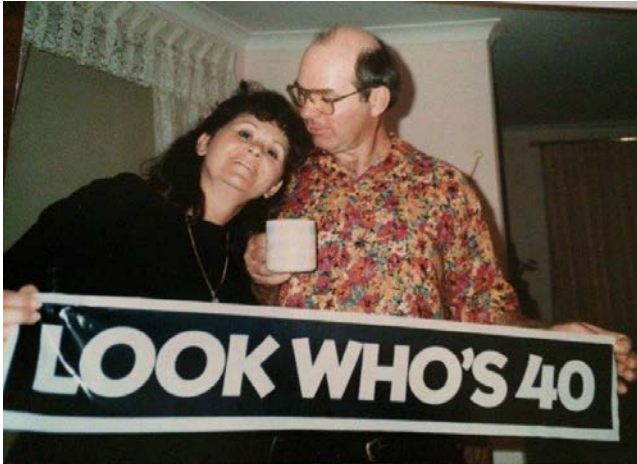


*Esperance Cup win.*

Once I was settled in Perth, I started to look for work and was lucky to find a position at St Mary's Private School as a boarding house mother. The job was long hours (3.00pm – 9.00am next morning), but the girls were wonderful and I loved it. I ended up working four years at St Mary's, six years at St Hilda's and 20 years at St Brigid's; 30 years overall.

After the races on a Saturday night, we would all go to the Ascot Inn for dinner. One night we were having a drink in the bar when I walked my future husband Phil Marks. Horse trainer Eric Parnham introduced me to Phil and that was it. He invited me out to dinner the next Monday night and we've been together ever since. The Marks family have all been horse trainers and their stables are heritage listed in Fremantle.

Both Phil and I love horses and in 1993 we bought a block of land in Ascot and built a house and stables. For the next 15 years we enjoyed the 'racing lifestyle'.



*Phil's 40th birthday.*

Mayor and six years as Mayor. It has been a wonderful ride for both Phil and myself and the most fulfilling period of our lives. There is nothing so gratifying as helping your fellow residents with the issues that affect their lives.



*Phil as Mayor.*



*My mum.*

In 2007 a gentleman made us an offer for our property that we couldn't refuse. So we sold and moved to an apartment in Rivervale overlooking the river. Phil has always been well known in the racing industry and when things were tight for racing in 1999 he was asked to run for the Belmont City Council. With the backing of the racing people he has now been on the Council for 18 years; six years as a Councillor; six years as Deputy



*My wedding to Phil sealed with a kiss.*

On a visit to see the family 20 years ago, I returned home with a little girl called Carrie-Jay. She was seven years old and her mother and father were only 16 when she was born. My sister Jill, her grandmother, was ill and so was her mother. My own mother was too old to look after her and her father had only seen her once, on the day she was born. Phil picked me up at the airport and I told him I had a surprise for him. Boy was he surprised, but he was happy for me and happy to help the little girl.



For the last 20 years we have looked after her. She has been to private schools, university, had cars bought for her and all the things I missed as a child. She has been home on several occasions to see her mother and then her mother decided to come to Perth with her new son. This was a great thing for Carrie, who had always fretted for her mother. One night Carrie was on the computer and came out crying - Dad's found me! Her father was now married with a son and a daughter and living in Tamworth on a farm. She has been to see him often and they are great friends. Carrie is a beautiful young lady and we love her dearly. We are blessed to have had her in our lives.



*Carrie as a young lady.*



*Carrie as a young girl.*



To have lived in this era, I think is a gift from heaven. In my lifetime, I have seen the change from the horse and cart to the motor car; from wireless to television, video machines, computers and mobile phones.

I've seen Terry Toon, The Picture Showman, who travelled the town halls in country areas with the film breaking and needing fixing continually, with us seated on the floor watching; to the colour movies and theatres of today.

I've seen the discovery of radar, splitting the atom, sulfa drugs, penicillin, heart surgery and organ transplants. There has been change from aeroplanes to travelling in space and men walking on the moon.

To be able to watch all of the great sporting events in the comfort of one's home is unbelievable. Events like winning the Americas Cup, the Olympic Games and Wimbledon. It is incredible to be able to watch horse racing all over the world.

To think that I have been spared to see the wonderful things in this world, especially with Phil over the last 33 years, has been a great bonus.

Luck has been with me - or is it fate? I am very grateful whatever it's called. No matter what - I will always call Attunga home.

# THE LIFE OF EMILY JAMIESON

Co-written by: Shakira Janowicz





Being born on March 14th, 1933 I grew up during the time of World War II. This made life a lot different to the way it is now. My family and I moved around quite a lot when I was younger, due to my father working on the railways, and I attended five different schools because of this! Everything was rationed when I was a child, due to the war, and we were taught a variety of different skills from sewing to baking to playing musical instruments. Sometimes even water was rationed! This only happened when there was problem with the Kalgoorlie pipeline.

We couldn't just pop down to the big shopping centres like you can nowadays; instead we had coupons. These monthly coupons, along with money, gave us access to what we needed. We had coupons for everything, from butter coupons to clothing coupons to coupons for tea! I remember my mother would swap tea coupons with my grandmother for clothing coupons for my siblings and I. Children received extra coupons once they passed their 12th birthday or grew to 5ft and over; luckily I grew taller than 5ft before I was 12 and my family received extra coupons.

It was a different world back then. I remember every Saturday morning when I was 11 years old, my brother John and I would take his little red trolley and go shopping. There was no one place with everything and so we had to walk to all the different shops, like the green grocers, the butchers, and the bakery, to put our orders in and then go collect them.



*My Aunt Lorna and I when I was 6 weeks old.*

John and I would sometimes walk to Mount Lawley to the cake factory because it was cheaper to buy a cake than to buy the butter and sugar needed to make the cake.



*My father John, brother John (6) and I (10), 1943.*

Life was different back then. You could leave the house as a child and be trusted to be home by the time the street lights came on, and you could go anywhere without getting hassled. You could trust people. My mother never used to lock the house; you didn't need to. If someone knocked on your door and you didn't answer they'd just walk away. The freedom that children once had has been taken out of this world.

During primary school, I only attended school during the morning and my sister during the afternoon. This was due to not having enough teachers to be able to teach all the children, so we would have to take turns. When I attended Our Lady's College, now known as Mercedes College, the nuns organised for my sister and I to learn to play instruments. June played the piano and I played the violin. We would have family nights where all the relations would come over and we would play the piano and violin and everybody would sing and dance.

When I was teaching in Shackleton, I used to play the violin and the children would sing.



*Here I am on the left on my first day of high school with June, 1946.*

Being a teenager was fun! Every Friday night my sister June and I would walk to the YAL youth club, and every Saturday we would walk down to ANZAC house for dancing. These dance nights were 50/50 and consisted of old time dancing, like ballroom and the waltz, and the other half was modern dancing, like the quickstep, tango and samba. This was something I really looked forward to each week. This was our social event and where we got the chance to meet people aged 16-25. I was cheeky and attended one of these dance nights when I was 15, but turned 16 a week later! I stopped attending these when June was sent to Rockingham for teaching. But this didn't stop me from dancing.

I attended Teacher's College when I was 18. Here we used to have square dancing parties! Anyone who had the biggest backyard had the privilege of being host, and we would play records and square dance for hours. Girls would bring a platter of food for supper, and boys would bring cool drink, as you couldn't drink alcohol until you were 21. Two of the boys who used to come had cars, and back in those days if you had a car, you

were like a millionaire! They would transport us around and this of course made them very popular.

I had always wanted to be a nurse, and I worked as a ward maid at St Anne's Hospital when I was 15. I decided I would qualify as a teacher here in Australia and study nursing in Switzerland. I wanted to go there to teach and help the disabled children that I had read about. My father didn't like to imagine me having to go through what nurses deal with and encouraged me to teach once I had finished teaching qualifications. I respected my father very much and he was always selfless towards my siblings and I.

I started teaching when I was 20 in Shackleton. My favorite thing about teaching was the children. I like children and find them more interesting than adults. They say what they think, and they don't think about what they're going to say or what will impress you or make you upset. They just talk to you. Children like to be listened to, and not many people listen.



*The photo above shows me (20) on Graduation Day from Teacher's College, June 12th, 1953. This photo was taken to be sent to my Gran and Grandpa.*



I met my husband Colin Jamieson in my mother's kitchen. He was a local member of parliament and knew my mother due to her being the President of the Bentley Labour Women. Another member of the party named Ruby kept trying to set us up, to which I told her I was quite capable of finding someone for myself. I was doing the dishes when Ruby announced she had brought someone for me to meet, to which I replied, "If it's who I think it is, you can take him back to wherever!". I turned around and there was Colin standing in the doorway. I apologised and said I had heard non stop about him, to which he replied "Same here!"



*Colin and I at Ron's wedding in 1985.*

One afternoon when friends and family were over, including Colin, we were discussing the trots. Colin had tickets and I had said how I would love to go to the trots, thinking a friend and myself would go. Colin then invited me along with him. For Easter my family would have a picnic, and Colin did not have anything else planned so I invited him to come along to Moore River with my family. We went to the drive-ins that Monday night, and three weeks later we were engaged, on Anzac Day, 1959.

We married on May 14th, 1960. The wedding was put off until elections were over, when Colin was free, and then put off again until school holidays, when I was free. On the wedding day my father became annoyed

with the photographer who had pinned my dress to the carpet and was making us late. My father didn't need to worry though, as Colin had decided to make a quick stop beforehand to a football match in South Perth!

Colin was a very busy man, and marrying a politician I knew what I was getting myself into. He was President of the Labour Party, President of the Australian Amateur Football Council, and a member on the Australian Football Council. He seemed to know everyone and everyone seemed to know him! I had to resign from teaching once I married, as this was what you had to do. Raise your family and then return to teaching once you were a mature lady. But I did do relief jobs at Catholic schools.



*Our wedding day.*

I probably had the most unusual honeymoon anyone's heard of. We were to travel around Australia, which we did, but it turned into a honeymoon full of business trips, football meetings, and meeting friends. We caught the State ship up the coast which delivered to all the ports along the way. At each port there were people waiting for him to whisk him to a meeting while the ladies would show me around town.

There was a cyclone threat in Wyndham so we had to be flown to Darwin instead! Colin and I were walking down the street in Darwin when a Volkswagen did a U-Turn and a man hung out the window yelling at Colin. Turned out it was man Colin had been in the air force with! We were taken all over Darwin. That night for

accommodation I had to sleep in the single room, while Colin was down in the men's section due to not having enough room.

I led a very busy life with Colin. Colin was such a busy man that our phones would start ringing at 5am in the morning and wouldn't stop until 11pm that night.

We house sat my parent's friend's house in Bentley while our home was being built in 1960. Colin had designed a house, which I redesigned. Due to Colin having been in the air force we had air force funding. When Colin wasn't working he liked to garden, and would wear his daggy hat, unbuttoned shirt (just to keep the sun off his back) and tatty shorts. I would check if he would ever need anything, but other than that would leave him to have his 'thinking time'.

Jane was a very happy child and loved when visitors were over. She was always very chatty and sociable; she still is to this day! She had a few problems when she was younger with her legs, and due to this had several operations, but despite this continued to be her cheery self! She enjoys her life very much and loves to go on cruises.

Ron was a very strong child. You couldn't walk into the lounge room with the light off if he had been in there as he had a fondness for moving furniture around; you never knew where you would find your furniture. He would easily lift things that were far too heavy for anyone else. Though he was strong, he was such a caring and loving person. It once only took him 30 minutes to ride to Fremantle from home.



*My daughter Jane and son Ron.*

My mother was an extraordinary woman, and not just because she was my mother, but because she could do anything and everything. From sewing, to baking, to painting, and even making paper flowers! She had many talents, and this is where I believe I inherited my talents from. She was like my grandmother. They both always were organised and well prepared.

When my mother was older and in a nursing home, she started to go blind. She was a very visual person due to her skills and so I would take her for walks. I would push her in her wheelchair around South Perth and describe what I saw to her. When it was Jacaranda season I would say "Mum, it's Jacaranda season, there's purple flowers on the trees and there are flowers everywhere on the ground." I would describe the roses in the garden bed, to which she would close her eyes, smile and nod.



*My mother Emily (80), most commonly known as Poppy with her creations.*



*Colin, Young Kim Beazley and I.*



# It's been a long and hazardous climb

"I've always tended to gravitate toward the organisation sides of sporting clubs, union groups, politics. It's just the way I am. Even at school I was sports captain or secretary of clubs."

But Mr Jamieson waited a long time for the prime position in his political party. For 17 years he has been president of WA branch of the Australian Labor Party. He has served the State Parliament since 1953, been a member of the Tonkin Cabinet as Minister for Works, Water Supplies and Electricity.

### Followers

He describes himself as a "faithful Indian." "You have to be a good follower before you can be a good leader."

Born in Perth in 1923 he is the eldest of three children. His mother, Mona Jamieson, died when his brother, Newell, was born.

He was raised by his mother's parents. His younger brother and sister by his father's parents.

He attributes his interest in politics to his grandfather, former councillor and Mayor of Midland. "He was a true democrat."

His father's father worked for many years with the Midland Railway but was sacked for attempting to start a union. When Colin Jamieson

left school he worked alongside his father in the vineyards picking grapes. "I got my first pair of long pants, so I could earn a man's wage. I earned the same as my dad."

Armed service ended the tedium. He served in the AIF with the 138th General Transport Company, before transferring to the RAAF. An eye disability precluded any ambitions to become a pilot. He took a training course as a radar technician.

Demobilisation, however, brought unemployment. He went back to the vineyards and the Midland Railway while waiting to attend a services rehabilitation training programme.

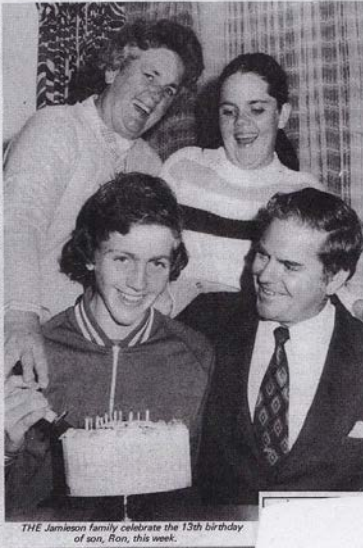
### Acquaintances

Winning the leadership vote also brought a renewal of old acquaintances. He received a telephone call from a former schoolmate, Mr. Bill McGhie. They had attended Victoria Park school together in the 1930s.

Mr. Jamieson remembered Bill because Bill jabbed a nib pen into his backside in class one day.

He visited Mr McGhie at his service station in Canning Bridge.

"You rotten bastard," he said. "It's taken 40 years to catch up and say that."



Colin retired from 33 years of Parliament when he was 63; he was never beaten in an election, he just decided it was time. He continued former roles and took on new roles: the role of President of Australian Amateur Football Club, the Kings Park Board, Chairman of the Cemetery Board, on the Tennis Council in Kings Park, and in the Victoria Park Horticultural Society.



The last photo of Colin and I in March, 1990 at a friend's son's wedding.

I have had to deal with much grief in my life. Colin died in 1990, and while I was at the hospital with our children I knew something had gone wrong. Colin's death was announced on the radio. I received so many flowers that I could not house them all inside and had to get Ron to get two more tables out of the shed to place them on. At one point I think I had up to 80 people within the house. It was exhausting. My niece Julie and her girlfriend Kathy took over catering for the multitudes all day.

Ron found out he had a brain tumor in January, 2008. He hadn't told me about it for a period of time, but when he did, there was nothing I could do and we just had to keep going on with life the best we could for Ron. He would get frustrated because he couldn't do the things he used to be able to, but we did the best we could with what the doctors could do. Unfortunately Ron died later that year in August. He left behind his wife and four children ranging from late teens to early 20s. The family pulled together to get through this tough time.



Ron, Jane, Colin and I.

I have travelled to many places during my life and I plan to continue to travel. I went on a world trip during the mid-1980s with my husband for nine weeks. We travelled to India, Greece, Italy, England, Scotland, Cook Island, America, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Greece was my favourite place. I found it so interesting and I particularly enjoyed seeing all the buildings, night light shows and live music. Cook Island was an interesting experience; I went to a Mass there and was not prepared for the loud choir music. You could hear them down the street!



*Colin and I in Greece.*

I have also been to Singapore, Bangkok, Czechoslovakia, and Japan. I quite enjoy going on cruises and have cruised around New Zealand, Fiji and Asia with Jane. My favourite thing about travelling is the relaxation. Travelling is interesting, you get the chance to meet all different types of people in all different parts of the world.

I have led a very happy and busy life, but like everyone else have also experienced hardships along the way. But everyone has problems and this is just something that you deal with, everybody has to get on in life. Life is something that you can't change. You need to appreciate life and take advantage of it, it is up to you to make something of your life.

Don't let others bring you down. If something is right, it feels right in your heart.



# WALTER FRANCIS LAMP

## THE NINE DECADES OF LIFE

Co-written by: Simbarashe Mutero



William Shakespeare once said “Some are born great, some achieve greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them.” One of these three aptly describes the great man by the name of Walter Francis Lamp, born on the 15th of August, 1927 in Victoria Park to his father Walter Thomas Lamp and mother Gladys Cockerell.

His parents married on the 10th of January 1927 in Baptist Manse, Katanning, Western Australia. Frank’s parents received their son with so much joy, gratitude and hope for a better life for him. It was a period of medical discovery which saw Scottish bacteriologist Alexander Fleming discovering penicillin (which destroys bacteria), the first antibiotic developed in 1928. The discovery of such an antibiotic ascertained a better future of healthy people, including Frank.

Frank’s father, Walter Thomas Lamp, was enlisted in the Australian Imperial Armed Forces at Blackboy Hill in WA and around 1916 served in the military during the World War I. However Walter suffered from lung problems and retired from the military.

During the early 20th century Australia’s agricultural production had rapidly increased as a result of new and improved technology, including more productive grain varieties and advances in livestock breeding. As a retiree from the military, Frank’s father, Walter became a farmer and a freeholder of house and land at part Lot 40, Kwobrup.

The family home was situated near a general store with silos around it. It was in the vicinity of a railway line 32 miles east of Katanning, a small town located 277km south-east of Perth, Western Australia on the Great Southern Highway. The Lamp’s livelihood in Kwobrup involved rearing sheep and growing wheat.

Frank vividly recalls the walls of the house they lived in. His mother Gladys had transformed their farmhouse to have a better outlook. He fondly described it as a decent house with decorated walls handmade from

bags that were dipped in white wash, left to dry then stretched along the walls. Frank chuckles, “They dried to a degree like asbestos, it was a surreal atmosphere.” They lived a basic life.

Ironically, Frank never fully engaged much in farming as his father and mother did. He envisioned a different world altogether which seemed unattainable due to the impact of the Second World War. Four years later Frank’s sister by the name of Marion Gladys Lamp was born. She competed at state level women’s hockey, following in her mother’s footsteps, but later on her father banished her from playing hockey. He regarded the sport as unsafe for his daughter because his wife suffered from leg injuries received from hockey. Interesting to note was that Frank’s parents named their children after their own names.

As it goes with Jean Piaget, “The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men who are capable of doing new things.” Frank’s mother, Gladys, lived to this quote as she manoeuvred the corridors of education for her son. She was determined to give opportunity to her son against all odds.

Frank’s mother valued education and at one time received a medal of punctuality at her school. She was a disciplined mother who also displayed great sportsmanship. Being a stunning athlete, she competed at several state competitions in women’s hockey.



*Gladys Lamp from the far second right on the sitting row.*



Gladys Lamp loved the game of hockey so much that she transferred the passion to her daughter Marion Gladys. During that time they played the sport with less protective sportswear and hence she later suffered from leg injuries.

However the environment of living on Kwobrup farm did not provide for conventional schooling, hence a set up in the Education Department brought correspondence schooling to the community. Frank commenced his primary education in correspondence school at Katanning with his mother tutoring him in his school work. However farm life, house chores and being a mum took a toll on Gladys, and again the desire for her to see her son's educational success made her make one of the hardest decisions.



*Frank Lamp (last row) at Katanning Junior School.*

She had to accept the grim fact that Frank needed to leave their home at such a young age and go for a better environment and conventional school. His parents later decided to dispatch Frank to Albany where his father's sister Aunt Lena lived. Frank moved to Albany when he was in Year 1 but he was automatically placed in Year 2 instead of Year 1 due to his brilliance. Surprisingly he commented that the correspondence education he was attaining back home in Kwobrup was far ahead of the education he got from the conventional school in Albany. He progressed well with his primary education in Albany.

Sadly, Frank's mother Gladys passed away at the age of 39 years in the year 1937, while Frank was still schooling in Albany. It was emotionally devastating news to a 10 year old boy who had consciously agreed to his parents' decision to move towns in order to attain better education.

Frank had spent less than nine years with his mum alive and the thought of losing a mother at such a tender age was heart wrenching. The death of Frank's mum rattled the little boy's world. Frank's father then decided to move the him to Uncle Charlie's home in South Fremantle. Frank relocated from Albany to South Fremantle where he resided with Uncle Charlie, his dad's eldest brother

Frank fondly recalls 34 Walker Street, South Fremantle, Western Australia as the residence of Uncle Charlie and his family which included his wife and two girls. Frank lived with Uncle Charlie's family as he continued with his primary education at Beaconsfield State School. Uncle Charlie and his wife had two beautiful daughters around the same age as Frank and it did not take long before the cousins bonded.



*Uncle Charlie, Frank, Marion and Gladys.*

It was a better environment compared to Katanning and it was the centre of much of Perth's heavy industry, which comprised of a coal fired power station, railway marshalling yards, abattoirs as well as numerous skin drying sheds. In this regard, it was every boy's dream to be in a blooming town of opportunity.

At Beaconsfield State School Frank encountered good teachers and he fondly remembers Mr JK Ewers who happened to be his teacher and an author during the World War II. As a young boy, Frank's assertion that correspondence education was better than conventional education shifted to appreciate both institutions. Frank had gelled very well with his beloved Uncle Charlie and cousin 'sisters'. However, following the death of his mother, his dad remarried a second wife by the name of Thelma F Wanke in 1940 meaning his life was shattered once again.

Mournfully, Frank aged 13 years rejoined his dad in Katanning. Frank had to part ways with his friends at Beaconsfield State School and indeed it was a disruption to his education at Beaconsfield State School. Frank managed to continue and finish his schooling in Katanning where fortunately this time around he got a fantastic local teacher by the name of Mrs Adeline Obourne.

Mrs Adeline Obourne had moved to Katanning from England in 1910 and had a career which spanned more than 35 years, right through the Second World War. She was adored throughout the community of Katanning and had taught Frank's mother, Frank and Marion his sister. She was well known and liked to the extent that as you entered her lounge room, the entire wall was decorated with photos of servicemen she had taught within the community. Frank used to receive letters from her even after completing his studies That is how lovely Mrs Obourne was, she was a community icon.

Frank's school in Katanning only went up to junior level. He exceptionally wrapped up his junior level in 1943 with a record pass of nine subjects; he was the first to accomplish such a good record at his school. Upon completing his junior level his father then decided to send him for apprenticeship.

Growing up during the World War II period presented limited options for studies and careers. Furthermore, the 20th century era had parents having an upper decision on what their child was to study or which career pathway to embark on, contrary to the 21st century where the children decide the majority of their life course. This was also Frank's journey; he said, "It was more of what Dad would say in terms of school and career to undertake."



*Photo of Walter Thomas Lamp,  
father to Frank.*

A dark cloud hovered yet again for young Frank. His father Walter Thomas Lamp died on the 3rd of January, 1944 before his son commenced his apprenticeship. However he managed to sign his son's apprenticeship papers before his death. Frank then managed to start his apprenticeship on 15th October, 1944 in Perth. As a young boy who had just completed his primary education



thinking of a career pathway was a mammoth task. The career adventure had just begun for Frank. Frank's dad insisted that his son would do an engineering apprenticeship. After earning his junior level education in 1943, he left for Perth. Frank Lamp recounts that the career pathway was contrary to his interests. He absolutely disliked trade workmanship, however he unwillingly enrolled in an apprenticeship as a mechanical fitter at the Western Australian Midland Junction Railways Workshops.

The journey of being an apprentice in mechanical fitting was not an enjoyable one for Frank. He frankly confesses that, "I was not a good tradesman, I wasn't greatly interested in it." He managed to finish his engineering apprenticeship course in 1949, a year prior to his gym training. In the quest for career fulfilment, Frank then started the gym training in 1948. He exclaims, "Nowadays you have got health club gyms all over Perth but we only had the Marvel Barbell Gym Club on Wellington Street in the city and you had to pay two shillings for a workout." His friend Bob Crowe, who trained at Marvel Barbell Gym, worked for the Commonwealth Bank while Frank was working in the railway workshops.



*Fitness fanatic Frank flaunts his spectacular physique.*

Their rendezvous was at the Marvel Barbell Gym Club where they would spend a substantial amount of time working out and discussing various career options. One sunny day at the gym, Bob startled Frank

by alluding that he was quitting the bank job and joining the Western Australia Police Force. In shock, Frank regarded his friend's move as a silly idea, but this did not deter his friend.

Resolved to make a difference, the young banker boldly joined the Western Australia Police Force and would always share his wonderful police force experiences with Frank at their rendezvous at the Marvel Barbell Gym. However Frank had other thoughts. Frank recounts that, "For one to get ahead in mechanical engineering, the best bet was to get on a ship. Marine engineering was the thing those days." He recalls, "I actually purchased a train ticket to go over to Melbourne to pick up a boat there, then I changed my mind."

Feeling it was time to move on, Frank loathed trades jobs and within a period of two years he quit his job at the railway and took heed to his friend's call to join the police force. Finally, the career puzzle pieces began to merge gradually. Frank Lamp was to make a big career move up his life ladder.

At the age of 23, Frank got married to his first wife Yvonne Ward in 1950 in Perth and they had two daughters together. The couple's first daughter Marily was born in 1950, followed by a second daughter Corriene in 1953. Frank later separated from Yvonne. His young life was full of big decisions. Eventually, Frank Lamp was employed as a member of the West Australian Police Force in 1951, and in the same year he went on to procure a house in Kewdale and Perth became his home.

Frank Lamp served in the police service from 1951-1969. He immediately rose through the ranks to become the General Secretary of the Federation of Western Australian Police and Citizens Youth Club, a position he held for thirteen years. During his tenure, Frank managed to grow the number of clubs affiliated with the police federation from 7 clubs to a whopping 28. It was deemed the largest youth organisation in the Western

State. One major highlight in Frank's career was in April 1953, as the General Secretary of WA Police and Citizens Youth Club, he superbly organised the first ever International Amateur Youth Boxing Tour that was held in Singapore. He assembled a team of 23 boxers and it is believed that, it was the very first time a team of amateur boxers from anywhere in Australia having to compete overseas.



*Certificate of Appreciation for Frank serving as General Secretary.*

The following year in 1954 saw a return trip tournament for the Singapore Youth Boxers to Western Australia, and again it was acknowledged as the first ever amateur boxing tournament on Australian soil.

While both were serving in the police force, Frank met Laurel Margaret Scholz and the two fell in love. They later married in 1960, and regrettably during that time women had to resign so Laurel subsequently left the police force to start a family with Frank.

Mignon McLaughlin noted that, "A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person," and this is true in the long love journey of Laurel and Frank, who have been married for fifty-eight years. They had two children, Warren born in 1960 and Sharyn born in 1966.

Frank later resigned from the WA Police Force in 1969. During this time he balanced two demanding institutions, the police force and weightlifting, but Frank managed to execute his duties with so much dedication and excellence. He might have hung up his

police force boots in 1969, but the policing spirit in him continued to reverberate. Twenty seven years was not enough to wipe off the police DNA that had deeply assimilated in him.

In 1996 Frank went on to assist with the establishment of the Belmont Police and Citizens Youth Club, subsequently occupying the position of Secretary for one year before being elevated to Vice President of the Club for two years. Upon his resignation from the police force, Frank deservedly received the Police Service Medal for his 18 years of sterling service in Western Australian Police Service.



*WA Police Service medal to Frank Lamp.*

He ventured full time into the sport of weightlifting, devoting his time in administration while exerting his skills in sport development, growth and recognition.

Weightlifting has a long history practised both by ancient Egyptian and Greek societies. It developed as an international sport primarily in the 19th century. Weightlifting is defined as the sport or activity of lifting barbells or other heavy weights. There are two standard lifts in modern weightlifting; the single-movement lift from floor to extended position (the snatch), and the two-movement lift from floor to shoulder position, and from shoulders to



extended position (the clean and jerk). Weightlifting is also called Olympic weightlifting and it became an international sport when it featured at the 1896 Athens Games.

Frank's deep passion for weightlifting began on the 7th of February 1948 prior to joining the WA Police Force. For Frank, the journey of weightlifting spans over seven decades and mainly in administrative roles. He was heavily involved in weightlifting and in 1950 he assisted in the formation of the first Weightlifting Club in Western Australia: the Marvel Barbell Club. In his first year of joining the police force he organised the Mr Perth Weightlifting competition (which he also took part in) which saw the Police Commissioner presenting the trophies to the winners.

In 1951, Frank mobilised interested people and initiated the formation of the Western Australian Amateur Weightlifters Association, which he became the first President for a period of eight years. More importantly, the organisation was formed to create competition in both a weightlifting and physique contest. As the President of the organisation, he succeeded in affiliating it into the major board which was the Australian Amateur Weightlifters Federation. This was a landmark for Western Australia as a state. It was its maiden step towards recognition and representation at a national level and in 1958 Frank attended the Australian Weightlifting Championships that were held in Adelaide, South Australia.

The Western Australian Amateur Weightlifters Association began competing at both state and national level, a credit to Frank for putting up good organisational structures. He later on took the secretarial role while his friend Ken Law assumed the Presidency of the Association in 1960. Frank undertook several delegation tasks such as delegate to Western Australian Olympic Council state, Western Australia Commonwealth Game Association and a nine year membership of the Associated Sporting Committee executive.

Frank significantly contributed to the growth of weightlifting in Western Australia. His efforts and skill expanded around the sport of weightlifting. In 1962, thirty five nations participated in the 7th British Empire and Commonwealth Games held in Perth, Western Australia. Frank fondly remembers shaking hands with Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who came to officially open the prestigious event. During these games, Paraplegic Weightlifting was to be conducted for the first time.

Later on Frank became instrumental in assisting to pen down the official governing rules of the game. Furthermore, he assisted in the conducting of the weightlifting section, officiating as an Arena Manager of the Commonwealth Games in Western Australia. This was indeed a watershed achievement. Four years after the games, he was appointed the Senior Vice President of the Australian Amateur Weightlifting Federation.

In 1965, Western Australia held their first Australian Weightlifting Championships and Frank was involved in its organisation. It is important to note that the weightlifting sport did not get any sponsorship for its activities and was not recognised with high esteem in terms of media coverage. Despite all these constraints, the weightlifting sport flourished.

He was driven by true passion. Frank flourished in his leadership roles and had successfully turned his passion into a business. Frank established Sportsman Barbell Company, a business which manufactured weight training equipment. It initially operated in the garden at the rear of his house in Kewdale. The business flourished and he established two health club gyms in Carlisle and Kenwick. They were quite profitable businesses that bankrolled his passion. Ironically, most of the administrative roles he was holding within the associations were on a voluntary basis and so he received no salary. His involvement in weightlifting was driven by genuine passion for the sport.

Frank's success in the sport attracted numerous leadership roles for him. His track record had illuminated excellence in administration. In 1972 Frank pioneered Powerlifting in Western Australia along with two others, Yuri Sterns and Bill Keir, who formed the national body. Frank became the inaugural President of the Australian Amateur Powerlifting Federation (AAPLF).

Powerlifting was officially recognised as a National Sport later that same year on November 15th, 1972. He held this position up until his resignation in 1985. Frank Lamp was credited as the longest serving President of any of the National Federations affiliated with the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF). In his career he assumed a number of decision making leadership roles.

Frank's influence and contribution to the sport locally, nationally and internationally has been vital to the success of the sport. His notable achievements are a force to be reckoned with, holding various awards in different disciplines. From 1973 through to 1985, Frank discharged his duties as the Vice President for the International Powerlifting Federation (Oceania Region). In addition he served as a member in the technical, disciplinary and certification committees of the Federation ensuring the growth and direction of the sport.

Publicity and sport promotion of the weightlifting disciplines were important. It was a lifetime experience and an honour for Frank to be requested to write about sport in the community newspaper. He covered different sports in his sport section in the Tom's Weekly, a local newspaper that was designed to promote a grocery chain and a wide range of community activities.

This community newspaper was owned by Sir Thomas Wardle, the former Lord Mayor of Perth and proprietor of Tom the Cheap grocer chain, who also sponsored the 1965 Australian Weightlifting Championships.

Frank's acumen in publicity sprouted as he realised that publicity was the way to go. He was becoming jack of all trades from engineering, police, administrator to article writer. Frank was unstoppable and unapologetically ventured into new territories with vigour.

A plethora of people began to understand and appreciate the sport of weightlifting and powerlifting, kudos to Frank's articles in Tom's Weekly and the other three magazines which he published in on different occasions.



Tom's Weekly article.

Frank shined at an international level as he officiated at 6 World Championships, including the inaugural event held in 1975 Birmingham England, 1976 York, Pennsylvania USA, 1978 Turku Finland, 1980 Gothenburg, Sweden and 1984 Dallas, Texas USA. His global contribution and influence was well attested by becoming the Inaugural Electee to the Australian Amateur Powerlifting Federation 'Hall of Fame' while gaining his IPF category 1 referee card in 1975.

Frank Lamp was the only Australian Strength Sport Administrator to organise and conduct World Championships in the three strength sports which are 1977 World Open, 1964 World Junior/Masters Powerlifting



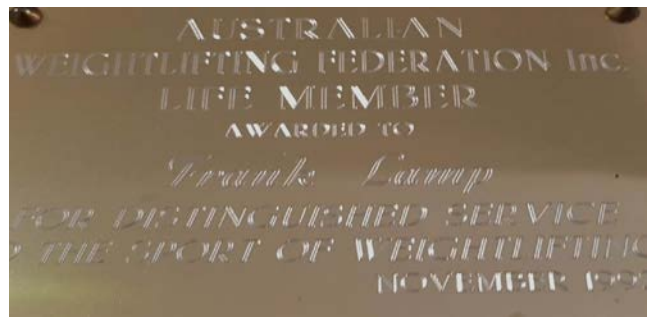
Championships, 1994 World Masters Weightlifting Championships and 1999 and 2003 World All-Round Weightlifting Championships. This is a remarkable track record.

Such brilliance could not go unnoticed and in turn, he received an Australian Sports Medal for Australian sport achievement in the year 2000 with a certificate signed by the former Prime Minister John Howard; and achieving greatness was now synonymous with Frank Lamp. He accomplished remarkable lifetime achievements. He was appointed the National Masters Coordinator by the Australian Weightlifting Federation. This position had been formulated to develop a new section of the AWF for weightlifters beyond the age of forty but who aspired to proceed with their weightlifting career.

The growth of the Masters is up to this day regarded as the fastest growing sections of weightlifting, both at a national and international level. He proceeded to organise the Battles of the Giants competition in Burswood showroom and launched the Association's Five Year Plan that he had crafted.

Notably, at the Australian Senior Weightlifting Championships Congress held in Adelaide, Frank was accorded the status of Life Member at a national level and had previously had been elected Life Member of the Western Australian Amateur Weightlifting Association at state level. As the Chairman of the organising committee, he superbly led the Telecom Australia 1994 World Masters Weightlifting Championships which also included the Inaugural Women's World Masters Weightlifting Championships.

He progressively championed for women's participation in weightlifting and powerlifting during a time when it was a male dominated sport. After such a long life of dedication, legacy and outstanding contribution, a befitting life membership award was conferred to Frank Walter Lamp by both the Australian Weightlifting Federation, 1992 and the Western Australian Amateur Weightlifting Association in 2006, respectively.



*Life member award to Frank Walter Lamp by AWF in 1992.*



*Life member award to Frank Walter Lamp by WAAWA.*

Participants of the event totalled 258 drawn from 27 nations and the Championships were held in his local turf at Elizabeth Street Recreation Centre, City of Belmont. New innovations for the event and its success resulted in Weightlifting Western Australia being the recipient of international standard equipment valued at \$18,000. Frank was highly involved in the sport of All-Round Weightlifting where he held various administrative roles and organised a number of competitions until 2011.

Despite concentrating on administrative roles, Frank also took part in several competitions. He competed in both the All-Round Weightlifting events and the Australian Weightlifting Federation's Masters Championships, where in 2000 he won the gold medal in the 105kg division 70-74 age group. In 2003, in the age category of 75-79

years, Frank scooped the World Championship gold medal in the WA State Master Games.

He was awarded the Australia Sports Medal and a President's trophy in All-Round Weightlifting WA. He later retired from the sport of All-Round Weightlifting in 2009 but maintained his deep interest in the sport.

Frank's passion for the weightlifting sport was contagious and it inspired his family. As a result his wife Laurel became the first woman in the world to attain the status of an International Category 1 referee, while his son Warren achieved the category 2 International Referee and ranked highly in international Powerlifting. As alluded in the introduction of his life story, this is a true testament that Frank Lamp achieved sport greatness.

Having resided in Belmont for sixty seven years, Frank was extensively involved in a plethora of voluntary activities and this led to him and his wife being recognised as Pioneers of the City of Belmont. He assisted in the formation of the Belmont Police and Citizens Youth Club and has been an active member in several groups such as the Belmont Sports and Recreation Club and Belmont Community Group.

His leadership skills, expertise and contribution to the local city of Belmont are invaluable. As a result he received the 2004 Volunteer of the Year Award in the Belmont Small Business Awards category. The following year Frank was again honoured with the Community Service Award 2005 and his name is inscribed on the City of Belmont Honour Board.

As he continued to shine even in his local City of Belmont, his work has impacted on different organisations. He was approached by a representative of the Rotary Club of Belmont to assist with the operation of the Sunday Markets (Rotamart), a position he continues to serve after 21 years in the role.

In recognition of his sterling work, contribution to the community and with

Rotary generally, in 2005 Frank received the Paul Harris Fellowship medal, a high International Rotary Award rarely given to a non-Rotarian. He now proudly holds the status of Friends of Rotary.

Amongst his numerous medals and awards, one of his favourites is the Paul Harris Fellowship which was bestowed to him despite him being a non-Rotarian. Frank's life was full breaking records while making history.



A true narration of Frank Walter Lamp's life, is summarised in the words of Albert Schweitzer, "Success is not the key to happiness, happiness is the key to success, if you love what you are doing you will be successful." Frank experienced the happiness of his passion in sport and volunteering with great success. At a ripe age of 91, Frank concludes that, "I might not have made millions of dollars but I have millions of beautiful memories and achievements."

What a great sportsman!



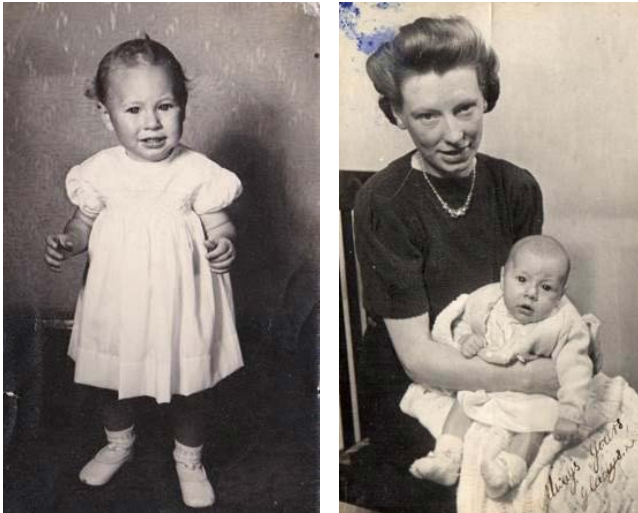


# JAN WEARING LIFE STORIES 2018

Co-written by: Jane Ots



In the midst of World War II, I was born in City Hospital Nottingham, United Kingdom, on the 24th of August 1943, with a mass of black hair. My dad Leslie Cook was a Sergeant in the British Army stationed in India. I wouldn't meet him until I was three years old. I lived with my mum Gladys and her sister Nancy while I was growing up, until my dad came home from the war. This affected my relationship with him as I didn't spend the first 3 years growing up with him.



My mum Gladys sent a photo to my Dad, who was in India at the time, every three months. I was just three months old in the photo on the right with my mum.



*Aunty Nancy and some of my cousins. I'm on the far right of the photo.*

I was the first and only grandchild at the time which meant I was very spoilt by my grandmother and my mum's sisters. Growing up my mum, who was the second eldest of 9, had to care for her siblings. Her youngest brother Joe was born when she

was 18 and she practically raised him, along with her nephew who was born at the same time. She was determined to give me the childhood she never had, so while I had to keep my room clean and do the dishes I never had to look after my siblings. Although lovely at the time, it didn't help me in later life when I had to learn very quickly how to cook!

One of my earliest memories is of my mother giving birth to my brother Colin at home in January 1947, when I was only three. My grandmother came down the stairs to tell me "You've got a baby brother," and I replied "I don't want him!"

Once Dad returned to Nottingham he worked as a machine operator. Digging ditches with a RB22 excavator and repairing roads across the UK. Once we arrived in Australia he set up his own business doing the same. To save money he would breed rabbits for food. The rabbit hutches were kept at the back of our garage, and when he would let them out for a run we would run around the backyard to catch them. Mum would take the rabbit skins to a friend who worked at a local tanner who made me fur gloves, a fur hat and a fur collar for my coat.



*The only picture I have with my mum and dad.*

My uncle would often babysit me, and I remember playing his Frankie Laine records and always getting him into trouble.



At eight years old Aunt Olive, who was a milkman, would take me on deliveries with her in her horse and cart. I loved it - rain, hail or shine (or snow!) – especially because I was allowed to keep the tips.



When I was 10 the Queen visited Nottingham, so my mum and I went to see her. There were large crowds queued along the streets waiting for the Queen to pass. I'm not sure if I was bored and wandered off, or if Mum moved to find a better view, but I lost her in the crowd. But being the confident child I was, I asked a stranger for a penny and I took the bus home by myself. You can imagine how frantic my mum was not being able to find me in the crowd. After searching for me with no luck, she finally decided to come home. I was in so much trouble, she was furious. But I know deep down this was her way of expressing how relieved she was that she had found me. When I arrived in Australia I was always asked if I had seen the Queen, and to this day I still haven't!



*My brother Colin and I at a Queen's coronation party.*

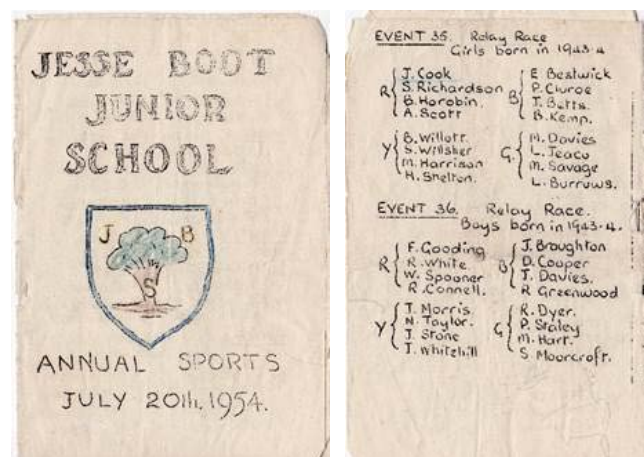


*Jesse Boot school photo in 1953 – I am in the second back row, five from the left.*

I attended Jesse Boot Primary School from 1943 to 1953 and Airedale girl's school in 1954. I also went to the Church of England Sunday school with my brother Colin.

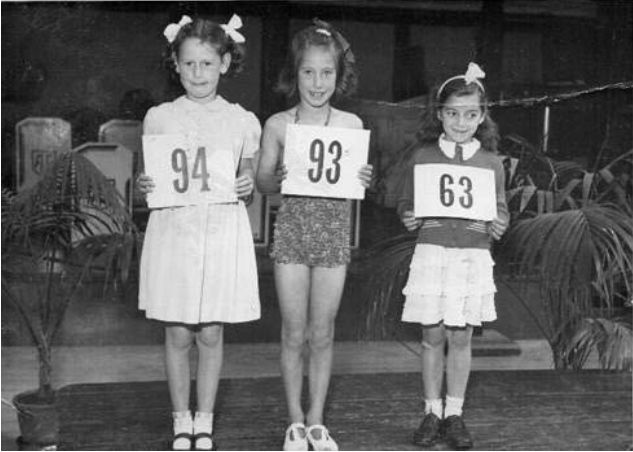


*Jesse Boot school photo – I am in the back row, third from the right.*



*Jesse Boot Junior School Annual Sports July 20th 1954 event timetable – you can see my name 'J. Cook' under 'Relay Race' for girls born in 1943.*

I remember an excellent geography teacher at Eadale Road School who showed me on a map where Australia was, before we came out. I had to be kept back a year at school because I didn't know Australian history or geography (even though we weren't taught it!). I remember it being an especially boring year, as I was excellent at Maths, English and Science.



*Me, centre, at Butlers holiday camp.*

My dad had a motorbike with a sidecar which we used to travel to my paternal grandparents (William and Annie Cook) who lived in Leeds. Mum always wanted me to travel in the sidecar with Colin in the back, but I refused! I would travel on the pillion behind Dad. He used to wear his army greatcoat and I would put my hand in his pockets and fall asleep, much to Mum's horror. She had visions of me falling off! I had a wonderful childhood with a lot of it spent up a tree or hanging from a bar in the playground and playing with the boys (who were a lot more fun!).



*My grandparents, William and Annie Cook.*

From the age of eight I stayed the night at my maternal grandmother's house, who I called Mamar, every Tuesday night, whilst Grandad Francis (who was called Frank) was working night shift at a coal mine in Nottingham. I'd walk to school the next day. Mamar used to send me to the local off-license (bottle shop) with a billy to get her a pint of stout! Mamar would cook me a fried egg on fried bread for breakfast every time I stayed. And I still love it! I remember family gatherings in my grandparent's lounge where they would all sing war songs. My Uncle Ken would play the accordion and Uncle Len would play the mouth organ. Some of my favourite songs were 'We'll Meet Again' and 'The White Cliffs of Dover' by Vera Lynn. Grandad used to have two gardens (called allotments) on the side of a hill, but in different suburbs Colwick and Sneniton. You could see the garden in Colwick from my Aunt Nancy's house. He grew vegetables and flowers in one garden and fruit trees in the other.



*The only photo I have with Grandad Frank.*

I lived at 13 Harrigate Road Colwick, near the garden, and used to ride my bike to the garden with him. One day as I went to leave, I forgot to use the brakes on my bike and went flying down the hill and into a hedge. Grandad Frank thought this was hilarious, and would often tell this story about me and



laugh! From our house we could see the huts from an old Italian prisoner of war camp and the River Trent. It was also close to Nottingham Forrest football oval.



*Grandad Frank with a photo of my mum and I in the background.*

After being deployed in India during the war Dad found it difficult to resettle in Nottingham, so my parents decided to migrate to Australia. I did not want to leave! We left the UK from the Tilbury Docks in February 1955 on the P&O RMS Strathnaver ocean liner, for a total of 20 pound (10 pound each for Mum and Dad; and Colin and I were free). We were colloquially known as '10 pound poms' as we migrated under the Australian Government



initiative the 'Assisted Passage Migration Scheme'. The Strathnaver was built in 1931 and had a capacity of 1,252 tourist class passengers. On the ship, we were in a four berth cabin on the lower deck.

I attended Manning Primary School, Tuart Hill Primary School, Nollamara Primary, Tuart Hill High School and City Commercial College. At Manning Primary School I remember the kids making fun of my English accent when I had to read aloud, so I didn't want to go to school. I played netball, hockey and enjoyed swimming whilst at school; and was one of the best at running. At 14 years old, I became part of the St. John's Ambulance Cadetship Program for two years. I learnt first aid skills, at home nursing and fire-fighting at the St John's office in Wellington Street Perth. These skills were especially helpful in later years when I had small children and lived in country towns. I was able to treat strains, sprains, cuts and stings.



*Colin and I standing out the front of our first house in WA, Australia, on Wanneroo Road.*



*At Meelup Beach, age 15.*

I met my future husband Paul (nicknamed Barney) when we were both 14 years old and he had just burnt down a pine plantation in St James. A couple of weeks after we had first met, my girlfriend told me he wanted to take me out, and I agreed. When Paul was 16 he worked delivering telegrams. I was working at Musgroves Perth Music Store at the time and he would deliver me a telegram every day!

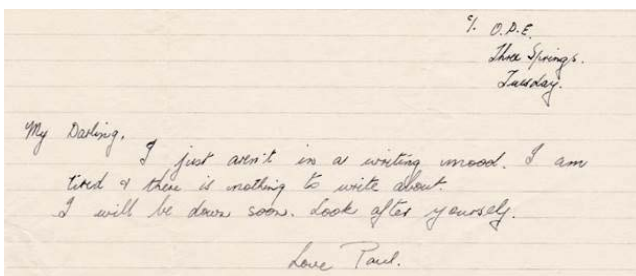


TOP: Musgroves Perth Music Store.



RIGHT: A photo I sent to Paul in 1959.

At the age of 16 I was raped. Things back then were very different. I was examined by a male doctor and interviewed by a male policeman and no support or counselling was offered to me. The case went to trial, and I had to testify against the accused in court. The defendant lawyers were ruthless and called into question my character. In the end the two boys accused, who were both 18 years old, were found guilty and jailed for 7 years each. It was such a traumatic experience for me, especially at 16, and it changed me forever. But I felt very lucky to have such a supportive partner in Paul. Paul went to the country for farming work when we were both 17 years old. He used to write letters to me all the time. He has told me that I need to burn them all before I die!



One of the letters Paul wrote to me.

Paul proposed by throwing an engagement ring into my lap in a taxi, and we married at 18 years old on Friday 1 December 1961. We married at St Peters Anglican Church on McMillan Street, Victoria Park, with 14 guests in attendance. My mum's friend made my dress and my Aunt Nancy from England, who was a milliner, made my hat and veil. My mum and her friends arranged the catering for the wedding too. Paul had cheekily written 'HELP ME' on the bottom of his shoes, so when we knelt at the altar our guests could see!



On our wedding day, Friday 1 December, 1961.

As a wedding present Paul's grandmother gave us 5 pounds, which was a lot of money at the time. We used it to go out for dinner and stay at a hotel on our wedding night.



Paul and I on our 50th wedding anniversary at the Boomerang Hotel.

After we married we spent many years working on wheat and sheep farms in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia from



Cunderdin, Yoting, Belka and Burracopin.



*Western Australian Wheatbelt towns we lived in – Cunderdin, Yoting, Belka and Burracopin.*  
Source: Google Maps.

Our first farm together was in Cunderdin, and we stayed there for 12 months. It was a lovely house but it had no electricity. We had to use a kerosene fridge and lamps. To wash our clothes we used a primus stove and a 4 gallon drum, and Mum had bought me a ringer for the trough. I would boil our sheets and then move them (very carefully!) into a cement trough. My feet would get wet every time I would pull the trough plug because there was no drain for the water. When you needed to go to the toilet, you first needed to switch the water on at the bore which was a 50 metre walk from the house (uphill!), go to the toilet and then switch the bore off again. During our time at Cunderdin, my youngest brother Clifford would live with us for six months at a time.

Our next farm was in Yoting. It was a brand new home with an Aboriginal farmhand and his wife Rhoda. They lived in a humpy on the farm and they both would work the farm with us. The ground was incredibly hard on the farm but Rhoda was able to dig a garden for us. This was the first place that I saw first-hand the discrimination they faced.

The town hall would often show a movie on Saturday nights and the theatre had segregated seating for white and black people. It made me feel uncomfortable as I didn't understand why they were treated so differently. When we did go to the movies, I would leave Brendan in the back of our station wagon sleeping, and check on him regularly during the movie. You wouldn't be able to do this any more!

Next we moved to a cattle farm in Borden

and could see Bluff Noll from the farm. When it rained creeks would run through the farm, which made it very difficult to go anywhere. Paul would have to use the tractor to pull my car through the water so I could go shopping as I would not get on a horse to get across.

Next we moved to a wheat and sheep farm in Belk that belonged to the Shire President. Again there was no electricity but this time we had a generator. Our final wheat and sheep farm was in Burracoppin, where we stayed for one year.

We met some wonderful friends during our time on the farms. But we needed to leave for Perth so Kim, who was one at the time, could have surgery to construct hip sockets for him and then attend physiotherapy three times a week. I was also pregnant with Derek, so being closer to a hospital was a plus. We then moved to 3 Peacock Street in Cloverdale, where we have lived for over 50 years!



*Our house in 3 Peacock Street in Cloverdale 2018.*

Once in Cloverdale, Paul worked for Brennan's bakery in Bentley, the oil rigs in Dongara and Anodisers WA, in Belmont Ave. During his time with Anodisers WA he travelled to Sydney for further training and was then promoted to supervisor in 1970. Next, he worked as a manager for Jason's (recliner chairs); and a storeman at Fresh Foods for 15 years. When Fresh Foods closed in 2004, Paul was offered a redundancy and we used the money to buy a caravan and travel around Australia. When we returned, Paul worked for Humes Doors in Carlisle and then retired at age 62 due to his knees giving up.

My first son Brendan was born in February 1963. He currently works as a plasterer and lives with his partner Gabi, with two sons Joshua and Dylan. My second son Kim was born in July 1965. The doctors said he would only live for 5 weeks, as he had a spinal tumor at his waist level and no hip sockets, but he proved them wrong. Kim was on regular pain relief as every time he would move his legs he would be in pain.



*Kim.*

When we lived in Belka, Reverend Bennetts from our local Church of England parish anointed Kim when he was 4 months old, and all of the children at the local school were asked to pray for him. I took him home after his anointment and went to change him, which usually caused him to cry from the pain. I was so surprised and relieved that I was now able to make bicycle movements with Kim's legs without him crying! From that moment Kim started to get feeling back in his legs and the pain was gone. A miracle!

Kim passed away in hospital on 26 January 1969 from his illness. Unfortunately I wasn't with Kim at the time, as parents weren't allowed to stay with their children in hospital and were only allowed to visit at certain times. Because we didn't have a phone my neighbour was the first to tell me that Kim had passed. Her words "Kim's

dead" still ring in my ears, and I often think about his last moments, and hope someone was with him to hold his hand when he passed.

My brother Colin, who was Kim's godfather, was fighting in Vietnam at the time he passed. We managed to get a message through to his army division to let him know. Colin adored Kim and was so distraught the army had to put him on suicide watch for 24 hours. Given his initial diagnosis we feel very lucky to have had him for the three and a half years that we did.



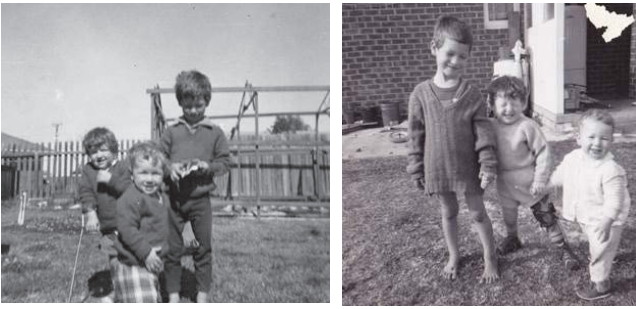
*Kim, Brendan, Clifford and Paul, January 1969 – the last picture we took of Kim.*

My third son Derek was born in May 1967. He currently works as a fly-in fly-out chef and is married to Dale.



*Christmas party with Kim, Brendan and Derek.*





*Photos of Brendan, Kim and Derek.*

My fourth son Ashley was born on 24 December 1970 and he has never forgiven me for having him on Christmas Eve! Ashley currently works as a teacher, is married to Jacky and has three children Rebecca, Samantha and Jarrod. I am also lucky enough to have two great grandchildren, Rebecca's children Peyton and Mackenzie.



*My four boys – from left to right - Ashley, Derek, Brendan and Kim.*



*Brendan and Gabi, with my grandchildren – from left to right – Samantha, Jarrod, Dylan, Joshua and Rebecca.*



*Jarrold, Dylan, Rebecca (holding Peyton), Samantha and Joshua.*



*My family tree.*

Paul and I have travelled twice around Australia in our caravan with my brother Colin and sister-in-law Rose. When I was 30, I travelled back to the UK for a holiday with Paul and Brendan. We went for over two months during December and January. We stayed with my Aunt Doris and cousin David, and they took us all over England, visiting places even they hadn't seen before. We spent some time in the local pub where my uncle played the accordion and everyone would sing along. I remember he played the floral dance and Paul McCartney's Mull of Kintyre. Returning to England, it was much smaller than I'd remembered it as a child. It

was also dirty and I felt quite smothered – it was possibly because of all of the time I had spent on farms whilst being in Australia.

I am lucky to have some very special friends who I count as family:

Lynne, Andrew, and their children Kate and Thomas from Kent, England. Penny and Ian immigrated to Perth in 1970, and Penny's mother and her sister Lynne visited Perth on holiday as well. Lynne and I have been friends ever since. I've stayed with Lynne on trips home to England.

Ian's sister Marilyn and her husband John, and their son James and his wife Angela from Consett, Newcastle. Ian's mum Win also visited Perth several times, and I visited and stayed with them in Consett.



*Jenny (left), Betsy (right) and I (centre) - the first friends I had in Australia, who I am still in contact with.*

So my best piece of advice would be to live for today and save for tomorrow. And own your own home before you retire.

What's left on my bucket list? To win Lotto and to travel.

I've always wanted to go to Russia, and I will be going in August 2018. I would also love to travel from Beijing to Moscow on the Trans-Siberian Railway; then to Paris on the Orient Express; fly to Canada and travel the Canadian Rockies Route by train – but I don't think this will ever happen.



*In my mum's backyard at Boundary Road, St James, September 1961.*

### **To My Sons**

*To my sons Brendan, Derek and Ashley, I am so proud of the men you have become. All three of you have had some tough times, but have come through with flying colours.*

*You have chosen the perfect partners for yourselves in Dale, Jacky and Gabi. I couldn't have done any better.*

*You may have worried me, infuriated me and sacred me witless but over all you have me the greatest pleasure, love.*

*As a family we have laughed, cried, insulted and fought, but always loved each other and been there for each other had each others backs through thick and thin.*

*You have given me five wonderful grandchildren and two beautiful great granddaughters.*

*I am so proud of you and love you so much.*

*Love Mum*



# MARJORIE 'MARJ' RILEY MALATESTA MY SOULMATE AND I. 'THE DAY MY LIFE BEGUN'

Co-written by: Mary Henson



I was born in the year 1936 when Australia claimed a territory in Antarctica in the name of science and exploration; on the 27th day of August which ironically is the same as my mother's birthday. I was named Marjorie because my parents wanted to honour an aunt who I was named after. Coincidentally, I have learnt later on that there exists a glacier in Alaska with the name "Margerie" or "Marjorie".

The Margerie Glacier is a tidewater glacier in the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Alaska. I am the 5th child out of 9 pregnancies, with 7 surviving children. My father's and mother's roots trace back to Ireland. Being a middle child of John William James Riley and Emily Rose Hearn was not easy, I must say. Although, I could say that this had made me who I am today and I am very proud of it.



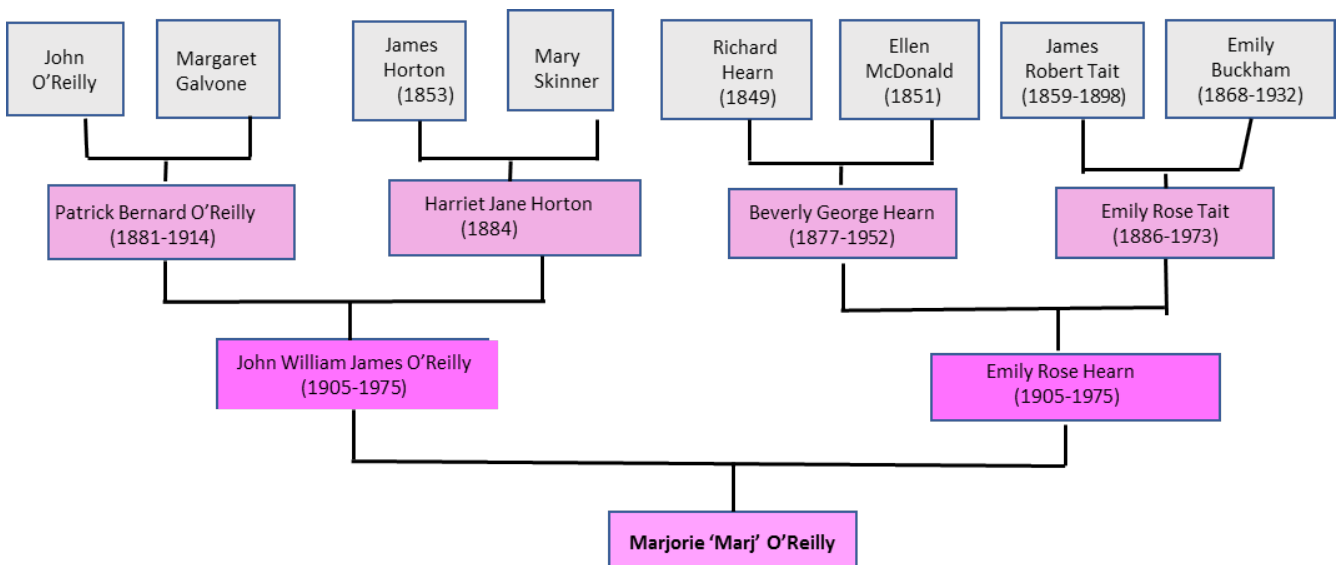
The Riley family: my father John is first from the right, back row.



LEFT: Me with my siblings: John, Les, Ron, me and Beverly taken around 1944.

My siblings and I were born in Collie, WA in a small house. The house was shared with our Grandma O'Reilly. It was divided into two so we had our own part of the house. Our part of the house had 2 bedrooms with a big kitchen and a separate bathroom which I didn't love as it was very difficult to get

BELOW: My family tree.





into. It also had a wraparound veranda. Our house was very close to the river so we got flooded most of the time. We had a water tank at the back of the house which was my favourite hiding spot. This is where I went whenever I needed alone and quiet time, especially to read my books. I could say that my family was very fortunate as the things we needed, we didn't usually buy. We had our own vegetable garden and fruit trees. Meat was always a treat and we usually had chicken on a Sunday or on special occasions such as Christmas or birthdays. Having meat such as chicken was very special in those days.



*Me and Doreen at around 3 years old.*

The community was very close knit where everybody knew everybody and were always looking after one another; always lending a helping hand. However strangers were treated politely, especially the Aboriginals who would always come visit.

It was a town of miners thus the children and wives did most of the house chores. Our family was no different. My siblings and I did the house chores.



*Grandparents.*

My grandfather was George Beverly Hearn and my grandmother Emily Rose Tait. We called them Grandpa Wonkie and Grandma Hearn. I was closest to my Grandma Hearn from whom I learned household chores; mostly cooking. We shared the same love for cooking and it is through her that I have learnt compassion. Grandma Hearn was very compassionate and a very warm person. Grandpa Wonkie and Grandma Hearn lived in Perth and so one of the reasons why I loved the school holidays was that I got to visit Grandma Hearn and spend days in their place. Growing up having strict Grandma O'Reilly was tiring for a child like me so having to go to Grandma Hearn's place was such a comfort. Her place was just so warm and a really lovely and welcoming place to spend the days.

Grandma O'Reilly lived just right next door from our house. I remember her being a very strict grandmother. We were quite afraid of

her, but we loved her. If we behaved well, she gave us lollies. My grandmother was well loved by the Noongar people, especially the women and children. She would always have something to give them; clothes or anything that we did not need anymore like shoes that the children had grown out of. With the constant interaction Grandma later on became fluent with the Nyungar language, which I also learnt as she would always take me with her whenever she would go out and meet with the Aboriginal children and women.

I remember the times when she would sneak me to the movies with her so that she would have someone to walk home with. In the movies I would usually sit on the floor so I could not really see the movie. Although I remember a time when I was so tempted to have a peak and I regretted that so much. I can't truly remember what I saw, but I have had nightmares for 30 years over the dramatic music from that movie. It was called 'Phantom of the Opera'. The musical background would always make me feel so scared and I had never gotten over it until I was an adult. I still love going to the movies though. Dad (below) would always take us and go see a Walt Disney movie. It was the only movie that Dad would take us to. Now that I am old, my children take turns taking me to the movies at least every weekend.



My father was a good man and I loved him to bits. He was such a hard worker; a responsible and very reliable head of the family. He did a great job in supporting the whole family. He was 16 years old when his father died and being the eldest, he had to take on the responsibilities and role as the main provider and breadwinner. He had to make sure that his mum and siblings were well taken care of, and us as well, which I understand must have been very difficult. Aside from being a coal miner my father was also an avid bike racer. He won once and never won again in tournaments thus was dubbed the 'The Shadow King'. He loved bike racing that much that he continued to join tournaments even without winning ever again.

I guess this influenced my love for riding bikes as well, which later on was instrumental to meeting my soulmate; my husband. As a young girl I loved riding my bike and together with my cousins, brothers and sisters would ride our bikes around the neighbourhood at any time we could.

A good field of riders has entered this year for

### The Historic "Donnybrook"

by NEVILLE CATCHPOLE

**FIFTY-SIX** bike riders have entered for the 27th annual Collie to Donnybrook and return road race, to be held at Collie on Sunday. The "Donnybrook," which is one of W.A.'s most historic and popular road races, is run over a gruelling 65-mile course and carries £185 in prize-money. Although there are longer and richer races than the Collie-Donnybrook, only the famous Beverley to Perth surpasses it in richness of tradition, and today it is the ambition of most W.A. cyclists to win either a "Beverley" or a "Donnybrook."

The nature of the course makes the "Donnybrook" a severe test of speed and stamina. It is known as the "Shadow King" through hilly country and over rough gravel roads, usually made treacherous by winter rains. The last 14 miles between Mumbalup and Collie is over steep hills and invariably it is here that the race is won or lost. The race starts in Throssell-street, Collie, and finishes on the recreation ground.

**Bush Course**  
The initial Collie-Donnybrook was held in 1925 over a 50-mile course on the Salvation Army road, east of Collie. The race was run in torrential rain over a rough bush course and was won by a new rider, John Riley, who was later to become one of W.A.'s greatest cyclists ever. "Old John," as he became known, was the "Shadow King" of W.A. cycling and he still has the best record in the "Donnybrook." He was first and fastest twice, was second twice and third on another occasion.

The following year the race was transferred to the present course. Ern Menghini, an 18-year-old rider, was first and fastest in 4hrs. 10min. 6sec. Since then 9½ minutes have been clipped off that time.

Until 1930 the race had been restricted to Collie club riders, but it was then made open to all riders. This step did much to help the rapid growth of the race.

In 1934 the club decided to finish the race on the recreation ground, instead of in Throssell-street, because of the interference caused by spectators in previous years. W. A. (Bill) Bonser, who later developed into a State scratch man, won the race.

**W. A. BONSER . . . his time stood for seven years.**

*Newspaper article mentioning my dad the 'Shadow King'.*

My mum was a very good mother, but I just never felt really close to her. I just didn't feel the connection with her, perhaps due to her inability to show sincere affection towards us. I love her still. I understand it may have been very difficult for her, raising a family of seven.





*Mum on the right with Grandma Hearn.*

I remember her having nervous breakdowns. Understanding her was never easy for someone at a young age and I must say, naive. I lacked the maturity to really understand the pressure she must have been going through. Although I can sincerely say that Mum did the very best she could to raise us properly and we all knew we were loved. My fondest memory of Mum would be her making home-made ice cream if we were lucky enough. I remember the lot of us gathering around the table while Mum churned the ice cream, eagerly waiting for it to be done. That is why Fridays were the children's favourite day in the town. Friday afternoons were when the ice cream man would come. Mum would always give us a penny each to buy ice cream. The ice cream man would always arrive on schedule with his horse-drawn ice cream cart, so when he did not arrive that meant something went wrong. In a small town where everyone knew everyone, everyone would know when something was not right or if something went wrong.

Summer was always our favourite season and something the whole family looked forward to and got very excited about. Every summer, our parents would take us on a train ride down to Bunbury and go to

the beach. Mum and Dad would give each one of us pennies to buy ice cream which we leisurely ate during our journey on the train, along with the very sweet watermelons. I loved train rides, makes me nostalgic on the times when I was young and carefree. It always takes me back to those days when the whole family would ride a train down to Bunbury and had really great fun. Those were really good memories.

Weekends were also fun. I remember the family gathering up on Saturdays and playing card games. My father and his brothers would always play euchre. My family was big and you can just imagine the crowd during the holidays like Christmas. It was a time for chattering and catching up with relatives. I remember when we were celebrating my 21st birthday on which we had unexpected guests. During the celebration we heard an unexpected knock on the door and to our surprise, there was a distant cousin on my father's side of the family who had come all the way from South Australia. Imagine our surprise. It was always nice catching up with relatives and especially those that we have never met before.



*My husband and me.*

I still clearly remember that day on the river when I first met my husband to be. That was in 1952. I was 15 years old and Benito 'Ben' Malatesta was 21. On beautiful days such as this one, a crowd would gather up by the river for a picnic or to just to soak up the sun and unwind. My siblings, our cousins and I were no different. My brothers and sisters would go swimming with our cousins, but I just loved sitting under a tree and enjoying a good book.



*Ben on his motorbike.*

I was busy reading my book when this dashing Italian young man came down to where I was and told me that he would love to take me on a ride on his motorbike. I was thinking 'what a show off he was'. I knew that I shouldn't go, especially with someone literally a stranger, but my curiosity and love for riding bikes got the best out of me and so I decided to give it a try. I never would have thought that this ride would change my life forever. Thinking back, I could say that this was the day on which I started 'really living' for the first time. I had never felt so 'alive' and that the world had turned into a more colourful one. It felt like I was not really living, not until I met Ben. It felt like waking up from a deep sleep and now I am actually awake and living.

I never regretted the moment I said "yes," got on his motorbike and went for a ride with a stranger. I never regretted any moment of it even though I got burnt on my leg from the exhaust pipe and then had an earful of scolding from my father when he saw me on that motorbike. It was the very first argument that me and my father had. I vividly remember the grim expression on my father's face when he was telling me that I am forbidden to ride a motorbike.

Back in those days, people were not very happy when an Australian girl went out with a 'non-Australian' guy. The Italians shared the same sentiments and they were not really happy with Ben seeing an Australian girl. But Ben and I did not care. We went through it all as we were so happy when we were together. It did not matter that he could not speak English and I could not speak Italian. As clichéd as it may sound, I could say that the saying 'love conquers all' and 'love knows no boundaries' would apply to us. The language barrier was never a problem for us. We always had friends who would translate for us and as time goes by, Ben learned how to speak English. He was such a wonderful man. We both loved dancing and he was such a wonderful dancer. I remember when I was a child I said that I wanted to be a ballerina, but I was told I was 'too big' to be a ballerina and my dream of being a ballerina was quashed. Dancing with Ben appeased the inner child in me who longed to be a ballerina. I could proudly say that he completes me.



*Our wedding day.*



Ben was the most wonderful man I had ever known. After 6 years of courtship, we finally got married on the 1st of March 1958 and I had never been happier. No one could ever ruin the happiness that I was feeling. Even finding out that the wedding gift my mother got me was a rubbish bin. I know she has her reasons and good intentions for everything she did, but still a reminder why I never had a close relationship with her.

The first year of our marriage was quite difficult as he had his Italian ways and me, my Australian ways, but we were able to work it out. Ben had been a wonderful husband. He had his temper but he never did hit me. We have had arguments, but we always found ways to compromise. We made a deal of 50% doing it his way and 50% my way. As the years went by, people were saying I am more of an Italian than an Australian.

Ben had been working in the Southern Cross mines from 1952 until 1953. He had worked as a boot maker in Italy before he came to Australia. After our wedding, I went with him to Port Hedland with a caravan where he was driving a manganese truck for Woodie Woodie. The first few years of our married life were spent on a camp with the caravan. Falling ill was a common thing as we had to get by on what was available for food. Men would go hunting for kangaroos for meat and if they were lucky enough brought back a cow. Kangaroo meat was a staple on the menu. It was never the best tasting meat, but we get by. Living conditions were not favourable especially when you get pregnant. I got pregnant with our first child in the year 1959. I woke up one morning feeling really sick and could not hold anything down especially with the kangaroo meat. It was so horrible that I thought I was going to die.

I was taken to a doctor at the station for a check-up and imagine my surprise when the doctor announced that I was pregnant. Funny thing is, I could hear the men outside, who accompanied us to the doctor, cheering. It was heart-warming. Everyone was giving their congratulations. Due to the not so

favourable living circumstances especially for a pregnant woman with her first child, I had to say goodbye to Ben and flew back to my parents' house on my 6th month of pregnancy.



*Our wonderful family.*

The year 1959 was especially a blessed year for us. Ben was granted his Australian citizenship and our very first bundle of joy was born. I gave birth to our first bundle of joy at The Collie Hospital on 2 February 1959. He was the first one to have taught us what unconditional love was really like. He was every 'first' in our family; first born, very first grandchild, and very first nephew, so imagine the dotting that he got. The first words Ben said when he first laid eyes on him was 'skinned rabbit' that I was laughing so hard. His sense of humour never seized to amaze me. That first encounter was really funny, but as it turned out we were blessed with a very brainy 'skinned rabbit' and I must be because he was always hungry that I always had to feed him constantly. He was also very demanding as he would never stop crying until he was fed.

Ben took me and Gregory back to Port Hedland that same year (1959). Ben would always jokingly say that he wanted a daughter so he could have a 'maid'. On 1 October 1960, Leanne, our second child

was born and imagine Ben's delight when he learnt that he had a daughter. A year after, Mark was born on 28 September 1961 who had been such a joy ever since he was born. Unfortunately, we lost a child due to a coiled cord around her neck in the year 1964. We named her Lisa Marie. It was in Perth where our Ilia was born, our fourth child. She was born 9 July 1966.

While waiting for the completion of our house in Belmont, we stayed in a house along Shepperton Road in Victoria Park. Our youngest, Peter, came as a surprise. He was born on 15 October, 1967. Unfortunately, Peter was an RH baby. He was very sickly when he came out and then later on had to undergo blood transfusion. Thankfully, after the transfusion he did pretty well.

'Home is where the heart is' and my heart had always been with Ben and our children. The house that we had built in Belmont had been my family's home for the past 54 years. It is where I had spent more than half of my lifetime and this where most of our memories were made. Belmont used to be all swamps when we got our parcel of land. We chose Belmont as we did not really want to be in a city. Lo and behold, the city is coming after us.



*Ben in front of our house.*

My life with Ben had been marvellous. We were blessed with 5 surviving children. Our life had never been so delightful especially with the addition of 5 grandchildren and 1

great-grandson. My eldest granddaughter is Lisa Marie. She is a teacher at Toodyay District High School and is also a dance teacher. She is also a very good artist and a very talented organiser of concerts and shows.

My second granddaughter Sarah Joyce is such a very beautiful, confident, lovely young woman. She works as a secretary for a heart specialist at The Mount Hospital. She is married to Marc Pikoos. Erin Louise, the youngest of my granddaughters, who from the time she was born, gave us so much joy watching her grow into such a beautiful woman and truly a wonderful mum herself. She worked in child care and then surprised us with the announcement that she was pregnant. She gifted us with such a wonderful, beautiful great grandchild, Jacob. At 3 years of age she exhibits such strong wilfulness, taking after his great grandad, I guess and is a true blue Malatesta.



*TOP LEFT: Lisa and Sarah when they were babies. Erin is not yet born in this photo.*

My grandsons, Benito and Marcus, grew up far away from us. Their parents, Greg and Maree, left WA to live in Sydney. However, the distance never changed the love we have for them. We love them and always will. We were able to really bond as a family when they returned to Perth in their teens for their studies. They had attended a private high school and then went to Curtin University. Both had grown into confident, strong-willed young men taking after their father who is so wise with business and had done really well



for himself and as his mother I had never been so proud of his accomplishments. Our children had grown up to be the good people we wanted them to be and had accomplished so much in their own ways. They have had their ups and downs, but they were able to come through it all. They were all survivors in their own right, in every sort of way. I am confident that they will do well even when I am gone.

I also know that my grandchildren are going to be good people as their parents are. I am certain that their parents will guide them well as we did them. My great grandchildren would fare very well and will grow up to be such good people as their parents and grandparents. I would say, that I had been a good mother. I wanted them to remember the times we had spent together, and I am sure we have made more than enough good memories together to last them a lifetime. What more could I ask for. My life had been so blessed and I have been so lucky.



Ben and I travelled overseas together for the first time in 1969 to the village of Magliano, province of Luca, Tuscany, Italy because his mum had died. Unfortunately, Ben never had the opportunity to see his mum again. The last time he saw his mum was when he was 18 years old, when he left Italy to come to Australia. It was also very unfortunate that I never had the opportunity to meet her in person. However, we did exchange letters while she was alive. Ben and I did manage

to go sight-seeing. The place was so beautiful. It was also wonderful being able to meet Ben's relatives.



*The view from where he was born and grew up.*

As they say, life is not always about happy stories and like any other good story, there will always be sadness and sorrows to tell. Deaths will always be sad and not easy to deal with and talk about. However, the important thing is how we handle the sorrows that life throws at us. I had known that dealing with the death of a loved one is never easy and will never be easy.

Ben had always been a very fit man and then all of a sudden was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation although he never had any operation done. By this time he was already retired and just loved sitting on the lounge in our back garden. He loved his wine being an Italian. We have such a lovely back garden with the thriving grapes which he planted. He very well knew that alcohol was not good for him, but nonetheless, would insist on drinking wine. He was such a stubborn mule living true to his family name which translates to 'stubborn' in English.

One day, he just said to me "this is going to be the last time that I am going to see you." I promised him that I would never put him into a hospital, but on that day, I had to take him. I had no choice. He spent one night in the hospital. We knew that he was willing to go so it was not really sad thing letting go of him. Ben passed away on the 26th May 2011. We had stayed with him until he closed his eyes and took his last breath. I told my daughters, who were with me in the

hospital that I knew it was time. I will never forget the moment I thought he was gone and gave him one last kiss. When Leanne and Ilia took their turn to give him one final kiss, he opened his eyes and looked at them. When he closed his eyes again, he was really gone. His passing away was not really sad as it was not so sudden. We knew that he was going to be happier, not having to spend days in the hospital. He just did not love the idea of spending his remaining days staying in a hospital, lying in bed.

I miss him, naturally, day by day. I miss him around the house. I have photos of him around the house and a big photo of us together in our room. I still say “good morning” to him the moment I wake up. To this day, I still talk to him like I used to when he was still alive and I can still feel his presence around me.

When I went to Italy with my daughter, I met a couple of young women who had just lost their husbands and were still trying to cope up with the loss. They were both from Italy. I just could not compel myself to ignore the sad people sitting right next to my table. I shared my story with them, about losing my husband, of how I know that my husband is still around me. After our talk, they were so thankful for having someone share their story with them. I could see it in their eyes that some of the shadows of sorrows were gone. I may not have helped much, but I still am thankful that I could help them in some little ways. We still keep in touch and they would always ask when will I be visiting again. The connection I had made with them was so wonderful and it was nice to know that little things you do were appreciated.

The hardest part in my life would have been with my mother and father. Dad had to endure through pains with melanoma, a type of cancer of the skin. I had seen him suffer as he never wanted to take any medications of sorts for treatment and so it is comforting to know that Mum had passed on peacefully.

When Dad was diagnosed with cancer and Mum with angina, my sister and I had seen to it that we went and visited them once week. We would drive down to Collie, had lunch with them and then drove back to Peth. On this lovely day that we went for a visit, after lunch Mum had asked us to stay longer and had tea with her. We would have never thought that this is going to be the last day that we are going to spend with her. She passed away at 3 o'clock in morning of 13 March 1975. I am just glad in a way that she had passed on peacefully. People were saying that it seems like she just closed her eyes and just went away.

Poor Dad, when he was diagnosed with melanoma, he was just so against any treatment as he did not want anything that “would keep him alive”. When he was taken to the hospital and knew that the time was coming, my sisters and I went to say our goodbyes. In the days before his death, it was raining so hard, but on the day that he took his last breath the rain had stopped and the sun was shining so brightly. We took this as a sign that it was really time for him to go to a better place. I am a Catholic and am a firm believer that when we die, our soul would go to a place where we spend our time until we are ready to be born again. I know that the people we have loved in this lifetime, we are going to meet them again in the next.



*West Australian Women's Golf League ceremony dance performance.*



I was 16 years old when I had my first paying job. I used to clean a house for a family whom we know. Later on I started a job in a jewellery shop. After marrying Ben, I never did really had a paying job. When the kids were old enough to look after themselves, I took on mostly volunteer work.

I had always loved volunteering and loved meeting new people and making new friends. I was always a believer that social interactions are an important aspect of a person's life. I played golf and was the president of the West Australian Women's Golf League as well as Hawk Valley and Embleton Golf Clubs.

I also played tennis, but had to stop when I suffered a shoulder injury. At the present, I am doing water aerobics and some volunteering in areas that interest me and is not strenuous enough for my old weary bones. Although, I must say for an 82-year-old, I still am strong and well enough to do things that interests me independently. I still drive and go around places on my own just well.



Most of my weekdays are spent on water aerobics and going out with friends. I have a couple of friends that I regularly meet once every week. We go out for coffee and some walks if the weather permits. We love going to Tomato Lake, just sit there and talk about

just anything under the sun.

When Ben passed on, my children would take me to travels outside of the country. On each place that I go, I always see to it that I take something from that place as a memento. I guess it was a way for me to eternalise the memories and feelings that I have had during this travel. I had taken into liking collecting fridge magnets which I had put on the fridge at home which is now running out space to put more. I may have to buy another fridge.

My daughters and I were planning on taking a trip to Italy this year as they wanted to go and see the birthplace of their father. My children had never been to Magliano although Ilia and I had already travelled to Italy to the lovely Isle of Capri in Italy in 2017. It was such a magnificent island that I had fallen in love of the place. I had always wanted to go there, having heard the song 'Isle of Capri'. The song was as marvellous and captivating as the island itself.

When I look at my family celebrating birthdays and wedding anniversaries just sitting around the table playing games; I always say to everyone that I had been so blessed with my family and I could never have asked for any other. As my life became fuller from the time I met and married my husband.

My purpose in life has always been to make everybody happy. I was born to meet people. I noticed that everywhere I go, people would always come up to me and have a chat, and I always learn a thing or two from them. I think this is really good and that is really the purpose of life. To connect with people, touch lives and leave an impression, a lesson or two. There is no such thing as coincidences in life, everything happens for a reason and every person that we meet and everything that we do creates a ripple that is surely to affect somebody else's life. I would go as far as say that 'life' is like a spider's web. You, the individual spins the thread, the threads are the people we encounter in this lifetime and the actions we

do. That is why every person we encounter and everything that happens around us, are all connected. We impact on other people's lives as much as they impact on ours.

As my candle dims and yours starts to shine the brightest, I would say, enjoy each moment that you've lived. Never take for granted the little things that makes you happy. Those little things are the things you take with you through your journey in life. For those little things that money cannot buy, are the most valuable treasures in life.

At the end of our journey and when time comes that we are to meet our Maker, you are going to be measured up by the deeds that you've done, not by the material wealth you've amassed. Take life as it is, make mistakes, learn from it. The most important thing is you keep moving forward. Technology is good, but I think the most important thing in life are the connections we make.





# MY NAME IS RAYMOND MALCOLM RICHARDS AND THIS IS MY LIFE

Co-written by: Juliana Auriemma



When you look at me today, you're looking at an old man. A man who is in his 80s, with one too many wrinkles and short silver hair that is few and far between. My name is Raymond Malcolm Richards and I am 86 years old. As I look back on my life to describe myself to you, I would tell you that I was, and still am, a jack of all trades and a master of none. In case you aren't sure what this means, let me draw back the curtain and tell you what my life was like from the beginning.

### **REWIND TO THE 1930s**

I was born in Boulder City on October 28, 1932 to my mother Ellen and father William Richards. Located just a few kilometres away from Kalgoorlie, Boulder City was commonly known as its sister city. Boulder City was for the working class. My father owned a taxi there, but when it was quiet he would drive to Kalgoorlie for extra work from wealthy merchants.

One time, my father was driving a client to the Boulder block and unbeknownst to him, the road he anticipated to use was about 40 metres below the ground from the mines that had been dug in that region. This was the Goldfields-Esperance region of Western Australia, about 597 kilometres east of the state capital Perth. Named the Goldfields for its fields of gold, I grew up in a city where there was a giant open cut gold mine in my backyard. My door opened to the Loopline tram - this tram was the busiest railway of its time in Western Australia. This tram would take you from Kalgoorlie to Boulder City.



One time when my father was helping to start a car, a lady on the tram saw that it was about to come straight for my father, so she jumped off and turned the key to stop the tram. Apparently the car that he was trying to start went forward and caused a bit of a pile up with four or five cars!



*The street of Boulder City.*

Mine blasts, whistles squealing, dusty, dirty, dim, and dowdy, black smoke reeling, ragged shirts and gleaming collars – that was Boulder City.



*Life in Boulder City.*

I was born into the Great Depression, the beginning of a decade overflowing in unemployment, poverty, and crashing incomes. There was civil unrest amongst many Australians who were suffering and living in exceptionally poor conditions. At times my parents were lucky to put food on



the table. There was a collapse in Australia's important export industries, particularly wool and wheat. Luckily, my father was a tradesman which meant that he was able to make an income using his two hands.

### **I AM WHO CAME BEFORE ME**

Not only did I follow in my father's footsteps, the Richards were bred to be tradesmen. The Richards family migrated from New South Wales to Boulder City. There were six girls and two boys. Grandfather Richards would go to the lake to collect lake water, and then firewood. He used the wood to make a fire to boil the water and sell it for drinking water. This was before the great pipeline had been built.

Grandfather Richards had his own small goldmine. He would dry drill into the rocks; this finished up his lungs in his older age. I think I was about three years old when he passed away.

The Sutton family was the largest family to immigrate from England to Australia. My mother was one of twelve siblings to leave England. There were eight girls and four boys. The entire family settled in Margaret River. This was Grandfather Sutton's attempt to leave his metal work trade behind and become a farmer. Bloodline to Queen Mary (Mary of Teck) it is no wonder that Grandfather Sutton could not hack being a farmer. After one too many attempts, the Sutton family moved to Maylands in Perth. Here, he was still out of luck or help to find another job –especially from the local priest who told Grandfather Sutton to go back to where he came from. Today, there is only one of twelve still alive who is 97 years old.

A little bit of history – the second officer of the Titanic was a 'Lightowler' and was one of the last to get rescued. He happened to be my great uncle. During WWI, he was drafted into the English Navy, and whilst in charge he managed to sink a German boat. After the war, he met an American lass, they made up and eventually got married. They

had five children: three boys, and two girls.



*My great uncle.*

### **FAMILY TIES**

My parents were devoted and loving parents. Aside from being a taxi driver, my father fixed cars. People would bring their old cars to him; he would cut the body of the cab down behind the driver's seat, and he would make a tray top for utilities. One day, he was making a tray for the back of the truck. He had one leg inside the radiator, and the other on the bull bar. Being only four or five years old, I was sitting on the driver's seat and must have pushed the clutch into place which crushed my father's leg in three places. That was just about the beginning of World War II.

My dad wanted to enlist in the forces to do his share for the country, but because his leg was a little shorter than the other he was classified as medically unfit. Later, he was drafted and based in Karrakatta as a 'choco': a nickname given to the Citizen's Military Forces during World War II. My mother was a stay at home mother, but later on in her years she worked at a 300 bed, 110 Military Hospital (renamed Hollywood Private Hospital in 1994). The hospital opened in 1941, and was built to care for service men and women. She

was a very loving and graceful woman with a compassionate heart.

I had one brother, William Gordon Richards who was born in January of 1930. We would go up into the goldmines, into the rubbish dumps and find lead acid batteries. We would break the plates off and dry them in the sun to collect the lead. Once we got the lead, we would melt it down. We used house bricks and filled the holes with the lead to set it into shape. We sold these for a halfpenny a pound (half a penny). We used this money to buy war stamps at our local post office. When we had enough of them, we traded them in for war saving certificates. When we moved to Perth, we traded these certificates to pay for our lacrosse uniforms and equipment. When my brother left school, he got an apprenticeship with a bootmaker. He got his girlfriend pregnant so they got married and he went to work at the Forestry Department.



## LEARNING THE TRADE

When I was five, my family moved to Perth. I continued my primary education at Redcliffe Primary in Shenton Park, and then my secondary education at Perth Boys High School in 1945. I only ever had four jobs in my life.

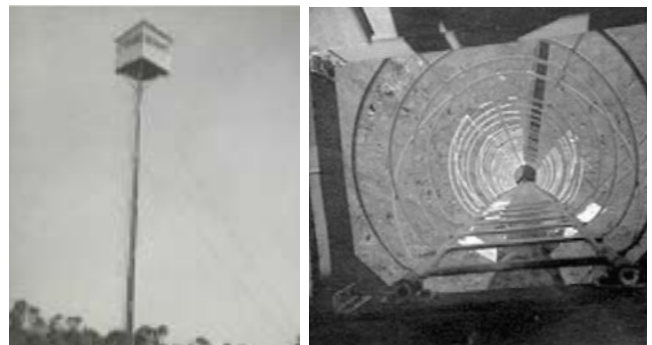
In my second year, second term of high

school, I went to work for Campbell and Manichs to build buses. This included transport and tour buses. These tour buses would go all around Western Australia. The metropolitan transport ended up taking over all the bus companies.

The firm that I worked for made the first transport buses for Metropolitan transport. We built ambulances and hearses too. There was less work for us to build when parts and labour were sourced overseas. I was 21 when I was made redundant.

My brother was an overseer at the Forestry Department – he would take the team out to control burns. I got a job there because they were low on hands. I worked there for nine years and had this job when I got married later on in life.

I designed and built the lookout tower at Mt Gungin, between Kalamunda and Mundaring. We used the tower to seek out danger spots in the Mundaring - Glen Forrest area. I am not sure if it is still there today. It would be good to find out.



*Pictures of the Lookout Tower Mt Gungin.*

## DWELLINGUP FIRES

In 1960 there was a big fire in Dwellingup. Most of the gang from Mundaring Weir had been sent down to help fight the fire. My boss asked me if I knew how to use the pumper. I knew exactly what to do so I grabbed the tip-truck which had the unit on the back of it. It was 8 feet off the ground. I had parked on a hot spot, so one of the tires burnt.

My work mate had driven past, and pulled up suddenly to tell me that my tyres were on



fire. Unbeknownst to me, I would have realized all too late. I got on top of the truck to start the tanker – I wanted to use the pump with water. My work mate got into the driver's seat of the truck to drive it forward, but his foot slipped off the clutch suddenly. The truck went forward and I was thrown off the truck onto stone.

I finished up with a bruise the size of my fist on my left kidney. I was in hospital for three weeks. Only a real trooper would shrug it off and chuckle whilst saying 'I am still here'. When I left the forestry department after 11 years, my wife knew a plumber who was also our neighbour. Coincidentally, she also did his ironing. They had three sons, all plumbers and two tradesmen who worked for them; I was in luck when he was needing someone to work for them. I was there for 2 and a half years. Not qualified as a plumber but I still took apprentices out and taught them how to be plumbers!

## BATTLE SCARS

*"The gentle smile and heart-warming disposition that Ray holds masks his substantial scars. If you look closely, on his left thumb beneath his nail line there is a faint white scar. Ray was six and a half when he was in his backyard with a friend who suggested they dig holes to pass the time."*

My friend gave me a spade with a metal end whilst he held a pickaxe. As I began to dig, my friend swung his pickaxe with all his strength and came down onto my thumb. He missed the ground completely. Thankfully I did not have to have any stitches, but there was a lot of blood and I am lucky that my thumb is completely functional to this day.



*School days.*

## THE LOVE OF MY LIFE

Joyce May Lawrence, and my true love. Despite being nearly eight years older than me, my heart was, and still is, full of love for her.

Joyce and I were members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. During the time I lived with my parents in Shenton Park. Joyce lived in Redcliffe.

I attended Odd Fellows events and meetings with my parents whilst Joyce's mother would ensure that I would take Joyce home after each Odd Fellows event or meeting. I would just drop her off at the gate and drive off. I did that for 13 years.



*Me at an Odd Fellows Meeting.*

Joyce and I loved to go to dances together. Frequently, we would both get lost in the tuneful, heartwarming story of The Sound of Music. It was the first movie that Joyce and I ever saw together, and despite knowing all the words, this movie still brings a breath of vitality and excitement to me. 'The Hills are Alive' was not the only song that I whistled. Without me knowing, Joyce entered me into a whistling competition on Channel Seven. I was quite skillful and I came in at second place.

I was only a teenager, and Joyce a widow with two daughters. We were friendly, and would attend dances together until one day I simply suggested, "Why don't we get married?" Us two love birds married in 1966. We had a wedding breakfast that we were able to share with many of our family members and friends. It was nice.

There may have been quite a lot of members in the lodge with a comment on the age difference between Joyce and me. There were branches all over Western Australia and in the eastern states that were all in very close communication. Everyone knew everyone in the lodge. Joyce and I never had anything said to us directly, and I don't think it would have changed anything anyway.



### **MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN**

My daughter is Raelenne Joyce Ashman. Joyce and I had Raelenne when I was in my thirties. She went to school at the local primary school in Redcliffe. She completed her secondary education at Belmont College.

My daughter met up with a young man from Baker's Hill (with an 18 month age difference). His name is Wade and she met him when she was working for Beyond Bank. After she got married, Raelenne kept house for her family and did the accounting for her husband's business. Wade is a cabinet maker. We liked each other very much. She is a dedicated and loving wife and mother. I am so proud of the woman that she is today and love her very much.



My daughter had four children – two boys, and two girls. My eldest grandson is Shaun who is staying with me (and looks after me when he is not reading something on his phone). He did electrical engineering at university but decided it wasn't for him. Now he wants to be a teacher and is working towards this goal. On Friday night and Saturday morning he teaches swimming classes at Belmont Oasis Leisure Centre. In the summer, he sometimes goes to Northam and teaches at the Northam pool. He also plays netball at university on a Tuesday night.

My other grandson is Brett, who is 23 years old and stays at my house on Monday night so that he can go to TAFE. He usually goes back up to Northam on Tuesdays. He is a hardworking young man and I think the world of him and what he is doing with his life.

I have two granddaughters – Megan and Deanne. Megan is 19, and Deanne is 14. My granddaughters are very nice girls. My only hope is that they find a love like I had and are looked after by someone who is kind and caring.



I am more than meets the eye, an old man perhaps but a young man at heart. My life has been filled with trials and tribulations. This story is only a snapshot of what my life is and was.

I never really was the type to plan goals or keep a bucket list of things to do in my life. If there was only one thing that I am sure of – is that life is meaningless without love, laughter but is only glued together with a bit of hard work.



# RAYMOND HAWTHORNE

Co-written by: Alexandra Moir



I was born in the 1930s during the Great Depression on the 14th June 1931 in in the suburb of Carlisle, Western Australia. Yet my childhood was far from depressing. My old man had trucks and my mum was a housewife. They worked hard and did everything they could to make my childhood fun!

I did indeed have a good childhood. When I was young the only times I went in the house were meal times or bed times. I loved it outside, playing with all the kids, not being in the house. Some nights I would stay out too late and my mother would have to drag me inside. Sometimes I would get a hiding for staying out too late.

Me and my friends used to go shooting on horseback- rabbits, foxes, kangaroos. I had two horses growing up; one was a hack and the other an ex-racehorse. They weren't pets and we didn't name them, they were for fun. The first one I bought from the pound for £5. She was a grey mare, Belmont Park 6, which I bought at auction at the pound yard behind the Belmont Hall. The other horse was a brown bay horse.

We kept them in the paddock alongside our house. It wasn't our land, it was just a vacant block, but no one seemed to be using it so we put a fence across the front and put them in there. No one ever bothered us about it. One time me and my mate we went riding up in the hills on two ponies... and got lost. We didn't get home until 9pm. Mum was furious, I copped it that night.

My childhood was a safer time too. You could leave your bike in the streets, no lock, and come the next day it would be there. No one would think about touching it. You wouldn't lock your car (if you had one) or the front door of your house. You could also walk around at night and feel safe.

You'd see a house with a verandah, there would nearly always be a bed on the front verandah. Nearly everyone used to do it. It was safe in those days to sleep outside like that, under the stars.

I remember visiting all my mates and sleeping overnight. We used to do some silly things. We would play 'parcels' where you make up a parcel, tie on a piece of string and put it on the road. When someone stopped to see what was wrong, you'd pull the string.

We also played 'stiffies', where you'd lie on the side of the road and when someone stopped to check what's wrong, you'd run like hell.

Trouble is I was the poor sod who sometimes got caught!

The policeman, Harold Fraser, was a good cop. His station was in the front yard of his house. He wouldn't dob you in, but he'd give you a good boot up the arse, then he'd tell your parents and you'd get another one.

During and after World War II everything was rationed. This was done to manage shortages of essential items and also control our use of them so food and goods didn't run out. There used to be rations for everything from clothing, to food and even petrol. We were lucky in Australia though, as our rationing was not as severe as we heard it was in the United Kingdom.



*Example of a WWII Clothing Ration Card from Brisbane.*

My childhood was lived throughout the war, but I can never remember us going without anything. There was a strong sense of community back then. We all used to share the rations around. A lot of people got more tickets than they used so we would all help one another out if we knew people were going without. Meat was rationed to 2 ¼



lbs per week, but the butcher knew us so if we asked we could get a whole sheep if we wanted.

I was 14 when the Second World War ended. I remember I was at the corner of Barker Road and Lapage Street when I found out, behind the primary school.

I was quite pleased at the end of the war. Everyone knew someone that had gone so we were happy to see those that came back. I've lived in Belmont for 86 years. My first job was at Charlie Courtland's Pottery Works, making plant pots. I didn't stay there long. My first pay packet was 18 shillings and old Charlie said I'll give you an extra 2 bob to go to the movies so he made it a pound. Nearly everyone was working then from a young age, we had never heard of the dole. Different generation, you worked hard for what you had. Nothing was just given to you.

My next job was in the slaughter yards at Rob's Jetty. I also used to deliver bread around Belmont for the Corlett Brothers Bakery, which was on the corner of Great Eastern Highway. Back then there were lots of dirt tracks and not many roads.

There were more racehorses in Belmont than people in those days!

I then worked on the trucks with my brother, until he went back to Queensland and my dad sold the trucks.

I next worked at Monier Concrete Industries and stayed there for nearly 36 years. Initially I was working 5 ½ days a week, then chopped it down to 5 days. I would start at 6am and work a 40 hr week, sometimes 12 hour shifts. We couldn't make enough tiles to keep up with the demand.

I finally retired at 55 due to my health and to spend time with Win.

I met my love Winnifred at the Belmont dance in 1948, which was held at the Belmont Hall each week. Her mother used to provide the

dinners at the dance and she would help out between dances. We had seen each other at the dances before but never talked.



She was 16 when we met and still at school, so she was not allowed to go out on dates without a chaperone. It was either her Mum or Dad, was always one or the other, sometimes both. I was never intimidated by their presence though.

We both loved to dance to all types of music. We also loved the picture theatres. We'd go to any of them; the Piccadilly, Guildford or The Royal and go see any kind of movie if there was a good one on. Otherwise we used to go to friends' houses and have a card night.

People today are missing out on a lot of simple things that used to be very enjoyable and fun to us.



*1953 - our wedding day.*

I married Win on the 7th November 1953, she was 21 and I was 23. It was Win's 21st birthday that day. We wanted to get married when she turned 18 but the family didn't approve so young. So she looked at the calendar and saw what day she turned 21 and that was the day we got married. We were married in St Peters Anglican Church, Victoria Park. The reception was at the Belmont Town Hall.

She was the prettiest girl in the district and still is.



We've been married for over 65 years. I don't have any secrets to a long marriage, you just take each day as it comes. You have your ups and downs, same as anyone else. But we were always good at making up with each other. You were together a lot in those days, no television to distract you so you'd talk to one another about everything.



*Win and I with her parents, Thomas and Marjory Kinghorn.*

Getting married was the best thing I ever did and being married to Win the most precious gift.



*27 Wallace Street, Belmont.*

This is a picture of the first home we built three years after getting married. We could only borrow £1750 back then from the bank. Most homes cost you between £3000-4000 and you had to provide the rest. You couldn't be too greedy in size so they were much smaller than today!

At that time everybody knew everyone in the street.

We lived in this house for 39 years and raised our family there. It was 2 bedrooms and I build a sleep-out on the back so that made 3 sleeping areas.



*The family: Win's mother, Mark, Leanne, Steve and Nana Hawthorne.*

Having a family was also a gift for me. Win and I have three children, Mark, Leanne and Steve. We've always been a close family - not suffocating each other but always there for one another. Our children all got along well, and they still do and get together every week. They are good kids and look after us. They make sure we don't want for anything and we do the same. We are lucky, they have good values and are always there for us.



During WWII almost all forms of motorsport around the world stopped. Fuel was rationed and motorsports viewed as a luxury.

By the end of the war, venues began reopening worldwide. One of these was the Claremont Showgrounds Speedway, opening on the 18th October 1946.

The opening was a sellout, with 26,000 spectators packing the showgrounds to watch 23 motorcycle solo and sidecar racing events.

We started in the 1947/48 series at the Claremont Speedway. Back then there were 3 categories: motorbike solo, motorbikes with sidecars, and the speedcars. The sidecars were the best!

They used to have an hour pushbike racing before the speedway events started. Malcolm Barker was an outstanding rider, and at the interval they also used to have Professor Wilkinson on his Harley doing tricks.

When the bikes were on you were so close to the fence (only a metre away) so you could lean over and get close to the action.

The speedway used to cost 3 and 4 pence to get in when we started going. Later they bought in stock cars, sedans, and stopped the bikes. Now everything is on all 4 wheels. We loved the speedway, even went there the night before we got married! Why not?! That was one of our nights out, we would never miss it.

My first driver's license cost 5 bob and it was a piece of paper folded over, nothing like the plastic cards today. My first car was a dark blue 1929 Dodge Ute that I bought for around £125. It was the first model to come out with hydraulic brakes. I still remember the license plate was 7531.

When we would drive to the speedway I would have a ute load full of kids in the back. They all wanted to come too - my younger sister Audrey, her husband, Joey and his



family, Win's brother and a couple of cousins. It was a real family event!

I later had a Ford V8 license plate 6127. Then the kids came along and we stopped going for a bit. Later our eldest got us back into it and we continued going for years. It was only the season before last that we finally stopped going in 2016.

I have always enjoyed footy and cricket. I don't really follow a particular footy team. To me it doesn't matter who is playing - I just like a close game, to me that's a good game. We didn't really have much time for hobbies. We had the boat and the caravan. We were out living life and got outdoors every chance we could.



*Anchors away!*

We used to go crabbing as a family in Mandurah; back then there were no limits on how much you could catch so we would get enough for the whole family. One time I lay the nets out and caught 100 crabs. When we got back we started cooking, it must have smelt good as all the neighbours and family came over and we were lucky to see any of it!

We had a house down there as the in-laws built a house and we would often go stay there. We had a yellow 16 ft half cabin cruiser boat and sometimes we would stay out on the estuary for a few days and sleep on the boat.

Win and I used to follow the country speedways as well, there were not many meetings that we missed out on over the years. We never travelled just to go, but if it happened to be on while we were there we would make sure we didn't miss the opportunity to go.

My favourite holidays were travelling around Australia in a caravan. We travelled around Australia three times! The longest time was for 6 months, the others were a bit quicker. That was our first trip about 30 years ago, in the 1990s. I retired at 55 and about 12 months after that we set off. We didn't plan for anything time-wise, we just took each day as it came. As long as we found a place to stay for the night we were set.

There were lots of country roads back then. We felt safe travelling, you never stopped on your own. If you were travelling and you pulled up at a spot at 4pm you could bet your bottom dollar that by the morning it would be full like a caravan park. Once one stopped you would all stop. We stayed in lots of caravan parks and stuck mainly to the country areas as there was more to see. If you want to see a city you could go to Perth. We never really went into the main cities like Melbourne or Sydney but we went into Adelaide.

I don't have a favourite place that I've been to, there's a hell of a lot to see over east and the best thing is you don't have to travel far to see it, unlike WA where you travel 500 or 600 km before you see anything! There is so much to see over east and there are some very pretty places.

You don't realise how big WA is until you start driving it and there's not much to see between the cities; nothing between here and Geraldton, nothing between Geraldton and Karratha and then the next place is Port Hedland. Each time we travelled Australia we went to different places. We had a few trips to Adelaide, SA, travelling across the Nullabor with no worries. The only trouble we had was blowing a couple of tyres on the van. Those tyres had had it so we had to get

new ones. Other travellers were always willing to help if they saw you were in trouble.

We even went up the Snowy Mountains and Mt Kosiosko as it was no good going all that distance if you're not going to see places. We couldn't get over how green everything is over east, especially in country Victoria. We went to Canberra and drove around in circles as you do. We went to the Floriade Flower Show, it was very pretty.

My wife and I moved into Belmont Nursing Home just before Christmas in 2017. We have lots of visitors come every week; our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. We phone friends in Mandurah and Geraldton to keep in touch with them.

I'd like to go back to the 1940/1950s. That would be my advice to young people today. It was freer, safer and you could leave your doors unlocked. There were no TVs or computers to take everyone away from each other. People would talk to each other more. There was more community spirit, you knew your neighbours, the people around the streets and the local community and shops.

What I would like to be remembered for... It would be for the life I have lived, the friendships I have made and those who have stood by me in life, particularly Win who has been the most loving wife and mother that any man could hope for. I count myself truly blessed.



# GARY BOURGOURE

## MY LIFE

Co-written by: Matthew Whiteford





I was born in Dalby Queensland in 23/7/1958. My family did not stay long and so we moved to Theodore, a little north of Dalby where my biological father (Kevin) was killed in a fight. I was 6 years old, he was a laborer who would work any odd job. I do not remember much of the feelings at the time but I'm sure I was sad and angry. Afterwards we stayed in a caravan because that is all Mum could afford. She had to work, looking after three kids with no man, however there was no stigma attached to her from others in Theodore; they helped her out with washing, child minding and other ways. Even though I had no father for a while it was a good childhood because of the love from Mum (even when being belted with an electric cable, which was turned off) and others of Theodore.

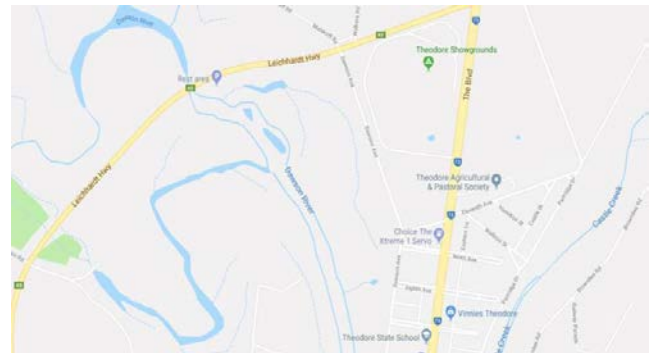
I have 3 siblings Debbie, Christine and Tony. I am the oldest, Christine and Tony are Kevin's children and Debbie was Russell's. I believe all are in WA but I have not seen them since they left Queensland. I know that my sisters married two brothers, but don't know if they are still married. I would love to see them again.

In my late teens my mother June remarried to Russell Davis who was an independent contract truck driver. He came from Victoria and with him brought the love of football. We got on like mates drinking and hanging out, but he did not like pubs so he drank at home. We would attend the football matches but sadly never saw Carlton in a Grand Final. My mum was not into football so it was always a father-son experience. Later on in life I got two tattoos of the Carlton logo, one on my chest and the other on my right knee.



My siblings and I grew up mostly playing outside because we did not have TV, and of course when we did it was black and white. I would watch Combat (first aired in 1962, WW2 drama series) and WWE. Since I was the eldest I could not misbehave when I was not at home, as I had to look after my three other siblings.

In Theodore we (my mates from the sawmill/ school) would swim in Dawson River and there was a pub nearby. From looking at the map it looks like it has grown since there wasn't much there, pretty sure just the main street and maybe a few side roads.



Source: Google Maps

It was easy to get beer even though we were underage, we would then drink by the river. Also my friends and me would shoot kangaroos and pigs for the farmers which we got paid for. Their meat would be either cooked or sold to the butchers.

I went to a Catholic primary school where I played rugby for the school. I would be the one charging in to get the ball, tackling the opposition and going for touch downs. I do not remember much but I know we rarely lost. I did not carry on to high school because I was a terrible academic (my mum said no hope for further education), so I went to work in the sawmill, which would have been on the left side of Dawson River. I could do most of the work that the others could do; lift, carry and saw.

I left Theodore on my 21st birthday and went to Bellborwie and have never returned.

I moved to Bellborwie in Queensland as a welder. I helped build a power station. There does not seem to be any information about it now, probably because of the increase distaste for coal in society.



*Source: Google Maps*

I would stay in rented houses here, but the companies had also set up camps for workers to live in. They had segregated the camps to have married couples and singles. There were different camps for different jobs, boilermakers (me), plumbers, electricians etc. They had a wet mess (selling beer) so you could drink all you wanted till you fell asleep because no-one was driving. This was the same in Darwin. In both places any drunken behaviour meant being fired, no question, and possible losing your tools. There were a few cases of fights and the resulting punishment. Neither me or my friends got into such messes.

After Brisbane I then went to Rockhampton. I was working on construction sites as a boilermaker (heavy metal fabrication).

After that I went to Gladstone, with the same construction company. We built air-conditioning pipes for the site to clean away bad air as well as for the building after construction.

After construction work was done, I needed work and saw they were building a power station in Darwin. I hopped in my car by myself and drove from Gladstone to Darwin. I did not sightsee, just simply drove, rested, drank, slept and repeated until I got to Darwin. Luckily I got there without incident because of course no mobile phones, much harder to get help.

The power station is the one on Channel Island, and it had already begun construction by the time I got there. I lived in Palmerston City north of the site, and you would either get a bus there or drove. I of course drove. The heat suited me because I love it but the humidity was bad. I would hang out with work colleagues swimming and fishing. We had to watch out for crocs but fortunately there was not an incident (that I can remember). The fishing was good, though did not catch much but the drinking and relaxing was what mattered to me.



The other boilermakers and I realized that the other workers were getting more pay than we were. So we went on strike, I can't remember how big of a gap it was but obviously enough for us to strike. However we did not get better pay and were fired, maybe because the construction was nearly complete and there was not much need for us.

The first time I flew I was going to Melbourne from Darwin for the footy for Carlton versus Melbourne. I did not like flying but I liked how you could drink. Even before getting on the plane my friend and I may not have gone because my mate and I were drunk when boarding, but somehow they let us on. Carlton won so a great trip (not a final just one of the rounds). My friend was disappointed because he was a Melbourne supporter.

With work mates and others we would go on holidays in NSW, mostly by the coast, to relax and drink. One trip was from Gladstone to Byron Bay. On a few occasions we went

down in a semi-truck with no trailer. It was one of the bloke's personal truck. Sometimes two of us would go down, and other times three. Two in the front and one in the back seats sleeping. Had to be always on the move because we wanted to get there as quickly as we could, we would alternate driving but only one had a truck license. We knew some people and stayed with them for about a week.

I also went to Tasmania for a holiday which I enjoyed. I was there for a week and saw a cricket match there. I know one team was WA but can't remember the other.

In Darwin we would go places for holidays too. I have been to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs. We went to other places too but hard to see them on Google Maps. Usually three of us alternating driving.

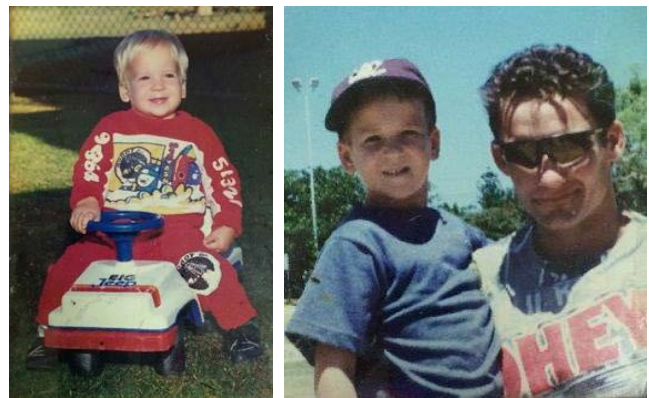
In Perth I went with my family to Monkey Mia, Exmouth, Geraldton and Albany. Most of the holiday places I went with Simone and Nicholas.

It was in Darwin where I met my ex-wife Simone, which happened to be in a pub, and it took a few times to pluck up the courage to talk to her. We got married in Darwin, and went to Bali for our honeymoon. We were there for 2 weeks swimming and drinking. I got Bali belly (bad water makes you go to the toilet a lot). Coming back we moved to Perth (where she is from) driving the whole way with two cats. We lived for a time with her parents (1 year) which I did not like; her mother was very nice but her father did not like me (possible caused by my drinking). I had a son with her named Nicholas and he went to school at East Kenwick Primary. We were married for 7 years.

We would go out drinking with friends at night (to the pub of course) and go dancing in nightclubs. At some point I had a stroke when Simone and I were still on good terms. It was not that serious but drove me more to the drink, which was the main reason for the divorce.

I was not much of a role model for Nicholas. I was working, drank a lot and did not make much time to spend with him. I would coach him in rugby, but I have no idea if he enjoys the sport anymore. He was much more academic than I was, I wonder if he has found a good job.

I kept in contact with him a while after Simone and I divorced, but I was too forceful. I would ring him constantly to see if we were still okay, but he would say that he needed time to think it over. I kept pushing him which eventually lead him to say stop contacting me and I do not want to know you. Not sure how long ago that was, but he would be 29 now and I have no idea how his life is going. I would like to know what he is up to, even what he looks like and tell him I am sorry that I drove him away.



The photo on the left is him at our home in Kenwick. The other is him with a Rugby League Player, Mark Geyer, who played for the Western Reds from 1995-1997 (they do not exist any more). My wife took the photo and it was at a get together of the fans. He would be about 7 and near the time Simone and I divorced.

Here in WA I worked for Hvack, a mining company, located in the Forrestfield / Kewdale industrial area. I was making air-conditioners like in Rockhampton and Gladstone. Every other week I would go to the mine sites outside of Perth just to check on equipment. The rumbling going on from the works on the new Community Centre while talking about this is similar to the feeling when on the mine sites, the heavy



machinery at work, with its shaking in the ground. Never went up north or to Kalgoorlie but sometimes would take Simone to the mine sites when I was not working, to show her what I was doing.

Working with Hvack is where I met Steve. If there was ever an accident or cave-in at the mine sites we would have the next week off for counseling, safety and making sure we weren't drunk on the job. I was never in an accident or any of my friends.

Simone had divorced me and I still worked at Hvack but after several incidents outside of work (quite a time after the divorce) I realised that my drinking was a massive problem for me and so quit.

I lived with my mate Steve for 14 years in Kenwick. I lived with him after the divorce. He and I would not go out much except to the pub, I would go to movies (action) by myself because Steve was not a fan of the movies. Or we would have friends over and watch sport and drink. I had my second stroke while living here, this one was worse and caused some brain damage. This meant Steve became my carer for a while before he heard of the home I am at now. He has been my best mate. He comes and visits me at the home every now and then and we chat over the phone.

As I have said throughout my story I have had a problem with drinking, causing my marriage to end and resulting in me needing to quit my job. Some incidents were drink driving and I have spent a few weeks in jail for that. By myself though and would not do so with others in the car.

Also it has also been the cause of several car accidents, some serious, no one was injured in any of them because most were against parked cars. In one of the more serious ones the doctors thought it best to turn me off life support, Steve however did not let that happen even though he thought also that I may die. He still wanted to give me a chance to live, which thankfully I have.

For all these reasons, and likely others I cannot remember, I gave up drinking.

Hall & Prior Belmont Nursing home is where I live now, because of the brain damage. I have lived here for 6 years. Twice a month they do trips for the residents and they go everywhere, all the beaches you could name, the Swan Valley, Hillarys and many other places. One goes for 2-2:30hrs and we don't get off the bus but have lunch on it, so it can become smelly with all the different lunches. The other goes for 4-4:30hrs and that one we get off and walk around. I much rather prefer the trips when we get off the bus.

Two of the carers have become great friends, Sharron and Michelle. Michelle assists with those of us from the home getting to and from the story telling. Michelle would say she makes us be their friends, but they take great care in looking after us and are very friendly.

The home has restrictions on what radio stations they can listen too, so I listen to the radio (6IX) 1080am in my own room. There are times when I can't help but listen to their radio but I get on with it, as it is not a big deal in the scheme of my life.

I am doing this story because I want to find out about myself. I can't easily remember my memories because of the strokes and brain damage. So having what I can remember written down and accessible would be great.

The remainder of my life will likely be at the home I am at now, but as well as the friends I have made with two carers, I have met a woman I have fallen in love with called Doreen (the lady on the front cover). She is such a friendly and lovable lady and we are planning on getting married. I have already popped the question but just need to get the divorce papers and see if the priest who comes once a week would be able to do the service. I really love her and being near her makes me so happy. I was nervous of doing this story because I would be away from her, but I have really enjoyed telling my story and hope to spend my remaining years with Doreen.

# PAULINE BLAIR

## MY LIFE STORY

### County of Donegal - 'my home'

Co-written by: Hyacinth Monamoleli



I can almost vividly recall my afternoon as an 11 year old farm girl, sitting on a bench outside by the side of the house, watching as the sun sank behind the magnificent hills overlooking the riverbank behind our farm. Nestled at the bottom of the hills, the farm was one of very few in our small village in County of Donegal in the Republic of Ireland, where I was born and reared with four of my older sisters.



I am most certain it would have been in the early 1950s since I can just remember the year 1940 2nd of November, the day I was born. Life was nothing shy of an amazing experience, embedded with treasured memories that we'll share for generations to come.

My family was musical - we all had amazing voices. We sang in the church choir. Trust me when I tell you that my father had vocals that could have turned him into an instant star had he tried out for these pop star groups of today. All my sisters enjoyed the choir practice we endured Thursday evenings. That was the one time we could be free from farm duties.

I'm laughing now as I remember my oldest sister Barbara and the secrets we shared. But she was just so selfish and that helped her get away with a lot of things growing up. She was as you would say the 'defiant' one and very brainy might I add to that. She went on to become a nursing sister at the Royal Victoria Hospital. But she's deceased now as are my second and fourth sisters Hazel and

Mabel. All I have left is memories of us. Now I am only left with my third sister Alison. We hardly see each other but we talk over the phone quite often.

My parents made a living out of selling fresh milk and churning some of it to produce the most beautiful tasting butter and it sold in neighbouring villages in an old and trusted horse drawn cart. We spent our mornings helping our father with most of the animal grazing.

I would watch with delight as he was whistling up the sheep over the meadows to eat. It may seem silly now trying to explain to my nephews how we rode around in horse pulled carts, but this was back in the 1950s and life was simple and fun. We didn't have all these new gadgets to complicate our way of life.

I never had kids of my own so I would find myself sharing these amazing stories with my nephews. I recall the puzzled and yet excited look on their faces as I mentioned how I had a donkey for a pet!

"Yes that's right," I repeated. I had a pet donkey called Balaam's Ass. I specifically chose that name from the Bible. My family was very religious and Presbyterian Christians.



That donkey sure was a stubborn, typical donkey and would stray off beyond the hills. We would have to get on our wagon and ride around the village in search of it. Even though my father would seem infuriated at



times because I was not looking after Balaam, I'm sure he enjoyed chasing after him! It gave him an excuse to go about the village and greet everyone we came across.

Ireland became entangled in the religious conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, particularly the Catholic Nationalist Community, who believed it should leave the UK and become part of the Republic of Ireland.

This was 1969 when it all spiralled into violent unrest. My dearest friend and I decided we just couldn't stick around and watch this conflict unravelling.

It was then we boarded the biggest ship you can imagine and made our way to Australia. Migrating in those times was not as complex as it is now. We spent days tucked away in this tiny cabin with just a bunk bed between us. The nights would become unbearable as the heat would just be sweltering in that cabin. It sure was not five star travels but it got us to where we had to be.



*Source: Fremantle Port Authority.*

We finally arrived in Australia after that long journey. It would have taken us a little over 3 weeks to finally get to the port of Fremantle. We were lucky to have had an Irish married couple, Marie and Crawford, waiting for us as we disembarked and made our way to becoming independent. They were close family friends and my sister Alison was the one who introduced us to them.

True to their Irish heritage the couple embraced us and showed us around the town of Newman in the Pilbara, where I later got my first job doing general clerical duties. We barely had anything to do at that time, which brought about the phrase 'living in the golden days'. Crawford, an officer at the Mt Newman mine at the time, played a huge role in assisting us secure those jobs. I've come a long way to be where I am today.



I spent my life in Perth living in a house I proudly worked hard for. How much I partied, well that is better left untold.

I never had kids of my own and I never married, thus this 67A Oats Street house being my greatest achievement.

I've lived 40 years of my life in Belmont, I am proud to call this country my home. If I had a few more years in me I would travel the world and continue to make new acquaintances. Who knows, it might still happen. This has been my journey, and I believe I lived it the only way best for me.

# WIN HAWTHORNE

Co-written by: Cleo Buck

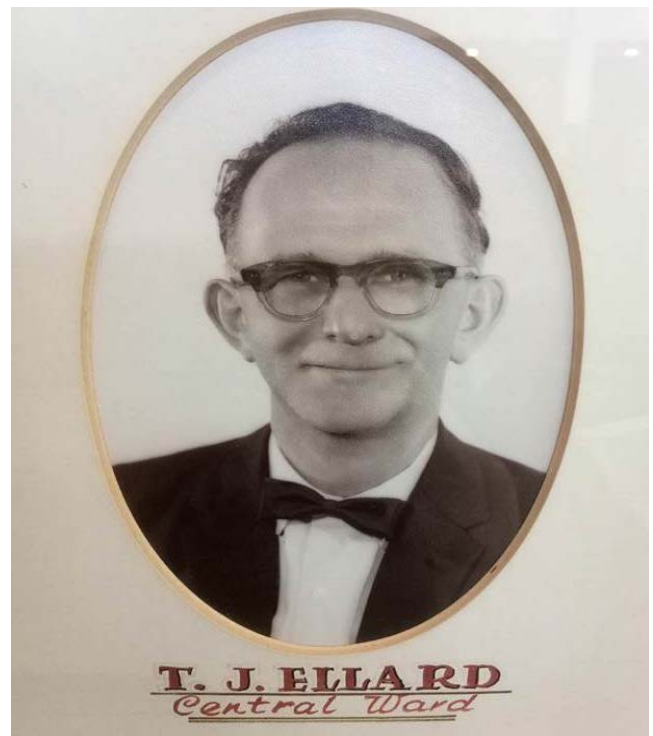


Whenever I look back, I am grateful. Even if some things seem distant and blurry, what I can remember is that without a doubt is how lucky I have been. I've had a loving and supportive family, from birth until now. The southeastern block of houses between Wallace and Keymer Street is where I lived most of my life, where all my memories began. My grandparents, parents, brother, my children, husband, and I all lived on that block. We often went through the bush to each other's houses rather than use the road. This was home.



Grandad Ellard was the first to live on Keymer Street. He worked for the Shire between 1938 to 1939 and 1944 to 1950. He led a group of volunteers to raise 500 pounds (worth at least 40,000 dollars today) for improvement on the Belmont Primary School. He also introduced soup at lunchtime. He was very active in the community, and so well-thought of that an avenue was named after him; Ellard Avenue. Grandad and Grandma had 8 children. One boy, Thomas, who became a councillor, and seven girls including my mother.

With six aunts and one uncle, it is needless to say I had lots of cousins. Around Belmont, people used to whisper, "Be careful, she is one of them!" when they saw me or one of the other members of the Ellard clan.



*Grandad Ellard.*

The youngest aunt, Norah, was only three years older than me. I never called her Auntie, she was more like a friend. We went camping down in Mandurah together, and dancing at the Belmont Hall. She and her husband Ted Harris were beautiful dancers.



*Norah and I.*



My first home was at 50 Keymer Street on the same block as my grandad. My father worked at Cresco Fertiliser. Growing up we never had a car and Dad used to ride his bicycle over the railway bridge for his 3 shifts in Bayswater, even at night. He was a healthy man who insisted on having meat and three vegetables every day, even on holidays. One day he came back from work with a bag of fertiliser on his handlebars, borrowed an old-fashioned plow and horse from a neighbour and started a beautiful pea garden. People were mad about his peas. I remember watching my mother harvest them at the bottom of her folded apron, which I had to deliver all around on my bicycle. Later on, my dad bought a car: an Austin. It was a small car, and looked even tinier when my dad was driving it! He was a slow driver, so slow that the police once stopped him, thinking something was wrong.



*My parents.*

My mother never failed to cook Dad his three vegetables a day. She and Ms Rowland, her good friend, also brought food every Saturday night to the Belmont Hall dance.

Back in the day professionals would photograph strangers in the city and would leave a business card in order to contact

them to get a print copy. My mother often liked her photographs.

I had a peaceful childhood, far away from the horrors happening around the world at the time. The closest I came to experiencing the war was when I had to lie down on Keymer Street and pretend to be one of the wounded for training. I was only ten or twelve years old at the time. There was army training at Ascot Racecourse and the soldiers would march down the streets. You'd hear all these footsteps going down the road. We also had to build an air raid shelter which became the perfect breeding ground for new inhabitants: frogs! I said even if their was a threat of air raid I wouldn't go in there. I also remember going to Perth for end-of-war celebrations.

My parents kept two plots of land between my house and theirs for us. There was another vacant plot of land next to Grandad Ellard's house. That is where Ray would come galloping on his horse from Kimberley street to see me in secret.

Ray is my husband. We met when I was 16 years old in 1948 at a dance party in Belmont Hall.



*A young Ray.*

We knew other before but had never spoken. After that, we went on dates and were chaperoned all the time. Mum would always be there with her friend Mrs Rowland. Mrs Rowland had a daughter: Pat. Each Saturday after the dance, we would walk back, Ray and I, followed by Pat and Harold, then Mum and Mrs Rowland, who always chaperoned us. Pat became a good friend and we were bridesmaids at each other's weddings.



*Harold, Pat, Ray and I.*



*Pat and I.*

Ray and I wanted to get married when I turned 18 but my family did not approve so much of Ray. As I did not want any conflict, I decided to wait. I looked at the calendar and saw that I turned 21 on a Saturday and decided this would be the day we would get married. We have been together ever since, 65 years later, for a total of 70 years! We've both helped each other through hard times. Our children, Mark, Leanne, and Steve

would say we bicker a lot. Maybe they're right, but we love each other.



Seven years before I got pregnant for the first time, I was hired straight from school to work at Felton Grimwade Bickford, which became DHA (Drug Houses Australia). I was working in invoicing. I remember having to wear a special uniform to go to the printer, as in those days I had to place the ink on the printer and could get it all over my clothes. I quit my job to start a family, not knowing that I was actually already pregnant with Mark.

Our children have always been there for us. Steven comes and visits every day. He was very mischievous as a kid, especially with his cousin Theron Kinghorn. They'd go on adventures, catching 'gilgies' (freshwater prawns) with tongs down in the drains. They'd cook them on a camp fire in the garden, and wouldn't share with Ray. One day, I found them walking with our tomahawk down the street. Who knows what they had in mind! They also set fire to the shed in the back of our yard, and with it Granny Bantam, my Mum's hen. Apart from that, they were good kids. My daughter Leanne can be a miss bossy boots, but she has been tremendously helpful with me. She was a tomboy growing up.





*Mum, the kids and Nana Hawthorne.*

We thought Mark was troublesome growing up, as he'd sometimes ignore us. We later realised that he had a hearing problem. Despite this, he got through life successfully, and became a tradesman like his father.

When we got married we built a house on 27 Wallace Street in Belmont. We wanted to pay for our block, so we gave my dad 200 pounds for it, which was nothing. We stayed there for 39 years. It was a small house with two bedrooms, one lounge room and a kitchen but no dining room. We borrowed 1750 pounds in the bank; that was all we could borrow. We turned the second bedroom into a dining room when the kids moved out. At the back there was a big gumtree, fenced off for the chooks. When the boys were little they used to go up there and play under the gumtree and made racetracks around it. The tree was hollow and that's where the chooks would lay their eggs.



*Our house.*

Back when I was still living with my parents, we had a cat that Mum called 'Mama'. She had turned up at our place out of the blue, and we didn't know where she'd come from. We found out much later on that it was Ray who had dumped her there.

My sister-in-law Jennifer had a goat - again, it was Ray who received it from someone at work and gave it to her. The goat became the official landmower, and would be tied all around the neighbours' place to munch on their grass.

One of our pets was a white cockatoo in a big cage on the side of the drive. It would start to screech as soon as someone walked by or wanted to come in. And the dog came out barking every time. It came to the stage where our cockatoo would screech even when no one was there. The dog would come barking, which would set the cockatoo into fits of laughter. It used to talk as well, and call out the kids' names. Animals are smarter than we think.

Six months after we were married Ray hurt his back. Then, when Steven was only a few months old and had to be fed baby formula, Ray was off work because of his injury. For that reason, we were rather broke, so I gave up the baby formula and gave Steven cow milk instead.

Not far from my house on the Great Eastern Highway, there was a stable owned by a horse trainer. The boys working for him would take the horses down to the Ascot Racecourse to do training. They'd come down Hardy Road, down Wallace Street and pinch our milk. Ray had covered the lawn in yellow sand to make it grow, and so we could see where they had stopped the horses. I had no milk for Steven's breakfast! They repeated this a few times until Ray got involved.

Ray has been an outstanding husband, and a great provider. However, we also found time to have lots of fun. We never missed a Friday night at the speedway in Claremont.



We also had a house in Mandurah, bought a half-cabin cruiser and we went crabbing along the river. One day, we put the crab netting up the estuary and Ray caught 99 crabs. He said he wouldn't go home until he caught 100.

When we went back to the house, we cooked them all up on the copper. We didn't have much left after the neighbours and family heard about it!

We sometimes went on the boat for several days. The children camped on the beach of a small island on the river while Ray and I slept on the boat. We eventually sold the house, bought a caravan and traveled around Australia.

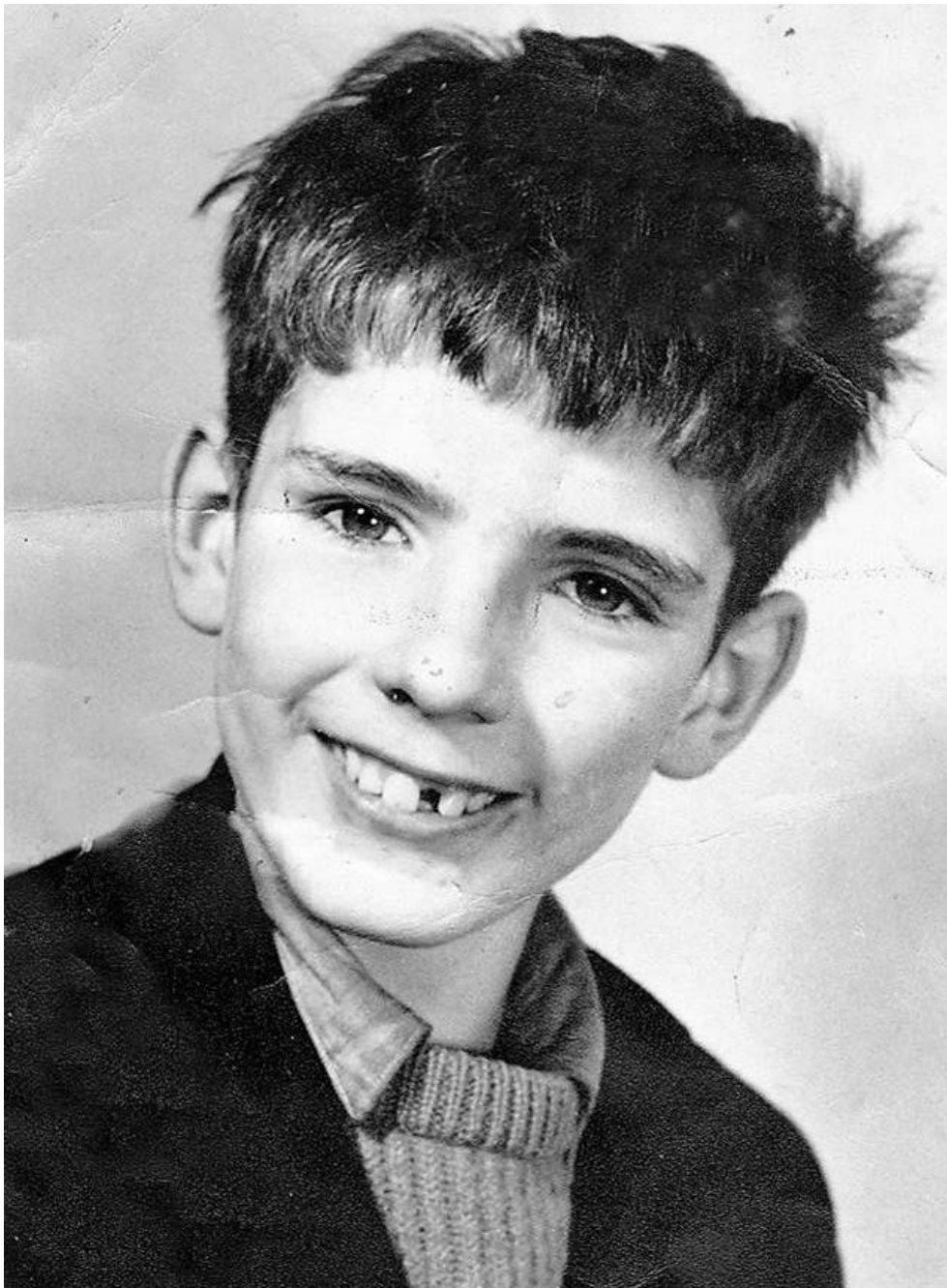
There was an incident I remember about a nearby borehole. One Friday in January 1957, after our usual evening at the Claremont Speedway, we headed straight

down to Mandurah to our house on Allnut Street. When we arrived we heard a lot of commotion in a street close by. It turned out that a 2 year-old boy had fallen down a borehole. He went straight down, and a historical rescue began. They got him out after 23 hours. He was alive but he wouldn't have lasted another hour. All night long, those machines were digging, trying to get him out without the hole collapsing in on him. Late on the Saturday afternoon the rescuers finally got him out. They had to dig another hole to the side and go across. I remember lying in bed listening to the machines desperately digging to save the poor child.

I have had a wonderful life. My secret to a successful 65-year-old marriage is simply to respect and support one another. Ray and I went through some difficult times but were always there for each other. We are a close-knit family, and still see each other as often as possible. That's all that matters.

# STEVE TOON

Co-written by: William Chambers



When I was born in 1949, the effects of the war were still being felt over Europe; salt, sugar, meat and butter were still rationed. This was of no concern for us four children. None of my family died from starvation as so many had across Europe, we were the lucky ones.

As children we would play in the street on bombed building sites and on the dirty old canal that ran through Calthorpe Park until it got dark. Then, unworried, Mum would call us in, the four of us children would rush to share the bath (getting warm from the hot water) and then put on our warm pyjamas (they looked like old deckchair material.)

The dangers of life that we are all aware of today did exist but we weren't aware of them. Life was so simple back in those days. Y'know, if you were allergic to something you just wouldn't go eating it again. In fact I broke my back at the age of 15 falling out of a tree. I joined the army 6 months later, it was just the way it was.

I was a very bad speller in my last years at high school, so bad. I did mostly gardening in my final year at school. The 'school system' had written me off giving me no real future out in the grownup world.

Fortunately when I joined the army's boy service as a junior tradesman half of our training time was education. I gained three 1st class Army Certificates of Education and six 2nd class Army Certificates of Education. I started to believe I was not a complete idiot. I was good at some things. People talk about what's changed and "How we didn't have this" or "We would never have got away with that". I could go on about it but it's just the way it was then. Every new generation will have the same kinds of conversations with their kids and their grandkids. Materialistic things change but a tree is a tree, human emotions and expectations are the same. Children will grow up the way they grow up and people won't question it. I was never bored, there was always something to do and it's the same now, there are plenty of things to do

around the place.

We could hang about with friends or walk around the neighbourhood, listen to the radio or we could spend our days standing by the corner store trying to figure out which gobstopper would last longer. (Gobstoppers, also known as jawbreakers in Canada, Australia and the United States). A penny one or 2 half penny ones. Still don't know the answer!



I think the time where my life really opened up was when I joined the army. My mum had just bought me a new pair of shoes and I was sent off to the army recruiting office, and by the time I reached my first army camp some 14 hours later I already had blisters from those shoes. Never wore those shoes again.

14th of September 1965; that's the day I joined the British Army's boys service. Suddenly I had to become independent while also been told what to do all 24 hours of the day. Until then I had been at home and Mum did everything, but when I went into the army all of a sudden I had to be self-sufficient and stand up straight. The army gave me a lifetime of experience in just a few years. I have travelled all over and seen the good and the bad. One thing it taught me was there is always more good than bad in the world.



Throughout my time in the army I saw the best and the worst and I think it really made me appreciate all of life. The whole time I was in the services it was an adventure, even though there were moments I would rather not remember, I never



thought that I was going to get killed or that any of us were going to get killed. For us we were just playing soldiers.



*Me -The Aldershot Army Show 1967*

In 1968 we did an amphibious exercise, the whole battalion, some 900 men, vehicles, anti-tank weapons and stores. Everything was loaded onto the landing ship Logistics, as big as a cargo ship. We then sailed from Portsmouth around the south coast of England to North Devon.

Just before dawn the landing started and we were taken off the ships by helicopters, hovercrafts and landing crafts. It had taken us forty hours to waterproof the six



landrovers. In a reconnaissance platoon we drove off the back of the main ship onto the small deck of the landing crafts that held four landrovers. We then sailed for about an hour.

The landing area on the beach had already been cleared for landmines and such by royal navy divers. So you can imagine we're in this landing craft where the side walls being two and a half meters were so high we couldn't see outside as we approached the beaches. The front of the landing craft dropped at this time, our hearts pounding as we press out, foot full on the accelerator and release the brake and then within a fraction of a second I was within four feet of ocean. The good part about the landing, even though we started off going forward at a very slow speed, was as the seconds passed the water became shallower and our speed increased and then we were on the beach, heart still pounding, soaking wet but with a great sense of relief.

My friend Vic Skip was in the second of two vehicles leaving the landing craft. Whilst they were waiting for us to reach the beach a big wave came in and lifted the landing craft up. Vic was doing the same as I had done and shot off the end of the landing craft into five meters of water; the vehicle and all his equipment and weapons dropped to the bottom of the sea. As we weren't wearing life jackets Vik had to swim to the shore.

Over the following days the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and army ordinance scoured the beach with mine detectors. Vic and I were walking along the beach trying to find Vic's rifle. On the fourth day we were just walking up the beach looking and low and behold, sticking out of the sand was a little paper name tag with a bit of string on it. We pulled up Vic's rifle from the sand! We laughed and joked that all the others with expensive metal detectors hadn't found the rifle but we did because of the tag. Red tape, it took four months of arguing with the Ministry of Defence, who had replaced all Vic's military clothes and equipment but would not pay for his shaving and toiletries.



My time in Northern Ireland was a big part of my life. We were taught well in the army, we knew exactly what we had to do and anything could happen in a fraction of a second. We always saw the good things -

although I was aware of the bad things, I still saw the good things. I served two four month tours, one in West Belfast and the other in Armagh, and one nine-month tour (Ballykelly, County Londonderry) prior to coming to Australia.

Sept 1969, my regiment had packed up ready for a six week exercise in Libya in North Africa and I was given a week's leave prior to leaving. However while on leave I received a telegram telling me I had to be back in camp the following day. Within 72 hours we were about to take off to Northern Ireland. In the early months there was no infrastructure to house or even feed us. We slept in school gyms, on the pavements, a swimming pool, a library, even bandstands in a park.

After a few months we got a permanent base. A derelict warehouse on Cooper Street. A home at last. Cooper Street was the dividing line between the two warring factions, the IRA and UDA. Most of the homes in Cooper Street had been destroyed by bombs and fire. Not a nice place.



From 1970 to 1972, I was posted to Minden in West Germany with the Gloucestershire Regiment, a whole new form of army. We were an armoured regiment with the 432 series of tracked armoured vehicles. Prior to moving to Germany I did an 8 week tracked vehicle course to gain my heavy duty tracked vehicle licence.

Back to Northern Ireland. During our Armagh Tour 1973, the Colonel used to have to attend Brigade meetings at 2am every few days. This was one of the rare times we moved in military vehicles at night (unmarked civilian vehicles normally). The three vehicles came under fire by a sniper. The convoy was moving at around 70 kilometres an hour. Moving at that speed while being on escort duties, you just keep moving knowing in moments you will be out of range and sight. However in the last of the three landrovers someone shouted duck, and a young soldier for whatever reason jumped off the back of the landrover. Everything had to come to a screaming halt. It was pitch black, no one could see where the person had fallen, so they had to bring in reinforcements, helicopters, sniffer dogs. It was bigger than Ben Hur!



There was a time in Armagh where a prison officer's body was on the road and if you went near him to check his pulse the bombs would go off. One weekend in Armagh the terrorist decided to hijack cars and they took thousands of cars. It was actually good for us as we got to test our new communications system in our area. I had to work from 6 in the morning to 6 at night and we had hundreds of vehicles parked everywhere that had to be treated as a potential bomb. A milk tanker had been put across to block the road. A man crashed into it and was trapped screaming and we couldn't do anything because of the pressure sensing bombs. We didn't have a procedure to follow, we just listened to him



scream all night long. On this night they really tested us because a third of them weren't bombs but we had to treat them all as bombs. It was horrible for the locals but they didn't care about their own or who got hurt with that, they just wanted to make a point.

Like once they pushed a trolley full of explosives into a supermarket and 18 women got killed and double that were maimed and injured. There was a security man who should have stopped it, but he must have been told they would kill his family. He was the only one that got caught and had to serve time because he was no more innocent than the men who set it up. The army hospitals, churches and ambulances were unofficially no-go areas. We didn't follow people if they ran into these places but that wasn't the way that they thought. On one occasion, they had surrounded an ambulance and they blew a whistle which parted the crowd and three gunmen opened the ambulance and shot everyone inside.

I was then transferred to Hong Kong from 1974-1976, the best posting ever, no more tours in Northern Ireland. What a dramatic lifestyle change. We had open plan army quarters (nothing like the UK and Germany) overlooking Kowloon. We had an amah, Tammy, a wonderful lady who taught us so much, along with chinese cooking skills. I still have a hand beaten wok from China today. My first son Philip was born on January 1975 in a military hospital. His claim to fame was he had three birth certificates. A military one, a Hong Kong one and a UK one (the military hospital was on crown land belonging to the UK.)

Whilst we didn't go into China, we spent 4 and 6 week stints in the secure border with the China area. Britain had just changed the immigration laws for Chinese illegal immigrants. So not only were we guarding the Chinese border, we were looking actively throughout the New Territories and the 70 or so islands that are within the Hong Kong territory for illegal immigrants (affectionately known as ii's). Each day at 3pm, the Royal

Hong Kong police bus would cross over a rickety wooden bridge into China with the illegal immigrants. (Out of interest - the China side of the bridge was painted red and our side blue.) While on border duties we saw some dreadful manhandling and murders of the Chinese immigrants. Sadly, even though we were in Hong Kong we saw the cruelties of man. In those days Hong Kong was 401 square miles with 400 breeds of snakes. You learnt quickly to check your sleeping bags before you got into them at night. The snakes liked the warmth.

January 1976 we were back to Northern Ireland. 18 month residential posting (with families). After two years of trying, I finally received permission to emigrate to Australia. Thank you Mr Malcolm Fraser, I have voted Liberal ever since!



*Maybe the world's first selfie.  
Me at the tender age of 16.*

A month after my 27th birthday, early November 1976, Australia here I come. It took me nearly two years to get to Australia and late August 1976, I finally received permission to emigrate to Australia and join my mother, father, two brothers, two sisters, a brother in law (who I didn't really know) an uncle and aunt and two nephews. Fortunately, I had a few days left in which I could resign from the fulltime army. Finally, when my ex-wife and one son arrived at Perth airport all my family was awaiting at the airport and it was a wonderful feeling seeing them all after so long. But there was an aspect of fear, I was



lucky that I spoke English, but the culture was very different to what I was used to like a BBQ on Christmas Day on the beach! The thing I remember about my first impression was the brightness and the blue sky (even when Lyn and I came back after 15 years in South Australia the first thing you notice is the blue sky). Everywhere I looked there was something new to see, everything was compact but still so bright and big everywhere. I was one of the lucky ones, I realised that for other people it was so much more difficult if they could not speak English as they became isolated in their new country immediately.

It took me a couple of months to get my first job in Perth as a mobile security guard, where I learned the layout of Perth at night - mind you I got lost during the daytime. I enjoyed it, met lots of new people and saw a lot of new places that I had never seen before. It was an amazing period as everything I saw was new to me. The Fremantle docks at night is a different world with different characters.

It was time to move on. I applied for another job with ESSO as a manager, which I got through with the ancient art of bullshitting. I had very little knowledge of cars and motors, but I went through all of that and ended up with the job. I already had a car from my security guard job and houses were a lot cheaper to get back then. Things just flowed from there and after three years a decision was made in Australia where the government stepped in and stopped companies having direct influence on a business. Back then I had to borrow about 30,000 dollars to buy the franchise for ESSO Kewdale on the corner of Kew Street and Orrong Road. It was a hard site to manage and you always had to pay COD for your fuel (just a thought, who remembers the old Kero pumps?).

Because I was on the edge of Welshpool and Kewdale most of my fuel sales were on account. We had to pay a COD cheque for the fuel. It was a lot less money than now but it was still a lot at the time. When fuel

discounting came in, business became a lot harder. The price of fuel started fluctuating almost daily and often I had to sell the fuel for less than it cost and then wait many days to get paid.

I was totally dependent on being paid on time from my customers. Because with ESSO our site rents was almost double what the BP and Ampol paid along Orrong Road. Unofficially we were supposed to get a \$1.76 per litre rebate direct from ESSO. However sometimes we would have purchased two or three tanker loads (36,000 litres) of fuel before we got the rebate from the first tanker load. Selling fuel at a loss, waiting months for your money you had worked so hard to earn. It was ludicrous.

My accountant suggested starting a second business across the road to support the service station. Off I go on another business venture, Kewdale Exhaust System Centre. Well ESSO didn't like that so they started making life very hard for me by acting out all the small print in my lease. Silly little things. Such as not having signs other than ESSO signs displayed on the site. I had to take down the Exhaust Centre, Coca Cola, dry cleaners, and security signs.

Moving the Exhaust Centre across the road made even more sense. But not the best business decision.



Around this time my first marriage started to break-up. Financial problems, long hours, (I had two sons now) long drives, going home to Rockingham and back, trading 6 days. Everything was becoming just too much. I started to socialize and drink too much away from home. My best friend Chris, a fellow ESSO manager, and I used to drink an awful lot at the then Orbit Inn at Perth Airport. I was living in my caravan parked inside the Exhaust Centre. Not a good time

with hindsight. ESSO had forced me out of the service station, I was just left with the Exhaust Centre and was not happy with life in general. I met the then Lynette Faye Lawless at a party in a hanger at the airport. A party I didn't really want to go to. No lie, it was love at first sight. After leaving the service station and Exhaust Centre things at first were a bit sad. Then I got my divorce and married Lyn. We moved up to Sawyers Valley, built our home on five acres, giving plenty of room for our four children. Then it was two children (ex wife thing). I got employment as a service advisor with Midway Ford in Midland.

the Mundaring community. Life was good. I attended many major bushfires in the shires of Mundaring, Swan and Kalamunda. At one very bad bushfire at the Kalamunda Zig Zag, we were called out about 5am after the fire had been raging overnight.



*Still have my uniform from 1995.*



*2009 June 11th - Malaysia – Kamunting Road Cemetery – Taiping – Perak with wife Lyn.*

We got back to our fire station around 2am the next day. As was the way, on the way back we refuelled with water and petrol, then had a few beers back at the station. On arriving home Lyn was at the door distressed and in tears. She had been watching the TV newscasts all day and had become distraught with worry and fear. As is the way I got in trouble for having a few beers.

Lyn in the following weeks joined the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade beside me. We had so many good and thrilling times together at bushfires. I remember one controlled burn off which we were doing for the then CALM (The Department of Conservation and Land Management) in dense bush south of Sawyers Valley. Lyn and I were walking through desolate dense bush with petrol fire lighters in one hand and holding hands whilst lighting up the bush. Strange as it was, it's a nice warm special memory!



*ANZAC DAY 2018 with family.*

I joined the Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade not long after moving to Sawyers Valley. (Sawyers had 501 ratepayers at the time). We all made heaps of new friends and became active members of

I had been with Midway Ford for just over a year and with McInerney Ford for another year when I was offered job as a sales representative with Wynn's Automotive Products WA. I spent 7 years here in Western Australia as a sales representative. I remember going to Bali with Wynn's for a convention and two trips with clients. In 1995 I was offered the position of Sales Manager with Wynn's Automotive products in South Australia.



Lyn and I sold up and moved to Hallett Cove in South Australia. Lyn stayed behind for ten days in order to be with our daughter Kayleen who was having our second grandchild – Joshua.



*Family picture.*

Our four children were off doing their own thing. But it was hard leaving them behind, four children and two grandchildren. During our fifteen years in South Australia all our children came over and visited us several times. The downside to moving interstate is over the years you spend a fortune on air fares, no discounting in them days. It seems in the fifteen years we were away there were endless special birthdays and weddings. When my mum passed away we managed to get an emergency flight with Qantas. We had to provide Mum's death certificate and then pay almost \$800 each, not that we minded.

When my dad passed away we were in Malaysia with the National Malaya Borneo Association Australia. We had just finished a week in Ipoh, North Malaysia for Remembrance services and had just flown over to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia about a thousand kilometres away to the east.

We had only been there for two days when we received a phone call saying Dad was not well. Amazingly Malaysian Air services (MAS) got us back to Kuala Lumpur and then down to Perth in just 20 hours, amazing

but an extra \$2000 trip. But that's the way it had to be.



*Mum and Dad.*

Moving to South Australia had many benefits. It was great for Lyn and my relationship. Our four children were 24, 22, 20 and 18 (they believed they were grow-up). With hindsight it was hard on Neil our youngest, and would come back to haunt us years later. But at the time it was a good career move. Kayleen was settled in a relationship with two children. The three boys were out bush working on farms.

Lyn and I were on our own, with no children to look after. We joined the Mitsubishi car factory social club and once a month we went with a group and danced like we were twenty years younger. We would have a few bevvies then a mini bus would take us all home. We often stayed up to the early hours chatting with friends.

In 2004 we joined the Returned Soldiers League (RSL) and a year later joined the National Malaya Borneo Association Australia. We made friends with a heap of like minded people. In my role as National Liaison officer Malaysia, on our first trip in 2008 to IPOH, I had been asked by a member if we could place a wreath on their uncle's headstone at Kamunting Road Cemetery – Taiping – Perak. I had discovered a little known about cemetery with 108 UK, 28 Australian and 4 New Zealand military graves, also very unique, 31 UK and 12 Australian Service family members also buried there in the early 50's. No one seemed to know of them. Simply forgotten.



In 2008, I undertook some research and recognised an oversight by both the Graves Commission and the Office of Australian War Graves. I discovered uncared for grave sites of British, Australian and New Zealand military totalling 183 heroes. Perhaps that's the way it was back then in the 50s. I spent four months of seemingly endless emails, phone calls, letters and scratching my thinning hair style.



I made contact with Lt Colonel Campbell Payne of the 2nd/30th Training Group, Butterworth Malaysia. Campbell enabled me to make direct contact with the then Minister for Veterans Affairs, Mr Alan Griffin. He immediately contacted me and with his and Campbell's help, things started to happen.

From early 2009, massive help came from the Minister, Lt Colonel Campbell Payne, Rifle Company Butterworth, RAAF Butterworth, and help within Malaysia from Fathol Zaman Bukhari and Yunus Ali both retired Colonels, The Royal Malaysian Rangers regiment and Headquarters 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade.

Over the next four months the Australian Office of War Graves had started the massive job of cleaning up the area surrounding the military graves sites, laid new turf and started repairs on the headstones.

With a lot of help I organized the first ever annual Military Remembrance service at the Kamunting Road Cemetery, Taiping, Perak involving Australian and Malaysian Troops. The Kamunting Road Cemetery Taiping Perak has been receiving ongoing care from

the Office of Australian War Graves since 2009. Each year in June since 2009 a Veterans group from Australia and New Zealand travels over to Taiping, Malaysia Kamunting Road Cemetery.

Since 2008 Lyn and I have travelled over to Taiping, Malaysia several times. We were joined by our sister and brother-in-law one year and our daughter Kayleen and Grand-daughter Kristi-Leigh on another year. Malaysia for us is warm, friendly and an exciting country to visit. Each time we visit Ipoh and the surrounding towns and the island of Palau Pangkor. We find more to see that only the locals know about well off the tourist track.



*Maureen and Dave with our friends and The 9th Battalion of the Royal Ranger Regiment.*

My boss at Wynn's Automotive products in South Australia without warning sold off half the company. After 22 years with Wynn's it was time to come home to Perth to be with family. At the age of sixty and feeling optimistic, we sold up and moved back to Perth January 2010. Thinking with my successful management and sales career over twenty odd years or so it wouldn't take long to get employment, buy a new home and settle down with family and friends around us.

For a few months we stayed with Maureen and Dave, getting out and about visiting family and friends down south and up to Carnarvon. After a while being self-funded our money started to slip away.

No problems, after a deep breath I started searching for a new career, sending off twenty plus a week job applications. Month after month, depression was starting to creep in. At the end of 2010 I got a job as manager of Balladonia Road House, 1000 kms from Perth. Lyn was also employed with me as the accommodation manager. Wow a great new adventure out in the bush. Balladonia was 200kms from the nearest doctor, bank, post office and an IGA store. 400 kms round trip to do the banking. What an experience, Balladonia was totally self-sufficient, rain water tanks and generators for water and power. I had a staff of ten mostly backpackers from Europe. We even had an runway for light aircraft used at least twice a week. After 5 months of seven days a week with eighteen hour days and a total of eight days off, time to move on.

Boy was I going through a change of life! Over the next two years I had three jobs. Firstly, as manager at Auto Masters where after three months I got sacked. Wine selectors selling wine at Perth Airport, after 3 weeks I got sacked. Then a job north of the city on great Northern Highway as a service station manager, you guessed it after 4 days I got sacked.

Still being self-funded, our money was disappearing and I seemed to have no real future. I became suicidal (more tablets to take) and then a family member suggested I contact Centrelink (an alien idea to me) and ask for help. Cap in hand off I went. Outcome was I got about \$45 a week (Lyn was working) and free medical cover. Then it got worse. I had to report weekly to an agency and look through the daily paper for a job, even though I was sending away 20 plus applications for a job a week. It was a destructive and humiliating period.

Fortunately in late 2013 I got a job as a service advisor and driver for Honda North in Osborne Park. Yes, good news, I didn't get sacked and I stayed there for well over a year. It was no career advancement but it was a job. I started to feel content within

myself and life went on.

In March 2014, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Multiple hospital appointments, multiple new tablets and eventually I started radiotherapy in March 2015. Following the radiotherapy treatment, through the Cancer Council WA Life Now exercise program I met and became friends with 12 other cancer sufferers. Just brilliant, people like myself. We can talk honestly with each other. The thoughts you have, that you can't talk about with family and friends. Who don't know, who keep telling you "You will be okay," said with love but it doesn't actually help you or how you feel. Our group still meet once a month for lunch after all this time.

I must say thank you to the Cancer Council, Western Australia's leading, independent, evidence-based cancer organisation. Without their help, I would not be living a happy productive life now. In 2014, I transferred my RSL membership from South Australia to the City of Belmont RSL Sub-Branch. What a great move, starting a full social life with friends.



*Members of our Cancer Group together supporting a fund raising event at the City of Belmont RSL Sub-Branch.*

I have had a great life. I must acknowledge the one special person who has shared my last thirty years is Lyn.



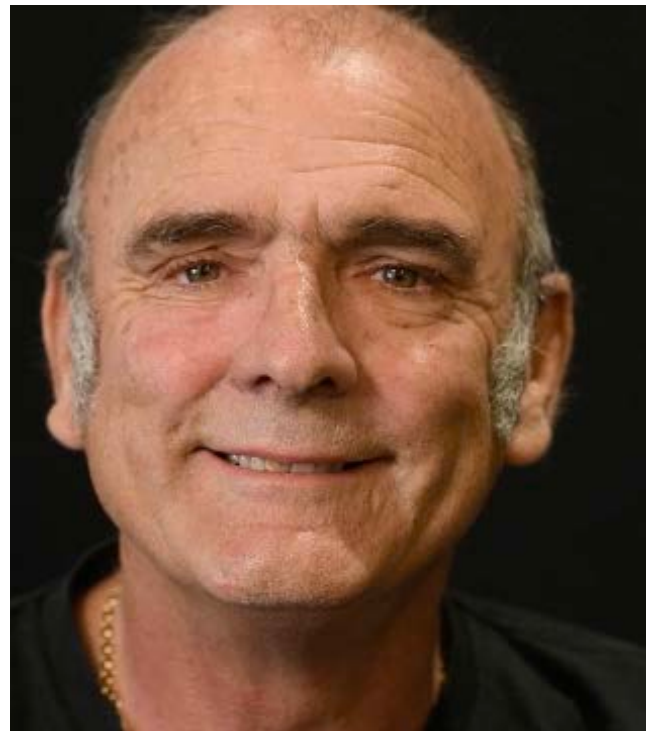


*Our wedding thirty years ago. Please note, I have hair!*



The advice I would offer for consideration by those younger than I.

- Things will happen in your life that are not so good. Put it down to experience, and do not be vengeful or overthink the incident. Life will move on and so must you.
- I reckon life is 20% luck. Dream, fantasise and have positive thoughts, the more the merrier. When as it will, a good opportunity or outcome crosses your path, you can recognize it and most importantly you will know what to do.
- Our brain put simply has a portion that is divided in three. 1 portion is positive and 2 portions are negative. The negative portion stops us putting our hand into a hot fire. We do this without thinking.
- Life is so much better using the positive portion, to recognize good things that happen around us daily. Focus on what you can do, not reasons not to do.





# STELLA BERYL MONGER HAY THE LIFE OF A STAR

An anthology of stories & events

Co-written by: Felicia De Palo



My name is a riddle. My father named me after the stars in the sky and my mother's middle name. He always loved that name and always wanted to call my mum Nellie by her first name. But women can be difficult at times, she never quite liked his idea – so he decided his first daughter would be called Stella. My middle name is somehow historical. I was born in 1927, the night in which Miss Beryl Mills, Miss Australia 1926, passed by the heart of the Avon Valley and visited our hometown. My name is Stella Beryl Monger (married Hay) and this is a little of my story.



*Miss Beryl Mills, June 1926.*

The Mongers came from the UK, John Henry Monger being the first arriving from Kent in 1829 and building on Monger Street in Perth (which still exists nowadays) a sawmill for the trade of sandalwood or jarrah. He dealt with the forestry industry on a local scale, then helped with the construction of the first steam mill of the State in Guilford, which was used to prepare the trees cut from the hills of Kalamunda.

In 1836 he travelled to the newly discovered Avon Valley, got to York and helped as one of the first settlers to raise the city and the

development of farming in the area.

With the help of Aboriginal guides, in 1886 John Henry Junior and his brother George went on an expedition to the region of the Whitewells Station, now called Charles Darwin Reserve, and reported the existence of a series of lakes and high hills. The following year Sir John Forrest crossed the same lands with George as his second in command, and mapped and named those lands after the Monger brothers. From John Henry Senior, long line of Monger descendants have developed trade and have been an active part of the society in WA, as successful merchants, innovative farmers, engaged politicians and lucky goldminers.



*Small goldmine and miners at Mt. Monger 1922.  
Source: WA Museum.*

Since I was a little girl, I have always known that my father's family came from York, and there were 13 of them. 'The Yorkmongers' has been their nickname for years. Many places have been called after my ancestors, as tribute to their influence: Monger Street and Lake Monger in Perth, Lake Mongers and Mount Monger in the Wheatbelt. Once I went to visit the Charles Darwin Reserve for a day and a half, and, guess the odds... I came across a gentleman who was writing a history of the Mongers, the historian Charlie Nicholson! That was really unbelievable, there for 36 hours and you find somebody that is trying to trace up your family!



*Swans at Lake Monger Reserve in Perth.*

I was born and raised in Northam, a town in the heart of the Avon Valley, about 50km from the Perth metropolitan area. It was quite a big town, for the standards of the time – I will not dare to say it was bigger than Perth, but to me it was better!

Northam was founded in the 1830s and it quickly became a beating town thanks to the Gold Rush and later on due to its location as the centre of the Wheatbelt. The Northam townsite seems to have the highest number of heritage buildings in all WA after Fremantle and it still keeps its importance by being the link between Perth and the east through roads, the Avonlink and the Prospector train lines and the pipeline to Kalgoorlie. This one time I was supposed to meet with this friend of mine who was getting married – I was part of the bridal party, but... I didn't know that the town had changed so much. Even the railway had changed. It goes on another track now... my friend Shirley and I ended up in York! It took us two hours to get back to Northam.

I think I probably got my artistic talent from my dad, Samuel Henry Monger, as he always enjoyed making something beautiful when he had the chance. Dad was a blacksmith and I remember seeing some of the wrought iron

work that he'd done on different homes, including ours, where it was almost like filigree work with designs of parrots and flowers intertwined in fine metal work. Every parrot was realistically painted and the whole fence looked like it was inhabited by the real, flesh and bone creatures. What a masterpiece! I wish I could lay my hands on that... the house still stands, but the balustrade no more, unfortunately.

My father left a mark on history, as his family name would have claimed. He worked with Sir John Forrest on the pipeline. He kept working on that project in Northam for many years and we think he died as a result of the dirty waters of the pipeline, both by drinking it and through the working conditions. They had to wear thick grey flannel shirts which they used to wear with an undershirt and go inside the pipes, no matter what temperature. By coincidence, he had subscribed for life insurance not too long before he passed away. If it hadn't been for that, Mother would have had even harder times ahead! Father got counselled on the matter by Mr Throssell, a good man of an old family in town. I recall that in the Town Hall there was a large picture of Hugo Throssell as he served during the WWI as Captain and got awarded for gallantry in face of the enemy. My father was a clever man indeed and able to do whatever.

May Monger, who would have been my father's sister, married Lionel Viveash and they had two sons, Lionel and Simeon, and they had this beautiful property, The Katrine, a two-storey house in which we were housed for a while when Father was in hospital. There was a little church on the side fenced with electrified wire to stop animals from getting through it and destroying it. And there was a spectacular, big circle of strelitzia flowers, I didn't know the name of them back then, but they left an impression on me.

I went up there recently, it is still a beautiful household, but the people that own it now do not have any interest in the historic past of it which I think is a bit sad. Yesterday is history and if you don't take history on board you



don't have a future, without a past. My uncle was Hubert Monger who I wished could have given me away at my wedding, but he couldn't due to a medical condition of his (so it was our family doctor and a good friend of my mother who did). Muriel Anne Monger, who was one of Uncle Hubert's daughters was the second person in the world to get the Royal Red Cross Medal for War Services in 1968. While Aunt Rose served in the Boer War... there were so many of us, these are just bits and pieces.

My mother, Nellie Stella Elisabeth Walker, got married to my father by the Archbishop of Perth. My mother's mother must have been Perth bound, but they decided to settle in Northam to raise their family.

Nevertheless, Mum was soon left with two children to bring up and she did this by herself with no help from anyone. She was an incredibly hard working lady and was much admired as a cleaner in Northam where she was employed by the railway company, the military camp and several offices. Looking back, I don't know how she managed so well as she never complained. She even built us a new home next to our old house when she had saved enough money. I remember the old house was built out of blue stone which was impossible to shape into bricks! It must have been an incredibly hard job for anyone to chisel the ironstone rock into bricks as it was so hard ...but that's what they did in those days! You had what was to hand and you just had to get on with it.

I still remember my mother's first car was a little baby Austin...

For groceries we used to go to the Beavis Bros Shop sometimes. There were two stores, one in Fitzgerald Street, and one up the block from my home. During the war we had tokens which we used to swap for things. If one didn't have a car you would exchange a petrol ticket for food or whatever... that went on a lot.

My little sister was only 13 months younger than me, and she had an important name:

Carmen Vittoria Monger. She never quite liked it, but it was an important one given that Carmen was a special aunt of ours and Vittoria reminded us of a battle in Africa, not too far from the Lake Vittoria, fought or nursed by some of our ancestors. My sister and I went to the same school in Northam, back in the days when toilets were not built and you had to go in the bush. It was quite a big school, for little ones through to high school, and it was run by nuns. I remember that the nuns used to call me and Carmen 'the two princesses'. My sister got employed at Beers, a clothes shop called after the name of the owner family, and she became a seamstress.

We also had a brother, but unfortunately he was stillborn. I believe there was a particular area once for stillborn children at the Northam cemetery; he was named after the doctor who delivered him, Doctor Kenneth, and my sister named one of her sons Kenneth as well.



*Created by Jannoon028 - Freepik.com*

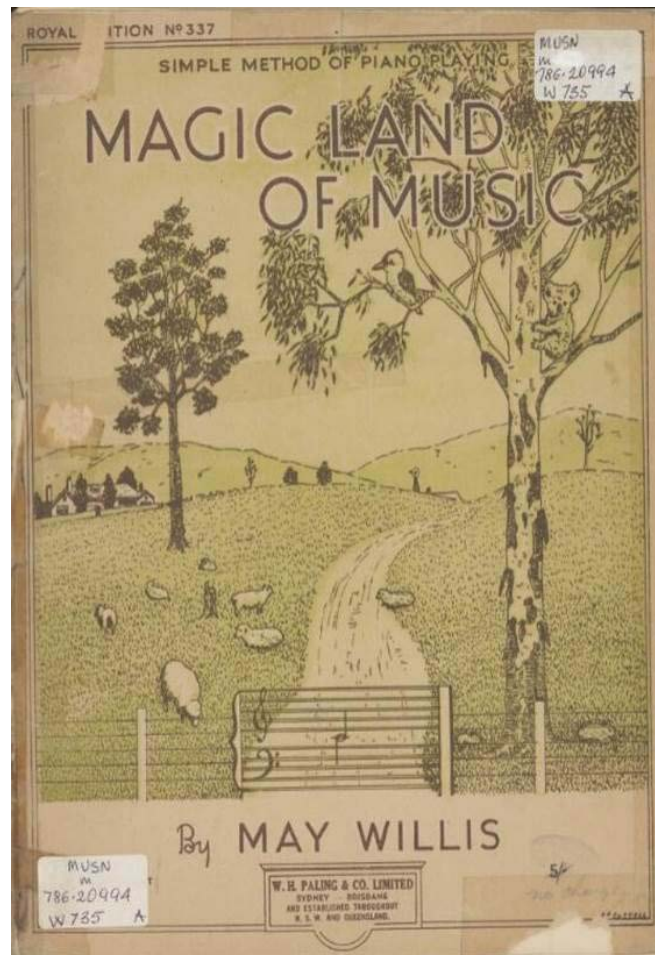
I've always loved music and as I look back, I can see that I got my love of music and determination to succeed from the nuns at the convent where I first went to school. I started off learning the piano with Sister Angela and I could play at home as we had a piano ourselves... after all, it wouldn't have been much of a good lesson if we didn't have an instrument to practice with. With time, I have been able to go through the Music Tune in Northam and, although I left the convent to go to secondary school, I still

went back there for music lessons. I'm most proud of taking all my music exams. I got my letters with the piano: I attended the Associate of the London College of Music (ALCM). The day I sat at the ALCM I had the highest marks in WA, I topped the state! When I went to see my teacher and told her, she replied to me, "Well, we are going to have a swollen head now!" ...and I never looked back!

If it would have been up to me, I would have loved learning the violin. I always thought: "You can't carry a piano with you, but you can carry a violin with you." Unfortunately, the adults had a different opinion: Sister Angela said to my mother that I was very good at piano and that I should stay at it. So learning to play the violin didn't eventuate for me. When I was a teenager I did manage to have some violin classes, but only for a short time and I reckon I was too old by then. I remember I kept breaking the strings. In the end, I didn't follow it through and I never really mastered the instrument. Altogether I have been much more successful with the piano. I started when I was about 10 and continued as an adult, as well as giving piano lessons. I started in Northam and I continued here in Belmont, at the school or sometimes to the grandchildren of a lady who was at the Art Centre with me and also word of mouth.

I wasn't playing classic music all the time, nevertheless, little by little, Beethoven became my favourite. I liked his rondo in my tutoring book called 'The Magic Land of Music', which I used for a couple of years. It has been out of print for many decades now, but it was an Australian method book which had, at the back, little composers' biographies and pictures, followed by a simplified piece by the composer. For a while I taught my kids how to play the piano as well, but just a little as I believed they would have been better learning from someone else.

When I was a child we did not have a television. We played games like snakes and ladders, drums, cards (I remember



*"The Magic Land of Music" by May Willis (Source: National Library of Australia)*

playing a great deal of patience!) and dominos. Once we grew up we enjoyed great concerts in Northam, given the times and the context, and we did not lack dancing nights. On Saturday nights we used to dress up, there was the deckchair cinema (oh, I love old movies!) and the bus ran three times a week to a nearby town where we could go dancing.

When the time came I got my first job in an office. I fantasised about becoming a nurse – a long line of nurses served in the family, and we even had an aunt that worked in the Boer War, however Mum was firm, "You are not to empty bed pans Stella!" The first pay was 12 pounds and 6 pence (12&6 as we said). I gave the first pay to my mum and the second I invested it all in an office outfit, all the 12&6.

Because the boss at the office was a little

too interested in me, Mother decided I needed to get a new job, so I did and worked at the telephone exchange during the Second World War (1939- 1945), at the age of 16. It was a respectable job and that most probably determined how my life took its shape.

My town had great relevance during the war as we were the next military base down after Darwin and we had the Airforce camp, the Military camp and the American camp. It was a very important hub indeed, for the passing of the information from all the places involved in the war up North through to Perth. We were very, very busy. I couldn't say Northam was like Darwin... well, back then we didn't know how important Darwin had been during the war! We didn't know it got bombed and I just learned recently, in a trip with my daughter up there, that they lost so many people. It is quite astounding that despite my privileged position as telephonist that I only learned these things now as we were not told while the war was on.

After the war we also had an internment camp in Northam for 'people who were not Australians', for foreigners stranded from Eastern Europe and Italy. In the 50s it was one of the largest migrant centres in Australia, and, in a sense, I think the people that were there were quite lucky as well – better there than where they came from. I met my husband on the other side of the telephone exchange: he was on the counter, and I was at the telephone exchange. He was a Manjimup boy by the name of Clement William Hay.



*Our houses in Wellington Street in Northam  
(Source: Google Maps 2018)*

The one on the left was our original home, which used to have father's ironworks all around. The one on the right is the one Mum built.

We got married in 1951, after the war, at the Anglican Church across the road from my mother's house. As it was literally across the road on our wedding day we purposely had to drive the car around the block to get me to the church entrance in style!

When we came back from our honeymoon we moved to Perth. How different it was back then! Dumped in the bush, with no water, no electricity, we lived in a sort of a shack. That's all we had! You couldn't get anything after the war. I didn't bring my piano from Northam. Those were anxious hours at first with long days from daylight to dark. We did go back to Northam a few times to visit my mum and my sister, who had married a Northam boy and stayed there. We even rode our horses once! It took us two days and two nights. Clement bought a bush block – 3ha it was, and we built our house. He first built the area that is now the workshop to live in while we built the rest of house. How busy were we, working on it day and night for so many years.

I wasn't working then as married women didn't work in those days and I was looking after the property at home. We had 10 stables as we bred horses for the races – and we won a couple too. We had a dog, chooks and ferrets. Oh, they used to back me up in the corner, they were dreadful. When I met my husband, I didn't know which end of a horse kicked. We used to have horse betting in Northam and he wanted me to pick. I chose all the ones with romantic names! Bride's Hero – I can still remember that was one I chose with much conviction.

Clement used to love his horses, but we also had ponies. We had Pearl. I believe she was the oldest horse in WA; she lived for 35 years. She died just before I came back from a historical trip over east with my husband, on Mother's Day. Back in those days, people used to put poison along the verges of the properties. A passer-by hand fed her over the fence and she died like that. Pearl was a bit small for me, she was more for the children; then we had Gemini, she was my



pony. She was a buckskin with black points, and more my height.

We were married seven years before having children as we were working too hard on the house. We went on our second honeymoon, and when we came back – it all happened! The house was not yet ready, but we finished the nursery first. When we moved, Clement became a post office worker in Perth. He also did a course in carpentry to help with building the house. He used to leave every morning at dawn with his bike to the pickup point next to the river. He would then come back at night with a block of ice roped up to the handle bar of his bike for our Coolgardie cooler, which was just an ice box and didn't come from Coolgardie at all, but that was its name. There was a bus down to Belmont Avenue, walking distance from us, where the school is now. There was no main road - just a sand road. A friend of ours had a Bentley, one of those posh cars, but he couldn't even drive it down the road. There was a duck pond the other side of the school and where the shopping centre stands now there was a cow paddock.

When they decided to build and develop Belmont, they took the hill down where we used to train our horses in a day and built Kew Street. What about Abernethy Road? They said it was going to be a major highway, and it certainly is a main road now. Who would have said that when it was a bush track with a little fence?

They call it progress... Nevertheless, I think it is going too fast.

You need to be able to become a little bit more acclimatised. If you can and if you want to – which I don't want to. For the children as well, they need stability – same, same, same sometimes is good. The 'developers' have only one thing in their mind – money, unfortunately. Sometimes they don't think about it enough and that sometimes there are lots of consequences. They don't think it through when they 'develop'.

I remember watching a show on tv about Barcelona in Spain and being able to recognize the places I visited. I told a friend of mine, and she couldn't believe that it was possible to recognise a place years later, particularly when things change so quickly these days.

I've always loved art as far back as I can remember and like most kids, drawing and painting were activities that I looked forward to hugely in the early years of my schooling. As I grew older, I became more and more interested in nature and I started to spend time drawing and painting flowers and plants that I found in my garden and then further afield when I'd go for walks. I finally had time to dedicate myself to painting when the kids were grown up, and I must thank a lady at the Belmont school for reviving this passion of mine. She talked me into going to art classes and to the Art Centre, and then everything started back again from there.

Native Australian plants are my favourite to paint as their colours are so dramatic. Simply looking at a red flowering gum tree full of scarlet clusters of flowers in the spring time is just magical. Or walking down a street full of flowering red bottle brush trees – really, what's not to like about such stunning natural beauties? I don't draw sketches, I go straight in! I don't work on preparative drafts, nor do I start from one corner to the whole picture, I paint naturally and only in correction, if necessary, I do it from a photo.



When I first started to paint in my teens and then as an adult I used oils, but I've found as I've got older that I prefer watercolours and pastels, either used together or separately. I

focus these days on painting flowers. I have painted landscapes and I've still got a few sheets of paper ready prepared with a wash that I could use for landscape, so you never know, there might still be a landscape picture that I might paint if I feel like it. I've sold lots of my paintings over the years – mainly when I've shown them in exhibitions but occasionally people have asked me to do a commission for them which I've enjoyed. Only just recently in the last few months I've sold four of my paintings to Dr. Juaysura and these now hang in the Belgravia Medical Centre. One of my more well-known clients was Eric Ripper, former leader of the Labour Party in Western Australia, who told me he loved my pictures as they reminded him of growing up in the countryside around Nyabing.

I've been the art co-ordinator at Belmont for about 30 years and through working there have met so many artists and people keen on art. For many years Forrestfield TAFE ran art and pottery courses in Bentley and offered a diploma course, which I studied along with many others. Our teacher was Rudi Tassell, who was one of five artists who formed a painting group in Narrogin in 1966 which went on to attract some well-known names in WA art among its members.

I have had many personal exhibitions, one in a restaurant by the river, one in a bridal shop (a no-no for selling as the ladies are too busy looking at the bridal gowns to look at anything else!), a number in our Art Centre here in Belmont, the Gallery, the Museum in Perth, working exhibitions, my doctor's clinic and many other places.

The Belmont Forum Shopping Centre has been a good show ground for artists. People used to exhibit there and it was a success! In recent years there has not been the possibility because of the upgrades they are making to it, which has been very unlucky as by its nature, it is a venue that attracts lots of people. One of my creations went worldwide! I made the logo for the Begonia Society of Western Australia (what a marvellous plant), and that has gone all the way to America, as they

held a convention over there. I didn't go to that one, but I did go to the local ones which were a success.



*The Begonia Society of Western Australia (Inc.)  
Logo of the Begonia Society.*

I also made the logo of our Historical Society in Belmont and the one of the Art Centre, which is fairly simple with a pot with paint brushes coming out because we had pottery next door. I have worked with pressed flowers as well. I used to press wedding bouquets so that the bride could have her bouquet forever. It was very tricky pressing flowers. I still have my huge flower press which I had made back in the days. You do have to attend to it, looking after minute details and the position of all the leaves and petals.

A couple of times I did bark art – at least, I tried! It takes so much attention and time... It took me days to do the 'Raising the Flag' that I made! I gifted that one to the museum as I originally made two, one for each one of my daughters. You don't see much bark art around. I got the barks from down south, from the Snotty Gobble which has a beautiful red coloured bark!

I enjoy painting on wood. I have this piece on a swan tree mallee root, and it portraits the old museum in Belmont. I donated it to





the museum as well – not that they have got much room at the moment! But they are going to expand in the next few years...

Nowadays they have a little room in the library. Before it was where our art room is, at the Seniors' Centre of

Belmont. It is a bit heart breaking when art gets pushed back – lucky my doctor took it on board, or it could have got forgotten... too many people in Belmont are not art-conscious!

Dr. Juaysura hosts many artists, and does art himself, but he doesn't want to display his works. I tried to blackmail him by saying, "I won't show you mine, if you don't show me yours!" - but that didn't work!

I work at my art both at the Art Centre and at home. I worked in the pottery area of the Art Centre for eight years, and I made many acquaintances and a few strong friendships over time. I still have some of my art pieces at home. I kept my very first painting for many years until a redback decided to nest behind it. I tried to paint a portrait of the chooks, but the cheeky chooks didn't want to stay still, did they? Plain air landscape painting, Monet style!

If I had to pick my favourite artist it has got to be Monet as he was always trying to capture the light and air in his landscapes and like a true artist, understood that these things change constantly. His water-lily paintings are what people think of as soon as you mention his name and they have become a floral symbol for his work, the same way that sunflowers have for Van Gogh.

I have always struggled with big paintings. For our diploma course we had to paint big, but no one wants a big painting in their house these days, and the houses are small anyway! This is one of the reasons these paintings don't sell.

Apart from the occasion when a buyer requests to meet the artist, you don't really know who buys your paintings... Paintings become like children, actually: you come to love them, but you have to let them go.

I can proudly say that I have a wonderful relationship with one of my daughters, Rosanne Elisabeth, her second name comes from my mother's third name. She is an agency nurse who goes wherever they send her and she now lives in Mandurah, but we see each other as much as possible, almost on a weekly basis. Quite often she sleeps over when her job requires her to be closer to Perth, and sometimes I go along with her to Mandurah, particularly if there are good shows at the Performing Art Centre. Just in the past months we have attended the concert of Gilbert O'Sullivan, which I enjoyed very much despite Rosanne's fear that he would have been 'too modern' for me. We went a couple of times to the ballet – the Nutcracker was particularly beautiful, and I do find myself liking the shows much more just because of the presence of my daughter.

We often travel together. We have been to Darwin, bushwalking across WA, from Mundaring to Kalamunda and further along, and we spend most of the public holidays together down in Mandurah. If we are lucky, when we have lunch on the Mandurah foreshore we see dolphins as well, and I do cherish those moments very much.

I have travelled to many countries and consider myself quite lucky as I have visited almost all of the continents, including Antarctica. I do recommend Antarctica to everybody. The shades of the blue of the water and the glaciers are something one cannot put into words. The wildlife, the bears, and, oh, yes, we did see the whales coming up and then diving back down into the abyss again, but I had seen that already here, in WA! I let the youngsters rush onto the deck and I stayed behind.

I did a sort of road trip around Europe – it is



so different from our country. It is like going from one suburb to the next, while it is actually going from one country to the next! And that takes a little bit of getting used to. I enjoyed London and Spain, Paris, Venice... it is hard to pick my favourite! It depends a lot on the people and on how you react to a place too. I visited Bali a couple of times, nice people.

I travelled most with Rosanne, but I managed to organise a cruise on the Sea Princess with my youngest daughter and her two little ones as well. They enjoyed that! It was a nice ship too – they had a show every night, seven days of pleasant and relaxing time. I have also been to America, including New York. That was about four years ago now. We did the ferry from the town to see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, but we did not get to the migrant centre on the island itself. And the big bridge, it is not red, it's orange. We went to Florida and stayed 3 full days in Disneyland. Another experience that I recommend to everybody, given the time and the chance to do it! We had accommodation about 15 min walking distance, but we should have stayed at the Disneyland Hotels... what an amazing place, and the Grand Parade...oh! It's something else! They open it with Tinkerbell at the front and at night time they tie her up on a flying rope, and you have to look up to see where she is, if she is there or not! Of course, they have Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Micky Mouse and Minnie Mouse... it is so well done. The Castle is beautiful, big... such a wonderful experience!

I liked America, but I loved Canada even more. I went with the oldest and best friend

I have ever had. We travelled mostly on the train stopping for a couple of night in various cities. On one of our travels, we happened to spot Prince William and Princess Kate! Rosanne noticed some commotion out of our hotel (we allowed ourselves a special treat and checked in into a hotel where royalty stays). They had laid out the red carpet with photographers and people everywhere. "Something is going happen here today!" Rosanne said, and helped me up, perched on a great big pot plant, where I could see a little more... And William and Kate went by! Not slow enough, but, still... I had seen the Royals before, in 1954. We were living in Perth by then, and Clement and I lined up on the Highway when Queen Elisabeth drove by, and we did see her. Apparently, she went to Northam as part of her royal tour as well... I wonder why she went up there?

As part of the Stories and Skills Project we went on an entertaining bus trip around Belmont which had been organised for the whole group as well. The aim was having fun while the volunteers could connect and share even more stories by visiting places that belong to their past, their present and their future in all the shades of the historical changes that time brings along. The result of our storytelling is what you can see here. We kept it as faithful to the memories as possible and we hope we can leave a trace for the future generations of these people that made our history and have so much to say, to vouch for and teach.

Dear reader, if you got till here with your reading, please don't forget what you have learnt as, like I always say: "There is no future without a past."

# THE STORY OF SUZANNE DOWSETT

Co-written by: Mouna Al Joray



I was born and raised in America, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, Belzoni. I grew up there with my mother, father and brother in a lovely home that I cherish dearly. I remember our huge backyard. It was huge - filled with many ancient trees, squirrels and woodpeckers. I miss our family thanks giving, family barbeques and games.



*This is my mother and daughter Leah playing our original family yard dart game. This game has been played throughout my family's history.*



*2007- Dan, Stephen Lea, Leah, June Lea, Naomi Erb and I.*

We were in my brother's home in Memphis Tennessee, just before my husband, daughter and I returned back to Australia. I left America to search for another way of life and have never regretted my decision because I found it here in Australia.



This was a celebration of Dan's 65th birthday in Rome. We were on a family trip that took us to many countries over a period of five weeks. We're a travelling family. We make sure our family bond forever stays strong. We love and enjoy our weekly Sunday family dinners. We love travelling together, working puzzles, picnics and making more cherished memories.



*Leah and I.*

Born 10 days before Christmas in 1970, Leah has been the light of my life. As I have taught her, she has taught me; about children, students, her generation and how a person develops from childhood to adulthood. It's been beautiful seeing her grow up into the woman she is today. I'm very proud of her. She has surpassed me in cooking and technology and is now working on her masters degree. She has made me so proud and I will always be here to support her.



When Leah was a poverty-stricken student, she wanted to take me out to dinner for my birthday. Of course, I said she didn't need to be spending her money on that etc. Dan took me aside and said, "Just let her take you out as she has her heart set on it." She had found out that my favorite Eagles player, Craig Turley, was to be at Hungry Jacks signing posters so that was my birthday surprise and a joke on me. Unfortunately, he couldn't make it, so another favorite player, Mitchell White, took his place. Knowing I wouldn't go up and ask for an autographed picture, she did! "Could you sign it for my Mum's birthday?" How embarrassing for an old lady but very funny. Previously, one of the guys at work brought in a big color poster of Craig Turley, my favorite football player and left it on my desk. Everyone said, "You've JUST MISSED Craig, but he left you this autographed picture to take home." Knowing nothing about the game, the first year I was in the footy tipping competition at work, I won first prize simply by picking uniform colors that I liked.

I have been quilting for 35 years and belong to 3 quilting groups. I have always loved to sew, from making dolls clothes to making all my own clothes and all of Leah's and even, some for Dan.



*Quilting at the age of 12.*



*I quilted this blanket for my brother, he was so happy and proud of me.  
This is my brother and I.*

I have always loved travelling and here are some of my experiences. England was the one place I'd been longing to go to my whole life. I went there in the year 2014. On the memorable garden tour I went on in England, I had the opportunity to see the 12 important gardens in England, varied and magnificent. I also went to the Chelsea Flower Show, the most famous flower show in the world. It was a dream come true.



*On holiday in London.*

Because of the books I've read about Scotland, I was interested in the history and scenery of the sights. In the highlands area it was beautiful to see the mountains and the lochs, such a different experience and romantic.

Ireland, it's the greenest green I've ever seen. There's a lot of Irish history all over the country. Some of the history related to my husband Dan's Irish family.

Dan's grandmother was O'Rourke. Historically they owned a castle O'Rourke, which was lost because the ancestor helped the Spanish whom were washed upon the shore after the Spanish Armada.



*The O'Rourke Caste, Ireland.*

The highlight and favourite part of my Netherlands cruise was enjoying the sight of the architecture, houses and gardens. The Netherlands was so clean and spotless. We enjoyed the long bus tours and cruises throughout the Netherlands as Dan and I swept through the countryside.

We visited Germany and had a tour around the Romantic Road, it's a series of castle sightseeing and took up the whole lovely day.

Because I was an art history student, I really enjoyed seeing the Italian artwork that I had only read about. Having the opportunity to see it in person was exciting.



*Beautiful artwork in display in Italy.*

We visited friends in Paris and Carnac and saw the big monument; the alignments which were extremely impressive. The sights were breath taking. There was the most gorgeous golden mosaic of Christ.

Turkey was breathtaking! The clothes, fashion, food, culture and atmosphere is so different and interesting. The spices, jewelry, food and culture could all be seen at the grand bazar.

The history of the Vikings was the reason we wanted to go to the Scandinavian countries. I was intrigued by the carvings and style of the Viking ships and their culture. We visited Sweden, Norway and Finland. Dan and I took a ferry from Sweden to the island Gotland. We spent three days there looking at the Viking sights and fantastic museum.

Coming to Australia and being included in the list on the Welcome Walls at the WA Maritime Museum at Victoria Quay was one of the major highlights of my life. I was so excited to come start a new life in Australia, and this beautiful country made me feel so welcomed.



Life is not lived in a straight line. The twists and turns, highs and lows allow you to take advantage of unexpected opportunities to make a more interesting life than the one you expected to have.

*The Road Not Taken.*

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth; Then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear; Though as for that the passing there had worn them really about the same, and both that morning equally lay In leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back. I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.”

- Robert Frost.



# WINIFRED BAUMBERGER LIFE STORY

Co-written by: Josie Giancolo



It's hard to imagine as I sit here today what life was like for so many people in 1932, the year that I was born. The world was gripped with an economic downturn of such magnitude that the 1930s became known as the era of the Great Depression. In Australia, the collapse in world prices in agriculture saw farming communities destitute and life wasn't much better in the cities.

As I think back over my early life and remember what it was like as a young child, I have such a strong memory of my parents both working very hard – all the time – and now I know why. They were trying to provide food and all the basics for us at a time when unemployment was over 30% and there was no welfare net to catch those who fell through. But I don't want anyone reading this to think that my early life was all hard as while things were certainly tough, we had lots of great times together as a family.

I was born at home as was the custom in those days. Women didn't go into hospital to have a baby they would have them at home. Like a lot of babies, I had blue eyes and fair hair but of course, things change a bit as you get older. I was called Winnie the Pooh and that nickname stuck with me for quite a while. While I was generally a quiet child, once my brothers got together with the other lads around to play cricket I'd be as 'out there' as the next kid, running and shouting and being part of the gang.



*My father.*

Both of my parents were born in Australia. My father, Alfred Edward Lord Barrington, worked as a stone mason which was hard physical work. He used basic hand tools in his work such as a mallet, chisel and edger unlike the power tools that stone masons can use today which makes the work much less physically demanding.

My father was strict with us but very fair and we knew what we could and couldn't get away with. The only time I can remember being punished I had my bike taken away from me and I had to walk to school to learn a lesson.



*My mother.*

My mother Winifred was from Coolgardie. I know Coolgardie is a sleepy, small town today but when my mother lived there, it must have been really buzzing. It was one of the towns set up during the gold rush and at the turn of the twentieth century was the third largest town in WA after Perth and Fremantle. Mum was a very good cook and I remember her baking beautiful scones which we'd have with home-made jam. She had a lovely singing voice and would often sing us traditional folk songs. My favourite was Danny Boy.



*My grandmother.*

I had two brothers, Ted and Arthur. Ted was born on the 15th March 1936 when I was 4 years old. Ted was very outgoing and full of life and had a lot of friends. We used to go fishing together and when Dad finished work, we'd go with him as well. When Ted finished school, he became an apprentice at Midland workshop where the large railway workshops were based.

My younger brother Arthur was born in 1948. Dad used to wheel him in the wheelbarrow to collect wood for the fire and I can still hear him hooting with laughter. Arthur was a very affectionate little boy and always wanted to be cuddled. Like most little children he was into everything and I used to make sandcastles with him. Very sadly he died when he was 4 years old. I believe he had some sort of convulsion and was given the wrong injection when he was taken to hospital. My parents were devastated, and I don't think they ever really got over his death.

I would have had a sister but sadly she died before she was born. My parents named her Bethel and it must have been a great sadness for them to lose a child although they never spoke about it to us.

Once every fortnight we'd go around to my grandma's house in Bayswater and have a Sunday lunch with all the family. I had lots of extended family, so the house was often packed with aunties and uncles and cousins.

I used to do needlework at home. Mum taught me the basics and I learnt some more at school. Seems funny looking back on it but we used to have a box called a Glory Box where we'd store things such as linen for when we got married. Occasionally I'd get a present from a relative that was especially for the glory box. I'd make things like crocheted doilies in pretty patterns which were used to protect the surface of tables, a bit like you might use a table mat today.

Quite often Dad would take us out fishing, which I loved as it was exciting to go out not knowing whether we'd return home with any fish that Mum would cook for tea. We never had much money when I was growing up but we used to have a family holiday every year. We would always go somewhere down south and Mandurah was one of the places we often went to stay. Of course in the 1930s it was a sleepy backwater of a place where people used to go largely for the fishing.



We lived in Belmont and I started school at Belmont Primary. I loved going to school as that was where all my friends were. I remember



that we used to write on slates with slate pencils and you could hear the squeaking and scratching all around you as the children wrote their lessons out. We were taught how to form our letters and do joined up writing and you'd practise for a long time before the teacher gave you a tick for good handwriting. It's all very different from the laptops that are used in many schools today.

When I left Belmont Primary, I moved to St Anne's College in South Perth. The school was situated on Angelo Street, opposite the Perth Zoo. Not long after I left the school it was bought by the Methodist Church and became a sister school to Methodist Ladies College (MLC) in Claremont.

We all had chores to do around the house. My job was to feed the chooks and ducks with all the leftover scraps of food that Mum would keep in a bucket for them and then collect the eggs. I'd take them back carefully into the house and clean them before putting them out for Mum to use in the kitchen. We also kept a few turkeys which would end up on the table at Christmas. Dad taught me how to pluck a chicken when I was about 8. I know that might seem an odd thing to teach a child today but back then it was something worth knowing as there weren't supermarkets where you could buy your poultry ready prepared for the oven. I used to pick lemons from the trees and sell them and that's how I'd make some pocket money.

My first job was at Jack Harvard, the butchers on the Great Eastern Highway, and then I got a job at an agricultural parts store. I learnt a lot about dealing with customers and what it took to run a business and when I went to work at Bairds department store I learned about accounts working for them in their country despatch section.

When I was 20 I lived with my cousin in Kellerberrin and got a job as a nursing assistant. I remember one time that they operated on a lady and the doctor showed what he took out of her. I fainted and when I woke up I was on the floor and getting

fanned by the other nurses! The doctor told me I would never be a nurse as I didn't have the stomach for it and I think he was quite right! I never liked all the smells around the wards or a lot of the jobs that you had to do cleaning patients and similar which, let's face it, aren't the most pleasant things to spend your time doing! I was getting really thin doing this work and was homesick and wanted to go back home. My cousin convinced me to stay so I packed the job in at the hospital and found work at a drapery shop. I liked this a lot more – serving customers and keeping the books – and I ended up staying another 6 months in Kellerberrin before going back to Perth.

I met Cliff at the Embassy Ballroom which was a large, well-known dance hall on the corner of William Street and The Esplanade in Perth. Going out dancing was lots of fun and something I really looked forward to. I'd go with a few of my girlfriends at the weekend and we used to dance all the latest swing dances such as the jive, the jitterbug and rock n' roll which were all the craze in those days. The Embassy had its own band and orchestra and they'd put on cabaret nights with their own dancers.

Cliff and I hit it off straight away and he asked me out to the Metro Theatre on William Street to watch a movie – although I can't remember what film we went to see. I do remember that we were both fairly shy that night and I was really anxious that I'd make a good impression, so he'd want to see me again. I needn't have worried though as we got married on the 8th September 1956. I was 24.



Looking back, I realise how lucky I was to have married Cliff. He had a great sense of humour and was a really lovely guy. When we got married Cliff was working at Aherns, one of Perth's large department stores on Hay and Murray Street, but he got offered more money if he moved to Boans so that's where he worked for a long time. He was always keen to get ahead so he worked his way up at the store, learning lots along the way. We went to Geraldton for our honeymoon and then moved in with Cliff's mum after we got married in order to save up to buy our first house. This was in Rivervale, at Number 28 on the Toorak Road. We ended up building our next house and a further two houses after that. On Sundays we used to go over to City Beach and meet up with friends and then we'd head over to my grandma's and meet up with the rest of my family for lunch. My parents were very fond of Cliff and he loved my mum's scones – we used to joke and say that was the only reason he married me, so he could eat them.

We had our first child, Waine, on the 18th August 1957, just before our first wedding anniversary. Waine was a premature baby and weighed only 3 pounds and 3 ounces – he was so tiny. He was kept in a humid crib for 6 weeks after he was born in the King Edward Hospital. In those days you didn't stay with your baby if they were premature, so I used to go and visit him every day, hoping all the time that he'd make it and grow stronger, which thankfully he did, and we were able to take him home eventually.

Waine was a lovely child, always smiling and laughing and doing things. He was very clever at school and decided he'd like to learn about mechanics, so he went and did an apprenticeship when he left school. One of the things he'd do as part of his job was to break linings with asbestos in them and no-one knew in those days about the dangers of inhaling asbestos dust so there was no protective gear worn. Later he went on to be a firefighter and again, there were no protective masks worn so he'd be breathing in a lot of smoke. Sadly, Waine died of kidney cancer when he was just 45.



*Susan.*

Our second child, my daughter Susan, was born 14 months after Waine on the 10th August 1958. She is very like me, quiet and easy going with a good sense of humour. Not long after she was born the doctor asked me what I was going to call her, and I said Susan. Quick as a flash the doctor said she was a black eyed Susan as she had fairly long, black hair and dark, black eyes.

Susan was a studious child, just like Waine, and when she left school she trained to be a shorthand typist. She started working for Sadlers (which is still going as a company today) and then moved to the State Government in what is now the Department of Premier and Cabinet, working for Charles Court and Brian Burke among others. When Susan got married to John she no longer worked in Perth and went to live in Shackleton where John farmed.



I have 5 grandchildren who are all grown up now.



Candy was born in 1987 and works for BHP. Clifford used to make rocking horses and I remember all my grandchildren having rocking horses to ride when they were small. Candy in particular loved her rocking horse. Karlah was born in 1987 and works in real estate. I've never heard her say a bad word about anyone. She is getting married soon to a lovely man.

Dale was born in 1989 and I'd describe him as a real gentleman. He's a heavy-duty mechanic and has just recently got married. Tegan was born in 1989 and works in real estate. She is very outgoing and speaks her mind and is very good with her step-children. Jane was born in 1991 and is a nurse at the Royal Perth Hospital. She's a lovely person and an amazing driver – I've never seen anyone reverse a car so accurately as she can.



*Susan, John and family*

I've had quite a lot of tough moments in my life, so I don't know what I'd say has been the hardest. I was 20 when I lost my brother, Arthur. It was a terrible shock and it took me a long time to get over it. When Waive, our son, died it was like a part of me died. He left behind a wife and two daughters.

Certainly, losing Clifford was really hard to deal with. He got really sick and went into hospital and just when he started to recover, he had a bad fall and hit his head on the floor. Although he came out of hospital he was never the same after that. Since he's died I've found it very hard being by myself

after so many happy years together. I am so grateful for all the wonderful things that have happened to me in life so although there have been some bleak times, as I look back, I have some very happy memories as well.



*My grandchildren.*

I love being with my grandchildren and I see Jane and Tegan regularly. On Saturdays, Jeanette and Jerry come and pick me up and take me shopping to Belmont Forum. We always have some lunch together and then go back to my place for a cup of tea.

I'm still a keen reader and once I get into a good mystery, I can't put a book down. I go to Probus meetings once a month and play bingo and indoor bowls at the Harman Centre. Although I don't have any pets I love feeding the birds and there are some very tame magpies who come calling when they know I'm home. I'm definitely someone whose cup is always half full!



# **AILSANELSON**

## **MY LIFE STORY**

Co-written by: Penny Chambers



Growing up in the outback, northwest of Western Australia has never left my mind. Tin house, dirt floors, extreme heat and bare feet, it was all I knew for a time.

I was born 27 September 1935 in Marble Bar, on a 42 degree day in little more than a tin shed that was the hospital at the time. There were no doctors, just a midwife who oversaw my mother's labour. They had to fly doctors in and I was seen by a doctor who became a sir in his own right for his dedication to the northwest, Sir Alan Vicars.

The mine where we grew up was 15 miles east of Marble Bar right in the never never, it was always extremely hot.



*Mine country.*

Mum and Dad had three children. I was the oldest and then my brother Rod followed 21 months later. Then another 5 years later, Max was born. My mother took calcium tablets when she was pregnant with Max for bone growth and as a result his bones were very strong and made it very difficult for the birth (he weighed 12 pounds at birth). Mum was in labour for ages, so the flying doctor had to come from Port Hedland. They put mother in an aircraft, C sections weren't heard of, so she gave birth naturally but it took a long time, as baby Max wouldn't bend.

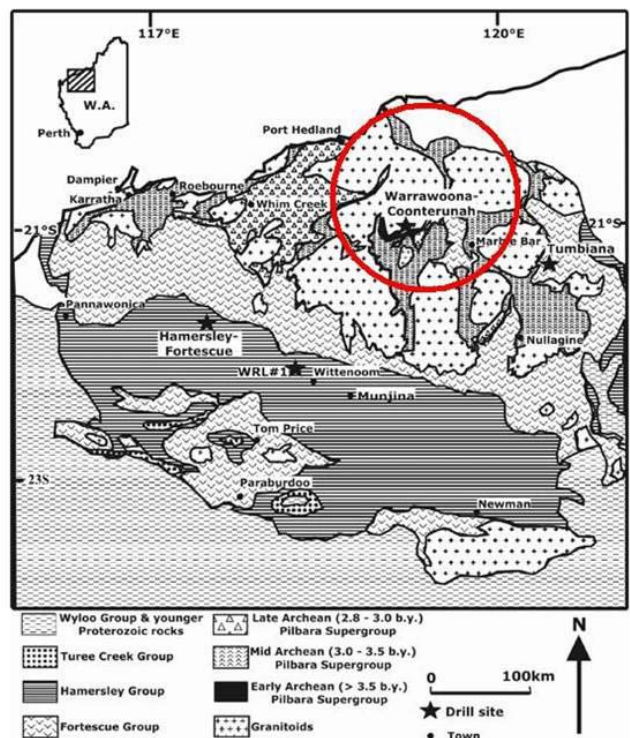
Our names Ailsa, Roderic, Maxwell are all Scottish names with no particular link. I got my name Ailsa June from my Mum's bridesmaid, Rodrick, my father's business partner and Maxwell was the name of the pilot that took my mum to hospital. Growing up in Marble Bar, we did things that city kids didn't even know about. In my lifetime I had a very happy

childhood. Nothing ever bothered us.

Dad was mining with a partner who was his best friend. When Dad married Mum his partner decided it was also time for him to get a wife. He married a Russian lady, Hilda Thomson, who spoke perfect English. She was a lovely lady and I've since met her on a return trip to Marble Bar in 93 when MB was 100 years old.

While the two women lived approx. 300-400 feet from each other they did not get on. My mother was a very headstrong lady. Mum would tell Hilda, "This is your watering day, at this time." But Hilda didn't take any notice and so we missed out on our daily water allowance. We took our water in the morning or otherwise it got too hot in the pipes due to the extreme heat. Mum got very cranky with Mrs Thomson, took an axe and cut the water pipe completely. But to do that, she cut it off for us as well.

So there was a bit of an undercurrent there which spilt over into the male part of the friendship for Dad and Rod Thomson. So they tossed a coin and called heads or tails, Rod called the toss and my dad lost.



*By NASA (NASA) via Wikimedia Commons*



So, we took the truck and 100 dollars and Rod had the business, and he carried on as he would have normally with my father, only my father was the brains and so he only lasted about 6 weeks. Rod and his family had to move into town itself.

Mum, Dad, Rod and myself moved off to a mine in Warawoona where my dad started his own mining business again. He was very successful. When I reached the age of 6, Mum decided to organise our schooling and applied to the education department for lessons to home-school us.



*The Klondyke Queen Mine.*

My mother taught us by method of home schooling, we had pedal wireless at the time and we could speak to people we had never met before. This was a big thrill for us at that time, especially being as isolated as we were. When Mum was instructing us at class times myself and my two brothers Max and Rod would gang up on her as we did not want to do lessons. However my mother had to have the lessons completed and sent away.

Poor Mum, she would have to hound us, make us sit down and do our lessons. There was a timeframe in which they were to be done and posted to get them on a ship to Perth to be marked. Kids of today have no idea how hard it was back then for us, and anyone who lived up north or anywhere remote. Anyhow, mother made sure we got an education.

At some point though, Mum got cranky and said to Dad, "Look, we've got to get these children more education and discipline than I can give them. I'm their mother and I can discipline and teach to a certain extent, however they need more of both of them."



*My cubby in the ground.*

I remember when I was about 5 or 6 years of age, my parents travelled to Perth from Marble Bar which took 3 days. My mother put a cabbage in front of me to hold and I screamed because I thought it was going to eat me. I didn't know what green vegetables looked like cause we were so isolated. "It won't hurt you darling, it's just a vegetable," Mum said.

I can remember two major cyclones when we lived Warawoona. During one of these events our house was totally destroyed. I lost my very first doll which had been made from papermache which of course turned into mush after all the rain. I have a memory of one night at 8.30 my dad said to my mum that we had to get out of there and take the children to the mine where its safe. We had to cross a creek, my mum carrying Max, I was on Dad's shoulder and Rod was holding Dad's hand. Mum lost her wedding rings which she had pinned to a piece of hessian that was used for a curtain. She would take off her rings to knead the dough. I have searched to find those rings, maybe one day!

Due to losing our home we moved back into Marble Bar. I remember that the air raid shelter was a hole dug out as big as a large round table with a ladder going down. The way we knew if the Japanese were coming



was when the policeman would drive around all the streets of Marble Bar with his hand flat to the horn.

When we moved back into Marble Bar we lived in what was called 'Shell House'. This was a mining hut made from opened petrol tins, flattened and cut out. These walls were whitewashed to try to reflect the sun's heat. It was under a big gum tree. And can you imagine how hot that would be?

We lived in this house for 9 months while the other house was being built. Our 'new' house was our old house transported 'brick by brick' from Shark's Gully to Marble Bar (approximately 15 miles). It was called Hillview. However once he had finished the house my dad let it to the Postmaster General as they didn't have a home. My mother was furious as you would be, having to stay in a tin hut even longer!



*Plaque on the site of our first house at Shark's Gully.*

We lived in Marble Bar for 10 years but my mum had finally had enough and we moved to Perth.

One time my parents were down in the town playing badminton. They always had a plan if something was to happen. Harold (my father) was to get on the motor bike and go straight to us and my mother would leave from the hall and take the creek up home. The night that this happened, it was

extremely dark, and she went up the creek and stumbled into a native person's camp. A man there said, "You look lost, where you come from?" and she replied, "I was playing badminton and want to get back to my children." He asked, "Where are your children?" and she told him Shell House and it was the people from that camp that directed her back home.

She hadn't gone very far out of the way, but far enough not to know where she was. She was upset and frightened. That particular night was when Darwin was bombed 19 February 1942.

Living in the country meant wearing no shoes. When we went to Perth it was a big deal to wear shoes. Nobody went out in the heat of the day, from 11-4 it was quiet time. We had a fire and an old stove for cooking. Mum would ferment her own yeast and make her own bread. It was beautiful and whenever I smell fresh bread to this day it takes me back. If we ran out of bread, we'd make damper as you would know it as today. You cook it in a camp oven in the ground, kept as a treat, we'd call it a big scone. Dad would get it out and tap it, to check if it was cooked.

We slept on cyclone beds, they were a bed that was a normal shape of a bed, but very narrow (two feet 6), and a single bed of today was like a double bed to us. Mum was very good with her sewing and she would pretty up the place with canopies and bed linen. Mother always kept a lovely house that you wouldn't expect to see in a camp. At about 4pm Dad was due home from the mine, he would come home for his shower, beer or lemonade what ever we had. Mother always had the three of us dressed nicely clean clothes ready for meeting father and he'd go off to the mine about 6am.

We left Marble Bar in 1945 and came to Perth. After living in a tin hut, once in Perth my father built a house for us, we had verandas, were we played and slept, we were always made to come to the table fully

dressed. There was always a dress code in my family, even in Marble Bar. We had to dress for dinner, I had to put a frock on and my brothers had to at least put a singlet on. My father was very strict which would have come from the Jewish influence, from my grandfather, my grandmother was very upper class English. She had a hyphenated name and back then if you had a hyphenated name you were from very good aristocracy. I remember a story that goes back to her brother in England who protested against fox hunts. Protesting was unheard of but he didn't like foxes being killed, so that was my grandmother's claim to fame.

We children got settled into school and Dad tried to make a go of it as a builder in Bassendean. It wasn't working out so he took off north again. My mum had seen a job advertised in Wittenoom Gorge which he said he would like so they took off.

I was sent to boarding school in Leederville and stayed with my aunt and uncle on weekends but I couldn't stand it. I was so homesick for the country. Dad was up there for 3 or 4 years. He had his own home and started to grow vegetables in the very rich earth. He grew the food for Wittenoom and it saved people a lot of money. We would go there on holidays, and one memory was getting the eggs quickly before they cooked in the heat! After some time all of us kids moved to Wittenoom and started school. I was 13 and was getting taught by Arthur Edward Nelson (who ended up playing an important part of my life).

I returned to Perth when I was 15 (1948) and was sent to the Stanley School of Dressmaking. I lived with my grandmother with my mum and brothers and soon my mum and dad separated.

The Stanley School of Dressmaking began in the 1940s and closed in the 1970s. It was owned and run by Isobel Agnes Halliday, nee Jaggard, born 15 June 1915, died 12 April 2006. The school operated in London Court, Perth, from c1951 until its closure, thought to be in the early 1970s.

My father left home at 15, when he heard about the gold in Marble Bar. I think he thought he was going to find a lot of gold. My dad was a gentleman, lovely and gentle, I never heard him swear.

Mum and Dad met at a party in Perth in 1934, both were bored and Mum caught my Dad's eye. My mother was quite the socialite, so you can imagine her shock when my dad who was a gold miner took her to Marble Bar to live in a tin shack while he started his business with his business partner in goldmining.

My mum left my father after 25 years of marriage as she was not really made for the hardship of country living. My mum remarried but not to a good man, he was a gambler and a drinker.

My mum got Alzheimer's in the end which was very difficult to handle. I was her earth angel, I could do no wrong, and all of a sudden in a matter of a week it turned around and I was now the devil! It was so hard to take and I didn't realise what was happening. She was 91 when she died. She was an avid writer and wrote a lot of diaries. She started writing the year when Cyclone Tracey hit Darwin when I gave her a diary. I still have these diaries.

My mum invited Eddie (Arthur Edward Nelson) as an ex Whitenoon contact to visit us in Perth, by the time he left that evening he asked Mum if he could take me dancing at the Embassy Ballroom.

I loved dancing, we all did in the country. My brothers were often my partners and we all loved music as we had so much time to listen and enjoy.

We got married when I was nearly 20 years of age and he was 28 years of age. He continued as a school teacher and was headmaster wherever he went. Our first placement was in Dardanup where Diane was born. We then went to Jardee where John was born, we went to Lancelin where we spent 7 wonderful years (1963 – 1971). We then came back

to Perth for the children's education. We had to go to my dad on bended knee asking for \$1000 deposit for our first house which cost \$12,500. This house was in Armadale Road and we lived there for 26 years. We then moved into the family home which was also on Armadale Road.

I have 4 children and 4 great grandchildren. Eddy passed away in September 2017 after 64 years of marriage. I miss him constantly.



*Eddy, I and the grandkids.*

I have always missed living in the country and in 1973 my brother and I returned for a visit. It was the wet season - humid and hot, horrible, I prefer dry heat. Since then my brother, Rod, goes every year. I sometimes have gone with him, however with my husband Eddie being ill it was not always possible.



*Eddy with great grandchild Harper.*

## THE TALE OF THE RETURNED WATCH

My father lost his watch as a young man somewhere in Warawoona when he was working at his mine 'Klondyke Queen'.

One day my brother received a phone call from a lady called Sarah who shared an interesting story with us.

Her mum (who was from NSW) had been out some 19 years before in the Clondyke Queen area with a metal detector. She came across a metal tin usually used to contain wax matches for miners to use underground. However on opening the tin she found a disintegrated watch band attached to a gold watch. The word H. Flegg was scratched roughly across the back of it. This began her journey of finding the true owner of her find. She went to the Corunna Airfield and asked around with no luck. She continued her search and then through a process of elimination through calling all the Flegg's in the phone book in WA they came across my brother Rod.

We believe that the watch was a 21st birthday present to my father from his family. We were so happy to have it back with the family.



*My brother Rod and Sarah, who returned the watch after so many years searching for the owner.*



# **BRIAN ROSS**

## **A TALE THROUGH TIME**

Co-written by: Kate Pryce



My story of growing up in South Africa begins when my Grandfather ran away from home to join the British army. It was the late 19th century, and he had left Ireland in search of a job with a steady income, as did many other men in those days. In fact, one third of the British Army at the battle of Waterloo were Irish.



*Flag of the Orange Free State.*

Soon my grandfather grew tired of the army life, and fled to what is now South Africa. It was here that he became a peddler of wares in Basutoland. After some time he decided to move to the Free State. Over time, my grandfather opened a few retail stores in the area and began the family business, which continued during my working life. My grandfather seemed to be quite respected in the area. At one point in time he was elected onto the Orange Free State Provincial Council, where he was able to help decide where infrastructure for the region was to be built. This turned out to be beneficial for our family business! He was also later elected into the Parliament, which turned out to be one of my own goals in my later life.

The journey of my grandfather from Britain to South Africa was passed down to me via my parents, and is a key piece of my family history which I love to share.

Sometime after my family settling in the Free State, I was born. My mother, Isabelle May Campbell, and father, Douglas Parr Ross, welcomed me into the world on the 8th of February 1928 in Bethlehem, South Africa. At this point in time the family business created

by my grandfather was performing well, and my father continued in this line of employment. Prior to my birth, my mother had been a teacher in the area. Her attitude towards education was instilled in me from young, and helped me strive towards higher education myself.

I had a happy childhood. My younger brother Colin was born two years after me, in 1930. We got along well and often played together. My father would often bring home some wooden packing boxes from the family business. Colin and I would spend hours happily playing with them, making up stories and using our imaginations. It was a happy time.

For my schooling, I attended St. Henry's Marist Brother's School in Durban, which we had moved to when I was about four. It was a boys school where we were mostly taught by Marist Brothers who all wore black cassocks. They were not shy to deal out punishment for those who were in trouble!

*BELOW: My father and I.*



When I was about ten years old I remember my father saying to Colin and I, "There's going to be a war." My parents decided that they were going to take a tour of Europe before any real trouble started, so that they could see the sights

before they were destroyed. So in 1938, our family travelled from Durban to Southampton, England. We had a German nanny in South Africa, so she came along with us for the trip. After taking a channel steamer through to France and Holland, we eventually arrived in Germany. It was here where my parents went off on a month long tour around Europe by themselves and we stayed with our nanny, Frauline Wolff.

Frauline Wolff took us to stay with her family in Heilbronn, Germany. It certainly was an interesting experience! There were another two young girls living there, but they had to follow a strict set of rules that we did not. Although I didn't complain about not having to eat my brussel sprouts! I remember walking through the house and seeing a lot of Nazi paraphernalia around. The man of the house was a soldier, and wore a big red swastika patch on his arm, over his khaki uniform. That image has stayed with me ever since.

After Christmas time in 1938, my parents met Colin and me in Germany and we travelled back home. Soon enough, war had broken out in Europe, and this caused some problems back in South Africa. I remember that the Boers had often supported Germany, but as I lived in the English speaking area I knew that there was tension. Living in Durban meant that we were the closest port to Johannesburg. As a result, there were often military ships going to the east to provide supplies, or to fight as part of the war effort. Although it didn't necessarily disrupt our day to day life, we knew that the war was being fought.

Throughout my senior school years I continued to study at the same school, St. Henry's Marist Brothers. My distaste for Latin had stayed with me, but I did develop an interest in my English and history lessons. Although I wouldn't go so far as to say I enjoyed them! I was fond of playing rugby with my friends, and although I wasn't much good at it, it was good fun. Throughout my time at school I never got into too much trouble and was relatively well behaved, but I did enjoy spending time with the other boys and having fun. I was around 17 when I finished school.

Once I had finished school, I went on to study at Rhodes University College in Grahamstown, South Africa. From Durban it was a three day train trip. At this stage there were no bridges over the rivers, so the trains had to travel inland. Whilst at Rhodes University I stayed at Botha House and

studied basic subjects. I did this for 18 months, until I moved to Oxford University in England when I was about 18.

To travel to England I had to get on a ship at Durban, and travel up to Southampton. Along the way the ship made stops along the coast of Africa through places such as Port Elizabeth, Walvis Bay and the Canary Islands. The journey to Southampton took two weeks. Once I had arrived in England I stayed with my parent's friends for a few weeks, as the university year hadn't begun yet.

Upon arriving at Oxford I was very pleased to see that I was staying in the 13th Century building once called Gloucester Hall, now called Worcester College. As I really enjoy history, this was a great place to stay.



*Gardens at Worcester College.*

I had a wonderful time at Oxford and Worcester College. I was studying English, and with the cold and wet English weather I certainly had a lot of time to dedicate to my studies! However, I didn't spend all my time studying. I played hockey socially, and made many friends. People from all over the world attended Oxford. I remember another student had come all the way from Geelong Grammar in Melbourne.

There were also beautiful big gardens with a lake and I thoroughly enjoyed walking through these as well as admiring the view. To get from class to class we often rode bikes as the university was so big – this



sometimes proved difficult thanks to the academic gowns we were required to wear! Being a 'commoner' I didn't wear an 'academic' long gown with sleeves. I wore the short black sleeveless gown.

The Deans of the Hall were very strict during my time. If you missed the 10pm curfew you were in big trouble! Although I didn't stray too far from the rules, I know one of my friends had to pay a £5 fine for coming in late, which was a lot of money during 1940s post-war England. The Hall was also surrounded by barbed wire and spikes, which made sneaking in very hard.

Overall, I studied at university for about 5 years. I stayed mostly at Worcester College, although I did spend some time in other accommodation in my later years, as well as some time in London to study.

I loved travelling and experiencing other countries, luckily one of the benefits of living in England is that it is so close to Europe. As it was so far to travel back home to South Africa, I spent many of my holidays travelling through Europe instead. I even started taking French lessons as it was so close. I ended up spending a fair amount of time in France skiing, which I seemed to have a natural aptitude for! I also very much enjoyed travelling to Holland, as I was able to understand a lot of the Dutch language, thanks to the similarities with Afrikaans.

Throughout my travels during university I met many more friends from all sorts of places. I kept up contact with most of them for years.

Once I had graduated from Oxford in 1951 I decided to travel back to South Africa by land, rather than sea. It was a long journey, taking about four months all together. Over this time I kept a diary, and wrote about my travel experiences which are so varied. I travelled all throughout Europe in these four months, visiting all sorts of towns and cities. I went through, Dublin, Holland, Paris, Tours, Vichy, Switzerland and Italy. From Naples,

Italy, I sailed to Alexandria in Egypt. It was here that I made friends with two Egyptians who took me under their wing and showed me around. From Egypt I travelled down the Nile towards South Africa, stopping at various places along the way including Sudan and Uganda via paddle steamer. The rest of the journey was travelled by road, notwithstanding a breakdown along the way. After a long trip, I finally arrived home on the 18th of September. Since beginning the journey in early June, I had seen and experienced many things around the world.



*On a camel in Giza, Egypt.*

Once I had settled in back in South Africa with my parents, I began working for the family business as my father expected. The business, A Ross and Company, was a shop which provided all sorts of goods. It sold everything from groceries to building materials. It acted as a general store for many of our customers – and we certainly had many stores around the area! Ross also had a competitive advantage in the fabric market. We were the only retailer around who shipped in exclusive fabrics for our customers at affordable prices

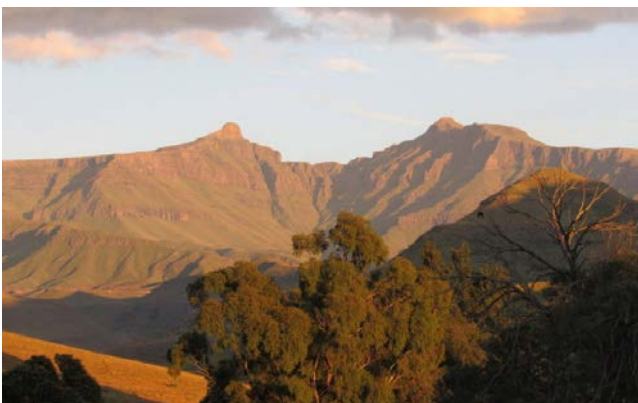
I initially began by travelling around to all our stores to check on the operations of the business and make sure everything was running smoothly. Soon I was filling in for the manager when they went on leave and became Acting Manager. Eventually I became Managing Director of the company.

Throughout my time at A Ross and Company, I

saw many changes. In the beginning we only had a drawer under the counter with coins inside, rather than a cash register. There was a wooden container with a big clip, which would be attached to a sort of contraption which would spring to the office, the person in the office would put the change in it, and it would spring right back. One day the metal clip became caught on a woman's wig, and it came flying off! This was NOT a good look for business, so it was somewhat of a relief when we introduced cash registers. I truly did enjoy working for the family business, retailing has always been interesting to me and it was a good, well providing job. A Ross had a warehouse in Point Road, Durban where imports were.

I was 29 when I got married in the late 1950s. I had met a lovely woman named Eileen Helland, who had two small children, Mark and Diana. We both loved children and got along so well. Eventually we moved to Kloof after we got married. We went on to have another 4 children together - Melinda, Giles, Edwina, and Julia. Having children really completed my family and each of them brought their own special joy to our lives.

After some time, we decided to move to Himeville, which was located 1600 metres up in the Drakensberg Mountains. Where we lived was also known as 'Giant's Cup', as it was nestled between two peaks at around 3000 metres high.

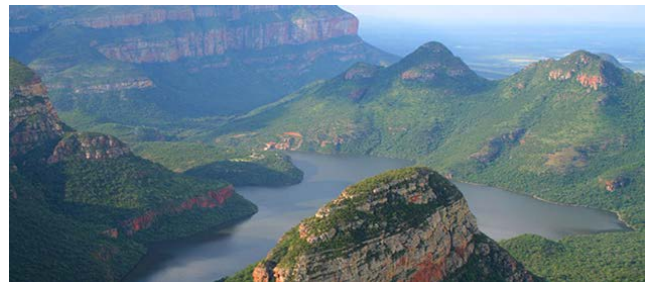


*Giant's Cup.*

Our family had lots of adventures up in the mountains, there was always something

to keep us entertained. There was a bit of rivalry between a nearby town, Underburg, and Himeville (5 km apart). We did, however, establish a tradition of both towns planting trees together, as a form of bonding.

Eventually, I left the family business and pursued other work and hobbies. I ended up spending a lot of time helping other local businesses with odd jobs around the place, which was a good way of keeping up my interest in retailing.



*Himeville.*

I was also very active in the local community. I was on the committee of the local mission hospital, King Mission Hospital. Although I wasn't a Catholic, I didn't let this stop me having my say! I ended up with a seat on the local council and eventually even became Vice Chairman at some point. Angling was a popular sport in the area, so I also became Chairman of the local Fishing Club. This meant I was able to control where and when people were allowed to fish in the area. This drive to help the community was a major part of the reason why I decided to run for Parliament.

I decided to run in the South African Parliament for a few reasons. Mainly, I was worried about the individual being brushed aside just because of local party politics, and end up being forgotten about. I feel that respect for the individual person is very important, and that political parties often try to just bundle people up and place them into groups that suit them.

I ran for the Democratic Party as it was aligned with these values. The party also believed in more public accessibility, and more public assistance. I had a small committee to help me run my campaign, as well as a lot of family support. Unfortunately



I did not win a seat at the time, but nationally the party did pick up a few spots.

I have always had a passion for writing, to be expected considering I have my degree in English. I had always written short stories, and in my later years I decided to write a book as it was something which I had wanted to do throughout my life. Now that I was retired, it was the perfect time.

I wrote a book titled *An Irish Nurse in Africa*. It was based off the story of my Grandfather and his family, and centred around the travels of a young Irish nurse serving during the Boer War. I had previously travelled to Ireland before writing the book, so I used my journey as research to form the background. I visited the town where my family had descended from and even got to visit the house where my Grandfather had lived. The trip provided very useful information for the book, and was a wonderful way to connect with my family history.

After my wife had died in 2004, I decided to move to Perth, Australia in 2006 to be with my daughters. It has turned out to be a wonderful decision, as I am really enjoying having my family around again. I have been able to spend some quality time with my grandchildren. I now have such fond memories to treasure of me and my grandson laying wreathes at the South African War Memorial at Kings Park. This has such a special connection to me as it recognises the role my grandfather played in South African history.

Shortly after I moved to Perth I decided that I ought to learn more about my new home. This led me to attend an art exhibition at the newly refurbished Perth City Hall, which was focused on displaying the history of Perth. Whilst I was looking at a particular photo of Barrack Street, a lady and I struck up conversation. We got along so well I decided that I would ask her to go out for a coffee! Anne and I began a lovely relationship, and we celebrated this by getting married in 2007 with the support of all our family and friends.



*South African War Memorial, Kings Park.*

These days I am enjoying a slower pace of life. I particularly like to spend my time reading, as well as gardening and cultivating my roses, something which I have done since living in Himeville. I am also partial to an afternoon nap every now and then!

If I could give one piece of advice to the younger generation it would be to respect your parents, even if they have a different opinion to yourself. There is no need to fight with them if you can avoid it, it just becomes an unnecessary fuss. In the end, you are family and should make every effort to get along.

I am very thankful for the life I have had, and all of the adventures along the way. I have accomplished everything I have wanted to do, and consider myself as very lucky to be where I am today.



# JOY LEE

## SKIPPING THROUGH THE SHADOWS

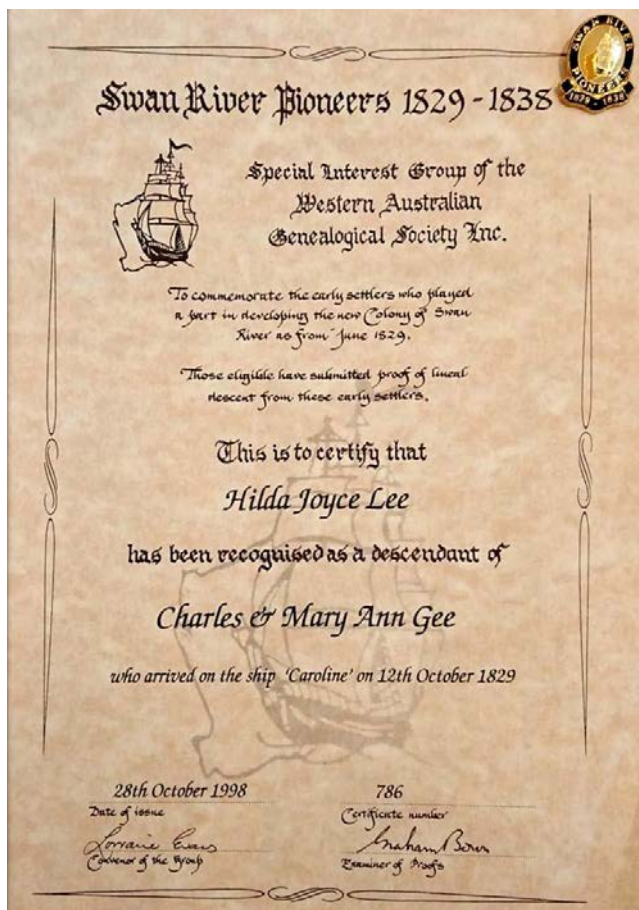
Co-written by: Sundas Furqan

*“There is a time for everything and a season  
for every activity under heaven.”*



I never achieved fame or fortune but rather a life enjoyed, always surrounded with love, and that to me is more important. I often feel I hear a different drummer which makes life interesting, well for me anyway, perhaps a little bit puzzling for others. I am blessed with a good memory and a vivid imagination and perhaps saw events and people different from others. I am aware of some of my failings, the others, well they are just "JOY".

My great grandparents Charles Gee and Mary Ann Gee arrived in Australia on a ship 'Caroline' in October 1829. I was born on 4th November 1926 after two daughters Dorothy and Evelyn. A motorbike killed my brother Edgar before I was born. My father Henry Edgar Southworth (known as Harry) was a mental hospital attendant (as it was called in those days) and was in charge at the new Hospital Heathcote in Applecross. He had a breakdown after this and now I am older, is it any wonder? This man had left his home in Lancashire England at 21yrs old, going to World War I in the 15th Field Ambulance, seeing service for all the war years including the Battle of the Somme.



My mother appeared strong, her love and support overcame this situation.

I must have been a trial. My older sisters seemed to be such good little girls. The family found me all of 3 years old with my bathers on and a towel around my shoulders, going down the street for a swim. Fortunately I was found before I got to the river. My elder sister Dorothy tells me I covered her schoolbooks in vaseline. Once I covered myself in black nugget (shoe polish) and when asked why, replied I wanted to know how it felt to be black.

I met my first friend Gwen Bowen when we were only 4 years old. Our house was called 'Elms Lea' a happy home with the sound of my mother's laughter. Her singing as she was doing her housework remains with me. A dearly loved son was born named Geoffrey. The morning he was born I woke up to find no mother and when asked where she was told that she was in hospital. I thought she must be going to die, I could never visualize my life without her and I felt like this about her till long after I had children of my own. Dad called me "Joycie" when I was little. I was sent to school in July, the week Geoff came home from hospital with my mother. The day they came home all the neighbours came in to see Geoff.



*Hilda Mary Southworth (My mother) and Henry Adgar Southworth (My father)*

I was sent to St Aloysius in Shenton Park, or in those days Rosalie Convent, run by Mercy

Nuns. I remember crying the first day and was allowed to sit next to Dorothy in the big girl class, but her teacher frightened the day lights out of me so I opted to go back to the bubs room with a beautiful Nun called Sister Mary Clare. The first thing I remember I was shown to do was playing with plasticine. I made an arch with swans going underneath.

There were about five nuns and three teachers. We really loved these nuns and teachers. We would carry their cases and loved their softness and the love they gave us. They instilled in us respect for other people's property. A look of annoyance was all sometimes all that was needed. If you were told you were bold, that was bad. We were not allowed to throw any food in bins. I once threw my egg sandwiches in the bin and later had to own up and eat it in the nuns' room. We were expected to clean the school yards every Friday. The ones that had to catch trams got out of that.

Picnics at the end of the year were a great event. The whole school would walk from Shenton Park to Crawley. We would have a swim and every one would bring a plate of food. The mothers would come and hand out the food. We would all be seated in a big circle, then we would have raspberry cordial which was a great treat. When I look back the nuns had so much to do with forming and developing our characters and the times that seemed unfair or that when we were harshly punished did not do us much harm.

During these years I had some lovely friends: Beryl Bowden, Beryl Beale, Clare Gartland, Betty Thomson, Peggy Jones and my very dear friend Marie Catchpole. Marie returned as my very dear friend when she started work at Sandovers. My mother was a friend of Mrs Bowden. From an early age we went to Shenton Park for Mass going to 7'o clock, not eating anything after midnight the night before, not even a glass of water. From Nedlands to Shenton Park was quite a walk so no wonder we used to faint in Church.

Another school holiday was St Patrick's Day, 17th March. In the weeks before Major Saunders and another time Major Kennedy trained us. We did exercise and marched to Irish songs. All the schools would arrive at Gloucester Park and gather in the arena. We would have Mass first by the Archbishop, then all the schools would march in and out making patterns with great coordination.

Family holidays at Yunderup then called West Murray, Mandurah and the most wonderful of all was the one we had at Witchcliffe. Eight days of farm life and a memory that lasted each one of a lifetime. This was the Davis family. Mum got on very well with Mrs Davis. I was 8 years old that time and Geoff about 3 years. We had a good time sliding down the haystacks. We went mushrooming in the fields which were so green that they looked like a scene from Austria. We went to Margaret River on a horse and cart. It was a week I will always remember.

Sweets? They were a treat. We had aniseed balls, licorice, toffee suckers and log sherbets. We used to have a choice of a half penny box or a one dollar box. A few other things that were common practice. We had inkwells that had to be washed and filled, which used to be done by the boys of the class.

The nuns wanted us to have good manners and for us to grow up good Christian people. There was no bullying at the school then. Confession and the awareness of sin was really pressed into our minds. My first Communion frock was a lovely white voile frock. I was 12 years old when I made my Confirmation.

My friendship with Gwen Bowen lasted all of her life, she died when she was only 38 years. Gwen and I would spend every weekend playing with dolls, we were allowed to use her mother's sewing machine. We lived in a fantasy world when we played. As we grew too old for dolls, we took on different names, my name was Jean and she was Myra. We would pick out two boys names from Gwen's school and imagined we were married to



them. We went to the movies every school holidays with Mum, before we were old enough to go on our own. Then as Geoff and I grew older we would meet Peggy Jones and her brother Peter and we would go every Friday having 6 pence to spend.

My father was a cabinet maker by trade, but when he first came to Perth jobs were not plentiful so he started working at Claremont Mental Hospital (now called Graylands). He never spoke of his war days to us but he did to Fred (my husband). Dad had been a regular churchgoer before going to the war, going to Christchurch Claremont and his name is on the board in front of the church with others that enlisted from the congregation. He made bunk beds for Ev and I, doll houses, carts and a case made out of tin for me.

Another part of my life that left an everlasting effect on my life was my joining the Girl Guides. I was about 12 years when Jean Meadowcroft suggested that I should join. I quickly learnt the rules. I felt so patriotic and admired all this movement stood for. I belonged to the Sturt Pea Patrol, I became a Secunder then Patrol Leader. Later I went on to be a Lieutenant.

We are now in 1939 and there was war. Everyone wanted to help get this war over quickly, as the First World War was still very much in the older people's minds. They knew of the horror and torment that war does to people. The Girl Guides helped by collecting milk top lids which were made of aluminium, also toothpaste tubes, any metal, clothes to recycle. We went from door to door, walking miles all over Nedlands and Hollywood area. We got badges for lots of these things which we wore on the sleeve of our uniforms. We met a new girl Joan Clark and she became our friend. Guides taught us so much, the camps, the hikes it was all a very worthwhile experience.

After I left the Convent I went to Perth Girls Central which was located in James Street next to Perth Boys School. I went with Joan and we were in same class studying

commercial subjects. I sat for exams at Stott College and did quite well in them. Bookkeeping was my best subject. We were starting to get really involved in the war as it was not going good. Our troops were going to the Middle East, factories were being changed into ammunition factories, men were being manpowered, the barest minimum were left to run the farms. We had air raid practices and there were air raid shelters in each street. During the war we made clothes out of blankets. We used velvet soap to wash our hair.

Leaving Perth Central after a year there, I went to Perth Technical School and concentrated on bookkeeping. I got an interview with Mr. Doggett at Haris Scarfe and Sandovers which resulted in getting my first job.

Strange how one event can change the rest of one's life, all part of God's plan. Life seems like a giant mosaic and each little piece fits in together and when the picture is complete your life ends. I earned 14/11 a week. I was put with a Miss Wood, who happened to be Celie my friend. We all had to call each other by surnames. Celie has been my good friend since that time, sharing holidays and all the ups and downs of our lives. The cashier was Lorna Wooller, whose job I took over when she married John Lee who had a brother Fred. Six months after I started in came Marie Catchpole for a job, still looking like a little girl. Marie got the job and we enjoyed each other's company for the rest of her life which sadly ended in 1994. She was my closest and dearest friend. We started our social life by going to Andre Drummonds to learn old time dancing. Joan Clark, Jean Meadowcroft, Gwen Bowen and Val Grey from Sandovers, another friendship I valued and still have today. So with Marie and I there was always a friend to go with. The dances were good fun and we enjoyed ourselves. Sometimes we would go to a movie but Saturday night you had to book as the theatres were always fully booked.

Our troops were all recalled, against Winston Churchill's wishes, so our 9th Division returned. Amongst these troops was Fred (I did not know that he would be my husband). He marched in Perth and I marched with the Girl Guides. I joined the First Aid group at Sandovers. They paid for me to go to St John Ambulance and I went in working hours. Hard to believe that most people did not have a watch, if you did not have one before the war you would not have one. Fred bought me my first watch Christmas 1947, your name was on a list, about 6 watches would come in to the jewellery department at Sandovers at a time.

During the war all the girls used to write letters to servicemen, I had many I wrote to, a couple of soldiers in the Middle East, some English sailors, an Indian in Ceylon and a girl in Tasmania. A sailor on the H.M.A.S. Quickmatch, which was one of the ships that took part in the signing of the peace treaty in Japan, wrote me a letter explaining all about the Emperor's palace. I gave it to the Museum in Fremantle. I also wrote to my brother-in-law Len.

I wrote to one soldier for over 2 years making sure he got a letter every week and he replied every week. He was making plans for the time he would be home again, so it was getting serious on his part. When he did come home and I brought up the subject of religion, he had some pretty negative views about religion and specially Catholics. I was strong enough in my faith to know this was very important issue for me so Tom and I parted company. It did not take long for me to put this all behind me and move on in life. I had gone out with an airman from Darwin. He was a Catholic and wanted to get engaged after knowing him only for 7 days, I went cold on him when I found out that he told a lie about his mother to get embarkation leave. He showered me with gifts, beautiful flowers with romantic words and also gave me a parachute. I made a lovely petticoat with it.

In May 1945 our prime minister Mr. John Curtin died. I attended his funeral at Karratta. The

war in Europe was over. My sister Ev as we called her married Tom Pratley in St Margaret's, March 1946.

In July I had holidays due so Marie, Nellie and I went to Bunbury and stayed in a guest house. We started off from the railway station again with Nellie's humour putting us all in a good mood. We enjoyed the week, especially as the news came through that the Japanese had surrendered. The atom bomb was dropped causing devastation although a lot more lives would have been lost if it had not been dropped. It must have been horrific for the poor people in Japan. Dot and Len had another son Brian Laurence, who was called Laurie. Dot was very good at sewing, so while she was doing that we took the children off her hands and did the household chores. Ev and Tom built their first house and spent every weekend working very hard.



Another interest Marie and I had was playing basketball. We started playing basketball for Sandovers. I was captain and arranged training nights. Some of my friends were getting married, Lorna Woolier to John Lee. We went to Lorna's 21st and she got engaged shortly after. She asked me to be a bridesmaid. In those days it was very much frowned upon for a Catholic to take part in a Protestant service, whether it was a funeral, wedding etc.

Lorna's and John's wedding went off well. It was there I met John's brother Fred, for the second time. Had I not been a bridesmaid I

would not have spent so much time over Mrs Wooller's at that particular time. I thought he had a nice gentle way, very shy, could not dance and had a motorbike. He asked me at the wedding could he take me home. Well I could not accept as I had a long dress and besides Mum and Dad had the car. I knew he had plucked up enormous courage to ask me and wondered whether he would ask me again. Lorna's mother delighted in asking girls from Sandovers over for a tea to one of her delicious meals. Well, thanks to Mrs Wooller, she had another dinner and asked Fred and I to go. It was that night Fred asked me to go to the Speedway with him. Well thanks to Mrs Wooller as she must have prompted Fred to ask me again and there it all began.

We took it very slowly. We would go to Harley Scrambles, then he got to know my friends as he did not have any close friends. His best friend was Jack and he was in the country so we did not see him very often. Fred had been away from Perth for several years prior to war and then overseas in the Army. As he had enlisted in the country so his friends were from the country. Fred fitted in with my family very well. I would not have gone out with anyone if they did not like my family. He had no religion and would be happy to belong to a religion. He said he would never interfere with my beliefs and at this stage till he learnt about the Catholic faith he would be honest and not make a promise to change. Well I am happy to say that he kept that promise and always encouraged me and the children to keep it foremost in our lives. He did become a Catholic before we were married and we have never had a problem with this.

Our wedding day was planned for the 18th December 1948. A wedding then was a romantic dream of belonging to each other and when a couple were married at the altar there was an awe of warmth and love, with a feeling of great joy.

I made a lot of my clothes and put them away for our honeymoon. Fred was working for

his Uncle Arthur and Hedley doing electro plating. He did not like the work but he made about 4 ash trays, unusual ones, a nice base for a lamp and a figure of Christ to put on a cross. Dad showed him how to make the wooden cross and I still have it hanging up in our bedroom all our married life. It will be placed on each of our coffins and then returned to the family.



Our wedding day finally arrived, a bright sunny day although overcast in the morning. I kept thinking of the song 'Happy the bride that the sun shines on'. Well I need not have worried - the temperature got to 95 degrees. Fred and I put superstition aside and met in the morning to go to church at Holy Rosary Nedlands for Mass. My dress was made of lace with a satin petticoat and you could have worn the petticoat as the wedding frock, it was so beautifully made with a frilled flounce around the bottom, made by Mrs Ross from Treena Street. Fred had a dark suit for the wedding and another new suit in fawn both tailor made by Mr Cohen. We had the reception in the Church of England hall in Claremont. We had a Claremont Taxi and a Claremont photographer. My grandmother was not well enough to come to the wedding so after we were married by Father Prendiville, the whole wedding party went to Caxton Road to see her. How thrilled she was. She kept saying that we wouldn't probably get to see her. The wedding was a credit to Mom and Dad. The music and catering was done



by the Harrison family who became well known. Our wedding night was spent at the Shaftesbury Hotel Perth. A girl I worked with lived at the Shaftesbury and she left a radio in the room. There was of course no luxuries of today but who needed them when you have each other and the excitement of the future ahead.

Back to the real world...we had no house. Fred had no job, we had 40 pounds, a bedroom suite, a radio and some linen plus crockery. I went back to work and we stayed with Mum and Dad. Len, Dot's husband put a word for Fred at the brewery although he didn't think he would like it. He thought he would never understand the work and he had never done shift work before. Well he must have caught on as he loved his work and stayed there for over 30 years.

In mid 1949 I knew I was pregnant but I continued work for 4 months. I had a lovely send off, gifts, cards and a nice speech from Mr Hammond. The pregnancy was fine, I had rarely been to a doctor before, apart from a terrible rash I got in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Living with parents was fine but one could not help thinking of starting a home of our own. Houses to rent were just not available.

On March 10th about 4 o'clock I went into labour and our dear Stephen came into our lives at midnight. November 1950 was our next move when we went out to see a house for rent in Carlisle in our little bomb car an old Morris. We decided to take the opportunity of getting a house on our own after 2 years of marriage. The house had no sewerage, the toilet was up the backyard and there was no hot water or a sink in the kitchen. Stephen was 2 years now and a very active little boy. For two years we were in 80 Mars Street. We had to sell the car for 35 pounds. We bought a fridge with Fred's gratuity pay, getting new furniture and painting the inside we were as happy as we could be. Fred planted vegetables, strawberries and sweet peas.

We bought a block of land in Planet Street for 210 pounds and when we chose the house it cost all together 2,220 pounds. We thought it was a lot of money. We were able to get a War Service loan and it took 35 years to pay off. We went ahead with the building of the house and in November 1952 it was ready to move in. What a treat. A sink! Sewerage! Water heated by a chip bath heater. Fred did a lot of work, putting in lawn, building fences. Each time we had any money there was always a million things we Wanted to do. Then Mum and I had a win in the lottery. I heard it on the radio. We were able to buy a bed and mattress for Stephen, curtains and baby clothes along with things for hospital as I now knew our 2nd baby was on its way.



On the 1st of October 1953 our second son Mark Alexander was born. He was quite a big baby weighing 8 lbs. He was such a contented baby and slept very well. He looked very much like Fred as a newborn, crawled very young and was walking before he was 11 months.

In 1956 I became pregnant again. Sylv and Ern had asked me to go to Merredin where Ern was teaching, so of I went with the 2 little boys on the train as Fred could not get away to come with us. Stephen and Mark were very good to take out as they behaved well. Around this time I had a miscarriage.



I was then overjoyed to know that I was pregnant again. I was worried in case the miscarriage had caused any trouble. Our dear daughter Deborah Ann was born on the 26th August 1956. She was easy to amuse and seemed to be wise beyond her years. She was a very pretty baby and won a baby competition in Carlisle. The prize was \$4 which we spent getting a picture taken by a professional photographer.

Stephen was a good sportsman being better than average at cricket, football and basketball. He played for hours on the oval opposite us. He was a very keen Perth Football fan and as he ran around with his football he would commentate the game with Stephen Lee playing with Barry Cable and Bob Coleman. He was an excellent student and I loved getting his report.

Mark grew up loving animals, the cats we had all seem to merge into one. They were all black ones. We had chooks, bantams, pigeons, lizards, tortoise and Galahs that talked very well. These years were always busy with Parents and Friends Committee's Church activities, family visits to Mum and

Dad, my sister and their families. Geoff was not married at this time. Our Church life was busy even then, with Parish Priest Father Power.

Just after Christmas on December 27, 1963 I was admitted to hospital and our third son Paul Anthony was born. With baby "Paulie" as he became known, these years were happy, although we were broke. Paul was another very good baby till he was 2 years old then he never wanted to go to bed.

Fred was very positive that we were to have a holiday every year. Most people said they could not afford it and we really couldn't but we worked towards it all the year. We would rent a house sometimes at Mandurah, Palm Beach or the Brewery houses, then Pemberton with a caravan later and then previous to that we hired a caravan and went up to Kalgoorlie and Southern Cross. We used to go on a weekend with Foletta's really roughing it and stayed in old railway carriages at Kwinana. We enjoyed it, days the children would never forget. These years passed so quickly.

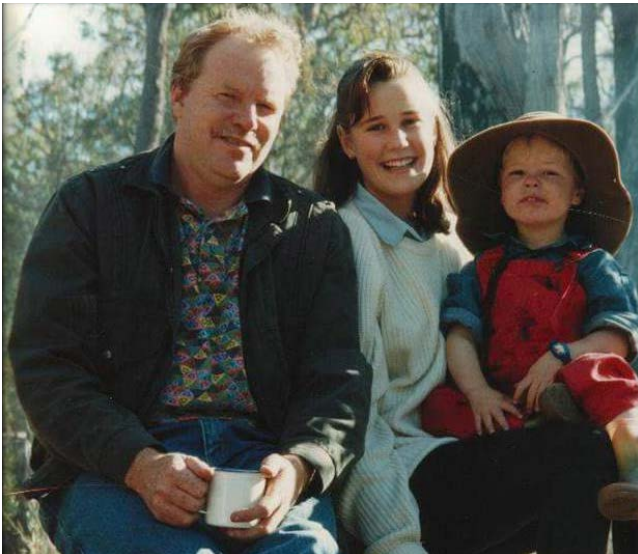


We had a small saving that matured on Fred's long service. Fred was always worried that I would never see the world, so he was dead set on me going to Singapore on the "Centaur". I bought presents for everyone and had a great 10 days. The trip was a great experience and the gift of an unselfish man.

I will skip a few years and probably say now they were the best years of our lives. Stephen did well in his junior year, he was always a good student. He did extra well in his Leaving and we were proud of him. He went to Bird Cameron and did University. He is now a Chartered Accountant, a director and a well-respected, loved father. He met Christine Lesley Jones, then we had little



Kristin. They married and soon another son, Adam, came along then a little girl Reagan. The kids are all grown up now. Stephen can take great pride in his children and we have always been proud of our eldest son.



Mark was always happier with me in the kitchen than kicking a football. Like Stephan he had a paper job and various other holiday jobs. He got his first job after working very hard during a Christmas holiday. Mark was always interested in cooking so he and I sat down and wrote to a lot of catering firms. A big thrill for us when he won "Young Chef of the Year". He won a lovely trophy and a trip to the East, to compete with the other Chefs from each state. He was recognized everywhere. Mark met Judy when he was working at West Sands. Judy a young student teacher from Singapore went there to work part time. Hannah Elizabeth was their first child. She used to spend a lot of time with us and we became very close. She brought me back to the wonder and imagination of the childhood. Next came along Alexander.



Our daughter Deborah is a caring person. She did well at school but put very little effort in it. She had a few self-doubts at one stage, so we put her in modelling and she won several shows. She did nursing at Heathcote and after completing this

she went to England for 2 years where she was working at hotels and then for Britiana Airlines as a hostess. When she returned to Australia, she worked at Ansett in Sydney. She then decided to return to studies and became a registered Nurse. Working at Perth Hospital she made an excellent Nurse but now she is in Palliative Care.

We were happy to welcome Brendan. Brendan had 2 delightful children Jo and Lachlan from a previous marriage, who both welcomed Deborah and were also happy to see their much loved dad happy. It was a lovely wedding and now they have 2 little boys "our Thomas" and "our Louis". Brendan is a wonderful dad and we love to see and share the joy of these boys growing up.

Paul went through school making many friends and was such a quiet and gentle boy. He started his schooling at Xavier Boys College and then to Lathlain School which he loved. After a few jobs he worked in a motor firm. He later applied to go in to the mining industry.

He married Peta and once again we were delighted with his choice. They now have 2 dearest girls, Madeline and Annaleise. Paul now has his mine manager certificate which enables him to be a manager of small mine or foreman for underground. Peta and Paul worked at several mining sites and had a lot of experiences before their marriage.



During my working life, I worked at a newsagency in Lord Street and then 5 years



at RAC. When Fred retired so did I but I found there was too much time for me. I was only 51 years and household chores got rather boring. Fred kept the garden up and had various jobs gardening, with that he was content. I was still a member of the Milbarra club that I joined when Paul was a baby. The Milbarra club was a section of the Y.W.C.A. We arranged guests speakers, went visiting law courts, factories etc. I arranged a trip to stay at Pinnacles. I am still a regular member. We have had talks on all religions.

The club itself is as strong as ever and everyone feels they are amongst friends. I still found had too much time and started to explore other avenues. I tried teaching people to lip read, joining Volunteer Task Force and doing work shops on these days although interesting, still did not seem to be what I wanted. I did a few summer schools in university and night school classes where I met Pat Thorpe. She was an interesting person full of ideas. This led me to take up swimming. I was not a swimmer but I proceeded with it and was happy to learn back stroke and breast stroke but could not do over arm at all. It was not until about another 15 years later that when I went to the Belmont Pool and met another lady called Madeline. I was now 70 years and in 3 lessons I learnt the breathing and developed a fine even over arm. Now I am able to swim 20 laps of the big pool, enjoy it and am very proud of this achievement.

I took up golf and was a bad player but spent many happy hours learning the skill with my friend Vilma. But when Vilma had trouble with her feet, this ceased. In the meantime I started to learn the organ. I bought a Kmart one and found I was interested. I took lessons then gradually progressing to a better one and more lessons. I can get a tune and spend many happy hours doing so. I have had some lovely evenings playing and having sing sings, specially playing on Dot's beautiful organ.

Still I wanted more, so I asked the Parish priest and he put me in touch with the St

Vincent De Paul. This was a great help to my spiritual growth and found the discussion groups most enjoyable. It has changed over the years. We used to organize picnics and days out for the older and needy people but now the needs seem different. The society is run very differently now. We have more money and now we provide many food parcels every week. We kept a pantry at home. Fred and I made sure it was never empty. At Christmas it is a mammoth job, which I do but also enjoy it and feel a great deal of satisfaction when it is over. For 9 years we delivered every Saturday morning, boxes of food to about 40 people. Fred and I gave this up after that time as we decided that something has to go.

Fred and I used to wait on the tables at the Hawthorn Centre for 7 years but again we had to let it go. We wanted to spend more time with children and Fred had a few little jobs that brought him into contact with some fine people. So you see this retirement was filled up with a lot of other interests.



It has not been all work. We managed a lot of trips. Deborah while she worked at the airline had a trip every year, so Deborah and I went to America. Not a very long trip but we called in New Zealand and Hawaii, then

at L.A. We contacted our first cousins and had the great thrill of meeting cousin Ken Southworth, his second wife Carol who was a delightful person and their children.

The house at Planet Street began to need a lot of repair. Fred had various operations, going on holidays and with our outside interests, we weighed it up and put our house on the market but then took it off. Then one day I had a call from a lady asking to pick up some clothes from a unit in Kewdale, so Fred and I went to pick them up. We were amazed at what room this lady called Doris had in her unit. She told us of one in the next group which was 262 St. Kilda Rd.



They insisted we had a look at the unit, with some thought we said YES. We were very happy here. The house in Planet St sold straight away. We were anxious, so many doubts after leaving a happy home but everything worked out well. I was able to go swimming at the Belmont Oasis, join the Library and have now joined another group of seniors.

We then found out that Fred had Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He was very accepting and went

through the traumas of Chemo, losing every bit of hair on his body. Dr Peters, her staff and the Hollywood Hospital were a great support. He managed for 4 years. I can't say that those 4 years were sad because almost all the time they were not. Fred's favourite song "One day at a time" was lived and kept too. Fred was well in June so we went to Melbourne and had 5 days with our friend Joan. We loved Melbourne and spending time there with Joan's family were great and time spent with them was very happy.

On our return from Melbourne, we were going to Northampton when the disease attacked again. Fred spent a lot more time in hospital. Judy and Mark had a party for him for his 80th birthday. It was a great party and people rang days after saying how great it was.



*Our 50th wedding anniversary.*

In 1998, December it was our 50th wedding anniversary. Fred has had more treatment and has lost his hair again. We went to mass in the Holy Rosary, on the morning to give thanks and memories of that day 50 years ago when we made our vows to love, honour and to remain faithful for all the years till death do us part. Another year passed, more chemo and infections followed, sometimes very serious. We both got strength to take this strain. Fred never complained but was happy that each time there were further treatments that was able to be tried. In December 1999 Fred was admitted to the hospital as he ran a high



temperature. He never really felt well again. I at that stage never gave up hope that he would survive this. On 9th December 1999 when I went to hospital Fred was gone forever with dignity and peacefully just as he told me he would want.

How does one go on, after a marriage of 53 years. First you have to face so much, one must try not to show the world what grief is really like. Grief is the loss of a physical presence, a deprivation of a voice and a laugh, a footsteps in the house and the loneliness at meal time. Grief is not something you know anything about till it happens to you. There is a physical pain when you least expect it, that starts at the bottom of your sternum and you wonder what is going to happen. It goes but it was really real, it is a bitter thing, a sickness of the mind some people never recover from. Recovery has no time. My grief took a step down by a dream I had nearly 3 years after. I had gone with the Y.W.C.A ladies for the weekend to Busselton and we stayed in all together. Some I did not know, actually it was a group called XYZ. We chatted and I still had the feelings as though I was alone. A very relaxing weekend, I shared the room with Margaret Cornell. I woke up singing the hymn 'Be not Afraid' and Fred was by my side in the dream. I had a tear coming down my cheek, Margaret said "Are you all right Joy," and I answered "Fred is in Heaven." I felt different as though something had lifted the feeling I had been carrying around had gone. I went outside to have breakfast and one of the ladies came over to me and said, "You look different this morning Joy." Now she had no idea what I had experienced.

So now at 91 years I am in remission from bowel cancer for 4 and ½ years. I had a massive heart attack at 90 years and spent 10 days in intensive care. After another heart attack I had a pacemaker and a stent and proceeded on with this journey. I have just entered a new programme with the Belmont Library with Ailsa and putting our life story together with the help of my dear new friend Sundas who was born in Pakistan.

So after these years do I have regrets? Yes a few, almost too few to mention. I never learnt to drive and I never had nice nails. Does it really matter? I have learnt that without my faith I would have been lost. I appreciate the beauty of the world and give thanks to God for allowing me to see so much of it and to be able to share it with my family and friends. I have also learnt to keep quiet when sometimes I observe things that are against my principles. Times past are not times gone as long as they live inside you. So my advice is families are so important, don't take the mystic and joy out of a good relationship. Keep both working together, take time to smell the roses, take time with your children, enjoy simple things together, have holidays even some not together and come back refreshed.

I hope the journey may be of some interest for anyone old enough perhaps to stir their memories and a glimpse into the past for the young. This journey is nearly over for me and I know the end of it fills me with pride. Our children can walk alone and their children after them. I hope and feel that we have taught them courage, patience, fortitude in the face of difficulty, encouraged them to see the beauty of the world and we have shown them in our small way the presence of God in our lives. I hope they can say "We can not see them anymore, but they are with us still, our parents are more than a memory."





The Stories and Skills – Across the Generations Project was developed to address some of the key concerns of older City of Belmont residents, including losing social connection, having limited opportunities to meet with younger people and reservations about new technology.

Part of this project involved younger people capturing the stories of their older partners. This book contains excerpts from the stories shared with our volunteers at weekly meetings over a three month period.

Capturing these stories has taken us on a journey of discovery regarding the similarities and differences between us all. These stories take us far north to Marble Bar in Western Australia, across the seas to Ireland and on travels across the continent and across the world. We learn of love and loss and the challenges and triumphs of living a long life. We hear of the importance of family and the value of friendships.

*We are privileged to share the wisdom of those who have lived their lives to the full and continue to contribute to our community.*



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