

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

A MEMOIR



OWEN R. CLARK

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Owen Roy Clark
7/30 Broughton Road,
Surrey Hills. 3127
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Respect for private sources of information is of primary concern for the author
and acknowledgment has been given where appropriate.
Dates of birth of living relatives have been abbreviated to year and month only, and other
information about them has been included with sensitivity.

Owen Clark was born in Chinchilla, Queensland. He is the eldest son of Roy and Mavis Clark of Iona, Kogan. After finishing his secondary education at Toowoomba Grammar School he worked for four years for his father before studying at Theological College in Melbourne. Prior to working at Melbourne Lifeline for 10 years as a trainer and supervisor of telephone counsellors he spent 17 years in Parish ministries in South Australia, New South Wales & Victoria. His final calling was Industrial Chaplaincy where he spent 12 years caring for people at work, together with critical incident de-briefing, at various companies and organizations in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Cover: Photo 'Home of Owen's grandparents' - Family Archives.
Cover & book design by Marion H. Clark.
Set in Calibri (Body) font 12 pt.

*I dreamed a dream
I'm living a life
My life's realities have surpassed the dream*

*Jesus said,
"I have come that they might have life in all its fullness"
I very thankful for my life. It has been very full.*



Dedicated to the many, many people who
have contributed to my life

As family history it is dedicated to the memories I have
of my Uncles, Aunties and cousins, with particular reflection on
the lives of those pioneers who started with little or nothing and through
hardship and tenacity made a good contribution to Australia's development
and history.

It is also dedicated to my parents, my wife and children, my
teachers, lecturers, and those I have been involved with in marriages,
funerals and counselling and wherever I have shared as a fellow
traveller in Churches, Life Line, ITIM Industrial
Chaplaincy, Probus, and having fun.



INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this book I want to share the general flavour of my life. As a Clark Smith descendant I have been fortunate to live during a time of change, from a time and place when life seemed very simple, through a time of great discovery and with it a great increase in knowledge and complexity. In the house I was born into there was no electricity, no refrigeration, and no running water into the bathroom. Hot water was boiled on a wood stove. Clothes were washed by boiling them in a copper. Milk came from milking a cow. There were no gauze screens to keep out the flies and mosquitoes, so we all slept under mosquito nets. Kerosene lamps gave light, but also attracted every bug for miles. Clothes, jam and soap were all hand made. Only absolute necessities were bought, and everything was done as cheaply as possible. It is amazing what can be done with raw materials from the bush and wire. Ingenuity and skills develop when there is little money. This thought is in this ditty children used to sing.

*There was a man whose name was Ford
He got a little bit of metal and a little bit of board,
A bit of leather and an old tin can,
He put it all together and the darn thing ran.*

Many things have so much more value when there is poverty. For children a coloured piece of glass, a shiny tin, a doll made from a peg or a bottle were treasures of play. Television wasn't heard of, but there was a large valve radio in the dining room. The party line wall telephone was a contact with neighbours, and the only live contact with the outside world. One neighbour was only seven miles away, but the telephone wire via many telephone exchanges to connect with them, was at least one hundred and twenty miles long, and the reception was so bad one had to shout to be heard.

With my forbears all being pioneers on the land and both my mother and father children of pioneers, it was logical that when I was born to parents on

a farm that my first interest would be the land. For the first 20 years of my life I lived on the land in an isolated situation. I was on the inside of a boundary fence, both literally and figuratively speaking. While I was aware of the outside, and made forays beyond the boundary fence, my main interest and focus was the farm, and I lived in a safe and secure family situation. My world was small, my thinking limited.

The time came when I took myself outside of the boundary fence. For me to develop further I needed to step into the unknown. The pressure and what I consider the call of God was in me to go further afield, to answer the call to adventure and challenge so I might experience a different and greater view of life, and hopefully make a greater contribution in the life I lived.

‘View from the Boundary Fence’ the title I have chosen for this book reflects a special position and from this position I will look and write first on the safe side about farm life.

Then I will look outside the fence into my journey into the bigger world, leaving home, living in a city, being educated and forever learning, being a minister of religion for 17 years, being in the area of counselling for 22 years, first in Life Line and then in Industrial Chaplaincy and Counselling. I will share with you my rich experiences and my thinking as well as my struggles. I am so grateful for all I have been taught from people I have related to and endeavoured to help. They thought I was helping them. Did they realize they were also helping me? With all the many facets, you will read of an enriched life. I dare to hope it will enrich your life.



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SECTION 1 – MY MEMOIR



FARM LIFE

INTRODUCTION

From the time my ancestors came to Australia, they were mostly farmers. A few tried to find gold but made more of a success on the land. They lived in South Australia and Victoria until land became available in Queensland. In 1907 both sets of my grandparents selected land between Kogan and Tarra. They had four survey pegs that marked out their block. They had to develop it with houses and fences and clearing the scrub. They had limited resources so as pioneers they had to learn and use all their skills and experience to support themselves, build their homes, and make an income. With the passing of time they developed farming skills. My father inherited and learned even more of these skills.

Born out of hard times and necessity, my father Roy was a timber cutter, saw miller, dam sinker and cleaner, driver of horse and bullock teams, dingo trapper, shearer, carpenter, painter, mechanic, welder, plumber, bulldozer driver, truck driver, horseman and horse breaker, fencer, ring barker, dog trainer, wool classer, drencher, black smith, butcher, sheep and cattle manager, kangaroo shooter, all rolled into one rather short stocky figure.

Even though my years with him were short, I was privileged to learn so many things from him and I am grateful for his practical skills and knowledge.

Working on a farm provides a good introduction to life. Being close to the earth, living close to animals and nature, and working with the weather cycles gives a farmer a certain outlook. It is a good place to be brought up, and I appreciate the good foundation it has provided me, even though I lacked the social skills and stimulation of living in a city or richer environment. The following articles are reflective of the things we did on the farm.



The house where I first lived was two hundred miles west of Brisbane in Queensland. It was very isolated in the country, and seven miles from the Kogan Post Office and we went forty miles to Dalby to do our shopping.

The house name was Iona. My one-handed grandfather carved the name into a piece of wood and painted the letters gold on a black background. The house built of cypress pine stood on stumps almost a meter from the ground, which was common in Queensland. It was a timber home, made of cypress pine which is a timber resistant to white ants.

The house yard was defined by a paling fence. Two gates had wire and weights to keep the gates always closed so as to keep the chooks, dogs, or other animals out. Inside the yard was a pepper tree, which once blew over in a storm and was jacked back into place. We had a lemon tree, which bore an incredible number of lemons. The front garden had borders marked out by upturned and buried beer bottles. Right on the house fence towards the south was a tennis court, made from crushed white ant nests.

There were four inner rooms in the house, with a verandah right around. A passage way ran straight through the middle of the house from front to back, so designed to get the breeze on a hot day.

The north east verandah corner was made into a bathroom. Our bath, picked up from a scrap heap, was a rectangular metal container with a flat bottom and straight sides. A rough surface and very rough on the skin, it served as a very cheap bath. Water heated on the stove was bucketed into this bath that was uncomfortable to sit in.

The opposite south west corner was a store room.

The enclosed north east corner, that included the kitchen and dining room together were also part of the original verandah. There was a wood stove in the corner. The dining room had an open fire place, and a large kitchen table, and a crockery cupboard.

I remember my father listening to the war news on the wireless and tracing the movement of armies on a large map of Europe on the dining room wall. The news began with the tolling of Big Ben and then the announcer saying,

“This is London calling, here is the news from the BBC”. Emotions were overwhelming when in 1996, I saw Big Ben and heard it strike and relived the memory.

Of the four inner rooms the lounge room had no wall into the passage and in it was a piano and my mother would play music that I thought was beautiful. Beautiful Star of Heaven was one piece she played well. In this lounge room, as a small child I went to Sunday school that was taken by my parents.

The spare bedroom was for visitors and at one time the school teacher Miss Watson used it. She came from the city and boarded with us for a time. A large green frog would come in each day and sit in the cool on a ledge in her room. Each day when she came home she would throw it out, but it would be back in the next day while she was at school.

I remember my mum and dad’s bedroom where my bassinette was beside their bed. When older I was transferred across the passage to the children’s bedroom. Here I slept in a cot.

The verandah doors of the house were so placed that a three-year-old could pedal his shiny bright red car, given to me at Christmas, inside the railed verandah like a race track. Gates at the front and back steps gave me a large area to play safely.

The wash house stood apart from the house, so if it caught fire, the house would be safe. I enjoyed the thrill of jumping off its roof. In the wash-house my mother washed clothes in the very popular three sectioned concrete tub, with only one tap with water from the cold-water tank. With no washing machine (and she then wouldn’t have even a dream of having one) my mother lit a wood fire under the copper.

The copper was an old forty-four-gallon drum, the top cut out with a hammer and cold chisel at just the right size to prevent the inner copper tub (bought at a hardware shop) from slipping down into the drum.

Two other holes were cold chiseled, one for the fire at the bottom, and another for a chimney at the top. Clothes were put in the copper that was then filled with water using a bucket. When the water boiled with added

homemade soap (and later Persil) the process was good at getting clothes clean and germ free.

Clothes were prodded and turned with a broom stick handle, and with continual prodding and turning in boiling water the wood was eaten away making a point. After boiling, rinsed in the tub, and squeezed, (a lot of physical work was involved) clothes were put out to dry on the outside line or under the veranda if it was wet.

When my brother was born, he was outside in the family pram while my mother was hanging out the washing. My sister decided to push the pram. The front wheels got caught and the pram tipped over and upside down, baby and all. Mother rushed to the rescue, but the baby continued peacefully, none the worse for the event.

My mother also used the copper at times to make soap. The ingredients, boiled into a large hard block, were cut into usable pieces with a large knife. Very little soap was bought at Old Iona, only an occasional sandpapery soap called Solvol to get off ground in dirt and grime.

Before I was born my mother milked cows to earn some extra money, and my brother has a cream can that was used to take the cream to the butter factory.

My mother also made bread, butter, and jam and sewed all our clothes.

I remember the sailor and air force designed outfits my mother made for me. I was very proud wearing the air force shirt and was also given a small badge with a plane on it. I lost the badge on the way to school. I was very upset, and while I searched and searched, I never found it. Perhaps this loss motivated me to learn to fly!! My father made a wooden toy train for me for Christmas 1942. My favourite was a cart he made out of a bee box adding shafts and wheels.

Occasionally we had bread with hot milk and sugar as sweets. We were poor but always had plenty to eat.

I never wore shoes anywhere, except to go to church, and because my feet spread, shoes always hurt, and I couldn't wait to throw them off. My feet were very tough, but exposed to the winter cold, they often had cracks that were sore. Every scratch I had got infected and I constantly had infected

sores that were bathed in salt water and poulticed with a black tar substance called baits-a-salve, that was melted on to a rag with the flame of a match. We had no electricity. We had a wood stove, a copper, rain water tanks, and to keep things cool, a Coolgardie safe. In later years my father bought a strange refrigerator that worked with a kerosene burner that had to be lit every night. It was not very effective.

Wood was very plentiful, and I remember with pride, feeling my strength and that I was growing up, as my mother and I dragged a large stump into the fire place to keep my father and the house warm, because he was laid low with dengue fever.

Outside was another world. To the west was the clothes line, the chook house and a large cow yard with bails, a crush, and a drenching race for sheep.

To the north-west was a shed where bags of grain were stored. I was fascinated by the mice that our cat caught here. Nearby was a clean patch of ground where the chooks were fed.

To the north were two trees close enough to each other to tie ropes from a canvas sling. This was used to support cows that were very weak or had been discovered bogged in a dam. It was an attempt to nurse them back to health.

Next were the dog kennels, then the old-style toilet with a drum that had the top cut out as a pan. It was a bike ride away from the house so other arrangements were made if someone needed to "go" in the night.

Next was a small shearing shed with a couple of yards to hold the sheep. At the end of the yard was the garage for the car.

Just outside the house fence to the east was a large area of wash sand, a natural sand pit, a small boys dream. Here I spent many happy hours as a child copying my father in playing trucks and trailers. A smaller drink bottle was my trailer attached with a string to a larger bottle being a truck. They were loaded when filled with sand and journeyed to the other side of the sand to deposit their load. One day while I was playing a large goanna that looked huge to me as a child, stood up on his back legs and tail, causing my hair to stand on end and sent me scurrying off for my mother.

Between the house fence and the sheds, my sister and I were playing and were throwing a metal disc along the ground to each other. I threw the disc while my sister was on the ground and it injured her top lip. A trip 40 miles to the doctor followed but he could do nothing. With the healing, my sister has a scar to this day.

To the east I remember a hole behind a couple of trees that filled with water when it rained, and where I cut my foot on broken glass while paddling.

To the east about one hundred yards apart were three houses, the first occupied by men who worked at the nearby sawmill. When the mill closed it was pulled down and the materials re-used. All that remained of the second house was the stumps.

The third house was called Currabubbla, built originally for mill workers, where later on farm workmen and their families lived.

Further south, and to the west about half a kilometer away, on the bank of a dam was a saw mill, with a boiler, a tall smoking chimney, a steam engine, skids for logs, saw benches, and a planer. The smell of ashes and steam and sawdust, and the noise of circular saws and the planer are easy to recall. I was thrilled when my father let me blow the whistle that announced the end of a shift.

Near the mill was a small hut used by mill workers, and a house where Freddy and Dennis lived. They were my playmates when I was a little older. What fun we had building forts in the scrub, playing in the mud of the dams, and in the sweet smelling newly cut sawdust, and building cubby houses with the off-cut palings from the mill. Sadly, my playmates left when the mill closed.

A neighbour, Ben Hindle called occasionally. The back was always worn out of his shorts, and when he turned to go, he used his hat to cover the holes. Two large pet sheep roamed about. My sister and I were afraid of them as they used to butt us over.

I was a very frightened child, and had bad dreams, and times of distress at night. I still recall a dream I had about hell, and the darkness and fire are very vivid. My father would smack me for telling lies. For him it was a moral issue, which it is for grownups. In later years I have understood it to be a

normal part of a child's development. A number of early photos of me show a young child sitting with the chooks. It was lonely for me being the eldest. Most of my memories though are happy ones. The warmth of the kitchen, the freedom I had, the love and concern of my parents, the sense of nature and the bush, the golden wattle, gathering eggs from the chooks nests, the natural sandpit, the dogs, rabbits, kangaroos, the cows, sheep and horses are all notable memories

I lived in this home for the first ten years of my life. In 1947 my father did a deal with Ben Hindle and swapped the house, now known as old Iona, for a 1280-acre block of land that was called "Bens". In that year we shifted over the road to the "new" Iona, where I lived for the next ten years.

Overall my parents did their best for me.

Over the Millbank road from old Iona was the usual 1280-acre block of land called "Gowan Lea" meaning "Daisy Flat". Apart from the flat areas there were two iron bark ridges that were a good shelter for stock during winter. There were five paddocks: Eastern, Western, Middle, Well, Wooly, and House paddocks. Early settlers dug a 120 foot well into an underground stream that ran underneath and across the Middle and Well paddocks. A government bore was placed where the stream departed the Well paddock. We all enjoyed holding the small end of a three-foot-long oak twig and walking about until the twig twisted in the direction of the flow of water underground. Some said it was imagination or superstition, but it was all normal for our family.

The Gowan Lea house was originally built two stories, and there was no other like it for miles around. It was lowered to one story to save walking up and down stairs. The floor of the original upstairs room measuring twenty feet by twenty feet was supported by beautiful hardwood timbers twelve by two inches and twenty feet long. The eventual plan was a bedroom and lounge in the center with a verandah running right around with a kitchen, dining room, bathroom and two bedrooms enclosed in the verandah.

The Clark family shifted from Old Iona into this house in 1947 and with the added income from the increased wool price, a lot of effort went into making this a really good home. Logs were cut on a saw bench to provide

timber for the additions. A bedroom and an office were added to the back, the rotting timbers of the front verandah were replaced, the garden was extended, and new fruit trees planted. The house was painted. The single garage was expanded to make room for three more car spaces, and a welding and power room added.

A house was moved from Dick Clarks block, and this became the school teacher's home, and later a workman and his family lived in it.

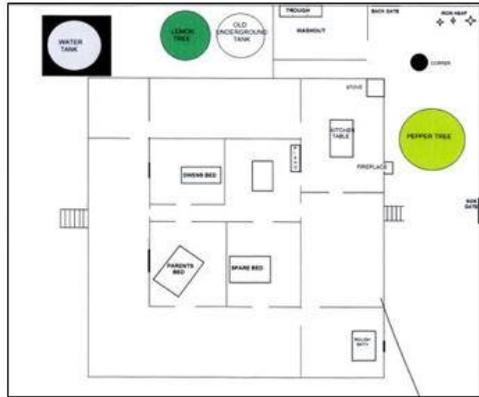
Another house and shed was shifted from old Iona and with additions became the shearer's quarters. Later a modern chook house was built. The small shearing shed was built larger to cope with the shearing of a larger mob of sheep. Rain water from the house and shed roofs filled tanks and an underground stone tank that was concreted. The garden was watered with water from a nearby dam that had been doubled in size. The water was pumped via a hand pump that had been modified and was now driven by a belt from the Lister engine that also drove the lighting generator. Dam water was also used for the septic system that we built.

My Father was ever creative as a handyman and did things well and cheaply. It cost money for tradesmen, so it was only with a problem he couldn't fix, that he paid a tradesman. He watched the electrician who wired up the twelve-volt lighting system, saw how it was done and wired up the thirty-two-volt system and the one-hundred-and-ten-volt tennis court lighting.

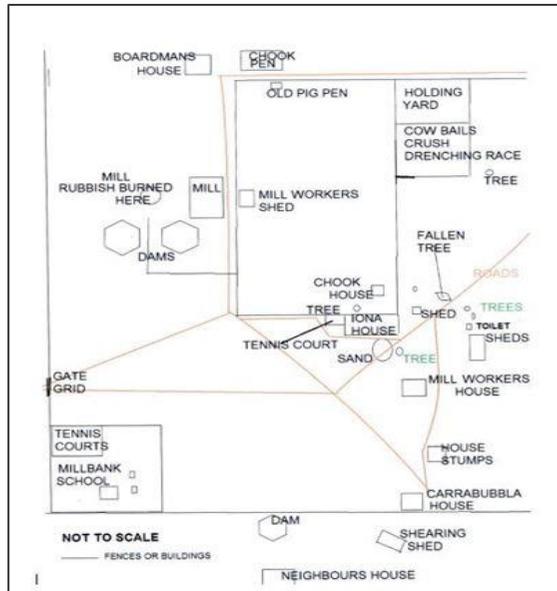
For fourteen years he worked to have enough land to be successful on what was considered to be poor Kogan country. The improvements he made to his home, the other buildings, the fences, the dams, and clearing scrub, as well as his management of stock meant he could sell it all in 1961, proud of what he had achieved.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

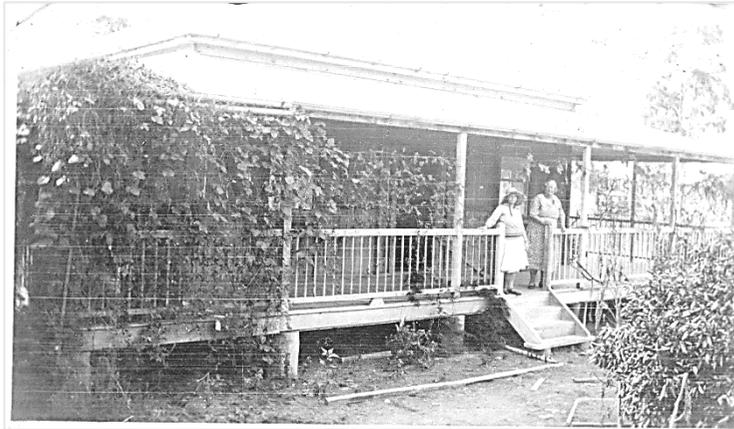


IONA HOUSE PLAN



IONA AND SURROUNDINGS

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



Old Iona with Nellie and Grandma Clark 1934



New Iona formerly Gowan Lea 1961



OWEN'S FIRST PLAYMATES



OWEN'S FIRST CAR

LITTLE BOY LOST

She rang the phone in panic.

“Come on Jan, answer your phone!”

It seemed ages but eventually someone said “Hello”.

“Owens gone, and I can’t find him”.

Owen was a three-year-old who mostly played in the house with toys and in a red pedal car that he pedaled in a circuit around the house verandah. He also played outside the fence that was around the house. He was the only child at this time and had no playmates. The nearest neighbours and a saw mill were four hundred yards away, where Jan lived.

Owen was very much alone apart from his parents. A number of photos show Owen with his playmates, the chooks. He had been caught by his mother eating the wheat and milo thrown out to feed the chooks. His other friend was the family dog who was also lonely, and playful.

His mother would work in the washout in concrete tubs with washing that was boiled in a copper, as here she could keep an eye on her son.

Today while washing the telephone rang in the house, so she went to answer it and talked for some minutes with her mother. She checked on some soup cooking on the stove and put some wood on as the fire had burned down. The porridge saucepan in the sink needed washing so she cleaned it, before getting back to her job outside in the washout.

She looked out to where she saw her son last, and he wasn’t there. She called: no answer. She went out and looked up and down the fence. She looked up towards the cow yard. No result. Roads went off in four different directions. She quickly went a short distance down each one. “I was only gone a little while” she thought, “He couldn’t have gone very far.”

She looked for tracks and found some along the road heading towards the school.

“I’d better let my husband know” she thought, “before I go off looking.” So she quickly rang Jan.

“Let Roy know Owen is lost. I’ve found some tracks leading off to the school. If I can’t find him, I’ll need help with a search.”

She quickly hung up the phone and headed along the school road. Finding further tracks spurred her on. Two hundred yards along, the road went off to the right. No sign of him that way so she continued straight on towards the school. The grass covered the ground so there were no tracks.

Then she saw the family dog in the distance, shaking himself after a swim in the neighbour’s dam.

A shiver of fear shook her. Then with great relief she saw him sitting down just short of the dam.

Relieved she ran towards him. He was crying. She grabbed him and hugged him, now very relieved he was safe and sound. Looking closer she saw he was sitting in a bunch of karkie prickles.

The story became clear. Owen had followed the dog, the dog thought he was going somewhere so he went on ahead with Owen following. Along the road and across the grass they went, the dog heading for a swim. Owen followed and stepped into a patch of prickles, got prickles in his feet, sat down and got prickles in his bottom. There his mother found him crying.

She carried him back to the road where her husband was waiting. He took them both home and went back to the saw mill to cancel the search party that was ready to go at a moment’s notice.



MY FIRST RIDE ON A HORSE

I fell off. The common saying regarding learning to ride a horse was “You have to have three busters before you can say you can ride a horse. My first buster was when I was 6 or 7. My father wanted me to ride Tony. I didn’t want to and protested. He said, “Give it a try” and lifted me up into the saddle and gave me the reins.

Some horses are quiet like Maisie. She was partly draft horse and was either slow or lazy or both. The rider had to kick her or use spurs to get her to canter. Galloping wasn’t her thing. Tony was spirited. As a six-year-old he loomed large, not just large but huge. On his back looked like twenty feet from the ground rather than about five. “Hang on to the saddle” encouraged my father.

There was a leather strap on the saddle, plaited between two small metal anchor points. I was scared. I didn’t want to ride a horse. “Turn him around” said my father. I gave a half-hearted pull on one rein. This was Tony’s cue to move. He swung around rather quickly and started a canter. I hung on for a couple of canters, lost balance and fell off. Most of my weight landed on my left arm. I got up crying and holding my arm.

My arm was examined and declared to be “not broken” I eventually cried out my fear and shame at failing and falling off. Later I learned to ride on Masie. Along with being quiet or lazy Maisie was smaller and easier to get on. I felt most at home with a saddle. I could ride bare back but never as well as the Baker kids who always rode horses bare back and had lots of practice riding four miles to school and four miles home each week day. It was torture on one’s bottom when a horse is trotting so the rider went from a walk to a canter as quickly as possible.

I am glad I learned to ride as I have many pleasant memories being in the saddle.



RIDING THE BOUNDARY FENCE

Pearl is a big, black horse. Not a black beauty, as described in the book of that name. Rather, tending towards a big black monster. Strong: a suspicious look in her dark eyes, with a warning: "Don't mess with me!!"

Some who rode her learnt this the hard way. Whether it was her swayback, sensitivity, or a cussed temperament, who knows?

Pearl took a walk to the front gate to get the saddle girth into a comfortable spot under her belly. How she got this message across to riders originally is a mystery, but those who rode her for the first time were given the time honoured and important message,

"Make sure you walk her to the front gate, before you get her to canter!"

Brian Kinnane, a young and adventurous school teacher from Brisbane was given but did not heed the message. He pushed her into a canter straight-away.

Pearl (if she could speak) said, "I'll teach this young fellow to mess with me", and promptly ducked her head and kicked up her tail and he hit the ground, fortunately, in some sand. She stopped, and stood nearby, nibbling grass, watching. He stood up, brushed himself down, checked himself over, straightened out his clothes, and tried to restore his dignity.

My mother's middle name was Pearl. Along with the horse she had an unusual habit. When away from home she would always want to go home. Pearl, the horse, no matter where she was in a paddock, was always pulling on the reins in such a way as to alter the direction of her head towards home.

With her large frame, she was not as zippy as the smaller horses, and hard to maneuver, so at times needed some spur to keep her mind on the job at hand, particularly when mustering cattle. Still Pearl, with her limitations accepted, was a good horse. She was not fazed by a cracking whip, a twig broken from a tree, a roll of wire around her neck, or odd stuff in the saddle bags, like wire strainers, pliers, or an axe with the handle sticking out.

So, it was that on this horse, that I took my turn to ride the boundary fence. It was two miles through Iona, one mile through Cameron's back paddock, and another two miles through "Bens" to get to our part of the boundary fence.

All internal stock fences were different. They were built with five or six plain wires threaded through holes bored through cypress pine posts, and strained tight. The wires were spaced with smaller distances apart at the bottom than at the top, to keep the sheep from squeezing through.

The boundary fence encompassed a number of farming properties, and each farmer was responsible for their section of the boundary fence. Dingoes were on the outside: sheep inside. Riding the fence was meant to keep it that way. Our responsibility was eight miles long. The fence was anything from five feet six inches to seven feet high, mainly consisting of wire netting with plain wire as support, with one barbed wire at the very top. Posts were split from cypress pine, or iron bark trees. White ants will not eat these timbers. The bottom of the fence was logged with bull oak logs tied on with wire or stapled. The boundary fence rider had to check to see that the fence was intact.

If two old man kangaroos had a fight with one on each side of the fence, this could cause a hole that needed repair. If trees fell over the fence, the axe came from the saddle, to cut through it. If wires were broken, the wire and wire strainers were on hand.

The boundary fence was the outside barrier of a kind of corral. Dingoes were the enemy outside the fence, and inside was safety. Home was inside. To go shopping, to cricket or tennis, to Kogan, a village seven miles distance where there was a Post Office, a Hall, a School and Hotel, to go to Church or any business activity, meant passing through a licensed white gate in the boundary fence. A license from the local council was needed to put a gate on a government road. On the return journey, we entered through the same licensed white gate, to the safety of home.

The boundary fence was of such a construct it was very difficult to get over, under or through. Unless kangaroos used their brains and their skill, they end up crashing into the fence, especially if they were being chased. My father had the thrill of seeing a kangaroo at full speed jump the distance of

a cricket pitch, up and over a fence. Being rather bored on one occasion I decided to cause some excitement by chasing a kangaroo that was sitting next to a high section of the boundary fence. With me bearing down upon the kangaroo on horseback, I was amazed when the kangaroo took two small hops, and then with a giant leap, jumped up and over the fence. I stopped and measured the fence height. It was seven feet high. What a privilege to see such a feat!

The fence was not designed for people to get over. In fact, for people it is very difficult. The only spot to climb over is at a post, using the fence's supporting wires as uncomfortable steps. To reinforce the fact the fence is not supposed to be climbed there is no supporting wire in the top two to three feet. So, if a person tries with one foot precariously on the highest wire, to put a leg over the other side and slipped, the result to the crotch would be more than embarrassing.

The way to go is to put one foot on the highest supporting wire, place the other carefully in a space between the barbs of the top barbed wire. Then spring and push together so as to clear the top of the fence and fall the seven feet on to the ground on the other side. This is not advisable unless there is a real need to be on the other side of the fence or unless it's a show off trying to impress visitors.

Few people get up close and personal with barbed wire. There were three types in our fence. One type had been taken off other internal fences, when there was none available during the war years. After the war, Darnett's barbed wire, the kind used to coil in front of war trenches was sold with all the clips that caused the coiling. It was cheap and rusty in colour, and all the clips had to be undone with a screw driver, before it could be used as a straight piece of wire in a fence. The other more exciting alternative was to hook one end to a tree, and the other end to a truck, and pull until the clips were forced and zinged off into the air. The third type made after the war was new, shiny and sharp. It is only when a person got scratched with the sharp points, or had clothes snagged, that respect is delicately given to barbed wire.

The only way dingoes got through the fence was by digging an enormous hole underneath, or by climbing up the netting and somehow negotiating

the barbed wire at the top, leaving a telltale tuft of hair caught in the barbed wire.

Within this secure boundary fence was my home for twenty years. The address was Iona, Kogan Queensland, two hundred miles west of Brisbane, on an eight-thousand-acre property, which I shared with 3000 sheep, 100 head of cattle, 4 horses, 3 dogs, 1 brother, 1 sister and 2 parents and from time to time pet kangaroos and orphan lambs.

I felt loved and secure. Yet as I grew older the security grew more like the lonely prison variety. The other side of the licensed white gate was threatening in comparison to my home, and I responded with lots of fear and hidden excitement at the possibilities. I loved being on that farm yet quietly and secretly there grew within me, a conviction, a calling that I wouldn't end up being a farmer, so I took every opportunity to have the variety of experiences that the farm and district could give me and lived it to the full.



SAND FLIES

These flies are bad: really bad. They sting. They are nothing like the friendly bush fly that hitches a ride on your back when you are in the bush. These flies suck blood and they sting. On Iona, when it rained after a long dry spell, all the sand fly and mosquito eggs hatched. One day it was clear, the next the air was humming with swarming insects. They all sting.

Why are the cows swimming in the creek with just their noses poking out? Because of the sand-flies and mosquitoes: they bite. And they sting.

Why are the kangaroos in the dam with their whole bodies under water? To escape from the sand flies and mosquitoes, because they bite, and they sting.

It's hot, so why are the people who venture outside the house dressed in long sleeves and long pants? They even have a net over their hat that is tucked inside their shirt collar. They look like a beekeeper at the hive. And they are carrying a fire bucket with smoking cow dung in it. It's to protect and deter sand flies and mosquitoes. They bite, and they sting.

At Iona we light a fire in the horse paddock in a large dry log, so horses can stand in the smoke: they stay there in the smallest wisp of smoke and are not interested in eating. They are trying to escape the sand flies and mosquitoes that bite and sting.

One type of mosquito is small and black. It sucks blood. It stings. Another is called a "scotch grey" because it has tartan like stripes on its body. It is large. Was this the mosquito Banjo Patterson was referring to when he described a mosquito that could "suck a man dry at a sitting"? They suck a lot of blood. And they sting. Queensland sand flies are small, under 5 mm, different from those found at Milford Sound and Stuart Island in New Zealand. They are huge, almost 10 mm. They suck blood and they sting.

The sting is caused by the saliva and anticoagulant they inject when they pierce the skin. New comers to the area were warned that the first stings could swell and cause inflammation, reacting much like an inoculation. Stings occurring in the following year will not cause such a reaction. One

child at school had so many stings, he suffered in health being lethargic and tired from the poison.

The itchiness is maddening to both animals and people. While almost impossible it is better not to scratch, as scratching makes things worse.

Good covering dress is still important, but modern repellents have replaced smoke, and products are now available to help with itching and healing.

Sand flies are only active during daylight hours, and after a few days when they have had their fill of blood, the female lays eggs that at Iona waited for the next lot of rain when the stinging would suddenly begin all over again.

PS. If you have scratched during the reading of this article, you have the message.



DOGS AT IONA

Kewpie was the first dog I remember. He was a golden kelpie.

It is virtually impossible to control sheep without a dog. Perhaps through the idealistic lenses of a child I saw Kewpie as one of the best sheep dogs working sheep on our farm. My father thought he was great too as Kewpie would muster the Woolly paddock of forty acres without supervision and bring a mob of sheep to be shorn to the shearing shed yards. I bonded with Kewpie and used to feed and play with him.

One day Kewpie got sick, badly sick with distemper, and he lay in the cool of an earth walled building. His breathing was strange. Next day Kewpie was dead. I was very sad and hurt deeply but wouldn't or couldn't come to tears. Kewpie, folded in a hessian mattress that had been his death bed was buried behind the shed. A small post marked his grave.

Lassie was a red kelpie. One of a litter born at our next-door neighbour's house that was named Moorilda seven miles from our house! Lassie was secured in a wooden box for the journey home. At the Wambo Creek crossing, the Chev stalled, and the engine refused to start. Already dark and five miles from home, my father decided to walk home and come back with a neighbour to collect the lifeless Chev and Lassie the following day. Picking the direction of our boundary fence and a star, he walked in the darkness through thick scrub until he reached the fence, which he climbed and arrived home at a late hour.

Next day as planned, with the neighbour's help, the Chev and lassie arrived home. Lassie did not have the skill of Kewpie but she was very obedient and worked hard and would bark when commanded, a very good characteristic when moving sheep. Her value over the years could not be estimated. When old, she enjoyed a good retirement. But she suffered the ravages of old age, arthritis, was partly deaf and blind.

One day she was resting under an old vehicle that began to be towed. She was run over and badly injured. My father was in tears as he saw her, and as he said to his workman, go and shoot that dog and bury her, I can't do it. If there is a dog heaven lassie would be there.

With Nigger my father was tricked. Advertised with good breeding, he came as a pup. When older and ready to work, he was taken out to a mob of sheep. A well-bred dog will ring around the sheep. Nigger when released ran straight into the mob and scattered sheep in all directions. He also bit the sheep. To save him from a bullet, he was muzzled, and later had his eye teeth broken off, and used as a yard dog. Here he was very useful, barking and walking on sheep's backs. Being a large dog, we children would attack a rope to his collar and to our bike and he would pull us along. Surprisingly an infection at the very tip of his tail shortened it by three inches.

Dogs were well fed with food scraps, meat from sheep, or kangaroo carcasses. They were chained every night and released every morning. On frosty nights they strangely seemed to sleep out rather than in the kennel provided. In hot weather to prevent sore feet, leather dog boots were made to prevent blisters. When only using horses, it was hard on the dogs as they had to run all the way. Today they will ride on motor bikes until they are needed.

Sheep dogs have different temperaments to cattle dogs. Sheep dogs have been described as a religious man's dog, because as soon as his master swears in anger, the dog will go home. The dog knows from experience that when his master gets angry he is in for a belting. Cattle dogs can cope with angry handlers and will still lick hands in spite of being belted.

Dogs didn't last long if they had no car sense, so it was important to train them to get out of the way. When walking with the dog it was important to kick them out of the way, so they would not be run over by a car. With no vets and no spaying, dogs had litters of pups, and unless someone wanted them they were killed immediately with a hit on the head. While our dogs were fed well, they also found hen's eggs tasty and had to be stopped eating them.

When my father was older he bought a red kelpie and border collie and enjoyed training them to work with the sheep.

DRENCHING: THE OLD AND THE NEW.

I saw my father slowly drenching in the old way with an old style funnel. The funnel was made of copper, and the drench container was an old battery case with the centre removed. The copper and battery case were chosen as the drench contained acid. The funnel was dipped into the drench and held till the excess ran out of the hole leaving a dose of two ounces in the base of the funnel. A finger was placed to plug the hole and the pointed end put into the sheep's mouth over the tongue and held, till the dose had been given. Note the teeth marks in a following photo on an old funnel. This process was painfully slow and labour intensive.

After each sheep was drenched the case had to be slid on a wide piece of timber that ran the full length of the drenching race.

Drenching the new style (in 1950's)

The new drenching gun had a bag made out of rubber worn on the back, with a tube running from the bottom to a hand piece that delivered an adjustable amount of drench. It was easy to use and efficient, which it needed to be as 3,500 sheep had to be drenched each month.

There were three particular worms. The barber's pole worm, so named because it had a spiral along its body like that on a barber's pole. This worm is a blood sucker. If a sheep was weak, had a swelling under the chin, and had little or no colour in the arteries of the eye, the diagnosis was barber's pole worm.

Another worm was a nodular worm, so called because of the nodules it caused on the stomach walls. The nodules cause the sheep to lose condition. It is very hard to diagnose from outward signs, so every sheep that died or was killed for meat was examined for worms to see if more drenching was needed.

Later on, there was a black scour worm or hair worm. This worm could only be seen with a magnifying glass.

The first drench was bluestone arsenic and hydrochloric acid. Later the acid was replaced with Nicotine sulphate.

In later times phenothiazine was recommended as a drench. My father was told that it was an army dye. The drench poison had to be strong enough to

kill worms found in various places of a sheep's four stomachs without poisoning the sheep.

It was important that a sheep only had one dose as with a double dose of the drench the sheep would die of poison.

Dispatched through sheep droppings worm eggs hatched in a short time on to the grass. Most worms would die if the sheep were grazed on a rotational basis. This meant that all the sheep were in one paddock for a week, and then it was spelled for six weeks, before it was grazed again. So, every week sheep were mustered and put into the next paddock. This reduced the worm numbers and their effect.

Drenching was necessary to keep the sheep healthy, and healthy sheep grow more wool.



A DROWNED RAT

Pearl and I had delivered a mob of sheep to Evandale. Evandale was the name of a paddock four miles from the sheep yards, made difficult as the mob had to go through 5 gates to get there.

Rumblings in the west, from black clouds, got louder and louder, as we got closer to the final gate. With the sheep safely delivered, we turned for home, hoping to get there without getting wet. Half a mile down the road, the wind started, followed by the rain as the heavens opened.

With no rain coat, dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and shorts, I headed for a tree. I tried to keep dry on the leeward side of the large, dry, partially blackened, tree. Looking back, it was a foolish place to be. Lightening often strikes trees like this very one sheltering me. My hope of a passing shower was in vain. Hiding behind the tree, I couldn't entirely escape as water fell from the trunk and the wet branches above, and the direction of the falling rain altered with the wind. Rain water soon soaked the dry soil, holes filled, joined together and started flowing. Pouring rain continued as the dark western sky showed no lightness and let up from the falling rain.

The decision was made. I would get wet. I mounted into a wet saddle, and immediately felt the full force of the driving rain. At first, it was the sting of large, wet, single drops on my skin, followed by a cold wet tickle running on my skin, becoming a nuisance of wetness as my clothes and skin were soaked.

Before the storm the day was hot and humid. The salt of earlier sweat mixed with rainwater stung my eyes, until the salt washed away. Water dripped from the brim of my soaked hat, from my nose and ears and ran downwards on my clothes, arms and legs. The horse walked at first, but then I decided the sooner we got home the better, so the horse was urged into a canter along a road of two-wheel tracks that were now with water up to six-inch-deep flowing gutters. The extra speed made individual raindrops hit the skin harder, notably my face, and especially my eyes, which were half shut, and by tilting my head forward, the brim of my hat protected at least one, if not both squinting eyes.

Pearl is a large horse, and when I was younger, I had great difficulty getting a foot into the stirrup. Pearl had a very annoying habit of continually pulling her head around in the direction of home. The rider had to keep the reins tight in the chosen direction, else she would turn for home. Today I gave her, her head. We wanted to be home as soon as possible.

As she laboriously cantered along in the water, her hooves came down forcefully, and sent water and the sand underneath spraying in all directions. The sand sprayed the full height of the horse and caused irritation and discomfort between the skin of my bare legs and the leather saddle.

Through the gate to home! Pearl was relieved of her saddle and bridle. I was the “drowned rat” ready for a good bath, warm clothes, and a good meal in a dry house.



STORM

A thunderstorm bearing down is beautifully terrifying.

To fully experience the 'before', 'during' and 'after' of a large thunderstorm, wide open spaces, and a full clear sky dome is needed, as in Queensland.

City dwellers don't really see a storm in its fullness. Something is lost with houses, and buildings, bitumen and poles. A storm does not need the background of city noise and life. It has a full cast, and wonderful orchestra of its own, and needs no outside interference.

A thunder storm develops as a result of hot, moist, air rising, forming a cumulus cloud, a cloud with a straight bottom and a billowing growing top. With continual growth, a massive, black, turbulent nimbus cloud develops further into an anvil shaped storm at least ten thousand feet thick, the top composed of ice crystals.

Wind blows towards the storm and feeds the frontal roll cloud and then ascends carrying water droplets upwards to super cooled regions of freezing temperatures. Here water can freeze into ice crystals that will fall and melt into rain. But if updrafts in the storm carry the ice upwards again and again the ice grows in size. When the weight of falling crystals becomes too heavy for the updraft, they fall to the ground as hail. The greater the force of the updraft currents the larger the hailstones that fall.

Air currents blowing into the storm rise upwards in the front of the storm, and downwards further back. No pilot in their right mind would fly through a thunderstorm, unless in a specially equipped aircraft with radar to guide the pilot around danger.

As it comes closer, the lightning and thunder, the powerful swirling of the clouds, the colors, the roaring winds, the green aspect to the sky warning of hail, are menacingly and attractively threatening. All understand why dogs and little children hide under beds.

Watching, one hears the roaring of the wind crashing through the trees and scrub some time before the wind arrives.

I was afraid of the wind.

My grandparent's house had the roof blown completely off into their garden. The terror of it still haunts me. Their ceilings were supported by timbers to stop them collapsing. The rain soaked everything, and I never forget the odd sounds of the wet piano that had a dried out and it produced a funny sound.

My fears of the wind, the creaking and straining of the wooden house, the threat of the roof being blown off, meant that before a storm arrived, I would race around shutting all the doors and windows, as though I magically managed to keep the house intact. I must have, because the house remained intact and is still standing 50 years and many storms later.

Lightening, nature's spectacular fireworks can be seen at a distance of hundreds of miles. It adds valuable nitrogen to the atmosphere and impacts on ions altering the feel of the air. It expresses itself in myriads of ways. Sheet lightning lit up the whole sky as if it were day in a storm I remember, on the Sunshine coast.

Have you ever seen lightning strike?

My father saw a small strike on a dry tree that he describes as a puff of smoke. I have seen the results of an intense strike with a tree blown into many pieces ("smashed to smithereens" is the local expression) and strewn around a wide area.

Lightning gives its warning. When hair starts rising on end, as in experiencing static electricity, it is important to throw away golf sticks etc. and fall to the ground and be as small as possible till the static effects go away. To be safe, shun the usual shelters under a tree or under anything out in the open. If you are very near a lightning strike, the sound of thunder is spontaneous with the flash, and the noise of the lightening has a fascinating fizzle sound. During the storm, wind, rain, hail, frightening lightning and thunder are characteristics that will continue till the storm passes or blows itself out.

After the storm is a fascinating time. I wish I had bought a painting entitled "After the Storm" in 1964. A beautiful painting, it depicted the eerie light, the wet rocks and trees. One could almost hear the tinkling of the trickling water, running over rocks and rippling into a muddy stream. The painting

seemed to play a beautiful noise in the new silence following the storm dancing away in the distance.

It's a unique time. Everything is shocked, soaked and sodden, and not yet recovered to usual sounds and activities.

There is calm, all seems settled, a clear and clean sense of peace with all danger, noise and turmoil gone, the earth, the heavens peaceful, and relaxing, after a tumultuous, orgasmic experience.



During war time, fuel for cars was scarce and expensive. It was rationed, and each person could only buy the amount of fuel allocated according to the fuel tickets given by the government. So as was the custom in many countries during the war, gasifiers were made to make a wood gas that would easily take the place of petrol. In my experience this was called a charcoal gas producer.

The gas was taken from the charcoal in a special unit that was attached to the vehicle, at the rear in my memory. The container was filled with charcoal and a fire was lit to start the process. The wood gas needed to be cleaned of wood tar or else it would cause trouble clogging up the carburetor etc. This was done by passing the gas through water. The result was an efficient power source, but the attached unit looked odd, and the smoke and soot that came out of the chimney as it travelled along the road was fascinating to behold. As with all fires, it had to be regularly cleaned. All sorts of wood could be used, but charcoal was better as it had been charred by fire.

With an eye on making some income, my father decided to make charcoal. He dug a pit about twelve feet long and six feet wide with straight sides that were bricked with six hundred bricks. (I know there were 600 as he kept good records.)

Nearby scrub had been cleared and bull oak trees had been ringbarked and were dry and mostly still standing. He cut these trees and loaded them on to a wagon drawn by our draft horse Farmer and put them into the pit and stacked them as high as possible.

They were then lighted, and the stack burned down to ground level. Then old roofing iron was placed across the top and covered in soil so as to snuff out the mass of coals that were burning. With no air getting into the pit, over time the fire and heat were no more, and the result was chunks of charcoal. These were placed in wheat bags, sewn up and taken to Napier Brothers in Dalby. From August 1944 to May 1945, 478 bags of charcoal were produced resulting in 77 pounds of income, a pleasing income at that time.

GOODBYE FARMER

Cruel were the days before we arrived: cruel was this day. The bare grassless circle, the different dryness in the dry heaps of dung spread around, said it all. His recent time had been spent with no water or grass. His ever-weakening body had undermined his efforts as he struggled to get to his feet. This tragic life and death picture grew larger, the closer we got. His once powerful body was now depleted into an image soon to be skin and bones.

The tenor of his greeting was that he was glad to see us.

It was if he said, "I have helped you many times, please help me now".

True, he had lived his purpose well. Large in size, strong in muscle, obedient in command, he pulled heavy loads with a good heart and spirit. But time worked on him with its usual cruel, aging process.

Recollections paraded past. In dimmed memory of childhood, he trotted merrily along pulling a sulky. He needed no whip, just a slight flick of the reins on his rump, accompanied with a "Gee up Farmer," and without hesitation, he jogged along, as though he enjoyed the opportunity. Left or right was easy, and he would stop with a "Whoa Farmer," and a light restraint on the reins.

When pulling a plough, the front of his hoofs would dig into the earth, and with his neck strongly in his collar, and chains straining, his posture forward, a good furrow was ploughed. He was the tractor when there was no tractor. He pulled the wagon loaded with dry bull oak logs to the charcoal pit.

His presence and work were more humane and personal done by a living animal for living people rather than a steel noisy machine.

The last monument to his working life is a level tennis court. The land to the west side front of the house looked level for a tennis court, but on measuring, it was found to be sloping about eighteen inches over the length needed.

Many times Farmer pulled the small two handled scoop, filled from the higher end with dirt that was deposited at the lower end.

He then completed his task by dragging metal wagon tires and a solid piece of timber followed by mesh and netting to complete the final leveling. Faithfully and well delivered this was his contribution to the Iona lighted tennis court.

Because of his service, to be sold to the knackery was not even a thought. He would 'retire'; or in the horse vernacular, be 'put out to grass' on the property where he had served.

Free to run with the other horses, the cattle or sheep, he would often be off on his own, the only draft horse on the property, grazing and sleeping his time away. With eight thousand acres in which to roam and much of it being scrub, it was easy for him to be not seen for some time. He was found this day in Cameron's paddock, as we were out driving in the utility.

Glad to see us as he was, we were sad at his state. With rope, and pulling with the utility, we did all we could to get him to his feet.

Alas, all our efforts were in vain. Too weak and too old, he slumped back into a crumpled heap. With the sadness of all the memories of happier times and good work done, my father shot him. Blood oozed out of the small hole where the bullet entered his brain.

His once proud head dropped, he breathed some final gurgling breaths, and his nerve twitching body was finally still. His time on earth was done. Farewell Farmer!!

His whitened bones now lie scattered in Cameron's front paddock and when they finally disintegrate all that is left is the memory of a good draft horse named 'Farmer'.



SOAKED TO THE SKIN

Sheep have lice, small parasites that eat wool. Unchecked lice destroy the farmer's livelihood. To kill lice a strong poisonous liquid must soak the sheep's wool to the skin. It is essential every sheep be included. The old way of doing this was to dig and concrete a large hole that sheep would swim through.

Schonrock's dip was the community dip, with parallel sides, measuring a metre wide and ten meters long. At the entrance is a narrow wooden ramp leading upwards. Sheep walk or are pushed (mostly pushed) up the ramp to the highest point that dropped sharply into the dip. A swinging door, hinged at the top, hid the sudden drop from the approaching sheep. Sheep slide or fall into the dip so that their whole body, even the top of their head is soaked. A forked stick is used to push their head under. The sheep swim the length of the dip, climb up the rough steps designed to make it easy for them to get a footing, and into a draining yard. With most of the excess liquid drained off, the wet sheep are released into a bigger yard, and then driven back to their paddock.

To maintain the strength of the poison and the level of the liquid in the dip, after a certain number of sheep are dipped, measured amounts of poison and water are added.

The sheep dip and yards at Schonrocks were only used for one purpose, so sheep associated this yard with an unpleasant experience. When driven to that particular yard they sensed what was coming and resisted.

A workman described this resistance as "the sheep having their hand brake on three pens back from the dip". Dipping was difficult with dogs barking and men yelling, as sheep were yarded and pushed into the dip.

Care had to be taken that no sheep drowned, particularly the weaker ones. There is a danger if too many sheep are in the dip at the same time, or if one falls in backwards and tries swimming out the wrong way, or if sheep land on top of each other. A man with the forked stick is there to rescue and guide sheep out.

Cooper's Sheep dip was the product used. It was a yellow powder and contained a lot of arsenic and came in a rectangular cardboard box 18 inches by 6 inches and had a peculiar smell. With the dipping finished, the dip was baled with buckets, and cleaned for the next farmer to use. Being arsenic, nothing grew where the baled dip water ran away.

'In' ground dipping is a difficult process so when money was available, a new modern alternative was chosen. A spray dip was built at the exit of three races where sheep were drenched once a month. Placed strategically, each sheep ran through the inoperative dip every month, so reducing resistance. With purchased raw materials, we did the construction ourselves. The new dip had two parallel corrugated iron walls 1½meters high and 2 meters apart, a flat concrete base, with corrugated iron doors at both ends. An extra netting exit gate was part of the design to trick sheep into thinking they were going out to freedom as at other times. At dipping time, they were caught behind the shut gate.

Pipes were laid on the concrete base with sprays fitted and positioned, so that when operating, all of the sheep's underbellies were soaked. Above and central were a set of sprays, belt driven to spray from side to side, to soak the sheep from above. A circular reservoir 7 feet deep and 4 feet in diameter was dug and concreted.

At the bottom of the reservoir, a hole 18 inches square and 18 inches deep was needed to place the pump foot valve. The rock at this point was too difficult to penetrate with a crow bar, so dynamite was used.

The heart of the operation was a pump driven by a belt from the pulley of a tractor. Using different taps, the dip was mixed, sprayed with full pressure under the sheep, then over the sheep until they were adequately soaked, with the excess draining back to the reservoir. When the whole mob had been dipped, all the liquid was pumped out and everything cleaned ready for the next years dipping. A far easier process!!



IONA BLACKSMITH SHOP

“There’s some scrap iron back there,” my father said as he slowed the old Chev, turned around and drove back to pick it up. He picked up any piece of iron. Iron from an old sulky, bulky bits abandoned by a bullocky, when his bullock team was needed no more. The wagon grave yard yielded scrap that could come in handy one day. Old T model Ford parts, wind mill metal, pipes, even bits of an old sewing machine were archived in an iron heap, handy to the door of the slab building called “The Blacksmith Shop”.

A large anvil, with hammers and tools to shape red hot iron, stood proudly on a base cut from a large, solid iron bark log, and placed in an even larger hole in the earthen floor. The bellows with leather and wooden lungs, held together with round artistic rivets, with a pumping handle, carved from the limb of a tree, was ready to blow air into a clump of charcoal in the centre of the forge, constructed with a lot of local stones and cement. Nearby was a rough wooden bench with a large vice attached, and an equally rugged, odd, and triangular shaped table, if it could be called a table (it was made from three logs joined together and had no centre), and supported by three posts, again buried deeply in the dirt floor.

As if to befriend the bellows in their sucking and blowing, next to them was a hit and miss petrol engine with its own noises of sucking and blowing, banging, popping and rattling and producing unpleasant smells. A small boy couldn’t help a secret grin and chuckle, as he mused on bodily functions, while the grown-ups continued ever so seriously in getting their work done. The noisy monster, through belts and an overhead shaft, drove a mechanical drill. Designed to be muscle powered, a belt had been put on the main wheel, with the handle still attached so that a helping hand could be given when the drilling was difficult.

This was the set up in the blacksmith shop, ready for iron, collected from ‘who knows where’ to be recycled and reshaped, into gate hinges, iron gates, scoops and the like. And the cost! Mostly in human effort and time!

He was fairly deaf. My father shouted to get him to hear and often gave up and wrote the message on paper. Charley had one good arm. The other was a stump about four inches from his shoulder. He told some farfetched story, that even as children we didn't believe, as to how he lost his arm.

His story was that he'd been in a brawl with a couple of "Poms" who were working with him in a garden and a fight erupted. The weapons were rakes and shovels, and in the process, Charley was hit in the head with a rake, and he proudly showed us his battle scar, on his forehead, just under his hair line. His arm was hit with a shovel so violently that it was amputated inches from the shoulder joint. He loved to embellish the story with how he smashed and wounded the others in the brawl. This was far more exciting than what we believe happened.

We thought he lost his arm and got the head wound in a car accident.

Charley was our painter, a very good painter and even with one good arm and a stump he managed his ladders and planks of wood, paint tins and brushes without help. He prepared with sandpaper and putty. He talked of linseed oil, and sienna and burnt umber and red lead which left us children in wide eyed wonderment as we hadn't seen a painter before or heard of such ingredients.

Charley mixed his paints to the right consistency and told us children how important it was to fill every crack with paint and then to wipe the brush over in one sweep for a smooth finish. And we'd sit and watch him at work. It was fascinating to see how he would put the handle of the wet paint brush under his stump to carry it. In spite of his handicap Charley was an excellent painter, and while a little slower, our father and mother were very pleased with the results.

He boarded with us while on the job and slept in the shearing quarters and had meals at the family table. To see how he ate his food, kept us wide eyed at the table. Our mother would cut up the large food so he didn't have to cut it up. Being very deaf added to our fascination with Charley. One ear was

only partially deaf, and he would turn that ear towards my father who would shout the message into it.

We were all sitting around the table one evening eating normally, when there was a sound made by our cat under the table.

“I wonder what’s got into that cat,” our mother said, “It’s making odd noises.” Louder growling cat sounds were then heard. Then mum moved her chair back in a hurry. “That cat: it scratched me.”

The cat under the table was still making angry and spitting noises. Dad looked under the table and then shouted at Charley,

“You have your foot on the cat’s tail.”

He had no idea what dad was talking about. Frustrated Dad shouted even louder. “Take your foot off the cat’s tail.”

The cat was glad Charley got the message, and when released, shot out from under the table.

Mum wasn’t really hurt. There was a moment of silence.

We all burst out laughing.



Eagles are magnificent birds, the envy of every glider pilot. They have seemingly endless energy and skill as they ride the thermals. Humans go to great expense and much training and effort to experience the joy that is the eagle's natural environment and experience. I see them in the distance and hope that their kind soars on forever.

My warm wishes to them now were not always reflected in my attitude. When lambs were being born at Iona, three enemies attacked them; crows, foxes and eagles. Lambs needed protection. I had seen the result of foxes attacking weak new born lambs. I had seen the cruelty of a crow's attack, picking out the eyes of weak and helpless sheep. But I had to take my father's word that eagles can glide down and pick up a new born lamb in their talons. Once I saw my father spur his horse to a gallop to frighten an eagle from the lambs. So, we carried a rifle to shoot or frighten the enemies whether on horseback or in a utility.

On one trip I saw an eagle in the top of a small dry tree. I stopped quickly, loaded the rifle, centred the cross hairs of the telescopic sight on the eagles' large form and pulled the trigger. It let out a death cry and fell to the ground. I was excited. I'd shot an enemy and saved lambs. My father would be pleased. I drove up to where the eagle lay. But my excitement was tinged with sadness as I suddenly viewed a magnificent bird lying dead, and never able to fly again. I picked it up, placed it in the back of the utility and drove home. My father was pleased. I was impressed by the large muscles in the eagle's chest that moved the large wings.

As a young man this was a trophy. I nailed the body with the wings outstretched to the shed wall, where we often nailed kangaroo skins. When it began to disintegrate I took it down and threw it into the rubbish tip.

Now as an older man, I look back with some regret that I took the life of a majestic bird. When I see them flying I send positive vibes to counteract my feelings of guilt at shooting a wedge tailed eagle.

MY OLD CHEV

My father bought a 1927 model Chev 4 in 1940 for 90 pounds. It was already 13 years old. Green in colour with a canvas hood, (one with an old rag top) its identity had been changed from a sedan to a utility.

During the war years rubber was scarce. Wooden blocks were shaped in a similar pattern to that of wagon wheels, wired to the car wheels and covered with an old tyre. At slow speeds this replaced tyres and tubes for many miles.

Usually mum and dad sat in the front seat and two children would fill the third space if one sat on the others knee, resulting with the usual sibling conflicts. With the plump lady from next door, it was a sardine squeeze with all three children sitting in the back, on the side bench like seats with feet on the floor.

Top speed was forty miles per hour, but with the roar of the engine, and the pressure of the wind blowing in our faces, it seemed more like eighty miles per hour. It was the family car for ten years, going to church, sixteen miles, going to tennis fourteen miles, and going shopping, eighty miles. During the week it was the work horse on the farm carrying wire, posts, drums and other assorted things.

Every year on the family holiday, it travelled two hundred miles to Aunties place at Woody Point. Leaving home very early in the morning, it travelled on poor roads, with very little bitumen, over two ranges of mountains to the sea at Moreton Bay. With many stops to cool and fill the boiling radiator, we arrived tired and excited twelve hours later at our destination, only to repeat the same process on the return journey. The brakes were poorly designed, and not very effective at the best of times, being mechanically operated by pads on the outside of the wheel drum, and being continually in contact with the drum, they wore out quickly. My father had a motto of "Never trust the brakes" and was a very careful driver, and thankfully we never had a serious accident. An alternate way of braking is to use the engine to slow the car down by engaging a low gear, a process known as "double-de-clutch".

Travelling once to visit neighbours who had shifted to another property, the road was unfamiliar. On rounding a corner, straight ahead was an unexpected gate and fence. As the brakes were of little use, dad “double-de-clutched” into the lowest gear, and tried the brake, but it was all in vain. The fence was too close. Dad aimed at a post with the front of the car spring. The car hit with a bang, the stop was sudden. The result was a bent bumper bar, a dented mudguard and a broken fence post. We backed off, kicked the dented mudguard that sprang back into place and continued on our way through the gate. The bumper bar was straightened when we returned home, and the story of our “prang” gave my father notoriety with the neighbours.

In 1950 the faithful old Chev 4 was replaced with a dodge utility. A workman drove it for two years while I was at school.

It became mine in January 1952. Through a daft transformation, it became a work horse on Iona full time. Iona was a property of eight thousand acres, seven miles across with many miles of fencing and fourteen paddocks. The Chev 4 was called in to be the transport.

Not being on main roads, it didn't need registration. Road worthies and safety checks hadn't been heard of. On this farm and at this time, the responsibility was on the farmer or the driver to keep everything going safely and well. Having travelled for 23 years the Chev had suffered from 'wear and tear'. The seat and doors loose on the chassis were removed to the tip. The radiator was supported by new stays. The wooden floor of the back was replaced with new timber and brought forward to provide a new, but uncomfortable wooden seat for the driver. The hood was torn and rotten and was dispensed with, leaving the old cabin area open to the weather. The rusted and holey muffler finally came off. The petrol supply to the engine was sucked from the main petrol tank to the engine via a vacuum process involving a vacuum tank. Satisfactory while working well, it was prone to breakdown, especially with the passing of the years. This was dispensed with. The main petrol tank was relocated from underneath, and secured to the side at the back, and the petrol flowed, per favour of gravity into the carburetor. The six-volt battery, never quite reliable and powerful enough to start the engine every time was also relocated and anchored to

where the passenger's feet used to rest in better times. This meant that a crank handle was needed every time to start the engine. (As you turn the key in a modern car you wouldn't believe this rigmarole)

This involved a special procedure and a check list.

1. Gear stick in neutral.
2. Petrol on.
3. Choke fully out.
4. Ignition off.
5. Turn the engine over with the crank handle at least four times in a clockwise direction. (This is to suck petrol into the cylinders)
6. Choke almost in.
7. Spark retarded. This is done by pulling the small lever on the right-hand side of the steering column as far as it can go in a down wards direction.
8. A small amount of throttle. This is done by pulling the small lever on the left-hand side of the steering column, a short distance down wards.
9. Now crank the engine, making sure when holding the crank handle, one's thumb was not grasping around the handle opposite to the fingers. The fingers and thumb were to be together on the one side as one turned the handle. If the engine backfired, meaning the engine fired but started turning backwards, the thumb could be badly hurt. Etched in my memory and on my fingernail is an injury I received on a cold morning, when in spite of cranking correctly the engine backfired and the metal crank handle hit against a metal spring with my finger in between.
10. When the engine comes to life, advance the spark and keep the engine revving. If the engine doesn't start, repeat the starting process. If there is a smell of petrol, the engine has received too much petrol. It has flooded. With the ignition switched off, and the throttle fully open, turn the engine over a number of times and then repeat the starting process with the choke in.

Each engine, like each person, has its own peculiarities, and through sensitive observation, and trial and error, car engines and drivers can relate well.

After being drenched while driving in rain, I decided my Chev needed a roof. With the back wooden support of the old hood, two sulky main springs, some old roofing iron and wire and with the help of a hammer to shape the iron, the Chev had a roof.

With large wheels, and being light weight, the Chev could be driven over logs and across rough ground. When I was working driving a bulldozer, the Chev carried drums of fuel, oil, grease, tools and accessories.

The day would begin at 7.30am and work ended at 5pm.

After finishing work on one occasion, I was driving home on a straight stretch of road about 25 mph. The Chev veered off to the left. I steered to the right. The wheel turned and turned to the right and the Chev kept off to the left. I realized the steering had disconnected. Looking up I saw a huge pine stump and the Chev was heading straight for it. From experience I knew that pine trees have huge roots, and I did not want to be in the Chev when it hit.

There was no door to stop me, so I rolled out and along the ground. I looked up to see the Chev continuing on. The stump had been burnt almost completely through and broke off. Going over logs and bushes, the drums and tools were tipped out and scattered. Eventually the Chev stopped with no real damage. After investigation I found the problem and did my best to fix it with wire.

Then, after recovering all the scattered drums and tools, the Chev reluctantly started, and we began slowly on the four miles to home. The steering disconnected twice more. As though offended the Chev became even more difficult to start. Eventually, because of the passing of time, and with darkness coming in, my father came looking for me.

Some parts were pirated from the other Chevs that had been bought for "spares" and soon we were travelling again.

For five years almost every working day, the Chev and I travelled to fences needing repairs, tractor work, bulldozing or something to do with stock. With a change of career, I left the farm behind. The hardest thing for me to leave was my old Chev. We had had so many adventures and done so much work together. In 1961, Iona was sold.

At the clearing sale, one item was an old Chev, described as a "bomb". "Any offers for the old bomb" said the auctioneer. No one responded. Surely someone will make me an offer.

"Ten pounds" said someone in the crowd." Ten pounds...any advance on ten pounds. If not ten pounds it is... Sold to George Went." When I heard that I

was sad, and a bit hurt. Feeling sentimental it seemed to be worth more than that to me. George used it for a while carting wood and bee hives.

Returning some years later, I enquired about the Chev. George had a habit of pulling things to pieces, and when I went to where he had lived, I discovered a few bits and pieces of my old Chev. They were spread out like bones from the carcass of a dead sheep. I took a couple of souvenirs, felt the sadness of memories past, said goodbye to an era gone and got back into a modern car and drove back to the city.



The night was the same. The chooks flew to their roosts in the pine trees, safe from designing foxes. The dogs were fed, and chained and settled down for the night. The usual evening peace after sundown, crept in, and was sealed over by quick darkness.

Into the stillness and silence of night comes the faint sound of a car engine. Sound travels for miles in the cooling air.

Sound isn't blotted out by other sounds in the country. These sounds are heard, especially to folk with ears so attuned they hear a dingo's howl coming like a whisper from at least four miles away, a distant creepy curlew, or an unexpected, unusual cry of pain or panic.

The sound is coming closer, and here comes the light attached. Tonight, it is not unexpected, and soon it will be joined by more sounds, and more lights, and more dust. And tough about the chooks and dogs! They will just have to cope, and I guess the rooster will crow as usual in the morning when all the fuss is gone, but the left overs should show a good night was had by all.

I got to thinking, did the original squatters who entered this untouched area with their sheep and cattle, over one hundred years ago, bring tennis racquets with them? Sheep folds and cattle yards with a nearby shepherd's grave, spring to mind, but no tennis courts. No cricket or football grounds either. Raw survival was the priority. English tennis played at leisure by English lords and ladies was back in England. Certainly not on the Darling Downs near Kogan in the eighteen fifties!

When the squatters were moved on by selectors and pioneers in the early nineteen hundreds, did they bring their tennis racquets? But along with the fences, stockyards and houses was a dream of a tennis court at the back, or front of the original house. They put in place a plan for play.

Two courts were built over the road from Edenhope where the Smith's selected land. One court at the front of Old Iona was built by the Schemunicks, there were two courts next to the Millbank School, two courts at Montrose Estate and three courts next to the Sixteen Mile Hall. They bobbed up everywhere. Mid-week evening and Saturday Competitions

began. Along with work during the week and half a day Saturday, and Worship on Sunday, sport provided some light-hearted oil for the community togetherness.

When the Clark family bought Gowan Lea in 1947, somewhere in my father's dreams was the creation of a tennis court. There was just a spot for one to the left of the front garden gate outside the garden fence. With lots of courts about, and competitions working well, it wasn't until the good weather, the world price for wool of the magic 'a pound a lb.', the dingoes controlled, and the worms in sheep killed by modern drenches and by rotational grazing, that my father embarked on building a tennis court. It was a bit of an indulgence for him, but he wanted to prove something to show one could, with good management succeed on the poor Kogan country.

With the purchase of a tennis net, racquets, balls, and some wire netting for a high fence, added to the raw materials from the bush, and lots of physical work, a tennis courts was not difficult to create.

The surface for the court needed to be level, else the balls would bounce uncharacteristically. The slight slope of the chosen spot was more than slight, with two feet of difference. So, with the help of our draught horse, Farmer, the court was eventually pronounced level.

White ants put some setting agent into their mounds as they build them. They set hard. Many mounds were carted, pulped into a powder, mixed into a slurry and spread level, drying hard to make a good surface. Being thrifty my father even made a round concrete roller with a central shaft to crush the white ant mounds.

Along with this practical activity, my father was working on other ideas.

The Iona farm needed a welder, and welders back then in the 1950s were large electric generators with large resisters, driven by a governed engine, to keep constant power. Some local farmers bought generators for welding, and also used the same generator, driven by a tractor power take off, to provide lights for a tennis court.

My father's enquiries in Brisbane got him no results. He was told that using a generator for welding and the same generator to light a tennis court was impossible. His reply to the "experts" was how is it that you say it is

impossible when farmers on the Downs are doing it all the time?" Their response was, "There is only one man we know of in Queensland who is able to wire up a generator to both weld and light, and his name is Reithmeuller and he lives just west of Dalby on the Condamine Highway."

Reithmeuller was promptly visited and showed us all the generators he had secured. He was a farmer, and an eccentric in some way on the side. "Call back in a fortnight and I will have a generator ready for you".

Sure enough we collected our large generator, and apart from remembering to alter the brushes a few inches from 'weld' to 'light', the project was ready to go. Light shades were purchased that could be screwed into water pipe. A switch board, copper wire, insulators and other odds and end were necessities.

Some iron bark and cypress pine trees were felled and cut the right shape at the saw bench.

My father wired up the switchboard, I bent water pipes and wired the lights. The Voltage was 110 volts with 250 watt globes.

A thick mixture of slacked lime and water in a watering can with a clear spout following a tight 'bind a twine' guide provided the lines.

Timber was sawn to provide an umpires seat, and a small shelter was built to protect from the weather.

The tractor was a power kerosene driven W30 McCormick and the generator was driven by a 10-inch flat belt on to a shaft that had six large v belts to the generator.

When all was ready for the opening of our lighted tennis court, members of the church and the tennis clubs were all invited for the grand opening. It was hoped everyone would play a set of tennis. Tea, cakes and biscuits were available on the front verandah.

The W 30 purred beautifully till midnight. The manifold ran red hot normally for efficiency but was not noticed in the daylight. When I went to shut the engine off, the beautifully red hot coloured manifold had an ethereal glow spitting, shining and shimmering lively fire into the darkness.

The tractor was quiet, the visitors now had the warm glow in their bodies from a game of night tennis. Goodbyes began, car engines started. Car lights

and sounds moved down the road, decreased and finally disappeared. The star filled sky could be seen in the now dark sky, and all was clear and still. Chooks now slept.

The rooster crowed at his usual time in the morning.



What sort of machine is this? It vibrates viciously. Normally it runs hot, and still hotter if it is not being worked hard enough. It's awkward. It will swing around and hit the operator if they are not standing in the correct position. It's hard enough for a proficient operator. For the learner it is volunteering for torture.

"And you expect me to work with this machine in my hand eight hours a day to earn a living? You have to be joking. There are lots more, easier jobs, more pleasant than this. No wonder the industry is suffering." And this is only half the story.

The second part of the story is an animal. It will wriggle and kick and struggle, if it is not held and treated correctly. If the body of the animal is not stretched, and the skin remains wrinkled, it will be cut and the animal will suffer. A deep cut of a blood vessel or the skin requires the process to stop. The wound is then sewn with a flesh needle and thread. Some 'Woolo', referred to as "tar" is placed on the wound to help with infection and prevent a blow fly strike.

Special care is needed around the pizzle of a weather or ram and near the teats of a ewe. It is so easy to cut off a ewe's teat, which heals and seals, so it is then useless for providing a lamb with milk, a tragedy for a good breeding ewe. Even more serious is to approach the main tendon of a sheep's back leg from the wrong angle and cut it through. The sheep can no longer walk, and the best result is for it to be killed and eaten. A cut hamstring equals a death sentence. Less serious is a cut ear. It will heal.

All this is to be kept in mind for a learner while holding the vicious, vibrating, hot hand piece of a shearing machine.

There is a certain pattern and stroke a shearer must learn, while holding the sheep correctly with knees, body, feet and one free hand. Good experienced shearers may vary the traditional pattern for speed.

The usual pattern and process is like this. The sheep to be shorn are yarded the day before shearing so they will be dry, and rested overnight, so they won't have a full stomach. They then weigh lighter, and their body is easier

to bend. A sheep is caught from the pen, held by both front legs, and skidded over the floor on its tail to a spot near the shearing machine. Bending very low from the hips, the shearer's arm goes around both front legs and under the head in order to lift the sheep to make the belly skin tight. Switching on the hand piece, it is placed flat against a clear spot under the front leg and pushed downwards towards the back leg, and the wool is broken to separate it from the better-quality wool on the sheep's back and side. The belly wool is considered inferior and is pressed in a separate bale. The belly is shorn with mostly horizontal strokes, making sure the pizzle or teats are not cut. The tops and insides of both back legs are shorn and the area under the tail. The left back leg is completely shorn extending to the back bone.

Then a major shift of position occurs. One foot goes between the sheep's back legs, the other is shifted to steady the sheep's body. The head is held back gently by the free left hand on the bottom jaw, and the wool is opened up from the brisket through to the head. From this opening the wool is shorn back down the side, including the front leg.

In the next major position shift, the sheep is laid almost on its back with the shearer's right knee placed in its pelvis, and the left foot in a position to keep the sheep's underneath shoulder off the floor. If that shoulder were to slip and touch the floor, the sheep will immediately try to get up. The shearer's left hand pulls the sheep's head around the shearer's left leg to make the skin tight. This position is called the long blow, when the shearer is able to shear wool in long strokes from the tail through to the head in one sweep and eventually one blow over the sheep's backbone.

When this is done the sheep is gradually straightened up and the wool from its face right down the last side is shorn. This includes the other front leg and continues down until the sheep is completely shorn. Most of these strokes are horizontal. The sheep then goes into the counting out pen, and the shearer goes to catch another woolly sheep and the whole process begins again.

To shear the magic hundred a day, each sheep needs to be shorn in slightly less than five minutes so an extra one can be done in a two-hour shift. An experienced shearer can make this whole process look easy.

A hopeful shearer was asked, "How many sheep can you shear in a day?" He replied, "A hundred." He was then asked, "Where have you shorn before?" "I haven't," was his reply. "How do you know you can shear a hundred?" he was then asked. "I've seen others do it" was his reply.

This young man was in for a big shock. To learn to shear is hard mentally, and physically. To get everything right needs determination, practice, physical strength and coaching. For the experienced shearer who keeps moving quickly for five minutes, the process is easier on muscles and body. However, the time a learner will take can be up to thirty minutes. This means that the physical discomfort for the beginner is many times harder and longer than for an experienced shearer.

Shearing quickly means the cut wool keeps the hand piece reasonably cool. The learner finds it hard to keep the hand piece at all times in the wool, so the comb and cutter get hotter and hotter, smoking as the comb and cutter burn because they are so hot. Another difficulty for the learner!

The wool of sheep contains burrs and prickles, and they won't go diagonally into the shearer's skin, but they do go straight in, making them very difficult to get out when the shift or day's work is done. If they aren't removed they are liable to fester.

After the first day's shearing, the learner is exhausted. Every muscle is sore, and he now has the tell-tale shearer's back with the obvious kink, as he tries to straighten up and walk.

Longing for rest, in bed there is no way to get comfortable. With one muscle resting, another is aching. On the second day, every sore muscle screams with pain as they are used again the first time until all muscles are used and become warm. This happens every day over a number of days till the muscles are conditioned, and the body becomes reasonably pain free.

In winter and especially in summer, perspiration pours off the whole body, stinging eyes and dripping off the nose. Shearers need to drink lots of water. Many drink alcohol, beer, even rum at the end of the day, and in perspiring the next day, they can smell, even stink.

The pay is not great for the shearer, and especially as the price of wool is low.

Ideas have been tried to reduce the physical load of shearing. One was a drench that caused the sheep to shed its wool, but it came to nothing. Another was an iron frame to hold the sheep while it was shorn. This has had limited use. A yoke attached to the roof and placed over the shoulders to give support to the back has been used often. An idea that came from New Zealand of having wider combs and cutters to take wool off a greater area when shearing has helped.

Shearers are often not at home with their families during the week and they have to travel to different places for their work. With sheep being bred larger and heavier why would anyone want to learn to shear? Yet the Australian sheep all get shorn once a year and one can only admire the men, and some women tough enough to do this work.

Would you like this job? I shore 113 sheep one day!



On the Darling Downs, 60 miles west of Toowoomba is the town of Dalby (pronounced DOLL-B). The 4QS radio mast a few miles north of the town, is the only visible interruption to the view of the Bunya Mountains 30 miles to the north.

The mast, one of the highest I've seen, was the object of a childhood game: "Who can see the tower first"?

The plains were flat, the soil black, black as boot polish, and over 30 feet thick. When dry the soil shrunk, revealing large cracks. When wet it expanded and became very sticky. "If you stick to it in the dry, it will stick to you in the wet" was a familiar farming statement. Provided you could carry weight on your feet, your height would increase 3 inches before the sticky buildup of soil, would eventually drop off as you walked. It was very fertile volcanic soil, and during a good season, three or maybe four crops could be grown in a year.

The main street of Dalby ran north and south, vaguely parallel with the Myall Creek that could flood a wide area. Near the railway at the northern end was Thomas Jack and Co, a general store that supported early pioneers with amazing credit in tough times. Situated midway on the east side of the main street was a jeweler's shop, so decorated with all kinds of sparkling and colorful delights, that few people could walk past without being drawn to look in Drew's large and lighted windows, such a contrast to other shops in this country town.

Enter, and you are face to face with a father and son combination, who would look more at home in a London or Paris jewelry spot, than in a black soiled farming town.

Tall, thin and looking wonderfully sophisticated in his buttoned-up waistcoat with a goupin, unique spectacles, greying hair and twinkling eyes, the father's image was the ideal grandfather image of every girl and boy. He was the attractive presence fitting in perfectly with all the diamonds, jewels, watches and gifts.

Shorter, stockier, but still with attractive dark eyes, always nicely dressed, and with a ready smile was the son, nice but overshadowed by the presence of his father. With other staff that fitted the image, and being the only jeweller in Dalby, one wonders why in the mid-1950s, it was necessary to stir up more business. This they did by advertising a competition with a fifty-pound prize. With no entry fee the winner would have written down and sent in the most words possible using the letters in the slogan "Drews for Diamonds".

I entered. Maybe out of some boredom, but more out of the idea of winning fifty pounds, was my motive. No entry fee meant it wasn't gambling. It was a matter of effort and everyone had an equal chance. This was a Christian value at the time and I suspect it was behind the "No Entry Fee" of Drews as they were strong Methodists.

Our family had a tattered old dictionary, and in the year before I bought what seemed an oversized Websters dictionary for ten pounds.

With an exercise book and pen I started out. 'A'. Now that's the first word on the first page. The slogan has no 'b's or 'c's and is missing other letters too, so I can skip pages. I don't have to go through every letter of the alphabet. I worked from 7.30am to 5pm pushing down scrub with a bull dozer, half an hour for smoko, and one hour for lunch. It was time I could use to write words. My dictionary and exercise book came with me in the old Chev. And when not working, words were transferred from dictionary to exercise book, hopefully without dirt or grease making marks. At the end of the Dictionary, my effort was wrapped up and posted. I probably won't win. If I do I will wait for the time when I need an engagement ring for the girl I was going with.

Work weeks went by, and apart from being in the back of my mind, I'd almost forgotten the competition. One day I came home tired and dirty. My mother met me at the door,

"You've won," she announced excitedly.

"You have won the 'Drews for diamonds' competition.

It came over the radio that 'Owen Clark from Iona Kogan won the competition.

Your name will be in the paper and displayed in the Drew's shop window."

At this age for some reason, I was not able to express my excitement, so I kept it inside, but I was pleased.

The announcement of my win brought reactions. Some envious spoilt sports rumored that I would be better off using my time reading the Bible, instead of writing out words. One strong woman congratulated me and said the rumor was utter rubbish. There were so many entries, Drews added to the number of prizes.

Next time I went to town, I thanked Drews and asked if they could keep the prize until I needed to buy an engagement ring. The years went by. The engagement I'd thought about never happened. I am glad I married someone else. Our engagement ring was bought in Renmark, South Australia.

With my wife, I visited the great Jeweler's shop some seven years later. We chose together a silver cutlery set, which is still our best, fifty years on.

We often use it, thanks to the *Drews for Diamonds* competition.



THE DINGO: THE ENEMY

Dingoes were the enemy that attacked in the night. The time was during the war years and up to the late 1950's. While there were some pure-bred dingoes, a lot were cross bred with domestic dogs gone wild, or just domestic dogs gone wild. (I have used the word dingo and dog interchangeably). Strychnine baits were used to poison wild dogs.

People who had cattle usually didn't worry much except when cows were calving. They didn't worry about dog proof fences. Fences however are very important for sheep farmers, as they have to keep the dingo out.

In the early days fences were three-foot six high on the boundary of each block, with 6 wires in the interior fences. During the war years, netting, wire and barbed wire was almost impossible to buy as was ammunition. So, all the netting and wire available on the property's internal fences were used on the boundary fence!

And most of the wire had been there for many years so the bottom selvedge could have rusted away. The netting was turned upside down and logs would be used and dug into the ground and wired or stapled to the netting. The height was also important for once a dog learns to jump they can easily jump over a three-foot six fence. When my father bought another block of land, he had to organize the available fencing materials so as to make the outer fence secure.

I have seen dingo holes dug under the logs buried at the bottom of the fence. They are huge, like wombat holes. When dug deep enough, the dingoes go under the fence and into the sheep paddock. They return to the same hole to get out.

Dingoes do a lot of damage to sheep. If they would just come in and eat one, and leave, that would be bad enough. But it's a game for them. They will cause the sheep to run, and chase them and lunge in and grab, and tear a piece of skin, or flesh before letting go. It is shocking to see how they can tear a live sheep to pieces, and leave some with entrails dragging along the ground. Every dog has a favorite place where they bite.

We had to continually check the sheep to see they were OK. A lot of crows would be a telltale sign that sheep had been killed and bitten. The suffering sheep would eventually die, or else would be rescued, or had their throats cut to prevent further suffering. Then the search began to see where the dog got in. If it was under the fence, a steel trap would be set under the dirt in or near the hole, and next time the dog came back it would be caught. These were described as “mug dogs”. They didn’t think much and weren’t cunning. My father averaged catching a dingo a month for three years and a grateful neighbour gave him an English magazine subscription for a year. On one occasion my father caught two dogs in one night. The dog returned and was caught in the steel trap in the hole under the fence, and the accompanying dog walked down the fence and was shot in a gun trap.

Steel traps were used in well-chosen places, near the track where the dog was known to walk. Dogs like to sniff and mark out their territory, so a decoy, which was the collected droppings and wet urine soil of the house dogs was placed in an appropriate spot to draw the dingo. Amongst dingo trappers there was a lot of competition as to who had the best decoy.

If placed on a track, a stick was placed so the dog would step over it and into the trap. Because the steel jaws of the trap could cut through the leg of the dog, a rag wrapped around the jaw and laced with strychnine would prevent this and the dog may be poisoned if it licked the rag. Steel traps were either attached to a log that could be dragged or to the top wire of a fence so there would be movement which meant the jaws wouldn’t cut through the leg so easily.

There came a time at our farm when there was one dog that couldn’t be caught. Farmers did detective work following tracks, looking for clues as to the dog’s habits, where the dog came from, any characteristics that gave a clue as to how the dog could be caught.

This dog always bit the sheep at the top of the sheep’s back leg, and would tear out the top muscle. I remember the carcasses of one legged sheep hanging in our cool room. My father had found freshly bitten sheep, promptly killing them and cutting off the bitten limb.

Riding the boundary fence, no hole of entry was found. So attention was then given for any signs that the dog jumped the fence, signs like tracks

inside the fence where the dog landed after jumping, or some hair caught in the barbed wire of the fence. All the usual methods were not working, and many sheep were being lost.

Eventually my father found some red hair on the top barbed wire, looked at the netting and saw sand on the netting on the outside of the fence. There had been very heavy dew the night the dog came and sand from its paws showed it didn't just jump over the fence but jumped on to the fence and then climbed up the netting. All boundary fences were at least five-foot six high. This dog was clever. We would like to have seen just how it got over the top barbed wire so as to jump down on the other side. Lucky for us it always left some red hair on the top barbed wire.

How many people when asked what they did for work one day could say, "I rode six miles on horseback looking for a few strands of red hair caught in barbed wire on top of a fence." I did this on various occasions.

It was further discovered that it did not walk along the fence as all other animals seem to do. It came straight to the fence, climbed over and went straight into the scrub on the inside of the fence.

One farmer had pulled down a section of his fence and put a gun trap in the space in the hope the dog would walk along the fence and walk through and be shot. For this dog, this would not work.

Two unfortunate events occurred that should have destroyed the dog. A gun trap had been set by a neighbour. Because set gun traps are dangerous in the day time, the gun is disabled during daylight hours but then needs to be reset for the night. The neighbour had a newly broken in horse that would not tie up, so he didn't reset the trap. It was that night that the dingo walked into the trip wire. Just after this, the dingo walked into another gun trap and the shotgun had been borrowed. The gun went click but the mechanism didn't fire the cartridge. The dog was alerted to gun traps. My father tracked this dog trotting along a road, around the back of a gun trap, and then rejoining the road. This was a cunning dog.

Farmers did various things to get dingoes. One neighbour climbed up a tree on a moonlight night with a shot gun and began howling in an attempt to

get the dingo to come to the bottom of the tree where he would shoot it. Only trouble is he went to sleep and fell out of the tree.

A game was played by two families who lived about a mile from each other. One group got a dog answering their dingo call, and when it was near rang the other family and got them to call. The dog answered and went to their house, and when it was near them they rang the first family who called it back. This happened a few times until the dog was silenced when it walked into a gun trap.

To save his sheep one of the neighbours yarded his mob at night. Much to his horror, the dingo attacked and killed sheep in the yard. With this in mind, my father used a distant yard with small paddocks around and yarded the sheep at night.

To be on hand to protect them he built two beds, using chains, wire and wire netting in the foliage of trees growing in the yard. After the sheep were yarded he set up a gun trap on the side he expected the dog to come. He used ladders to climb into the beds and kicked them away, so they would be hidden under the yarded sheep. With a shot gun each, he and Harry Hindle slept for over a fortnight each night in the cold of winter in the trees. No dingo came, but one night a sheep missed in the day's muster came to the yard and was shot in the gun trap.

Because so many sheep were being killed, and he was unable to catch this dingo, to save them the sheep were sent away on agistment. Dave Smith was shooting kangaroos on the property, so my father gave him a bottle of strychnine and asked him to poison his carcasses when he had skinned them. He never had the satisfaction of seeing the dead body of the dingo, but eventually the sheep came back and grazed safely. This was the last and worst dingo to attack sheep on Iona.



ONE EXTRA PIECE OF WIRE

Guns are dangerous, gun traps are even worse. Roy Rokeski set up one gun trap on a road where he thought a dingo, that was attacking his sheep, would pass. Further along the road he was setting up a second gun trap. He left his pliers back at the first site, so walked back to get them, and walked into his own trap. The shot gun blast destroyed two inches of bone in his leg. What is a gun trap?

A very effective and dangerous booby trap! Take a twelve-gauge shot gun. Screw a piece of thin wood twenty inches long to the stock, with the shorter end facing down. At the bottom attach a wire to the trigger. Tie the shotgun firmly to stakes or trees so it will shoot about fifteen inches parallel to the ground. This height is important. Too high and the shot will go over the back of a small dog. Too low and the shot will go under the belly of a large dog.

Select fine steel wire, the kind used in bee hives to stabilize the frames and blacken it with boot polish, so it will not shine in the moonlight. Attach the wire along the line of the shot. With one end attached to a chosen target which may be a tree, post or stake, tie the other end to the top of the wood attached to the stock. Pull the wire down, and attach it, so it is close to the end of the barrel. Tighten the wire so there is gentle pressure on the trigger. The trap is set when the hammer is pulled back. The dingo will walk along, hit the trip wire and shoot itself. The lead pellets will go through the skin on the entry side and are usually found under the skin on the opposite side.

Roy Rokeski proved that gun traps don't just shoot dingoes. Many gun traps were used in the 1940's, as there were few people around, a lot of bush, and farmers usually communicated with each other when traps were set.

After Roy Rokeski's accident, my father put another trip wire high enough for a dingo to go under, but if contacted by anything taller, the gun would fire safely a few feet away. These gun traps were then safer. While the potential tragedy was averted, some incidents turned to humour.

My father forgot where he had set a gun trap on a road and drove the car through it the cartridge discharging safely at the front.

Eric Blanchard and two kangaroo shooter friends arrived at our house and asked my mother if they could shoot kangaroos on the property. At first my mother said no, as there were guns set. They had travelled some distance and were disappointed, so my mother explained there were no guns set on the Iona block, and it would be OK if they stayed in that area, but not to go anywhere else.

They went shooting, and in following kangaroos, became lost. One behind another they marched along a fence, having that eerie, peculiar feeling associated with lost-ness.

BANG! A shot gun cartridge exploded two yards in front of them and shattered the fence post nearby. Weak in the knees they almost collapsed in fright and removed themselves very quickly from the area.

Wally Stevens rode a newly broken horse to visit one of our neighbours.

After the evening meal, he left on horseback to ride the eight miles home in the dark. He decided to take a short cut along an old unused road.

BANG!!! His horse reared, turned, and bolted through the scrub. He eventually took control and steered the horse back on to the road.

BANG! Another shotgun blast spat fire and lead into the darkness. Now in a state of terror, the horse was difficult to calm, and he was much shaken. He retraced his steps and took the regular road which added six miles to his journey home. He threatened to sue my father but never did.



DEFEAT FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER

The dingoes were next door, in Schonrocks place. Thick bush, away from all human eyes, made an ideal hiding place. Somehow they had penetrated the outer boundary fence.

Our sheep were in the Well paddock, so named after a well that the original settlers had dug. They were vulnerable to attack, and three dingoes would wreak havoc. Two miles of six wire fencing with cypress pine posts, five meters apart was no barrier to keep the sheep safe.

What could we do? We couldn't sit by and do nothing. My father had an idea.

These dingoes are timid creatures, unless driven by hunger they hide away in the daylight, coming out to do their dirty work under cover of darkness. Survival for them depends on bush intelligence and cunning, so they are very wary of anything unusual and strange.

Could we use this characteristic to our advantage?

All the neighbors were visited and asked to give their Women's Weeklies and Woman's Day's and any other magazine they didn't want. Together with ours, a number were collected, and piled in the back of the Chev utility.

From the shed came a bag of flour infested with weevils that hadn't been thrown out, and some jam tins. Some old spoons from the kitchen drawers, and a four-gallon oil drum container of water, completed the ingredients for what we were cooking up. With the whole family also on board, we set out along the fence. In 1947 my brother was too small, so he just tagged along.

My father, mother, sister and I, would tear off a page of the Women's Weekly, on one end we would slap on a mixture of flour and water, mixed in our particular tin, and glue the paper on a wire, midway between the fence posts. This was done for two miles.

Checked every evening to replace those papers that had fallen or blown off, the fluttering paper barrier kept the timid threatening hunters in their scrubby den for at least a fortnight!

One night, the inevitable! The sheep were attacked. Over twenty were dead or had to be killed because of horrific injuries. What went wrong?

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

Perhaps the dingoes were driven by hunger, or a need to move. Had they become insensitive to the flapping paper?

We looked for evidence, checked the papers and searched for tracks. A spot was found in the paper barrier, where five papers were missing. On closer inspection, cow tracks were found near the fence at the offending gap. The cows had taken a liking to the paper and weavely flour and eaten them. Tried as we did, we were beaten, and believe it or not: by COWS.



THE DINGO DRIVE

The phone rang Friday night. It was Uncle Dave. Our call was one of many he was making. Dingoes had killed at least twenty of his sheep. He had seen the crows gathering and flying overhead as he drove through his paddock. They were attracted to the fresh carcasses of newly killed sheep. On investigation he saw the bloody truth of sheep ripped and torn, having died from mortal wounds, or slowly bled to death. The living wounded would probably die from the poison of infected bites.

“We haven’t heard of dog attacks for some time” he said.

True, with the more intense settlement of farm land, resulting in scrub being cleared, better fences, and more people going in for sheep farming, the dingo territory had shrunk to isolated areas and mountain ranges.

“I think the dogs are in some thick scrub in Dooies” he continued.

Dooies was the name of a block of land very near to his home block. It was two miles long and one mile wide, with a frontage along the Montrose Road. He had done his investigations, following tracks, and looked for holes in the fence, and was convinced the dogs were hiding in the thick scrub on that block.

He was organizing a dingo drive, that would hopefully flush them out of their hiding place, and more importantly get them shot.

He continued, “I’ve rung many farmers around the district and told them to meet at the front of the property on the Montrose Road at 10’oclock tomorrow, and to bring along their rifles and shotguns. I hope you can come”.

“We certainly can. We will be there”. My father replied.

Ten o’clock the next morning a crowd of at least forty had gathered. It was a motley group, most in working clothes, some with large straw hats. All with good walking shoes or boots, and a goodly number with guns at the ready. They came from near and far.

The atmosphere was carnival, but they looked like a group who really meant business. They knew dingoes and the destructive things they do, so on the

serious side they were there to put an end to them. Drives like this were a rarity, and all were excited to be there and be involved.

The group was divided into beaters and shooters.

Using the fence on the left-hand side of the property as secure, some beaters would quietly drive to the back fence and be dropped off, spaced one every hundred yards across the mile along the distant boundary.

Others would be positioned at a similar distance along the insecure right-hand side fence.

The shooters were lined up on a slight diagonal across the front of the block shooting towards the secure fence, so no one would be shot.

At 11o'clock the beaters would start banging tins, blowing whistles and generally making a noise, and move in a line towards the front of the block. Those beaters on the right-hand side would stay still and make noise so as to drive the dogs towards the shooters, and then gradually move towards the front road.

When all eventually arrived at the starting point, they were pleased to see two dogs lying dead on the ground. They had been shot shortly after the beaters began their noise making. One was blue grey in colour, the other was a large black animal. Both were not real dingoes, or the real dingo colour, but tame dogs gone wild into the bush.

There was much animated talk. What happened as they walked? And who fired the important shots? Everyone went home having had a unique experience, and with a different kind of story to tell.

Uncle Dave thanked everyone and was pleased that his predictions of the dog's whereabouts were right. He had his revenge and could see the evidence. These dogs would never again tear or maul his sheep.



THE NOSE HAS IT.

There was a shocking smell in the car. My sister and I were on our way to youth group. It was bad, so bad we stopped and looked under the car seats, in order to find what was causing the stink. We found nothing. So we continued with all the car windows down, in spite of the cold. Next morning my father asked a simple question that solved the mystery.

“Did you get a receipt from Ron Holt?”

Four days earlier my father had put a dingo scalp in the boot of the car, telling me to give it to Ron Holt who was responsible for giving out a five pound bonus. What was required for a scalp was a strip of skin including the nose, ears and a strip of skin along the back and the tail. I’d forgotten, and the scalp in the boot of the car had four days to ripen up the smell. This was a smell we could do without.

Yet I would not be without a sense of smell. Smokers tell me they can’t smell the roses and can cut up onions without tears.

Smells are linked to imagination. Who can escape their imagination when the aroma of a roast dinner is upon the air?

Smells are linked to history. I open an old book and I’m back again in my mother-in-law’s house. Opening an old box brings back my parents’ home. We categorize smells. It was stated, “Horses sweat, men perspire, and ladies glow”.

How dull life would be if roses weren’t scented, if wattle, freshly ploughed ground, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, scents and all other smells could not be experienced. New smells equal a new experience.

One never forgets being captured by the scent of Boronia flowers for the first time.

People returning from months in Antarctica, are delighted with the scent of eucalyptus, miles out from Tasmania as it indicates they are near land and home.

Few things are odorless. Along with seeing, hearing and feeling, without a sense of smell, life could not be experienced in its fullness.

“The sun comes up the sun goes down, the hands of the clock go round and round” Every day at Iona we get up, get dressed, have a wash, and have breakfast. Then get the bucket, walk up the paddock and find and milk the cow. The milk is separated and the separator washed. Wood is split and cut and put into the wood box. The chooks are fed and the eggs collected. The dogs are let off the chain. And so each day begins.

Today is different:

Today a metal box that’s black,
And has a hook upon the back:
With two terminals, two battery clips.
The power house wall is where it sits.
It’s here for you. What will it do?
We’ll soon find out, what it’s about.
Writing on the box, gives us the sense.
It says; I read the words: “Electric Fence.”
To the battery it clips, and then it clicks.
The click is heard, like the cheep of a bird.
Would you buy it? Come on just try it.

5 4 3 2 1 0 Contact. A hand flies back.
An arm takes a thump: the body a jump.
As thousands of volts give the nerves a jolt.
You’d be gone in the brain, to touch that again!
But in this our farmyard zoo, let’s just see what this will do.
We have no hogs, so let’s try it on dogs.

Young dogs in haste, have developed a taste for eggs in a nest.
But dogs that are best,
Won’t eat an egg; they pass the test.
Before today we had a way,
Of curing an egg eating dog,
Without giving the offender a flog.
An egg is prepared, with ingredients hot,
And placed in just a convenient spot.

The farmer will lie, watching, nearby;
And the dog's unaware of the plot.
Our black dog is nabbed, as the false egg is grabbed.
This dog now in fact has been caught in the act,
And is here in a guilty position,
And since this dog was young, no taste on its tongue,
Has burned, with such heated precision.
For dogs that are silly, get mustard and chili,
Rammed down in the back of their throat.

We'll try a new way: with the dog anyway,
With an egg that's out in the open.
With two little wires put on with the pliers,
We'll wait and see, what will happen.
No dog has a look, but a curious chook
Walks up to the egg to inspect,
She spies with her eye, an egg with a fly
And casually gives it a peck.

5 4 3 2 1 0 Lift off. We have a lift off.
A squawking space rocket rises 10 feet in the air!

This could put a chook off laying eggs for life.
The scene is reset, so now we will get,
The dog as we really intended.

We're watching again, and it's very plain
Our wait for the dog is extended.
Then the dog comes by, and out of his eye,
He spies like a drinker, a keg.
With cautious eyes peeping, and gingerly creeping,
He takes a slight sniff at the egg.

5 4 3 2 1 0 Contact! Acceleration! A super dog!
Faster than a speeding bullet: like a streak of greased lightning,

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

He disappears into the bush. Will he ever return?
Two hours later he slinks back.
Surely this will cure an egg eating dog.

They are found in the zoo, but our kangaroo,
Has always been a good pet.
Rudolf's his name, and he's out for a game,
But he has our poor neighbour upset.
"With my twenty-two, I'll shoot that rotten roo,
If he comes near my shirts again.
I have a golden rule, when I teach the kids at school,
That my shirts will be both clean and bright.
Those clothes pegged on the line, have good shirts that are mine,
But Rudolf thinks they're foes he must fight.
If my shirts I cannot wear, for he has caused a tear,
I'll shoot him if he comes back in my sight."
Well that will never do, we'll have to fix our roo.
So our actions they have to be quite certain,
With hidden wires we hang up some old curtain,
That are attached from the black box to our site.
When Rudolf he hopped by, he just had to have a try,
He grabbed the curtain looking for a fight.

5 4 3 2 1 0 Contact! Rudolf! The flying kangaroo!
A double, backward somersault!
He paused to think; followed by;
A strange gawking; looking this way, and that.
WHAT WAS THAT?

We have a special horse, her name is Fancy, and of course,
We ride her round the boundary fence;
Merrily we ride along. Peacefully we sing a song.
But horse and rider often tire, checking holes and posts and wire.
Fancy just can't go past, a luscious tuft of grass
A quick nibble as she goes, she touches wire with her nose.

5 4 3 2 1 0 Contact! And they're racing!

The shocked rider recovers his balance
And wonders what got into his horse.

The shocking box is here to stay,
To stop the dingo, here is the way,
It will give our best defence, for the boundary fence
With miles of wire is
All organized to shock, the cruel enemy of our stock.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



IONA BOUNDARY FENCE



IONA PROPERTY FROM THE AIR



DAM SINKING 1955



WE LEARNED TO RIDE ON MAISIE



TRICKSY NIGGER AND LASSIE



I SHOT A WEDGE TAILED EAGLE

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



*DRENCHING SHEEP
THE NEW STYLE*

*OLD 2 OUNCE
FUNNEL*

*OWEN SHEARING
SHEEP*





OWEN AND THE OLD '27 MODEL CHEV



*ROY CLARK AND DINGO SHOT IN
A GUN TRAP 1947*

EDUCATION

MILLBANK SCHOOL, MILLBANK. QLD.



*Back Row: RUTH SHONROCK. EULA CLARK. OWEN CLARK.
JOHN BAKER.*

*Centre Row: NEVILLE BAKER. VALERIE BAKER. BARBARA
SCHONROCK. JULIE HOLT.*

*Front Row: LORNA SCHONROCK. KEVIN BAKER. BARRY CLARK.
CORAL HOLT.*

MY FIRST TEACHER

Yes, I do remember Val, and she did teach me...maybe in the first year I was at school when I was in Prep 1 and 2. It would have been in 1942 I think. She would be 18 at that time.

Mum told me that I had been playing up for some reason, and Miss Val kept me in and wouldn't let me out of school. I said, "If you don't let me out, I'll get my father to come down with his 303 and shoot you." I must have been hostile!!!

I remember the charts she had from which she taught us the alphabet. "a" like an apple on a tree, "a" says "acc." "b" like a bat and ball "b" says "buh". I also remember that Miss Val was sick one day and didn't turn up to school. The kids were all there and no teacher. So the boys all walked down the road about two miles to the 'mud huts'. I didn't know then that this was my mother's home when a girl.

I can remember walking into a room with mud walls that had whitewash or paper on them. On the floor was a mess and some empty cartridges left behind by kangaroo shooters who no doubt camped there. It still had the roof on.



Brian Patrick Kinnane. What a name! Not the same as Giles, Baker, Holt and Clark, which were familiar family names in the area.

“From Ireland?” you ask. I don’t know.

“Roman Catholic?” Yes. It didn’t matter to me. He was my teacher, an excellent teacher too. One who I admired and respected. Looking back I gave him a hero status. His was an image of manhood that was valid as a possible model for my life. He taught me and the rest of fourteen students at the Millbank School for five years from 1945 to 1949.

The look on his face, and what he said, would be worth recording, when he opened the letter from the Queensland Education Department assigning him to our school.

“Millbank!”

Q. “Where is that?”

A. “About two hundred miles west of Brisbane! It could be worse. I could be sent to Normanton or Mt Isa.”

Just out of Teacher’s College, he was eighteen years old.

Can you imagine one of today’s eighteen-year olds, leaving the city, and going into the bush, taking responsibility for a school with 14 children, preparing lessons for five different grades, teaching individual grades in the same school room, while the other grades are “getting on with their work?” The phrase, “Get on with your work” is deeply embedded in the minds of all “us kids” as he contended with a complex situation. Children were distracted by what, and how he was teaching in another class.

As his frustration rose, so did the colour of the skin on his neck, face, and head. A scar on his forehead stood out more plainly when this happened.

With the backup of a school committee, the teacher was not only responsible for teaching, but for all the property as well.

The school building was a typical Queensland “on stilts”, enclosed in a fenced school yard, and situated in a ten-acre school paddock. The grass in this paddock was nibbled by horses that children rode to and from school, a

distance of up to four miles away. Tojo (named after a Japanese war hero) and Laddie were the names of two of the horses.

The paddock sported an ant bed cricket pitch, two tennis courts, and a “boys” and “girls” pit variety of toilet, built an appropriate distance from the school. Some boys (not me) for a dare would climb down through the seat hole and stand on a pipe in the pit. None fell, but the mind boggles as to the result if they had.

The large school room had large windows facing north and south. Two verandahs, facing east and west were partly enclosed from the south westerly weather, and had stairs in the centre with twenty steps to the ground. The easterly verandah had hooks for school bags, lunches etc.

After the first bell rang, we children lined up and saluted the flag on the recently erected flag pole. For a time, the flag had not been raised on the pole because someone forgot to tie a knot in the end of the rope, which had slipped through the top pulley. A student, John Baker, an excellent tree climber, with the rope between his teeth climbed the skinny pole, replaced the rope through the pulley, and tied the very important knot.

With our loyalty to king and country confirmed, we marched up the stairs, and into the central isle of the main room through the eastern door. The teacher’s table and chair were situated on a raised platform, at the end of the central isle. On the wall, on either side of the teacher’s table, were two large blackboards, with the western door at the southern end.

Nine long desks with special slots for slates and ink wells, and a shelf underneath, faced the blackboard and teacher, on both sides of the isle. Each desk had a stool with no back rest. During the year sweeping and cleaning was done by the teacher and children. We had fun on break up day each December, when the whole school room and furniture were scrubbed with soap and water.

It was the custom that a single school teacher boarded with one of the school children’s parents, or someone local. Brian Kinnane boarded with Hindles and commuted the four miles to and from school on a push bike.

Beyond the call of duty, Brian cared for us, and shared with us. He came during the lunch hour and played cricket.

He taught us well. We learned English Grammar and parsing, which proved invaluable in later education

Games and competitions helped us learn mathematics. We were challenged to get answers to set tasks in our head. We learned spelling and tables by rote. A whole class would sit out on a verandah, repeating together and aloud, our spelling or tables. As long as the rhythm continued, the teacher would leave us alone. Some pranks were played. Eula, my sister tells how children from her class would run down the stairs, and over to the tennis court fence and back without being caught by the teacher.

In 1949, John Baker and I planned to sit the Queensland scholarship examination. I was 12, having skipped two grades at school as some previous classes were not available. John was 14.

Brian Kinnane invited us to stay behind after school ended at 3.30pm. He would help us with the novel we were studying, with the title, "We of the Never Never." We accepted and he worked with us many times till 4.40pm., then he biked the 4 miles home. At the end of the year both of us passed the examination and this was directly due to his investment in us.

I treasure the letter he wrote to me.

Dear Owen,

Congratulations in your success! Now do you think it was worth the effort? It is a credit to you to have passed. Would you send me a copy of your individual results when you receive them?

I am sorry that I am so late with my congratulations, but I have just returned from NSW.

Give my regards to the rest of the family. Wishing you the best of success in the future,

Brian Kinnane.

Whatever I have done, under the surface is the great contribution that Brian Kinnane made to my life. In early 2000, a Millbank school reunion was held and Brian Kinnane was there. He seemed so different to my projected image of him, because mine was an idealized image. While he was pleased to meet me, he was more interested in John Baker, who he remembered as being a clever student, and he was. Sadly, John's life potential was not realized as

he didn't continue with study, but centered his life in the country, sawmilling, and the hotel. He died shortly before the reunion. I was disappointed as I could not convey to my teacher, that while I started behind, I ended far ahead of where I ever imagined, and I would like him to know of his contribution. I heard later Brian Kinnane left school teaching to work in a bank

The Millbank School closed through lack of students, and the building was loaded on a truck, and taken to Wambo, about 20 miles distance where it stayed until it again closed through lack of students. It journeyed again to the small township of Moonie, where it remains and resonates to the sound of learning children.

MY LETTER TO BRIAN, 2006.

April 20th 2006

Dear Brian,

Today I read an article I wrote in the writing course I am enrolled in at U3A Nunawading. I have written mainly historical things I remembered concerning my early life on the farm at Iona. The group encouraged me to send you a copy of what I have written about my experience of you at the Millbank School, and I am happy to do that. You may find it interesting. Particularly I would like you to hear my appreciation of your contribution to my life. With my background, and living in a place of isolation, and limitations of awareness of the wider world, I think I only had three choices of career: a farmer, a school teacher or a clergyman. Your image, though idealized, was very significant to me as it represented a different picture, outside the social and spiritual corral I was brought up in. I hope you enjoy my reflections. I trust life has worked out well and been fulfilling for you.

Yours sincerely, Owen Clark

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

BRIAN'S REPLY

May 6th 2006

Dear Owen,

Nice to hear from you. Thank you for sharing your literary effort. I appreciate it.

It's good to hear you are enrolled in the U3A course and I hope that you enjoy it and do well in it.

How interesting it is what different people remember from the same era! I recall the time you and I crutched some of your father's sheep, when he was too ill to finish the job. (Forgetting about the nicks and cuts), and the times we drove the 'tilly' around the paddocks collecting firewood.

Probably the first lessons in driving for both of us!

Recently I received an extract from the Chinchilla News of 19/01/06, which listed the "Ultimate Team" of the Chinchilla District Cricket Association during the years 1940 -1959. To my surprise, I was included in the list, so now you can tell your friends that, as a school boy, you clean bowled one of the 'stars' of that period.

Kind Regards, Brian Kinnane.



FUN AND GAMES

With no TV, no radio, and few toys, by modern standards we were deprived. Along with my sister and twin boys' next door, we had little modern stimulation. However, after school we were free to roam until we were due home for tea.

My parents were more deprived. My mother spoke very little of play. She and her siblings tried to ride poddy calves, and eventually fell off, or were bucked off. Unique to Queensland are the rhinoceros cockroaches. They appear after rain. She said they always crawled northward, so she would change their direction to see how long it would take before they turned north again.

Apart from climbing trees to escape butting Billy goats and a bull, my father spoke little of games. He and his brothers had a ritual of swimming the Wambo Creek when it was in flood. Surprisingly none of them drowned in the fast-flowing water. Later they did play tennis and cricket.

After school we had to amuse ourselves. In doing so we became acutely aware of everything in our surroundings. We had an intense focus on nature: the grass, the ants, beetles and spiders, and sometimes a snake, along with goannas, frilled neck lizards, and birds.

We would imitate bird calls and knew what they meant. We had fun whistling the hawk warning of a minor and seeing birds flying for cover.

We set up bird traps, a box held up by a stick with a string attached, which we would pull when a bird was pecking wheat under the box. We trapped some top knot pigeons. Our mother cooked them for us to eat, but we didn't like them so that ended our bird trapping.

The dogs were always with us. There was the pet kangaroo, the chooks, the pet lambs, the cows and horses.

We were warned about red back spiders, but that did not stop us from looking under pieces of tin or rubbish where we would find and kill them with a stick. They were the enemy.

We explored the bush and ate sap from trees that we said were bleeding. Occasionally we climbed trees. We would walk on the top rails of the cow yard to see how far we could go before overbalancing off.

We were always on the lookout for hornets that stung us on a number of occasions. Their nests we would burn with lighted newspaper.

On the ground were different grasses and prickles we had to dodge with our bare feet. We made games with sticks, tins and pieces of broken coloured glass or anything we could find.

There was no sand pit like the one I made for my children to play in, because we had acres of wash sand within walking distance of our house.

With my father's help we found two bull oak saplings with a suitable fork and made stilts that we had lots of fun trying to master.

I learned how to make a shanghi (a sling shot) from my cousin and got into trouble as I shot a stone through the house window. One time I hit and killed a butcher bird and when I picked up its dead body I was repulsed by the fact that I killed it.

Once I lit a fire and scared myself and my father when the fire burned some distance before we beat it out.

With a piece of meat tied to string we caught yabbies in the dams.

In summer we loved swimming and playing games in the dam. In one game we used a large shed door to make waves in an effort to sink a shallow canoe with one of us in it. The canoe was made out of a piece of old roofing iron.

At school we played red rover, brandy, and tag, along with tennis, and later cricket, after someone made a cricket pitch in the school grounds.

Red rover is a game that involved one person in the middle of two parallel lines about fifty yards apart. Children could stay safely on the two lines and could take two steps out into the middle, but if they took a third step they had to run to the opposite side without being caught by the person in the middle. Hence the slogan; "Red rover, three steps and you are over". When caught the person joined in catching others crossing to the other side. The last person to be caught was the winner.

Brandy was similar to tag and being hit with the ball was to be tagged.

Girls played hopscotch. My sister also had dolls she played with.

We had competitions to see how long each of us could stand on a meat ant's nest. None of us wore shoes and meat ants only nip, they don't sting, so it was a matter of seeing how many nips one could endure.

This is what happened on April fool's day. Up until twelve noon the goal was to trick someone by making them feel foolish.

"Look there's a magpie," and if the person looked when there wasn't one, they were greeted with "You're an April Fool".

Twelve noon brought a change of focus, and the goal was to hook a tail on to someone. The tail was made with a bent pin in the end of a thin piece of material. This was pinned on to someone without them knowing, making them the butt of the joke. At school someone pinned a tail on the teacher's coat. He was not aware of it, and of course the pupils were laughing. He asked what was going on, and what we were laughing about, but nobody told him. A few seconds later the tail fell off and someone grabbed it, and the teacher never knew what the laughter was about. No one dared put another tail on the teacher. These are "fun and games" memories of my childhood.



MY FIRST TURNING POINT

“The children who go away to boarding school have more maturity. I will pay for you to go to boarding school until you get your Junior High School Certificate. You are young, so you can take a longer time if you fail the first time.”

Such was my father’s message to me. Through classes not being available in my small primary school, I was advanced a grade on two occasions. This meant I sat the state scholarship examination at twelve rather than the usual fourteen years of age and passed.

My dad assumed the Gatton Agricultural College would be the boarding school. However, it was further from home, and for some unknown reason I focused on the Toowoomba Grammar School. Dad didn’t mind, so I was kitted out with uniform and books to go to the TGS. The uniform and colours of blue and gold appealed to me, and that it was closer to home influenced my choice.

My life up to twelve years of age was very sheltered. I lived in an isolated spot. The Millbank primary school had fourteen children. Seven miles to the telephone and Post Office, Fifteen miles to Church and sport where the family went weekly, and forty miles to Dalby where shopping was done each fortnight. With few books, virtually no films, and the occasional radio program, it was a very isolated and sheltered environment, lacking in outside stimulation.

Toowoomba Grammar School is situated towards the top of Margaret Street and has spacious grounds and had about four hundred students, both boarders and day boys. At twelve years of age in February 1950, all my clothes, marked and organized by my mother, were deposited in dormitory East 3 that contained eight beds. My bed was next to the shower room. My books went to my locker in a crowded locker room. I said goodbye to mum and dad, my younger sister and brother, my mum cried as she did every time I was left at school. They drove off home and I was alone in a strange place, the first time I had been away from home and parents, ever. I felt strange

and alone like never before. Still I guess others feel the same, so I'd better make the best of this.

All the new boys were indoctrinated in to the traditions of TGS. The school song, and what sounded like a weird sounding war cry, had to be learned by heart. TGS, we were told was one of Queensland's Great Public Schools competing with eight other schools, especially in sport, and pride in our teams, and school pride was drummed up.

My subjects were English, Maths B, Geography, Book keeping, Physics, and Chemistry, and classes were held in different rooms for each subject.

Meals were eaten in a large dining room just next to a large kitchen, each person having a yearly allocated seat at a table with a senior leader. Meals began with grace.

From seven to nine pm with a half hour break in the middle, all attended and were seated at tables in the large hall, to do homework, the time being called "prep". Then it was off to dorms to sleep.

The new boys had to walk through a large central dormitory, and particularly on the first night they came face to face with the last year student intake called "old boys", who blocked their way and said, "Hey squirt, fold my quilt!" This was the introduction to "the squirt system" where old boys made servants of and bullied the new boys who were called squirts. What had been done to them the previous year was now passed on to the new boys. Cleaning and polishing shoes and football boots, running messages, and folding quilts and making beds is an example of the many chores that were commanded to be done by squirts. Anyone objecting was confronted by the sheers force of the old boys group sticking together.

One squirt objected and challenged an old boy to a fist fight with boxing gloves behind the bike shed. The old boy of considerable size accepted the challenge, not realizing that the challenger was an experienced boxer, who gave him a beating. Not only did the squirt win the fight but was never bullied again. Bullies are usually cowards!

This was a cruel bullying system that one had to endure. The only revenge, not really revenge, was to do the same next year to the next lot of squirts.

Cruelty, an old boy's right, also involving punching the body, especially arms, and kneeling legs, just for fun. Surprisingly after muscles recovered from initial soreness, they toughened and became used to being pummeled. "Crow pecks" were a popular cruelty, given for little or no reason. "Bend your head" was a command/demand by an old boy. When bent the head was hit by the knuckles of the bully, and as hard as they could. A "double bungler" was when one endured a head hit by an elbow and then knuckles in quick succession.

Old Boys Day was held for the squirts. This entailed each squirt having his hair fixed into weird shapes and angles using Brylcream, even axle grease, shaving cream, toothpaste and the like. I steered towards some traditional old boys who used Brylcream. Against the rules I combed mine out to go to piano lessons down town and returning tried to redo it. This was noticed but there were no repercussions. Teachers and staff obviously turned a blind eye to all the squirt system till years later.

Because of large ears, and a haircut of short back and sides, I got the nickname of Dumbo. I didn't like it but accepted that this was the way it was. When my father got the first account from the book suppliers, he asked me about the many rubbers, pencils and rulers I had bought during the term. I explained that mine had been taken or stolen and as I was taught not to steal, I bought replacements. After that I guarded my things better and took, or stole from others.

Swearing competitions were held as to who could speak the longest, using mostly swear words.

Sexuality was blatant. In my family sex was almost a taboo subject. There was no nakedness in our home. My father gave me a book about the facts of life. He was slightly embarrassed and described as "rude" the fact that a male plumbing part fitted into the female. My fascination with rams mounting ewes, bulls mounting cows and dogs getting knotted, and the hidden mystery of erections and masturbation was a type of "hidden in the cupboard" sexuality, a bit strange, a bit naughty, pleasurable and forbidden mystery.

At school, lust, lecherousness, and women being treated as sexual objects shocked me. Sexual stories, real or in fantasy were outside my world. I was told two females displayed themselves through a window of a nearby building, and boys would gather to watch. "Cock teasers" they were called. One winter evening, while out walking, I was confronted by a group of boys, with obvious erections under their clothes, who had a woman on the ground and they were "feeling her up", sucking her breasts and manipulating her body. Having never seen such a display and never seen a woman's breast before, I went up and touched her breast with one finger, and then left. The skin was soft!

Tales, whether fantasy or real, were told of boys searching for, and secretly watching couples having sex in the bush along the Toowoomba range. My bit of lusting focused on the large breasts of a girl in a local cake shop!

I was homesick. From this raw world, I longed for home. I'd sit on rocks along the school driveway, look across the Toowoomba city valley to a flat-topped hill to the west, called Gowrie Mountain. One hundred miles beyond that hill was my home and I longed to be there. I was sad. I used to complain about having to milk cows, separate the milk, and cut the wood. I never complained again.

I only cried once. I was sick in the school hospital with the mumps. (Coming from the isolation of the bush I got measles, mumps and chicken pox in the first year at school) My mother had rung to see how I was, and after the conversation, I cried. The nurse comforted me.

It helped in lonely times to walk with another boy, and explore the range, Picnic Point, the old toll bar, the flat-topped mountain, and walk through the parks. I often climbed trees, and one tree still has the carving of my initials.

Each week we received pocket money. In alphabetical order, names were called and ticked off the list as each was given pocket money. Then each was free to go. I always felt sorry for Zeigler.

I had only been to about four movies when on holidays. Now with other boys I went to the Empire theatre. The Empire Strikes Back, Stand by For Action and Annie Get your Gun still remain in memory. One night after pictures, a

group of us got through a hole in a fence and stole some oranges. I also tried two cigarettes, but knew I'd never smoke.

Every Sunday I joined the 9.30am Anglican Church parade, walked down Margaret Street to the Church of Christ, where after attending the service I went home with Aunty Phyllis and Uncle Ronnie. I had Sunday dinner and tea with them, a kind of family haven before they drove me back to school. Without trying I came ninety sixth in the school of four hundred in the yearly cross-country run. The second year, I tried and came nineteenth, and third in my class of 3c. I enjoyed running and was proud of my effort.

I came to enjoy watching the school rugby matches but hated playing. It seemed a game for all brawn and little brains. I had tennis coaching and played in matches. I enjoyed tennis.

Being twelve, I was too young to join the cadets in the first year, but second year I enjoyed the drills, the shoots, and the marching, and especially marching to the memorial on Anzac Day. I was surprised when some fainted in the heat.

I enjoyed my subjects, English with plays and poetry was the best. Geography was a close second.

I enjoyed glass blowing in Chemistry, but couldn't get my mind around the subject, and it was one I failed.

I enjoyed the challenge of theorems in Maths B. with the Principal Mr. Mills as the teacher.

Over the Christmas holidays I was back with my family, and we went for a great holiday in a caravan to the Blue Mountains.

There was no way I could be a bullying old boy. I found myself helping the new comers cope with the school experience. While waiting for mealtime, groups would gather and wrestle on the front lawn of the school. I learned and enjoyed wrestling. I was surprised that I could hold my own with some of the new boys who were bigger and stronger than me.

I studied hard, so I wouldn't spend any more than two years at this school. Home was a better world.

In the final Junior exams, I got two Bs. and three Cs, so it was home.

These two years were a huge turning point for me. I was glad to get back to the safety and security of the farm, but I had grown in that I wanted to read more. I enjoyed physical work on the farm, but the bigger world of ideas and adventure eventually drew me into a greater life, and I left home in 1957 for further study and a different career. I always feel the lack of stimulation in my early years due to isolation, but while it hurt, I am grateful for the experience of my two years at TGS.

Things are VERY different today at TGS.

My Brush with Bamboo

I lined up at the hospital for an important medical test. Before the test I was interviewed by a pleasant matronly woman who asked me a number of questions. Home address, Medicare number etc. I had forgotten my Medicare card, and didn't have the number, in spite of putting it in an obvious place at home, so I wouldn't forget it before I left. I'm sorry I haven't got my Medicare number. After a time and some consultation, that took place in the background with her colleagues, my interviewer came back into the room.

"You are going to get the cane" she announced.

"What do you mean the cane?" I muttered.

I was shocked and numbed. I asked why, and she went on about rules and requirements and red tape and mumbo jumbo like a politician who won't give a straight answer. What sort of place is this? What have I done wrong? Why am I singled out to be beaten with a cane?

"So let's get this over with," said the woman in a not unpleasant manner.

My mind started to work overtime. If I want this test, and it is important to me, perhaps I had better go along with this. This might be a new experience, was a strange thought that bobbed up into my mind. Then I got angry. Being caned is painful. I started writing down details. If I am caned, I'll have the facts and I will go to the Age and expose them.

"Now why am I getting caned?" I demanded. I wanted the facts.

"Because you didn't fill in your Medicare number on the form." She shot back at me.

“That’s unfair. You are going to cane me for that? Just because someone who sits on their bum in an office all day and won’t take my telephone call when I get home to give you the number and won’t write down my information on my form. What sort of place is this? You must be out of your mind”

Then I woke up.

Why would anyone dream such a dream?

After contemplation, I remembered when I was 10 at primary school. Our school was a one roomed building with one teacher, 14 children and 5 grades. While the teacher Brian Patrick Kinnane was distracted teaching another class, John Baker and I the only two in our grade had the opportunity to be mischievous. We chewed small pieces of paper, put them on the end of a ruler and flicked them so they would stick on the ceiling. The teacher eventually noticed and asked if we were responsible.

“No, it wasn’t us,” we replied all innocent like. Eventually he cornered us with his questions and our innocence turned to guilt, and I got three whacks across the hand with a bamboo cane for lying. The teacher was determined to punish us, but I remember his concern that he had not injured my hand. I deserved it.

When thirteen I was a border at the Toowoomba Grammar School. Of the six subjects I studied, one was Maths B. The teacher was the school’s headmaster, a Mr. Mills. He was a good teacher and very enthusiastic about the subject. However, the boys who made up the class and came predominately from farming areas, found theorems about angles and squares on the side of the hypotenuse, of little application to life as they knew it with sheep, wheat, cattle and pigs.

As well the subject was difficult to learn. The headmaster persisted. About six months into the year, with many in the class struggling, he casually mentioned one day in a lesson, that we all needed to do better or else there would be a bit of stick. When the next week arrived at least twenty in the class of thirty, got the assignment wrong.

“All those who got it right remain in your seats.”

“Those who got it wrong line up here.” He said.

He took a fine bamboo cane from the cupboard, asked each of the twenty to bend over, one after the other, and gave two solid strokes of the cane to each bum. Observers said some students were given harder whacks than others and I was one of those so privileged. Not having ever had this treatment, I found it very easy to leave the room as if propelled by a fire in the tail. I understood why other offenders who previously had been given six of the best, shot upstairs, dropped their trousers, and sat with bared bums in a basin of cold water. Blood would be drawn if two whacks landed on the same flesh.

Not surprisingly all students had correct homework for the next lesson. In the final Junior examination, I passed with two Bs and three Cs. For Maths B, I obtained a B. Is there a connection between this “B”, bamboo and bum?



To Cousin Lloyd:

I have a special connection to your father my Uncle Dave Smith's farm, and I wonder if you have heard of it. When I was a teenager, I was shy and wondered if I would ever fit in with the young people of the church who went to Christian Endeavour. I made my decision to follow Christ in 1951 and was baptized in the creek opposite Montrose. I said to God that if I could feel confident in the youth group that I would consider going into full time ministry. My parents bought me some new clothes and I tried hard to be part of the youth group, and ended up being happy to be a part of CE and was active in the church and camps etc.

I couldn't forget the "deal" I made with God, and there is a verse in Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 v 2-6 that really impacted on me. It was at the time when I was deciding what to do with my life. I had 3 alternatives: to be a school teacher, to be a farmer, or to be a minister. My father had done well when the wool prices were high, and everything was paid off, and Dad wanted to buy some of the black soil country not far away from where we were, so as to breed and fatten up lambs.

In 1956 Powell's owned your farm, and your father, my Uncle Dave Smith had the option to purchase it and that option ran out at 1pm on a particular day. After that my father had the option to buy the land. Uncle Dave had tried to get a loan, as he wanted to buy it, and he had not succeeded. My father had the money to purchase it. On the day the option was due to end, my father and I rode over to Powell's. We rode all over the property, checking fences and everything we could, and we discussed what we would do. I was to manage the place.

However, God and I had, had secret communication. I knew that ministry was very difficult, and I wasn't going to commit myself to it, unless I was one hundred per cent certain that this is what God wanted me to do. The purchase of this property was my Gideon's fleece.

I'd said to God that if He wanted me in the ministry, He would have to stop my father's purchase of the property. So, after the inspection we returned

back to Powell's house at about 12.15pm, and sat down to lunch, talking all the while of the sale and what Powell's would do etc. And I watched to see if God would do anything. At about twenty to one, the phone rang, and it was Uncle Dave. He had been back to the bank and was successful in getting a loan that had just been finalized, and he would be purchasing the property.

My father was disappointed. You can imagine what was happening inside me. When I got home my mother said,

"I really thought that God wanted us to buy this land".

I replied, "I'll tell you why we didn't get it".

And then I told my parents what was behind the fact we didn't get it. So just twenty minutes, and if Uncle Dave got a loan or not was just how close I came to be a farmer or a minister. Pretty close wasn't it? But I trusted, and it worked out. And when training or learning got difficult and hard, I always had the assurance of God's call.



The mud huts were in the bush. Nearby was a small dam, a dam with no bank. The soil from the hole was the material for the walls of the house. Adzed and sawn timber made up the frame, verandas, and floors. The roof was the only real expense. Named Edenhope, this was where my mother lived as a child. Isolated? It was miles from anywhere. The mailman came regularly.

Isolation breeds different behaviors, like self-sufficiency, and the more self-sufficient, the more isolated. In the worst of times my mother's family lived on kangaroo and possums with a weed called "pig face" for a vegetable.

When a stranger came, my mother and her siblings would go off into the bush and return when the stranger had gone. Aunty, my mother's younger sister, once failed to return home and was found asleep in a chook's nest.

As a child I lived on the property next door to Edenhope, with not so much isolation, but with peculiarities that grow in the bush. It's like living in a corral. We killed our own meat, had our own garden and chooks, milked cows, and separated the cream. We were very confident inside our farm fence, and while we acted confidently outside the farm fence, others could easily observe the unusual speaking, and odd behaviour, or dress. Blind to our own behaviour we laughed at others.

Our Church youth group was called Christian Endeavour. A group of young people fourteen years and upwards, met regularly to share together in training, fun and fellowship. Once our group travelled by truck to visit a similar group 40 mile away at a place called "The Gums". We were warmly welcomed and enjoyed the evening. With no electricity, all lighting was by kerosene lanterns and Aladdin lamps. We were welcomed with words of a strange slow speed, the tone and volume high. All this was accompanied by a lantern held too high, so it shone on our faces. The words of welcome were, "Hullo and how are youuuu?" Repeated as they looked into every face individually, it was difficult to refrain from laughing. They were not aware of anything inappropriate. To them it was a normal kindly welcome. Whenever

our group met afterwards, there was a re-enactment, with hand held high, and the words “Hullo, how are youuuu?” followed by much laughter.

Representatives of Christian Endeavour from all around Australia packed into the Brisbane town hall in 1954. The speaker told a joke. Everyone laughed. As the laughter subsided, a teenager from “The Gums” suddenly understood the joke. His laughter was so loud and unusual, the whole audience erupted, laughing at his laughter. He was being himself and enjoying the moment and had little awareness of the reaction he created.

Bob Wheel, a good-hearted neighbour of at least 6 feet 3 inches, had a large straw hat and even if a hundred meters away, he was friendly and would wave his hat with an outstretched arm going from the fullest height in an arc to a point near the ground and back again. To see this was to want to laugh.

He was once in a shop called Penny’s in Dalby. Tall and thin, he had a Hessian sugar bag tied with old rope at opposite corners, diagonally across his back. Completely bent at the waist, with his bottom in the air, his head close to the floor, he was looking from that position up to see into the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. From this low angle, he turned his head back and forth, up and down, odd contortions, examining carefully the contents of the refrigerator. People, seeing him, shrunk back and moved away. His unusual actions showed in the peculiar expressions on the faces of passers-by. I had a strong inward pressure to laugh.

Walking to his front gate every day, he would check the lane in which the public road ran to see if his cattle had wandered out of their paddock. He had a yard-wide dusty strip across the road that he swept clear of all tracks so he could see if his stock got out. A grid would have saved him his daily trouble.

Apart from the forays out of the farm corral to sport and church, occasional trips to town and holidays, and two years being terribly home sick at boarding school, I lived in this rural setting till I was nineteen.

Here the quality of farm clothes was not important. A hat was very important. Long working trousers were worn occasionally for riding or drenching sheep, or when legs needed protection. Shorts were preferred.

The same with boots or shoes! I only wore them when I had to. The soles of my feet were like leather, and shoes always hurt.

In 1957, I chose to escape from this corral. My future brother in law, Rob and I boarded the train in Toowoomba for Melbourne. We were ready to take on the world and with four years training, we'd show what Queenslanders were made of. I had had joy rides before, but this was my first real train journey on my own. Stopping at every little dog box on the line to deliver mail, it took six hours for the train to journey 120 miles from Toowoomba to Wallangarra on the New South Wales border.

Here the wider NSW rail gage began. All our ports (they are not called suitcases in Qld) were lugged across the border as we changed trains. We settled in to an empty section of a carriage, that we innocently expected to be exclusively ours all the way to Sydney. Seats were cross ways across the carriage, with one door on to the platform. Above the seats were pictures of Australia, their funny color showing they had endured too many journeys in the carriage, or they had been weather beaten for 20 years. After eating, a sooty, smoky steam engine had us speeding, very different to the 20 mph we had averaged in Qld.

Night came on. I'd brought a hammock from home, as it might provide a place to sleep, and it fitted diagonally across the carriage from one luggage rack to another. I tried it out, and we laughed as Rob swung me from side to side in a ridiculous and scary fashion. There are few railway stations in Northern NSW, so we decided to try and get some sleep. Sleep meant bed from where we came from. And the rituals are strong. Opening our ports, we put on our long pyjamas. I was in the hammock and Rob lay on a passenger seat. Some fitful rocky sleep followed. The train stopped suddenly at a station.

New passengers were searching for seats. Two lots came, opened our section door, took one look in, saw the hammock and two chaps in their pyjamas, one in the hammock, and one on the seat. Shocked, they shut the door in a hurry and disappeared. It dawned on us that something wasn't quite right. When the train moved again we changed back into clothes, took down the hammock, packed it, and put our pyjamas away. Just as well as

our section was filled with passengers by the time we got nearer Sydney. So shamed were we that we never spoke of this incident again.

After spending 8 hours in Sydney and remembering the warnings from home to look out for pickpockets, and to be careful not to get lost, we boarded the train to Melbourne at Central Station, changed trains at Albury's never-ending platform to the Spirit of Progress, arriving in Melbourne the next morning.

Wide eyed, we had never seen so many railway tracks side by side, and Flinders Street Station, it is a mile long, and the Melbourne houses, all made of bricks. (Those in Qld were timber). We learned many things traveling on the train from Victoria to Qld. It is better to go via Brisbane. After one night's travel in a compartment where eight men out of the ten smoked and told horror yarns all night, future travelling demanded a non-smoking carriage. With suitcases stacked on the floor to fill up the space between the seats of a compartment, and two people lying in the luggage racks, most can get some sleep. One of our colleagues talked to a girl on the train. Romance blossomed, and they later married.

It is better to drive a car the thousand miles to Qld, best of all to fly.

We learned a lot in the process of being "trained" bushies or as Sir McFarlane Burnett is credited with saying; we were V.I.P.s Very Intelligently Pastoral.

So, I arrived at the 'College of the Bible' at Glen Iris, a suburb of Melbourne to be trained as a minister of the Churches of Christ.



I sit, and I look. Up high is a stained-glass window. The observer has to look heavenwards. Two full body images, one of Luke, the other of Paul thrust forward towards me.

They make their presence felt, not just as an image in stained glass, but with the impact of who they were. Luke is described as the beloved physician, and Paul, the fiery intellectual and missionary.

Both have a significant place and contribution in the first century beginnings of Christianity. Both are worth getting to know.

For four days a week, and in the majority of weeks for four years, I sat and looked during devotions that commenced the day at the College of the Bible, the churches of Christ theological college in Glen Iris, Victoria.

Constructed in 1940 the chapel and windows were built from a bequest of two thousand pounds from Edmund H. Chown.

With no heating in the chapel, a comment was made at the time that the stained glass and images helped distract the student's attention from the biting cold of the Melbourne winter.

My connection with the chapel was not just sitting on a seat. I began as a student in 1957 aged twenty, fresh from five years' work on a Queensland farm. While I had savings, I set myself a goal of getting work wherever I could to support myself through the four years of training. The property manager, Mr. Keith Jones, paid students to work in the garden, or in other ways to maintain and improve the property.

After almost twenty years, the chapel and furniture looked drab as the seats were stained with a dark varnish, and the wooden floor equally dark, painted with a dark oily substance. The task set before my brother in law and I was to sand the floor and the furniture back to the raw wood, so a new, clear and modern varnish could make the whole building modern and brighter. This we did over some weeks. We added light to the building in a similar way, but not as grand as the stained-glass windows that let light stream into the building.

Thinking of stained glass highlights something of my deprivation. I'd seen coloured glass in and around the doors of old houses and loved the colours.

As a child I collected pieces of coloured glass, and as an adult I still love the coloured glass of old medicine and poison bottles, and especially the blue of Castor Oil bottles. I can't remember seeing a stained-glass window until I sat and looked up at Luke and Paul.

The church buildings I sat in were plain, and the windows were plain.

I can now see stained glass especially as a work of art, a special type of painting. The colourful filtration of light with the special shapes and tones that stream through into a building, goes beyond the recognition of a clever artisan but inspires a deep response. It challenges an inner capacity to appreciate beauty.

Given this challenge, no wonder stained glass windows are designed in places of worship, churches and buildings, where significant and meaningful memorials are needed to reflect on some special person, event or place.

Here I am being intellectual. Emotionally I feel deprived with stained glass. In the area of music or stories and in movies I have been moved to tears. I can have an emotional response. I have seen lots of stained glass, and have wondered at the beauty, the colour and the shapes. I see the cleverness of the artist, the fantastic amount of design and work, the beautiful tones of colour and light. I am in awe but somewhat distant.

But nothing compares with a sunset, where the great array of clouds and colours, are painted on the azure canvas of the sky.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

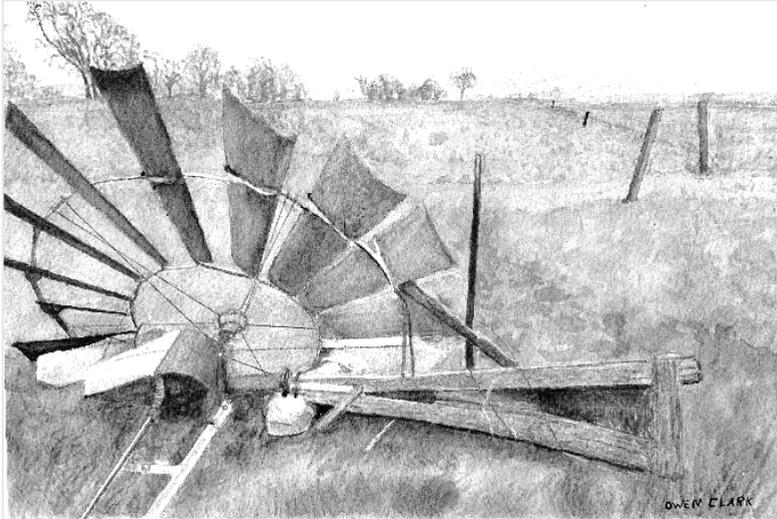


Leaving Iona for Toowoomba Grammar School, 1950



Main Building, Toowoomba Grammar School

LATER LIFE



Detelict Windmill



Abandoned Farm Cottage with Wagon

Watercolours by Owen

MY MUSIC

Did my mother sing to me? I don't know. I guess she did. I don't remember any music until being in Sunday School that was held in our home.

"The moon stood still on Blueberry Hill" is my next memory, as my mother sang it as she did the housework. When she sang, "Down Mexico way" I would say, "Don't sing Maxie go way", as Maxie, and I think his real name was Max Heaps, was a play mate who lived nearby.

There were always hymns and choruses at church services, and the Church of Christ minister who took us for Religious Instruction taught us choruses.

Our school teacher Brian Kinnane used to take singing as part of the school curriculum. Because he needed someone to get the right note to start, as he had no tuning fork, I would be asked to sing, Doh. The first time it came as a surprise to me, and it felt a little embarrassing or uncomfortable at other times too, especially when I sang Doh a bit too high or a bit too low, and he asked me to sing it a little lower, or higher.

At Millbank School a dance was held, and an odd-looking chap came to provide the music with a guitar and a frame on his shoulders that held a mouth organ. The music seemed OK to me but I was amused at his antics as he strummed and contorted himself somewhat to get his lips on the right notes of the mouth organ.

My mother often played the piano. I loved the piece she played entitled, "Beautiful Star of Heaven" and I would sit quietly soaking up the music, wishing that I could one day play like she could. Tunes like "The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" which was the theme music for "The Search for the Golden Boomerang", and other theme music for the News, the Lawsons and Blue Hills, imprinted on my personal score sheet.

When I went to Toowoomba Grammar School in 1950-51, I had piano lessons from a Miss Farmer. While I tried to become a player and learned things about music, all I could do was memorize a few tunes. To be a player one has to be free and somewhat theatrical, which Miss Farmer was, but as a twelve-year-old, and coming from the bush, and in my ignorance, I interpreted her playing as "putting on a turn" that embarrassed me.

One film that I went to at the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba was “Annie Get Your Gun”. For someone who had been to very few films, I enjoyed this film and the songs in it. Later I became aware that this film influenced me greatly.

My father had passed on some negative aspects of classical music. He thought classical music was a person playing as many notes as they could in a short time. I remember telling Miss Farmer this, and she said that my father had it all wrong. I think my father wanted me to be able to play hymns and more traditional pieces.

While my appreciation of music grew, in spite of my efforts, I didn't seem to have that something within that was needed to play music. I actually bought a piano accordion that was beautiful and red, and apart from playing on a few occasions, one being at a baptism in a creek out near Pelican, I didn't master it.

I eventually sold it to a teenage girl at Long Plains about ten years later.

During my teenage years, I visited Harold Powell, and particularly before going with him to camps at Caloundra. I caught some of his enjoyment of classical music, and at one time, we both listened to a nice piece. I knew there was something here that I could appreciate and enjoy. Because we only listened to the radio for news, the country hour, and serials, I never got to hear many pop songs, and when I heard some of Elvis's more rowdy rock and roll, it didn't impress me. When older I appreciated some of Elvis's quieter songs. Somehow, I got to listen to Tex Morton, Gene Autry, Bob Dyer and other hillbilly singers, and enjoyed them. I enjoyed riding on horseback and picked up a song during teenage years that I used to sing while riding:

*I love the saddle, bellowing cattle.
A stockman's life is hard to beat
Riding my pony, I'm never lonely
There's music in my pony's feet.*

Once I had the opportunity to buy a small record player from Ted Charles. He wanted fifteen pounds for the player and some records. I asked my father, as he managed my wages and finances, and he talked me out of

buying it. I think he thought it would lead me astray, and I was angry with him, after all it was my money. Most of my music continued to be spiritual songs, and I learned a number of new ones at the youth camp, and at the youth group Christian Endeavour. As different words had been applied to the tune of "The Whitehorse Inn" which I really enjoyed singing, that tune is on my overall musical score. This was how I was introduced to a number of tunes that later on I discovered were classical, Finlandia being one. What a delight it was to hear the complete music of Finlandia many years later with its dramatic, crashing and clashing beginning and ending with the beautiful central part of the music I knew.

When I bought a tape recorder in theological college, that was very large in comparison to later models, to help me with my studies and passing exams, there was a bit more music.

While I was at the Austin Hospital I needed some support and went to a Psychiatrist by the name of Jim Jewell. He came up with the idea that when we sing hymns we are only singing tunes. I disagreed. When my four-year romance ended, I felt very lost and it was a hymn that was sung by George Beverley Shea, which meant a lot to me. And it wasn't just the tune, the words were:

*Farther along we'll know all about it,
Farther along we'll understand why,
Cheer up my brother live in the sunshine,
We'll understand it all by and by.*

And I did understand later on!!

Beethoven paints in music. I continue to enjoy lots of music, classical in particular.



CONFUSED

Confused, I leave the Healesville Sanctuary.

On a lovely sunny day, I was happy to meet again Australia's native animals. A person would be wrong in the head or the heart, not to like a koala.

The curlews, the owls, the parrots, all delight the eye.

The ibis intrigue. As though on stilts they strut about as if they own the place, like visitors who have overstayed their welcome, with rights to walk the paths, anywhere and everywhere. They eat scraps of finished lunches, and even unfinished lunches, if they get a chance.

I take the path to the kangaroos, and on the way to where the wedge tailed eagles make spectacular flights over the crowd, I meet on the path, two attendants, walking two young dogs, each on a leash, in the warm sunshine. Their fur is colourful, well-groomed and shiny.

They are very healthy and placid in demeanor. Children pat them, and they lick hands in return. Friendly, they welcome the attention. What nice house pets they would make! With the children I pat them. They lick my hand. They are the perfect specimens of the Australian dingo.

A feeling of betrayal creeps up on me. The give-away head size takes me to another place, another time. In childhood I comically and cruelly imagine, an ordinary dog's head, swollen by too many bee stings.

Dingo memories and images from my past, drift slowly into sharp focus.

Dingoes are not nice. These dingoes are nice.

They don't fit the image I was raised with, of a cruel, cunning, and fearsome killer, an unseen enemy, whose presence was seen by trails of destruction.

A dingo's howl, one pitch black night, sent spine tingling feelings up and down my back. My terror kept me close to my father with a vice like grip on his hand.

Dingoes are nasty. They get through fences. They kill sheep.

They not only kill, they play wicked games, grabbing with sharp teeth, biting, tearing out pieces of flesh, tearing bodies to pieces, all great sport for a dingo or dog that is oblivious to the pain they cause. Fatal for the sheep,

some die quickly, others bitten or mauled die miserably, often days later due to poisonous infection from putrid teeth.

Sharp, cruel, nature displaying tooth and claw: Tragic for sheep. Doubly tragic for a farmer!

Live sheep produce wool and meat. Dead sheep result in a loss of livelihood, bankruptcy, defeat. One eaten sheep occasionally is bad enough, but thirty or forty killed in one night becomes catastrophic.

Here it's the dingo or the farmer. To live, the enemy, the dingo, the killer of sheep and one's livelihood must be killed by whatever means and eliminated, at least kept in zoos or behind a secure fence.

I am confused.

At the sanctuary, a dingo licked my hand.



MY FIRST STEP AS A HUSBAND

It was the second of September 1961. Our Wedding day!! Everything had been well prepared. We'd been to see the minister and practiced the service so we all knew what was happening.

The flowers were beautiful. The pews were decorated with ribbons. I had a special suit for the occasion. My wife to be came down the aisle to the wedding march looking absolutely beautiful in her especially chosen dress, and I was thrilled to have her stand beside me. We were both a bit concerned as we had arranged to say our vows off by heart and wondered if we could do it without missing words, or making a mistake. Both of us managed word perfect.

With the service in the chapel over, we were to move to the back and sign the necessary forms. The first step I took as a husband was on to my wife's wedding dress. I had never been next to a woman before who had such a beautiful dress and a number of petticoats underneath. Everybody chuckled or giggled as I embarrassingly backed off and then we walked arm in arm to sign the wedding register. This was the first of the many steps I have taken as a husband.



“Would you like a glass of wine?” is a simple question. “Yes please” or “No thank you” would seem a simple answer, yet behind that answer lurks much history and complexities that still bubble to the surface when I give my answer.

The year is 1977 and I am 40 years of age. Marion and I have bought a bottle of wine and are going out for an evening meal at the Pimple moose, a special eating house at the top of one of Melbourne’s tallest buildings. It sounds ordinary, yet this evening is far from ordinary for us. The bottle of wine is the first bottle of wine we have bought, ever. On that night was the first glass of wine we had drunk, ever. Our parents believed in total abstinence. We heard the stories of an Uncle who got in with the wrong crowd, drank too much and had an illegitimate child. We heard of the health issues, the car accidents, the family upheavals, the way drinkers’ waste money, and the destruction alcohol causes.

But we choose to be free, and freedom is the mastery of life, which means to be able to freely say, “Yes please” or “No Thank you”, and particularly “No thank you” when peer pressure is on.

My parents are still in me creating discomfort, even when I make this decision, but they get further and further into the distance.

“Let us go out to a restaurant tonight” is a simple request. My parents stood uncomfortably near me when I thought about this request. Because my parents were brought up in hard times, and we were seldom near a restaurant, it was only in exceptional cases we ate out from home. I can now decide to go out to eat and enjoy it, but it doesn’t take much for me to hear my parents and feel guilty.

Every time I peel potatoes, I always cut a piece of raw potato off and eat it. When I was quite small I asked my mother, “Piece of tatie please Mum,” and she gave me some. The practice continues!

Each time I clean my teeth, I cannot leave the water running while I brush them. I had it drummed into me when I was young that we only had one water tank, and to brush teeth with the water running was a waste and a

“NO, NO”. Even though we now have plenty of water, I cannot let it run, and when others run the water to clean teeth, my heckles rise.

The words and thoughts around “extravagant,” “we will make do,” or “it is not necessary” were the life brakes put on me by my parents. To this day, I am reluctant to spend money. I found it very hard to live in a beautiful home when I first came to Melbourne, and still struggle with things that are not necessary or considered extravagant. The “Make do” concept fits more comfortably. There are many things that others would throw into the rubbish, that I will save to give to the Salvo’s or so that I might make it into something useful. The small boy who treasured coloured glass or shiny, empty powered milk tins is not far away.

My father and mother were basic and very practical people, the children of the pioneers who chose land that had previously been used by squatters. They were survivors, and they taught me many, many, skills for which I am grateful.

My father taught me how to drive, how to kill and clean a fowl, how to butcher a sheep or cow, how to shoot and skin a kangaroo, how to ride a horse, how to muster, drench, dip and shear the sheep. He taught me the basics of electricity, plumbing, carpentry, saw milling, managing stock, mechanics, fencing, making and cleaning out dams, catching dingoes, and clearing scrub with a bull dozer. While few of these learning’s apply to my life now, all these things from my father are influential in the background of my present day living.

Little wonder I have little patience with a friend who can’t or won’t change a flat tire, or another who doesn’t know how to use garden tools, and someone else who doesn’t understand about a fire alarm.

Decisions we make, determine our uniqueness as persons. My parents appeared to have God like power when I was young. To disagree or go on a different path was to betray the family. Yet it was very important for me to find out who I was with or without my parents.

I learned later that in growing up and relating to my parents there are two dangers. I can go along completely with my parents, and this means I have acquiesced, and so have not chosen my uniqueness. Moving this way, I

would not be free. I would have given my parents too much power, and wherever I have done this the result in me is resentment.

The second danger I learned is that I can rebel completely against my parent's influence. I can think I have been cooped up at home, living under the family disciplines for too long, so can choose to go from home and do pretty much the opposite, and think I am having a good time. This idea has an underlying idea that breaking the rules is breaking free. But to do this I am not any freer because I still haven't discovered my own uniqueness. My attitude could be described as being cussed and rebellious.

My conclusion is to assess what my parents think in the light of my greater and ever-increasing knowledge, and then make my own decision as to whether, and how much, I will go along with my parents thought, values, and behaviour systems.

I have found that when I intellectually choose a different way from my parents or choose to change a long-held behaviour or value, the feeling is uncomfortable and it feels like being wrong, and being disloyal. It has taken time, but with practice, and with the conviction that this is the way to go, over time the decision on an emotional level feels OK.

If I know I am being influenced by my parents in simple things on a conscious level, my concern is how much more are their attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, influencing me without my knowing. My continual search is to find and accept my own uniqueness. I can now have a glass of wine if I want to.



MY LAST CONVERSATION WITH MY FATHER

My father suffered with prostate issues for at least thirty years. For most of that time, with help of Doctors, the Blue Nurses, and medicine, he was able to live an active and normal life. However, in 1994, his health issues increased to such a degree that my mother was not able to manage, and so he was transferred to the hospital's 'long stay'.

He was not happy there but apart from a 'run in' with an aggressive nursing sister, he accepted his lot. However as he got sicker, and the time became longer, he tried to get home again. Mum and Barry were feeling the pressure. He even suggested that Eula my sister come home and nurse him which was out of the question as she had her own family. I tried to raise all the issues I could in a fax I sent to my brother at this time.

Questions and issues that arise for me:

If dad leaves hospital does this mean the family takes responsibility for him?

Is he able to go back to the hospital without fuss if this arrangement doesn't work for some reason?

E.g. if mum can't handle this: if she gets sick etc. what then??

Who would take over? Eula?? Or Pauline?? Or who?

Is there a guarantee that he gets 24 hour a day care till he dies?

Where does this put mum?

At present things seem to be working OK. Will this pressure mum more? (I think it will).

At present she may not be aware of the crises that dad has in hospital.

Is she the wife or the Carer? What does she have to do? The cooking? The washing? The cleaning?

I assume she won't be showering him, turning him or cleaning him up.

Can she not be too involved in his care?

I guess this is done with the support of the Doctor?

It would be important to talk with the relatives of the people who now use the service and find out what they are experiencing?

Would this make it easier for you

Will he be loaned a hospital bed? It is definitely needed.

Where will it be put? Will the house need to be altered? E.g. wider doorways so the bed can be moved, or could he be put into a wheel chair? Won't there be extra heating needed to keep the house warm? I guess it will be mum who makes the decision, but we need to be sure that she understands all the implications. She needs to understand that it might be easier for her with dad in 'long stay.'

Speaking from a distance, it would be good if Dad could die at home, as long as it could be organized, and particularly as long as mum is cared for, and it only puts pressure that we can manage as a family, and you in particular.

I came to Queensland about two weeks before my father died and visited him in hospital. It was the usual small talk as we gathered around his bed. He was very pale and weak. He didn't speak which was very frustrating for my mother. She often visited on her own and she appreciated someone being there with her. On my next visit before I returned to Melbourne I knew that this would be the last time I would see my father alive, so I determined to say all I would like to, so I could look back on my last meeting with him with no regrets.

I sat beside the bed and chatted for a while in what was a one-sided conversation. Then I said,

"Dad, this is the last time I will see you alive in this world. But we will meet again. Our Christian faith tells us, and we believe that we will see one another again. That is what we believe.

I want to say thank you for all you have done for me and the family. You have taught me such a lot, and I cannot possibly repay you. So, thank you for everything. You have been a good dad. I have many good memories of all the things you have taught me and all the times we were together.

And don't worry about Mum. We will look after her. We will make sure she will be OK.

I have to go now, but we will meet again. 'Bye.'

I turned to go, but the gentleman in the next bed called out to me. "Come here, come here".

“Thank you for that. That was marvelous. I haven’t heard anything like it. That was great.”

I was over whelmed with emotion and all I could say was “Thank you” and walked towards the door.

I looked back towards my father to see his eyes following me. From the door I looked back to him and said, “Bye ‘Bye,” I waved and said, “Come on give me a wave.” He raised his hand slightly. I waved again and turned and walked out of view, my heart full of emotion and my eyes filled with tears.

The gentleman who called me to his bed died that night, so I hope what he heard me say to my father may have helped him in some way. My father died about a fortnight later, and I returned and had a talk to his lifeless body and took the graveside service when he was buried in the Chinchilla cemetery.



My mother, who I rang tonight, has a very cunning way of getting what she wants or trying to get what she wants. In her old age, we in the family are becoming more and more aware of what she does. Daffney (the nurse in charge of Illoura) said to Barry, "Your mother is a very cunning woman." We have all learnt a lot of how mum works.

She seems to me to live a long way back inside herself, and she manages how she presents to the world. She does not come right out and state what she wants clearly to all, and she withholds information and presents differently to different people so as to achieve her ends. She knows she can't manipulate me as well as she can manipulate my sister and brother, and so she presents differently to me. She puts a lot of pressure on Eula and Barry when she feels very anxious. She is trying to make things comfortable for herself and she can be ruthless in this, thinking only of making herself comfortable. She wants Eula to look after her every day. In this she is desperate to get out of what she is experiencing at present. She is old, thin, and frail and suffering and I wish it wasn't that way, but it is, and a change of place (she wants to go down to a home at the coast) will not change that. Her unhappiness concerns all of us and is associated with her anxiety. We organized oxygen which according to blood oxygen tests she doesn't need to help her with her anxiety, and it does help. She complains about the staff, the noise, the temperature, and no visitors when she has heaps compared with others, being lonely, having nothing to do, and being breathless.

These are the issues that get to us, who love her, and we struggle with what she tells us. We would do anything to stop her suffering, and so we get hooked into listening to her sufferings. We then toss about trying to DO something to stop her suffering. We visit, we explain, we do things, we tell her what she should do, and get angry when she won't even try it, and then feel awful because we are angry. We talk with the Doctor, the staff and we do what they tell us, and sometimes what they don't tell us, but little changes. I try to tell her that this is what being old is like. The truth is she will have ups and downs, and her general direction is to get worse and eventually die. This is sad. She is helpless. We are helpless. We try to reason

with her, but even that can't change the reality and the situation. She doesn't like it. We don't like it, and we all have to, in the end say good bye. I think mum realizes this when we talk about these basic issues, but that does not help much with the process we are all experiencing. The goal is to have a good, good bye. Perhaps this is the last real gift from our mother as we can learn about the process of being old, and something about our own dying.

Can we face these issues when we will be in her place?



My mother never got angry. That is what she would have the world believe. Whether it was the idea in her family of origin, or as a result of marrying my father I cannot say.

In my memory of the Smith family, I have not one incident where they were angry.

If anger is associated with hurt and disappointment, the closest my grandfather got to anger was just before his death. He expressed deep sadness that the family and the church had bitterly divided over the issue of a missionary group called the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade.

One part of the church wanted to be involved in supporting this group on a long-term basis. They claimed that there was more life and spirituality in the WEC than in the church. The other part of the church thought that they were a missionary group that people could support if they wanted to, but their own meetings and missionaries had their priority to support. This group also thought that the WEC people were acting spiritually superior and looked down on folk who didn't go along with them and their meetings.

The differences became a division. Some families from the country drove past their usual place of worship and went a further 15 miles into the town where the WEC people were predominant. Families from the town came 15 miles out in the country to worship with their group. The WEC's eventually took over the building. One young person reflecting on this interpreted WEC as "Where everyone's Crazy"

Because the building legally belonged to the Church of Christ, the WEC's were legally removed from the building when it was shown they had departed from the Churches of Christ doctrines. The WEC's built their own building in the town and struggled on independently until they eventually identified themselves with the Baptists. Sadly, my grandfather and grandmother and one uncle and his family, were part of the group, kicked out of the very building and church they helped to build. This was my grandfather's sadness and anger.

My father was deep down angry most of the time, although he would deny it and keep it under like keeping a ball under the water all the time. He considered anger to be sinful, and I have a letter from him in which he disagrees with *The Angry Book* which I sent for him to read.

For Mum to be angry she would go against my father's repression and rejection of anger and her own family culture. She also had some idea of being a perfect mother and perfect mothers don't get angry.

In the February 2004 before she died she continued to complain about shortness of breath, and this complaint had been going on for 2 years. She complained when staff insisted that she walk, which she agreed she needed to do, but always wanted to be pushed in a wheel chair. In searching for a cause of her shortness of breath, she did have bad osteoporosis, which restricted the expansion of her lungs. She was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis two years before, a condition that caused the death of her brother. The family did all they could, but the main diagnosis was that the main contribution to her breathlessness was anxiety.

Mum was asking for oxygen, and I talked this over with the Doctor, and he organized for me to take her to the hospital where they would give her a blood oxygen test. If it was 70% or below, she could have oxygen in her room provided free.

The first test was to be at rest. So, after we had rested, a peg like clip was attached to her finger, and attached by a wire to a machine, which showed a blood oxygen level of 94%. Then mum and I walked quite briskly three times up and down the hospital corridor. The second test registered 93%.

I explained to her that she didn't need to be pushed in a wheel chair and it was in her best interest to walk. Her oxygen levels were good. She needed to go along with staff who insisted that she walk. The test had revealed my mother's manipulation of the situation, and there was a sense that she was acting like a "queen" being collected and pushed in a wheelchair. Staff had said as much. I was quite firm with her and said she could walk quietly down to the dining room. She didn't need to be pushed.

After saying good bye to my mother, I was driving back to the coast, when I got a ring on my mobile phone from my brother, saying mother was in a

“state”. She told my brother I had accused her of “bunging it on” in regard to her breathlessness. She was angry with me. I think she was also angry that the test did not support her being a wheel chair queen. Her manipulation had been revealed and in her mind I did it. I rang her, and she was angry, and accused me of saying she was “bunging it on”. I didn’t use those words but there was some truth in her manipulation of staff and family. We talked, and I listened and understood it was difficult for her, but reiterated what had previously been said. She eventually calmed. To help her with her anxiety, oxygen was organized for her.

This was the only time I was privileged to receive my mother’s anger. Anger is difficult for her and me and the family. It would have made life easier for me if my mother had been stronger, angrier. I would not have been so crippled in some aspects of my relationships, if I had had a better model.

In working on this issue, I have more understanding and have moved a little from my family culture of anger.

I have a lot more to learn.



MY LAST TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH MY MOTHER - (16/03/04)

I rang my mother on the phone on the night of March 16th. It was the last night I spoke to her. I asked how her day had been expecting the usual expression of her complaint about not being well, of her struggle to breathe and her weakness, all expressions of old age. "Not very well" was her usual expression. On this occasion she was accepting.

"I've had a reasonable day"

I asked what had happened.

"I've been in bed all day. I haven't been able to go up to the dining room for meals."

"Have you had any oxygen?"

My mother had struggles breathing because of pulmonary fibrosis. This the doctor had diagnosed when she was in hospital at Caloundra. Her brother had died as a result of the same struggle. She also had osteoporosis so bad that it restricted her breathing and raised her anxiety level. She had oxygen when she felt she needed it.

"I have had oxygen all day"

"Has the Doctor been?"

"Yes he came. It's my heart, it's not working as well as it should."

"Yes, I know Mum, and that is why you have had swollen ankles. The oxygen will help."

"Yes it has."

"Is there anything you need Mum? Are they looking after you well?"

"I'm being looked after very well. Daffney and the girls have been here a lot and have brought me meals. I'm not eating much."

"It is hard when you aren't well. Barry and Pauline (my brother and his wife) will be there to see you tomorrow."

"That's good."

"Remember we love you mum."

"I know, and I love you too."

"I hope you have a good night's sleep. They will give you your usual sleeping tablet."

"Yes, I usually sleep alright"

"I must go now so good bye and love from us both down here."

"Bye, and thanks for ringing."

P.S. My mother had a good night's sleep and woke as usual around 6am. Staff checked on her and said they would be back in a little while to give her a shower. When they returned at 6.30am they found that she had died peacefully. Her heart had failed after beating for 95 years.

My brother was praying at about 6.30am that she would not suffer. His prayer was answered. After receiving a phone call, he went to her room and saw her lying peacefully on her bed. She was still warm. Here he said "Good-bye". We all said good-bye when she was buried four weeks ago today. (19/04/04)



AND I HELD MY BREATH

My private pilot's license is dated 1961. In 1960, my last year at Theological College for some idealistic reason I decided to learn to fly. I commenced at MacKenzies flying school at Moorabin in a Tiger Moth. What a thrill doing stalls and spins. And in a Tiger Moth they are dramatic. I changed to a Piper, then to a Cessna 150 in Adelaide where I got my license. To fly involves pressure. The cost of hiring an aero plane is high. Every two years the license has to be renewed, which involves a medical test, and being in command of a plane for three hours with three landings to a full stop, within thirty days of the renewal date. Having not flown for three months, means the flying school requires one to pass a test flight with an instructor, before being the pilot in command. So, the pressure is always there to keep flying so as to remain current. My goal is always to fly safely for my sake, my family's sake and for the passengers I took on joy flights.

It is such a thrill to control a plane, and I wish everyone could have the experience. I was confident with take offs and landings, and circuits, but with the radio, I could never hear clearly, and wasn't confident with so many radio channels and frequencies. Navigation was another area where I needed further training and practice. It demands using maps and working with "the triangles of velocities" which I find difficult while calm on the ground, without the pressure of flying, looking for ground features, along with communicating with passengers. Most of my flying was in close proximity to an airport, or over well-known ground features.

It is 1968. I am qualified to fly a Cessna 172 and a Piper Cherokee aircraft, the Cessna I flew was hired from the Adelaide Flying School and the Cherokee from a local farmer at Bute just outside Kadina where I lived. One week I had taken a farmer in the Cessna for a flight over his farming property at Long Plains. The next week some people from Kadina were my passengers, this time in the Piper Cherokee. I picked up a teenager, Neil Stock, who was a member of the auto cycle club, and we drove out to the hangar.

After the usual checks of oil, fuel, the split pins through the pins in the hinges of the control surfaces, the Pitot tube hole, and the airspeed indicator tube,

we got into the aircraft. With the engine started, I taxied to the end of the runway.

Take off is the most dangerous aspect of flying, so the pre-take off checks are very important. A check of the fuel, the carburetor heat, the trim, the magnetos, and the full and free movement of the controls, along with hatches and harness being secure, is the routine.

Unlike most other engines, an aircraft engine has two sparkplugs in each cylinder, so that if one fails the other will keep the engine running, as there is no chance of changing a spark plug or doing repairs in the air. The other benefit is that the fuel in the cylinder burns more efficiently providing more power to the engine.

To check the ignition system, three of the four positions on the ignition key are used. A twist of the key to the right engages the starter motor and starts the engine. The L position is for the left magneto, R is for the right, and B is for both magnetos. The engine is run up to two thousand revs on "both" magnetos, then switched to "left". If the revs do not drop by more than a one hundred, then that magneto is operating efficiently. "Both" is then selected by the ignition switch, with the revs returning to two thousand. The "right" magneto is then tested and if found to be operating OK, the ignition switch is returned to "both". The throttle is quickly returned to "idle" to check the engine doesn't stop in a "dead cut".

All checks done, I moved the plane on to the runway, which was about twice the length needed to take off, with some mallee trees at the far end.

With the throttle on full power, the take-off run began. As the take-off continued, something was different. It was taking longer than usual for the flying speed to build up. Should I abort the take off?

I was well down the runway, past the point of no return. The trees were coming up fast. Would I have enough speed to fly over them, and then check for what was making the difference?

I held my breath, and held the plane level for as long as it took for the speed to build up slightly higher than the normal take off speed. I pulled back gently on the controls and watched the speed carefully as we climbed, and as the trees were cleared by at least fifty feet.

I breathed again normally, as a check was done of all the instruments, controls and ignition. In checking, there was doubt about the position of the ignition key. To check I twisted the key further right towards “both”.

The engine regained its healthier sound and power. Relieved, I breathed again deeply. I had taken off using only one magneto. I had demonstrated how well this plane could fly on one, a demonstration I would never have chosen.

On further reflection I realized I had been flying a Cessna where the indication marks for Left, Right, and Both, are very different from the Piper. In the Piper the ignition looked as if it was on “both” when it wasn’t.

One thing is for certain I will never ever, ever repeat this breathtaking mistake again.



OUR PET DOGS

House dogs fulfill a different role to working farm dogs. In my childhood dogs were outside and while children played with them their role was to work. It wasn't until 1968 when I lived in Kadina that my children wanted a dog that we got a pup which was called Nip. He was a very lively little dog, and while the children enjoyed him, he got into mischief in the town of Kadina where we lived. He once got poisoned and had to be taken to the vet who saved him. When we shifted to Sydney in 1970, we had to leave him behind in Kadina and gave him to some folk we knew. It was a sad parting for our children and for me, but we had to be firm as he would have been run over as the house we were going to was on a very busy road. Nip didn't settle with the new folk and we heard later he had to be put down.

Misty Skye came to our house for Christmas 1983. We asked our children to write a list of things they might like for Christmas, and Russell got a piece of A4 paper and wrote on every line down the page, "I want a dog and nothing else". Misty was a Wheaten Cairn terrier, and we built a special kennel for her, and she fitted in to our family in Surrey Hills very nicely.

Marion, who had never felt at home with animals, had a special attachment to Misty who had a lovely nature and used to make little noises around the house that endeared her. She had an area in the back yard to run and Russell enjoyed having her. Being on a very busy road in Surrey Hills, we were all very careful to make sure doors were always shut. We had Misty for about four years when on one occasion the side sliding door was left open and Misty was missing. I hurriedly called her and looked in the garden, then out on the footpath, and there she was lying in the middle of Canterbury Road. A car had hit and killed her. Sadly, I went off to work, but was so sad, the Director told me I was no good there and to go home. I went home, and Marion and Stuart and I took her and buried her by a stream on the Appian Way.

Kerrimuir (Kerri) was a West Highland white terrier. We missed Misty so much we bought her to replace our loss. She fitted in at our new house but didn't have much of a back yard to run in and while we gave her many walks, she became very sad when she was with us. Her barking annoyed the

neighbours. She lost an eye due to dryness, and we learned that it was a weakness in the breed. Because we felt she was unhappy and didn't have room to run, we advertised that we would give her away free to a good home. One West Highland White enthusiast rang us and told us "How dare you give such a beautiful dog away". We assessed those who rang and, in the end, decided to give her to a psychologist who lived in a home with a big yard at Warrandyte.

We have enjoyed having our pets, playing, walking and having fun with them, but we have experienced a lot of sadness when we have lost them or said goodbye. The saying comes to mind, "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."



It is time to write a letter. The neighbour's dog has continually barked. Every day, without fail, when the Brown's dog is put outside, the barking starts. Not just an ordinary bark.

Certainly not the happy bark of a dog well loved, one that plays with children and with enjoyment. Like cries of a baby, the sensitively tuned ear can tell by the tones of the cry as to what a baby says, if it is hungry or tired or needs changing. The dog's tone is one of sad protest, as if to say, "I am not happy, and I don't want to be outside".

There is also a hint of anger at its owners, as if to say, "You are not looking after me and caring for me."

That is the torment. When the Browns are away at work, the neighbours get the full force of the unhappy, and angry tones that pound the ear and bore into the heart and soul. The Jones's and the Smiths who live close get the full force of the barking and the mournful tones. At first, they tried to ignore it, and focused on something else, even to try the diversion of music, or radio. But the persistent barking eventually seeps into one's very bones, and anger and frustration arises, as one feels helpless to the onslaught.

The anger inspires unworthy thoughts. Perhaps some valium in some food would calm that barking dog to silence. But valium doesn't taste nice, and the dog probably wouldn't eat it. And one would have to do it every day. Perhaps some snail bait would quieten the wretched dog, and for good.

But when you glimpse over the fence, you wouldn't and couldn't do that to such a beautiful dog. After all it is not the dog's fault that it is unhappy. Why don't the owners do something? Surely, they know their dog barks, and annoys the neighbours! The Jones's told me they expressed their anger to the dog's owners, the Brown's, and nothing eventuated, other than both became more stubborn and infuriated. An even worse atmosphere was created, and the tormented dog barked on. Attacking the dog's owner is obviously not the way to go. So, I must write a letter that appeals to the better nature of a dog lover, with a clear message and without the barb of attack.

My wife came in and took a photo of me writing the letter. I have it here now as a memento. I also have a copy of the letter I wrote anonymously and posted to the Browns.

HERE IS THE LETTER:

I write this with a goal to be creative and with the understanding that adults are able to look at issues in a mature way.

I live a little distance from you and am aware that you have a beautiful West Highland White Terrier.

My concern is that your little dog is very unhappy when it is outside your home, and barks in a very sad way, and never seems to stop. I wonder if you are aware of this. It must be very annoying for all the neighbours who live in the vicinity of your home.

I wonder if you take your Westie for a walk. We had a Westie and it used to bark with the same sad tone as yours, and particularly at the times when we didn't take it for walks.

Perhaps your dog is lonely and needs a mate. If there were two, they would be companions for each other, and could spend time in play.

Perhaps a book or radio program by Dr. Hugh Worth would be of value.

I know there is a de-barking operation, but I shudder at this even when all other possibilities have been tried.

This is all I can suggest for your consideration.

I can only wait for the sounds of silence that will reveal a happy dog.

Yours faithfully,

A former West Highland White Owner...

P.S. We eventually gave our dog away to a happier situation, as we were at that time too busy to walk.

After the letter, the dog didn't bark for a few weeks, but on odd occasions it still barks. The Browns seem more aware of their white dog, and the atmosphere of the neighbours is becoming lighter.

THE SECOND LETTER

About a week ago, I thought I would write you a letter to commend you on the management of your little West Highland White terrier.

As a matter of fact, I felt spurred on by a neighbour who mentioned that your dog was a lot quieter than usual. So, it seemed you were winning in whatever you are doing in management to make your "Whitey" happier and quieter.

However, in recent days your little dog seems to be whining and is barking more often in the same painful and unhappy way. It is very difficult to change a dog's habits once they are engrained over a number of years. I would encourage you to persist in your efforts towards success.

Maybe your little dog could be described as "naughty" or "rebellious" and needs a bit more firm attention or slight punishment when it misbehaves. I mention this principle as the other day someone told me of a collar that was approved by the RSPCA to stop dogs barking by giving them a spurt of citronella, electric shock or some other response every time they bark. From my reading of this it focuses on behavioural changes with rewards and/or punishment. I looked it up on the internet at

<http://www.barkcontrol.com.au/index.html#top> on the topic of barking.

Perhaps you could consider this, along with the information on this site as another "string" to your management "bow". If you put it on "Whitey" every time he or she is put outside, it should only take a short while for a resulting change in behaviour.

*Yours for good management and a happier and quieter dog,
A former West Highland White Owner...*

PS. On one of my walks I passed one of the Browns (I knew them by sight) walking with their Westie on a lead. The result, a happier and quieter dog, and happier neighbours.



THE ORPHAN LAMB, BY GRANDAD

A story for my grandchildren Andrew and Amanda

It was a cool morning when a lamb was born. Laying on the grass it looked around and saw other sheep and lambs. It started to call out "Ma..ma..ma..ma.." expecting its mother to come. It called again and again "Ma..ma..ma..ma.." and as it got more hungry it called even louder. The lamb could see other lambs with their mothers, but his mother never came. He got more and more hungry and cold, even though he curled up trying to keep warm and hidden from the foxes, eagles and crows who would like to eat him for their dinner.

Fortunately, it wasn't long before Farmer Clark (Amanda and Andrew's great granddad) came by on his big black horse. He picked up the little lamb and looked around to find the mother who could have been any one of the many ewes in the paddock. He spotted one who may have been the lamb's mother, caught her, and held her while the lamb had a drink of special milk. The lamb felt better, and he wondered if this ewe was really his mother. But, she would not stay to look after him.

Farmer Clark took the lamb along with him on his horse and rode back to his house. When he arrived, he took the lamb inside and said to his children "No one wants this one so we will look after him". The children were very excited and called him Cottontail. Every few hours they heated some milk in a bottle and fed it to the little lamb who sucked very hard while wriggling his tail and pushing with his head as though the bottle was his 'real mother'. While he wished he was like the other lambs that had real mothers, he was happy because he was warm and fed.

One day he got pains in his tummy and didn't want to eat, and he felt very sick. "I will have to get some special medicine" said Farmer Clark. The medicine looked green in color and had 'Sulphur G' written on the bottle. After a few doses he felt much better. He continued to grow up well and enjoyed the children and the dogs and cats that lived at the homestead. He stayed in the shed at night when he was older.

Cottontail learned to eat grass and he grew fat and healthy. One day he was taken to the shearing shed where his wool was cut off. The man who was

the shearer complained. He didn't like shearing Cottontail because he was so fat and had lots of wrinkles. The shearer said "Don't ever ask me to shear that sheep again". Cottontail heard those words and he felt very unhappy, very much like he felt when he was small and his real mother didn't come to him. But the children and animals still loved him and played with him.

One day, when Cottontail and the children were older the time came for him to be returned to the big mob of sheep. So, he said goodbye to the children and Farmer Clark took him to the big paddock, and he was happy enough.

Something very interesting happened when Farmer Clark was putting a mob of sheep into the yards at the shearing shed a year later. As you know it is very difficult to get sheep to go into an enclosed space, and the dogs and Farmer Clark were having big problems. Guess what happened? Out of the mob walked Cottontail straight into the yard and up the sheep race, and of course all the other sheep followed him. Farmer Clark was very happy and said "I am so glad we saved Cottontail, it is so good to have him help us to yard the sheep. I think he is saying 'thank you' to us for being kind to him". Cotton Tail was glad too. He never forgot the children, and whenever they visited the paddock where he was he always came over to them for a special pat.



THE DAY AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

NEXT DAY REFLECTIONS ON MY 50TH BIRTHDAY PARTY!

My 50th. Birthday was held in 35 Dean St. Kew and we had a meal together and then sat in the lounge room where we shared together.

It is always difficult to be original for a birthday party, so I decided to invite some special friends with the request that we would all share something of every ten years of our lives. Those invited were Howard and Josie, Hardie and Heidi, Jurgen and Rosvita, to join with Marion and I.

On reflection this morning, I concluded that my 50th birthday is the only party that I have really, really, enjoyed. While it is true that I was in the frame of mind and more open to enjoyment than ever before, my main joy surrounds those of you who came with the gift of yourselves and your generosity to enjoy, and share, and enter into the evening.

My deep appreciation to Marion for all the hard work that she put in. She excelled herself in the preparation of all the gourmet dishes. I was also delighted she was able to share with you many of the things she has never shared with a group before. Usually she is so busy cooking etc.

“A nice little party and a cuddle is what I want, and I enjoyed both.”

Howard always excels himself with his originality, down to earth words and fun. This night was no exception. His words from “The Prophet”, and the Survival kit for a 50-year-old fitted so right.

Josie, thank you for your card, decorated with pressed flowers from your very own garden. A card with a big ‘L’! L for 50 and I am still a big learner. Thanks for the painting book. It tunes in to an artistic part of me and it surprised me that it’s there. Thanks for encouraging Heidi to share her 18-year-old experiences with us all.

Heidi delighted us in a skirt and legs. You asked what to bring to the party and I said, “Your natural selves”, and you did. Thanks for your personalized art around my presents. We were all with you when you shared your experiences in England.

Hardy, I was amazed that I knew so little about your past. Sharing with us how you worked in the coal mines when younger is something I will always remember. It is good to see the journey you have come on and that now you are an Air Traffic Controller. You brought laughter and happiness with you, which we all appreciated. Being a connoisseur of good wines and food is always a strong contribution. Thanks for that.

Jurgen and Rosvitha: we have travelled quite a journey together. Thank you for being there last night and contributing as you did. You are a little more known to me now. I find the journey you have both taken, very courageous in geography, in culture, and in relationships. I hope you realize the treasures you have gained.

As I said at the beginning I really, really enjoyed this party. Perhaps it is a 'one off' but I would be prepared to try this again. Maybe a different focus on what would be shared.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A cubby house is being built. It is like a homemade cake.

The ingredients are timber, coach bolts, screws, nails, small corrugated iron, a colour bond roof, a ladder, and a slippery slide. A jolly-roger flag pole is just the icing on the cake.

Progressing with week end effort, the dream grows as does the sparkle in a four-year-old boy's eyes. His father is tired but happy.

His mother is cautiously contented. Soon the consuming project will end and give her more of her husband. She sees her children spending sunny hours outside the house. Other children will come and share in the enjoyment. Hopefully there will be few bruises, tears and scraps. This activity is to be a creative model of play which will be mirrored in adulthood.

Grandad and Nanna arrive to inspect. They are agreeably surprised with the way the materials they paid for have been put together by their son.

"Solid and safe, yes, this will give the grandsons, Daniel and Oliver and their friends, lots of fun and playtime." Not being a bought playhouse and built to the invisible plans in their son's head, they had their doubts, but their son has well surpassed their now unfounded fears. The almost completed cubby house they pronounce as "Really good. A. plus!"

The small window in the side wall caught the little boy's attention.

"It's a shop. It's a shop!" He sparkled from inside the cubby.

Joining the creative excitement grandad said,

"What are you selling? What can I buy at your shop?"

His grandson was nonplussed. Caught up in the fun, he hadn't thought of what he was selling.

He was out of his depth. Grandad rescued him.

"I would like a pie please. Have you got a nice meat pie?"

The boy handed his grandad a piece of wood.

"Here is a pie for you".

"Thank you", said grandad, "How much do I have to pay?" It was too hard a question.

"Here's some money for the pie" said grandad, handing over a real twenty cents.

“Have you got a purse or box to put your money in like a real shop?”
Looking at the silver in his hand, he was overwhelmed. But he quickly recovered.

“Grandad, you keep this and give me some pretend money”
Grandad took the money and picked up some leaves and said,
“Here is some pretend money for the pie.”

His father, clearing away off cuts of timber, stopped and watched proudly as his son easily climbed the ladder and slid down the slide. He was quietly, very happy and satisfied with his creation.

With a flag, some small furniture from Ikea, and a few other finishing touches, along with a coat of special paint, the cubby will soon be completed. Everyone will be happy. The various energies in its creation will end in a permanent new building in the back garden.

While his father has the finishing touches to complete, for one grandson and one grandfather, the final details don't matter.

The sign already says:

‘OPEN FOR BUSINESS’.



NOT ON THE FRENCH UNDERGROUND

The French underground lift was full. There was a long queue. Let's take the stairs. We were physically fit, as we prepared well for our overseas trip in 1996. I raced slightly ahead of my wife Marion on the stairs. The French underground was really underground as it seemed like ten flights of stairs, as we labored puffing before we saw people again.

Thank goodness it didn't happen on these stairs that only odd people like us would use, where we didn't know the language, or knew where we were.

It did happen though, a few weeks later, after returning from overseas to Melbourne and I returned to work. I was walking up just one flight of stairs at Australian Radiation Laboratories on November 7th 1996, having a significant conversation, when I experienced a six out of ten pain in my chest. I kept on walking and finished the conversation. I was hot and sweaty. I sat down and rested. "Are you alright?" asked a colleague. "I'll be alright" I replied. "I'll sit for a few moments". The pain subsided as quickly as it came, but I was shaken. "I'll take myself home" I replied. "Will you be alright?" she asked again. "Yes" I said, "I'll take it slowly" Which I did, with the air conditioner on high as it was a hot November day.

I knew something was wrong but had no sense of the seriousness of what could have occurred. I just wanted to get home and drove past two hospitals to get there.

Three months earlier, while walking, I had experienced difficulty breathing; a shortness of breath, a gasping in an effort to get enough air. This happened on four occasions.

"When I get back from our trip, I'm going to see a cardiologist" I told Marion. We had planned an overseas trip, and an occasional shortness of breath, wasn't going to stop our overseas holiday that had already been put off till after my father's death. On reflection, his death, and a stressful year at work, plus a greater effort to my home, and the fear and excitement of going overseas for the first time, traveling in a Jumbo for the first time, culminated in an unreal and stressful state as we boarded the plane at Tullamarine. My excitement mixed with fear was "over the top". I was not aware of any

connection between air travel and health difficulties but walked and exercised all I could on the plane, so I would be fit for the holiday. All through the seven weeks holiday, the previous pattern continued. I carried suitcases upstairs with no ill effect. But next day while walking up a slight incline to Hadrian's Wall for example, I had shortness of breath, which stopped after a short time. This symptom was typical of what was later diagnosed as unstable angina.

My "attack" occurred just 7 days after flying non-stop from London to Melbourne.

I arrived home safely, anxious and confused and a bit spaced out. I said to Marion, "I've had chest pains, and will have to go to hospital" She insisted I lie down. Because I felt OK, I wondered what the fuss was about. She rang our son who is an ambulance officer, who on hearing the symptom really insisted I lie down and keep still. He would ring his ambulance connections and get someone there as soon as possible. I'd just driven ten kilometers, and felt OK, so why bother the ambulance, when we could drive to the hospital anyway.

While lying still, I realized I had sweaty socks on. I sat up to get clean ones and was told very strongly by Marion and son Phillip not to be so stupid and not to move. In no time, a mica ambulance officer arrived and was quickly guided to the bedroom, where I lay frustrated at all the fuss. I felt OK. But a sense of "This must be serious" grew on me as I was connected up to an ECG machine and tested and given some Anginine that gave me a slight headache.

Then a second ambulance arrived, and an ambulance trolley was wheeled into my room. I still had an idea that I would walk out to the ambulance, but no way was that going to happen as I was wriggled on to the trolley and wheeled to the ambulance. I felt embarrassed with two ambulances at the front of the house, and the situation was a curiosity for all the neighbours who were both curious and concerned. I was beginning to have a sense of what it meant to be a "patient". I had been taken over. My task now was to work with those who were my carers.

With an ambulance officer beside me I was taken to the Epworth Casualty. Marion hurriedly explained to a client she was to see for psychotherapy, and

who had seen the whole drama, what was happening. She gathered a few things that I might need for a hospital stay and arrived at the hospital a short time after me. I was taken to a cubicle, and had more intensive tests, and answered the usual necessary questions, name, address, occupation, Medicare number, Medibank number etc. and questions concerning symptoms and health history. "Have you ever smoked?" "I had two cigarettes when I was at high school in 1950" I replied.

"That's what caused this, that's the problem" they joked.

Emotionally I was feeling a bit unreal, but also had a heightened sense of awareness. The pain, the reaction of my family, the ambulance taking me to hospital, the interview, the tests, the realization I had a problem with my heart all impacted upon me. This new experience was accompanied with fear. Marion was also very anxious. Her father had angina pain which resulted in his death in 1956.

I was still struggling with all that had happened, and with the strictness of Marion and Phillip, telling me not to move when I felt OK. In the conversation in casualty I said to Marion, "You are a hard woman", an expression I have not been allowed to forget, as I did not realize the seriousness of my situation and the potential danger I was in. A comment might be "typical man". I further realized that helplessness and dependence on others and some loss of status and dignity is difficult when one is a patient. The tendency is to want to be in charge.

I was taken to a hospital ward and was put on a drip containing Heparin inserted into my arm that was to keep my blood thin. It continued for some days and I said if my blood is getting thinner all the time, it will soon be like water.

My family and friends were very supportive. Stuart took the next day off. Russell came to Melbourne and stayed longer than planned. I had many cards and good wishes. I was cared for very well.

I asked Marion to bring in a handkerchief and some eucalyptus. This was comforting to me as it is associated with my years in the bush and my mother used to use it in my home of origin to help with colds etc. It helped me with anxiety.

The test to see what was happening in my heart was an angiogram. This involved a long tube inserted in my groin and pushed up into my heart area. Then when a dye was inserted pictures were taken of my heart and arteries. The cardiologist Dr. Dick explained that I might have a warm sensation when the dye was inserted, but I didn't feel anything.

The pictures showed a partial blockage near the intersection where two arteries ran into a third. Situated as it was, it was obvious that a bypass operation was necessary.

Russell's friend was Andrew Buxton, the son of Professor Buxton. When Andrew heard I needed a heart operation, he gave his father's mobile number. He was rung and agreed to see me, which he did, and I was to be operated on at a convenient time.

The prospect of an operation increased my anxiety and fear. It was hard at first to bear. My fear of being sawn open and my heart being stopped worried me deeply. Marion was excellent at sharing this time with me. But I needed also to face things inside myself.

There was a one in a hundred chance that I might die in the operation. My mind went to bargaining with God who I have always seen as a very good friend. I have had a very good life, fifty-nine years and it has exceeded my dreams, the dreams that I had when a teenager when I sat on a post on the farm in the dark and looked up at the stars and dreamed of what my life might be. If this is all my life then I am very thankful, but I would like to have more as I have a lot more living I could do. With this reflection, I found peace about life ending. But my fears were still very real. My training and faith said one must face their fears. My fears then were focused on my body. So, I decided to write a letter to my body. Here is what I wrote. (When life is tough I find it helpful to write.)

LETTER TO MY BODY:

"I just want to warn you of something that is about to happen to you. It's happening to me too, so you are not on your own, and I am glad I have you on my side too. We've travelled some miles together you and I since the very beginning, and I have always been able to rely on you to function and do what I ask. You have your limits of course, but I'd like to say you have

done a good job and performed well over all the years. I don't know if you feel the same about how I've treated you. When I think of all I've eaten. Sometimes too much just for my own enjoyment and pleasure. I hoped you'd enjoy it too, but when the extra weight etc. has come on you certainly are at a greater disadvantage and have to work harder. I enjoyed working my muscles hard and being strong. It was your contribution to my self-image and worth, and to be able to get you to do twenty-eight chin ups, is something I remember with pride.

We've fought infection and illness and a couple of operations together, which isn't bad really in fifty-nine years. I'm glad we have injections today because not so long ago in history we would have parted company before this. I'm glad we have anaesthetics these days, because we both would have had a difficult time coping with pain, infection and temperature. The same I can say about operations. You never liked someone cutting you open or cutting out those things that were infected and painful, but I'm sure you knew the benefit afterwards. Like when you lost your tonsils and appendix. It was rough for a bit, but at least we didn't part company as they often did years ago.

Now I want to tell you, no, I don't want to tell you, but need to so you'll understand that we both have something big on our hands. I don't know why exactly but those who seem to know, say we got some wrong bits in the DNA programming from way back. Hereditary, they say is the cause, and that meant you have a build-up in the pipes of your heart—like the water pipes to a sink. Over the years (and neither of us knew it was happening) the pipe started to get corroded. Much like at the sink we don't realize that we are turning the tap on further each time to get the same stream of water till one day, (and of course because we haven't been aware of what's going on we think it happens out of the blue) Kapow! There is no water. In the heart it is kaput! Because no blood flow means pain. If it's a real sudden block up, it's shocking pain and it's all over and we part company. If we're lucky (and we are) it's gradual, we got a warning. Mind you I didn't want it to register on me, because, well I had this idea I'd go on with you forever.

Anyway, after the warning of breathlessness for about the eighth time, I got the message and you got relief and I think we both feel a bit better. BUT some repairs have to be done. If the line isn't fixed, we are in real trouble so at last we come to an operation. We are both for it, and when

we get through the operation, it will be for the best, like the other couple of operations, if you remember.

First, we are given some medicine to calm us down to help us through what's coming. Then the anaesthetic, and I disappear for a while, but my body, you are for it. They cut you with a circular saw up the breast bone, while someone is getting some new pipe (to bypass the old corroded ones) from an arm or leg. Then they spread the breast bone and push aside the lungs, so they can get to the heart. Then a machine takes over. (and it has already cooled the blood.) The machine keeps everything (you, body) going while the necessary repairs are made. The surgeon puts in new pipes with superb sewing so its fluid proof. Great sewing so I've heard. I hope so too. And then the machine warms the blood, and the heart is reactivated after the only rest and repair it's going to get. (we hope) till we really do part company. Then they stitch the other bits and pieces up, and wire up the breast bone, (not the number eight wires we used in fences, but a relative) and they cart us both off to intensive care.

You've been on your own till now and I have been out of it. But now I come back and join you. It's getting back together that will be a bit tough, but then eventually we will be living in pain free harmony again. We'll both struggle with the things down the throat—breathing in harmony with the machine instead of resisting it, and coughing and learning to do things again. I'll focus on trying to understand the process and keep you informed with what I hope will be correct understanding and proper thinking in that situation. If we do that, we'll get through it as easy as practical. Just remember we're not on our own as everyone is in there battling for us, and I'll call help when it's getting a bit rough for me and you. So with all the resources available in this hospital, and the human resources of trained people, who have seen all this before, we have a lot on our side."



A lot of the detail in the above letter came as a result of all the questions I asked. Dr. Dick was bombarded with questions every time he visited me. So much so, he said, "OK what are the questions for today?" With knowledge I was helped with my anxiety. I was particularly anxious about coming into consciousness and breathing in opposition to the machine breathing for me.

I was reassured when told that the machine is so sensitive it alters to breathe with the patient.

I was also given spiritual strength from reading some words from the New Testament. I read a passage where Jesus had been up in the mountain praying, while the disciples were struggling rowing a boat. He walked on the water as if to pass by. The disciples saw him and were terrified because they thought he was a ghost. He replied, "Don't be afraid, it is I". What they were looking at terrified them, but it was Jesus. What I was looking at terrified me, but he seemed to be saying to me. "Don't be afraid of this operation, I am in it." This I found very reassuring.

TODAY IS THE DAY! WED. NOV 13TH 1996

Today is the day. I slept quite soundly last night from 11pm to 5.15am. They usually take blood at this time. I'm in routine already. They didn't take any this morning. I've been trying to relax since and have slept a bit and had one piece of toast – the last. I enjoyed every crumb. I had a good chat to Phillip last night and it was interesting his comment about me "being very deep". I've thought about that and think that that is the only way to go. I guess I can think too much and that's more worry, "worrying oneself sick!", but I've found it very comforting to think through all the issues I can. That means I become more aware and when all the thinking is done, I can relax and sleep well. I was proud of Phillip picking up a chap's angina when the Doctor had missed it. I've always believed in my sons no matter where they are, and not only proud of who they are now, but proud some day of who they'll be. Our investment in them will keep coming out into full bloom as they grow older. I'm finding it harder to write this morning-perhaps its anxiety although I have lots of hope and support for which I am thankful. The whole thing is routine really so it's go with the flow.

I was very relaxed, and so were Russell, Stuart and Marion in the time before the operation. This time had been extended due to an emergency operation that needed doing before mine. We were all so relaxed that there is a picture of Marion knitting, while my two sons were asleep on the floor, and I was asleep in bed.

It was an interesting feeling when I was put on a trolley, said goodbye to family and was wheeled off on my own.

I spent two nights in ICU, and on Friday 15th the drainage tubes were taken out. I was instructed to take three deep breaths and hold the third one, and as I did they pulled out the drainage tubes. It didn't hurt but I wonder if I had some morphine before it happened.

THREE DAYS AFTER! SAT. NOV 16TH

I am amazed that I feel so well. There are still a number of sore spots especially where the tubes have been but otherwise if I'm careful it's OK. I was amazed at how quickly the time went, one second it seemed from the beginning to the end of the operation. I was fearful as I said goodbye to Marion, Russell and Stuart and especially when they started pushing things into me. The lady in blue was very nice and was comforting. (She knew the importance of touch as she put a swan catheter into my carotid artery.) I just remember the anesthetist putting the mask over my face and the next second I was in ICU. I panicked a bit at first then remembered my "go with the flow" philosophy and tried to relax, which I did, and it was easier as I accepted my situation.

The night seemed to go quickly and when I awoke, I thought it was about 11pm but I was still in confusion I think. I was surprised that the operation was not more traumatic than what it was. I was asked what I wanted for breakfast, and I was surprised when they said I could have porridge. Fancy having porridge for breakfast' after such a big operation! The people here certainly work hard monitoring everything. I bumped into Sue's daughter an X Life Line counsellor which was good. She is a good nurse. It was nice to see Marion, Russell and Stuart when they came in. It must be awful to be lonely and alone. Now Darren and Eula are down from Queensland and that has been exciting and a surprise and enjoyable. It's funny but my previous room where I spent last Thursday to Wednesday seemed to be more like MY room. This one is not with that feeling though it's growing on me. I appreciate the cards from Darren's little girls. Today I'm more tired and not as focused as I was before the operation. It feels I have to trust in the work

I've done before the operation to carry me along. It's not quite eight o'clock and I feel like slipping into bed.

I was pleased to hear my heart didn't need anything to start it when the operation was finished. When blood went back into it, it started beating on its own.

I go to my cardiologist once a year, take an aspirin each day, and also 40mg of Lipitor a day which my cardiologist says is like keeping the oil in an engine of good quality. He also says that because of my relatively good health, and my attention to exercise and diet, it contributes to the fact that I have had no symptoms of heart problems ever since the operation. The surgeon who performed my operation had done over 10,000 of these operations when mine was done. Before he retired he did over 30,000. Russell had been on holidays with Brian and his family.

NOTE ON MY CARD EXPRESSING THANKS TO PROFESSOR BUXTON:

Letter to Professor Brian Buxton:

While you joke with Russell about 'plumbing' it is only you who had the skills to give me back my life, and for this gift of healing, my heartfelt thanks!

Owen Clark.

PS My son is a plumber.

REFLECTIONS IN 2013

Moses asked to see God's face, but he only saw God's back. The thought is that we can only usually see where God has been. From 17 years distance, this operation brought great blessing and change to my life. I had asked people to put their trust in God and prayed with them, but there comes a bigger challenge when it is my body and my life that is trusting in God. Can I trust that much to Him? Can I cope with the pain, and the unknown? My answer is YES. "He is able to keep". God cared for me in fascinating ways, through my wife, my family, and the Doctors and nurses. The nurse who put the swan catheter into my carotid artery, at least I think that's what she did

was a Christian and I felt God's comfort through her hands and sense of touch. It was soo...Comforting.

In the exercises after the operation one has to cough to keep lungs clear, which is done holding a pillow to the chest. A warning is given not to sneeze. It is hard not to and even though I held my pillow firmly, when I sneezed it felt like a .303 bullet had hit me in the middle of my chest. I only sneezed once.

I was home in 6 days and back at work in a month.

Some people I was working with before the operation opened up and shared more of their problems openly, afterwards. I think they realized I was human too. The whole experience strengthened and affirmed my relationship with God. I have moved more and more into mediation, which helps my relationship with God.

I still remember struggling to get air into my lungs before the operation, and it is so wonderful now to be able to draw lots of beautiful air into my lungs, what a pleasure! It's like drawing in liquid silver.

After the operation, I became aware of the big emotional load Marion carried as she cared for me and kept everything at home going well. I think one of the biggest emotional loads we can carry is seeing someone we love suffering, and we can do so little about it. It also involved the trauma of her father's death from heart problems similar to mine, but in 1956 when he was aged 56, there was no bypass surgery to give him extra life.

I found a greater sense of the whole of life and focused more on health and exercise since then. Some verses of scripture have shone out more; not only "Be not afraid, it is I", but others like, "If the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, dwell in you, he shall quicken your mortal body". "He is able to keep" are just some that had meaning.



UP A TREE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

It's Christmas Eve 2009. At the Blairgowrie house we sleepily get up late for breakfast. Our family are coming for lunch, and most things are ready. Our relaxation is suddenly pierced by noise from next door. It sounds like a girl crying or being teased. We are concerned. For a closer look and listen, we go on to the veranda. A nine-year-old boy is up a large pine tree at roof height. He is crying.

It seems that with the rest of the family busy organizing for Christmas, he is bored. He goes outside looking for adventure and decides to climb the back yard pine tree. It is an inviting challenge which he accepts. Wouldn't it be great to climb to the top? So, secretly from his siblings and his parents he contorts his body so as to evade the awkward positioned tree limbs, and up he climbs.

He thinks that he is smart as he goes upwards and when his little sister comes out he brags to her.

"You shouldn't be up there. You might fall. I am telling on you." He pleads with her not to tell and starts crying. His sister sings out from the back door, "Mum, Tony is up a tree." Eventually the message gets through to the mother. She drops what she is doing and races out the back door and screams in panic.

"Tony what are you doing up there? You stupid boy, you'll fall and break your neck, or your arm or something. Come down now...Do you hear me? Whatever made you get up there in the first place? Come down this very minute." He is hanging on tighter as if he is scared, and making the noise of crying that we heard.

"Come down" she demands.

"I can't, I'm scared" he blubbers.

"Well, I'm coming up" says the mother. She attempts to contort herself through the branches to climb the tree, but finds it too hard. She gets madder and more furious with Tony, which makes her scarier to an already frightened boy. Tony continues to cry. Now Tony has two problems, his own panic about coming down, and an angry, panicking mother waiting for him

at the bottom of the tree. The more the mother panics, the louder Tony cries.

He doesn't realize, as when climbing a mountain, it is easier to climb up than to climb down. At this time the father's car is heard, and hearing the noise, his wife meets him inside.

"That stupid son of yours is up the top of a tree. Get out there and get him down."

The father races out the back door followed by mother and the other kids and yells at his son.

"What the hell are you doing up there? Come down, you'll be for it when you get down, you stupid boy. Whatever made you climb up in the first place? Why are you scaring us all like this when it's Christmas? There will be no presents for you, my boy. How could you be such an idiot?"

Tony climbs higher. It is easier to climb upwards. He is then further away from his angry parents and his gawking brother and sisters. He is panicking and crying more and more as the father yells.

"If you fall and break your neck, it's your own stupid fault, and serves you right! That's all I can say! You got yourself up there, now get yourself down. If you don't get yourself down, you can stay up there all night and there will be no Christmas for you."

After the parents vent their spleen and see that nothing they have said or done is effective, they decide to go inside and leave him. Tony, now feeling deserted, weeps and blubbers in a very distressed manner, taking short, crying breaths, with big sobs.

After time, all is quiet.

Tony gradually becomes silent, and with space he is able to think about how to come down. His elder sister stays outside to be with him. She even climbs up a few branches. This seems to reassure him, until eventually he gets himself down on the ground. The incident seems to pass and not long afterwards, Christmas games are being played in the back yard.

Yet incidents like this seldom pass easily and need processing. This incident could traumatize Tony for life and he could be forever afraid to venture and be afraid of heights. Maybe he will process it well and realize that panicking

doesn't help. Or maybe he will be telling his counsellor or Psychiatrist in the years ahead about this incident that is buried back in his unconscious.

While mothers naturally panic, it is obvious this mother has never climbed trees herself as a girl or was never involved in the play of country kids challenging each other in climbing trees.

Even though anxious, she could have said,

"I'm scared Tony that you might fall," but then go on to say, "You are very brave and very adventurous getting up into that tree. You did it all on your own too."

And then to add,

"Think very carefully when you're coming down. Take your time. Be careful where you put your feet and hang on tightly with your hands."

The father's reaction is worse. He too, has not climbed trees, and is caught up in the panic. As a role model, he could have passed on a better image of manhood, of encouraging adventure, keeping a cool head in difficult circumstances, and using risk to develop new skills.

The father's comment, "You got yourself up there, you can get yourself down", with the added comment, "If you need help call out, I'll be here" would have provided support and inspired more confidence.

The panic of this mother and father is passed on to their son and in panic mode, no one is thinking clearly. When he is left alone to calm down, he is able to think and act more clearly.

Hopefully the family had a nice Christmas.



To all my family and friends,

This is to say a big thank you to all of you who very generously contributed in some way to my 70th Birthday. What is a birthday without Celebration, Cards and Cake!!

Well I have been very fortunate to have had two birthday celebrations: one on May 11th with my friends Howard and Josie, Jurgen and Rosvita and Lindsay and Ailsa at the Langham Towers on South Bank. It was a smorgasbord and lovely food. A special thanks to Marion for organizing this.

The second celebration was at Paynesville in an eating place chosen by Phillip. All the family, Phillip, Kirstie and Amanda and Andrew, Stuart, Alison and Lachlan, Russell and Kym and Daniel and Oliver were there. We had a cake with 7 candles and Lachlan and Oliver helped me blow them out.

All the family were at Bairnsdale to attend a special occasion when Andrew partnered one of the Debs. It was nice for 3 families to have units next to each other at Metung with the boys running in and out of each at will. On two occasions I went for a bicycle ride with Daniel along the walkway next to the Lake.

On Saturday all the "boys" went fishing. For me it was "a wet tail and no fish". All I caught was a "toadie" and when the wake of a passing boat hit our boat I overbalanced and sat on the bait that was all spread out on the engine cover which was like a small table. (See the sort of things that happen when one is 70.) From then on, I didn't smell too good, I had a wet tail and no fish. All the "boys" enjoyed themselves.

Thank you to you all for your cards, emails, and good wishes. I add some other names to those above. Aunty Jessie, Gloria and Paul, Barry and Pauline, Eula and Ross and Wal. and Alma all in Qld.

I consider the greatest gift is your "presence". However, some gave other "presents". Thank you.

The funniest card I got was from Russell, Kym, Daniel and Oliver. This was written on it.

Happy 90th birthday. You don't look a day older than 70. That was cute!!!!

So, thank you one and all, and I am very thankful for 70 years of life!!!



BANG!!! We were awakened from a deep sleep. We sat upright in bed. What was that? A shocking thud sound of an impact with tearing scraping metal. Straight out of bed and into dressing gowns!! Marion and I heard voices of the neighbours.

Quickly out of the front door we saw a cream station wagon on the far side of Canterbury Road. Our son Phillip was standing next to the driver's window. Phillip had been out on Saturday night with his mates and arrived home at about 2.30am Sunday morning, when the accident happened. He was first on the scene.

What appeared to be a big black car was in the shadows on the near side of the road. After the head on impact it had crossed Everton Grove entrance and come to a halt on the neighbour's nature strip.

Neighbours were milling around.

"Has anyone rung the ambulance?" someone asked.

"Yes, I've rung them," a voice in the semi darkness responded.

Moving past the neighbours, I went to the driver's window of what was a large dark blue Ford. The driver put out his hand,

"The name's Brian," he said as he shook my hand.

"Hang in there Brian," I said, "the ambulance is coming".

I walked to the front of the car. As a result of the collision, all semblance of the car that was, was hard to recognize. The passenger side had been pushed back a little, but the impact on the driver's side had pushed everything from the front bumper bar, back almost to the driver's feet. The impact was not straight on, and it appeared that Brian had spun the steering wheel at the last minute causing the impact to be a glancing blow from left to right, resulting in the front shape to be at a forty-five-degree angle. Shards of metal were everywhere.

Phillip came to the Ford and checked with Brian. He then returned to the driver of the cream station wagon. When Phillip first went to the station wagon driver, he found a pulse, and smelt a strong smell of alcohol. When he checked a second time, his pulse was no more. He knew the driver was

deceased. The smell of alcohol was overtaken by an acrid smell of battery acid mixed with motor oil, a distinctive smell that brings back strong memories of the 724 crash to Phillip to this day.

The woman passenger in the Ford became conscious, and started calling out, "Brian. Brian. Brian."

The ambulance siren stopped as they arrived. All their lights remained activated. Police with flashing lights-controlled traffic which was diverted around the scene. The fire brigade with their flashing lights were last to arrive.

The ambulance officers checked the driver of the cream station wagon. He couldn't be helped so they then focused on the couple in the Ford.

A local resident from a street near by heard the sound of the crash and reported that he had to dodge a cream station wagon, as it was being driven erratically before it entered Canterbury Road. He had rung the police to tell them, but it had been too late. The police said that before the collision they were pursuing the driver from the city side on Canterbury Road, but had given up the chase some distance earlier as his speed was so high, above 140kph they told Phillip.

The ambulance transported the woman in the Ford to Hospital Emergency. The body of the drunken driver, and the body of Brian, who also died at the scene, was removed.

The fire brigade set up high, a very special light that illuminated a large area, so all could see to investigate and clear the accident.

The investigation continued for some time, and we returned to bed, leaving the dreadful events that occurred in front of our home.

We looked out next morning. The mess was all gone. Traffic was flowing normally. No one passing would have a clue that a shocking accident had occurred just a few hours earlier.

Phillip was right on hand when this accident happened. His chosen career path was always to be in the ambulance. Friends were in St John's Ambulance, so he joined to get experience. Another friend was in the

regular ambulance. The starting age for entry into the ambulance was 21, and he knew it was very difficult to get accepted into that organization. So as a stop gap he chose an alternate job after University in case he was never able to secure a position in the ambulance. He says "2100 people applied for my job, I was one of 16 people chosen. How lucky was I!"

His involvement in this accident resulted in him being extremely angry. He was so angry that I can only guess at the cause. First guess is that it was about a stupid, drunken driver killing himself, and one other person, and causing such pain and destruction. What a shocking and unnecessary waste! Whatever it was, he was all the more determined to become a regular ambulance officer. My hunch is that the accident was a trigger that confirmed his choice of career path.

He graduated, became an ambulance officer, and then later graduated to MICA. He also did computer work and was a driving instructor and supervisor in the ambulance. He has spent all of his working years of life in the ambulance. His parents and family are very proud of him and what he has accomplished.



TRAVEL



C.A. FORM 529

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Department of Civil Aviation
FLIGHT CREW LICENCES
issued to
Owen Roy CLARK.

Photograph  of Holder

Signature of Holder 
H 2775

I. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Department of Civil Aviation

II. PRIVATE PILOT LICENCE
AEROPLANES

III. No. 11768
This Private Pilot Licence is granted to

IV. Owen Roy CLARK

VI. of British national
who is hereby authorized to pilot the types
aeroplanes endorsed on page 2.

VII. Signature of Holder 

VIII. Granted in accordance with the Air Navigation Regulations.

XI. Seal

X.  25 / 8 / 65
for Director-General of Civil Aviation

The taxis here.

The climax of our seemingly endless preparation, for our trip!
Have we got everything in? Have you got the tickets? The passports?
Money?

I just hope we have everything.

The clickety-clack of our wheeled cases seemed louder as the taxi driver took them along the footpath to his waiting car.

House doors are locked, the alarm set.

A kilometre along the road and we will have to go back. I have forgotten my watch showing the two-time zones. The taxi turned. The process of opening gates and doors and switching off the alarm, and then reversing the process is hopefully our last attempt to leave home for the airport.

This taxi engine is running roughly and is just getting along. I hope it will make it to the airport, and on time. And where is this driver taking us? This isn't the usual way. Why is he going this way? We need to get there at least two hours before, so they said.

Did you put in the compass? It's good to have one in a strange country.

It's a relief that we are here.

Gee look at the amount of luggage some people have.

Ah there's the money exchange, and we need to get some money changed.

How is the secret compartment you sewed on the bottom of your bra working? The one I have hanging on by loops to my belt works fine, although it must look as if I'm about to drop my pants, when I try to get my money or passport. I'll have to watch that. Nice shops here in the international terminal. Look at those beautiful scarves and ties. Pity we don't need them.

Perhaps we could get one of those new digital cameras. Let's look.

We've had a good look. I think I agree with the sales chap.

The canon IXUS 800 IS. Is the best quality and good value for money.

Where are you going? Not that way, it's back up here. Let's relax and have something to eat at this health food shop.

Isn't it good to be rid of the cases?

Time drags doesn't it, especially when you get through the security doors, and while waiting for the departure announcement.

At last!

This plane is huge. Ten seats across, and with two isles. It's hard to believe it will get off the ground, let alone get to England. Even though there are four of them, the engines look too small to me.

I'm glad we have a window seat. See that large TV screen, we can follow our progress on the electronic map. I've never seen one of them before, and the speed, the height, the outside air temperature, time from departure and time to arrival, are all there. Very interesting!

Gee this plane rattles on take-off. I wonder how much of the runway it will use with all this weight on board? Only a bit over half, that's remarkable.

The flight is over Bendigo, and then over South Australia. The parallel sand hills sure stand out.

This is the Captain. The time is 6.10pm EST. We are flying at 39,000 feet and soon you will see on your right, Ayers Rock. Those seated on the right will get a good view, and I will bank the plane so you all will be able to see it.

Great, we are on the right-hand side.

Just look at that, the

high enough.

Jordan, Turkey, and the Black Sea, so says the digital plane model as it moves across the digital map.

After sleep, I peep through the double-glazed window, with bleary eyes.

Look, the moon and stars are above. With clearing vision, I look earthward from 38,000 feet.

A black canvas! With clearer focus I see lights, millions upon millions of lights over hundreds and hundreds of miles. Different blobs, and intensities of lights, more intense where there are cities and civilization, miniature pin pricks, spiked into the darkness, brushed through from Scandinavia and Denmark to France and beyond the wing of the plane, edging along the

outline of the North Sea which is inky black. I see a map of Europe. colour, the size! It's the unique and beautiful colour that shocks the observer speechless. A brownish red colour, I've never seen anything like it. It's unbelievable.

It's a big place, Australia. Here it is, six hours after take-off from Melbourne and we are just crossing the coast near Broome.

Two hours later and we land in Singapore. Yes, there is such a place. Having always been in a small world one wonders if other places people refer to really do exist. Singapore does, and we walked on solid ground around the airport shops for an hour. No chewing gum is allowed here, and the place is beautifully clean, even at midnight.

I peep out the window over India. Darkness! But with a small moon and starlight, is that snow covered Everest I see, shining slightly through the darkness?

We fly over the war in Iraq. I hope we are high enough to avoid the conflict. Mountains, farms and seas, hidden in black, contrast the lighter areas. Travelling in our direction from the East comes the beginning of the chasing sun rise, gently and slowly with its soft glow, streaks and flashes, it is determined to wipe out the lights and bring life and colour to the present darkness in a new day.

And there's England. It is across that black channel strip. We've heard of it, seen it on maps, learnt of it in history, and there look, it does exist, and exists more and more as both we and the sun travel closer and closer. England's green, that beautiful shade of green, is appearing through the remains of the night, our sleepy eyes and the double-glazed windows. A decreasing number of lights are still on in buildings, accompanied by some cars and street lights. We fly our prescribed downward path. There are other planes before and after ours. Wouldn't it be good to see a Concorde?

Look there's London, and the Thames, and look over there is the Tower Bridge, and a park. Can you see the Houses of Parliament? This is a huge city.

In the light of this excitement, and fourteen hours of this travel leg of our journey, we thud to earth, tidying bags, filling in forms, waiting, waiting,

waiting in queues, for customs, for luggage, for taxis, for directions as to where we catch the Hotel bus in one of the World's busiest airports.

There are too many people here even at 6am this morning. Gee there's someone who is really, really black, a beautiful shiny black over against all the other colours of people. All shapes and sizes, all sorts and fashions of clothes and colour. All thinking, if they are thinking at all in this melee, they are the normal ones amidst this other entire rabble of sounds, suitcases, luggage and people.

If they think a more conscious thought, there will come an idea that they are just one small part of a very, very, large and unique world.

We eventually escape it all, as we enter the small, but rather comforting and simple space of the Hotel bus. With us and our luggage safely at the Marble Arch apartment by 8am, we decide we are not going to wait to get into our room at 2pm. We didn't sit on our bums for 22 hours just to wait here. We are here to see England, Scotland and Wales, even France. We have got limited time, and we have to include a bus trip around London, the British Museum, the Underground, Oxford, Kew Gardens, Windsor Castle, St Pauls, the British Library, Big Ben, and especially Big Ben. As its booms it will revive the shivers in memory of a four-year-old boy who now sees and hears the real thing over fifty years later, and Shakespeare, and the Moors and Paris and.....

Why am I feeling tired? No, I'm not. I can't be. It's not allowed as we are in London.

Marion remembered where to go on the Underground to Selfridges for breakfast and then we.... I wonder why I can't seem to write anymore.



What an impressive name for a hotel! The NEVSKIJ CORINTHA PALACE HOTEL.

For new comers to St Petersburg in Russia, our minds were stretched like our aircraft taxiing two miles after landing to get to the local passenger terminal.

The travel agent had assured us that this experience would be great, and it was. Journeying on the wrong side of the road to what we were used to, we passed numbers of poor, high rise, many storied buildings.

“You can see the Khrushchev type buildings, and closer to the city is the Stalin era buildings,” our guide commented.

“There is a statue of Lenin on the right,” she continued as we focused on a huge statue, in front of a very impressive building that was the Russian security headquarters.

Something was missing. There were no individual houses: not a one. Everyone lived in apartments. And the footpaths have no awnings. Even in the center of the city, where we were headed, every building was at least four stories high and came straight down to the edge of an open footpath.

Standing in contrast in the midst of all the dull apartments, a modern hotel appeared. Few hotels around the world could match the food, the service and the rooms when it came to quality. We were impressed.

From our fifth-floor room window, and through the glass ceiling, there was the dining room. At the end of the hall, there popped into view a Russian orthodox church with colorful onion shaped domes.

After an early start from London, two sleepy travellers couldn't resist trying out the bed. Awakening hungry, this was the time for room service.

A young Russian speaking waiter answered the phone.

“Do you speak English?” Marion asked.

“Of course,” came a rather indignant reply, with a tone of, “How dare you ask such a question!!”

She proceeded with the order, “One salmon and one sturgeon.”

“One salmon and one sturgeon” he echoed back, and a colleague wrote it down.

“Yes please,” Marion replied.

One “Yes please,” came the waiter’s reply.

“No no, no!!” Marion replied.

“You want two “yes please”, what is that? Is that on the menu?”

“No, no, no No.

Nonplussed, she paused while the waiter turned to colleagues near him and asked, “What is yes please? There was silence. No one tried to rescue him. She realized what had happened and said, “Sou Vou Plaise, sou Vou Plaise. Thank you.

She then continued, “Two ice creams and two fresh fruit”.

He seemed to understand.

After giving the room number, the wait was on to see what room service delivered.

A small table was wheeled in about twenty minutes later. The waiter opened the table to a full circle and prepared the meal. A nice lace table cloth, fresh flowers, real serviettes, quality crockery and cutlery appeared, that compared with the best.

When the waiter had gone with his tip, with interest, we checked the food. Yes, it was what was ordered and nothing more. The food tasted great. We were well pleased.

Left with a treasured memory, we hope the waiter got his “Yes please’s” sorted out.



PROFESSION – SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

In 1907 the Kogan and Hopeland area was opened up to new settlers. They came mainly from Victoria. With them came their faith and worship patterns and they established house churches. The Smiths had services in their home and numbers of neighbours joined in. This was repeated by the Fletts who built a chapel near their boundary fence with the Davis's and invited the Holt families and others.

The Smiths went from meeting in their home to the 16mile hall, and many more people joined in their services. The Smiths and Fletts belonged to the Churches of Christ and a closed communion at the time, which offended some folk like my Grandfather Clark who always claimed to be Methodist.

The Smiths sold Edenhope and bought Montrose Estate on the 14-mile Creek and built a Chapel on their property.

My father made his commitment to follow Christ and was baptized by immersion in a creek nearby the 16-mile Hall in the middle of winter. Services were held each Sunday and eventually moved from the 16-mile hall to the Smith chapel and later services were held each fortnight alternatively at Smiths and Fletts chapel. A new building was built on Fletts property called Hopelands and the Flett's chapel was jacked on to a wooden frame and hauled by tractors and attached to the rear of the new building. A large hall was built nearby.

The young people of the early settlers brought with them a youth group called Christian Endeavour. Here the young people met weekly for social and spiritual and outreach goals. This youth group continued to the next generation and included other churches besides Churches of Christ. It provided good training in leading meetings and giving talks and running social events. As a result of this training I was one of twelve young people from our church who entered full time Christian ministry with many others being active in local churches.

I had always accepted my parent's idea of Christianity, a going along with family faith and values. They believed in being active Christians, went to Church services every Sunday and took leadership positions. They started a

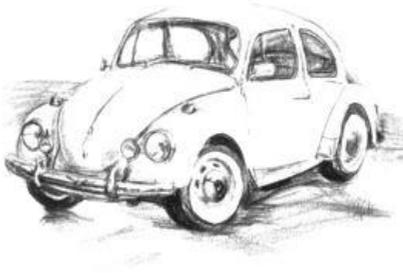
Sunday school in their home, and later a Sunday School and Band of Hope in Kogan. They really did care for people and thought that the spiritual would add to the quality of ordinary people's lives. They cared for the widow, the alcoholic and the elderly and those in need. As they had a practical approach, they were frustrated with those who they saw as spiritually superior to others. I saw this as a loving and caring approach to life and relationships. I grew up in Sunday school, later became a teacher and was active in Christian Endeavour, lead church services and eventually preached a sermon in the sixteen mile church.

My decision to be a Christian came because of my experience of the raw school world of Toowoomba Grammar School, and the fact I had to face it all on my own. I got angry and failed my own values, so decided to become a Christian for myself and not just go along with my parents. I made this decision public at a youth camp at Caloundra in January 1951 and was baptized by immersion in the 16 Mile Creek. At Toowoomba Grammar school I was always happy to go to church services, and at one Church parade remember someone calling out,

“You'd better watch out Clark or you'll become a minister”. I did.



I LIKED MY FIRST CAR



The year was 1958. I was 21 and had been driving for 13 years, as my father taught me to drive when I was 8. I needed a car. I had never owned one, having driven the family car, or used public transport.

I was required to travel each week end from the theological college in Glen Iris to Boronia. I looked at an old VW for 300 pounds, but a mechanic friend Tom Morrison dissuaded me from buying it. So I bought a newer 1956 cream coloured VW for 750 pounds. Characteristics of that model were a small rear window, a peculiar wheel shaped accelerator pedal, and two exhaust pipes. The speedometer showed 25,000 miles.

Kevin Harvey, a colleague, was the original owner.

I was delighted. I enjoyed having my own car. I enjoyed the miles we travelled together and the adventures that happened along the way. I had one small accident on Burwood Highway when the driver of a large car braked very suddenly. He thought some children who were playing beside the road were going to cross. My car was too close, and I braked hard, skidded all 4 wheels and crashed into the back-bumper bar. The front boot was dented, and both headlight glasses were hit in the accident, but neither broke. My car was repaired, and I had a good lesson in keeping a safe distance from the car in front.

Not long after I had another first. I missed seeing the speed sign going into Bendigo and contributed to the State of Victoria in paying a speeding fine.

During the year of 1959, I travelled to Boort most weekends. I travelled up and back by train, leaving Saturday and returning Monday. My car was housed in a local garage, so I could use it to visit the local people who attended the church where I was the student minister, and travel to football games. In 1960 the Volkswagen made regular trips to St. Kilda as I was assigned a church there. During this year I picked up a beautiful passenger

many times, Marion, who later became my wife. Our first kiss was in the VW.

Over the Christmas holidays, an engaged couple, Ron, Joyce, and Marion and I travelled via the Newell Highway to my original home and farm called "Iona" near Kogan in Queensland. We had one puncture going through the Pillaga Scrub north of Coonabarabran when a stick went through the side wall of a tyre.

While at Iona, a workman jammed an emery wheel that flew to pieces, one piece gave him a glancing blow to the head, and another hit him in the mouth, smashed his teeth, and cut his face.

He needed to get to the hospital 30 miles away in Chinchilla as quickly as possible. Being so good on wet tracks and roads, this was a job for me and my VW. Water on the tracks, sprayed well up in the trees, as we sped along bush tracks, and the VW didn't miss a beat. A few days later the starter motor failed as a result of the sand and water getting in.

While in Queensland, I bought a trailer in Dalby and spray painted it. The VW with a new tow bar pulled the trailer back to Melbourne.

At the end of January 1961, I packed the VW and trailer with everything I owned, and went on my own, via Mildura to Loxton in South Australia. I used the VW in my work, until August 1961 when I drove it back to Melbourne to get married. It escaped from relatives and the expected "Just Married" sign, toilet paper and tin cans. The VW took me on my honeymoon and we returned to Loxton via Adelaide. As well as being the work car, we shared time together on drives and picnics.

In Loxton the next-door neighbour carted grapes in a large truck. One morning, his truck had a flat battery. I suggested I give him a tow with the VW to get the engine started. He laughed saying it wouldn't be able to pull his truck. Much to his surprise his engine was soon started.

In 1963 after our first son was born, the VW with two doors was getting too small for two adults and a baby, and all the extras needed to take with us.

So, we decided to get a new car which was a EH Holden, light blue with a white top. It was a beautiful car, and my wife was very pleased. But I was sad. I had to say good bye to my first car.

We had done so many things together, and 50,000 miles. The two front tyres had been re-treaded twice and were still the original tyres. There had been no real mechanical problems.

My wife said, "We buy a beautiful new car, and you are sad." I said, "I am sad saying good bye to my first car, and I am happy we have a new car." I enjoyed the new car.

One day I asked what happened to my VW and was told that someone on a farm bought it, so that is where it ended its days. It still lives in my memory. I did enjoy my first car.



BLOCKS ABOUT CHURCH

I have a block when it comes to writing about my life in the church scene. The first I think of is a block about disappointment. I had huge expectations about my life and church, particularly when it comes to ministry. With all my life focused on being a successful minister, I have a big disappointment. It comes about because a dream was shattered by a reality. It is something that happens to all dreams. Dreams are important, but the reality can smash them. And because of this I have a block in writing about my Church ministries. My glasses of disappointment stop me from seeing the positive things that happened to me and to the people in churches I was involved with I believe we really helped.

Because I come from a very deprived environment, having a limited experience of life, whenever I think of my ministry, I am embarrassed by my limited experience. People have told me that the ministry was too hard for me. Later in my life I was told I had an authority problem, so this was a problem in the churches where I was minister. This resulted in me not focusing enough on the “powers that be” inside the church, and so they were annoyed with me and eventually got rid of me.

I was not a very good preacher. My skill was in relating to people and especially those outside the church. In this I was able to get people to come into church activities but when I did, the people inside the church complained about things like their dress, haircut, smell or way of life and in some way, I got the blame for them being there. I knew churches had problems from the division in my home church and family.

In Loxton where there was a problem with the charismatics, I expected Mr. Hollard the home missions’ organizer to give me some support and have wisdom for the situation, and I was not just disappointed but angry at his hypocrisy in dealing with the situation by being two faced, one with the congregation and the opposite with me. When he said we should quit, essentially giving me the sack, it gave me a message that I had failed.

Another block to my writing about my church ministry is that because of my narrow approach to ministry, Marion and I didn’t work as a team. As the

minister I wanted to control too much which was not good. She should have been included and supported more by me. She was more confronting and progressive and business like than I was, whereas I was more inclined to plod along.

Another block for me is thinking of the things I did and said that were immature and unwise. I was still a country person from rural Queensland in some way.

In Loxton, Kadina and Doncaster there was to a greater or lesser degree, a division in the church and I was central in that division even though that was the last thing I wanted. The division seemed to be between those in the church and those I was relating to outside the church. Eventually I resigned at Doncaster because my very presence was evidence of me being a focus of the division, and the last thing I wanted was to divide the church. I had seen what it had done in my home church.

This conclusion at Doncaster had not only church dimensions but personal dimensions that were very painful. Keith Horne had been my minister, he taught me at primary school, he baptized me, he was the person I told I was going into ministry, he helped me with being a camp leader, he and the Doncaster church invited me to minister there with them, yet he, through a committee, worked to get rid of me. I know I was, and have been told I was, difficult to work with but I felt personally betrayed by him. So, this is another block I have to work through to even look at church ministry.

Another block I have is that I was convinced of my call to ministry in the church. After seventeen years of ministry, very sadly and very painfully I accepted that church parish ministry for me was no more. My whole focus had to change. There is value in my ministry both in the parish and in later ministry, but this painful time has to be got through, so I can see the values.

Another block for me is that I am now outside the parish church. I can see the church through different eyes and looking into the church I once loved and worked so hard in and being able to see so much I couldn't see before, is a block. It seems painful and I am reluctant to go there.

With my family of origin still in the parish church and suggesting I have abandoned my faith by not being in church, also seems to add to my blocks.

All this accentuates a kind of alone-ness or loneliness. I would like to see clearly and write clearly the positives and negatives of my parish church experiences and particularly the positives. They get lost by the negatives blocking my way.

So by way of this introduction, I'd like to tell the story of my seventeen years as a parish minister in Loxton 1961 to 63: Long Plains Owen 1964 to 66, Kadina 1967 to 1970, Liverpool West 1971 to 72, Ashburton 1973 to 74, Doncaster 1975 to 1977.

On reflection it was inevitable that we would return eventually to Melbourne. Looking at the places of ministry, there is a great variety of experience I had that enriched my life.

I owe a great deal to Marion and my three boys, who were forced to come with me through this entire journey. I am grateful for Marion's continuing support that I know was difficult and a great effort for her. She did all she could in effort and financially to enrich every manse we lived in, and make it a nice home, often to the envy of the congregation. She cooked hundreds of meals so we could get to know people. She kept our home stable and did a lot of the parenting of our boys. She led many meetings and visited many people. Forgive me when I talk of my ministry, in reality it is our ministry. I could not have done what I did without her.



After ending at Loxton, we had a break from parish ministry till May 13th 1964. During the break we went with Phillip to Marion's home where we stayed for most of February. Then we went to Queensland, where I worked for Smith builders painting, and then did some shearing. In April we took the Clark caravan, went to Caloundra then up the coast to Cairns. Our only mishap was a broken windscreen and Marion had a nice dress stolen from an outside clothesline.

We returned to Chinchilla, then went to Melbourne for a couple of days before going to Long Plains. That first Wednesday night we had dinner at the Murray Daniel's home. Friday night was the church welcome.

Long Plains and Owen were two churches who joined together in a circuit supporting the minister who lived at Long Plains. Two services were held each Sunday and I spoke at one place in the morning and the other place at night and vice versa the next Sunday. The whole area was a farming area with Owen being a small country town. The Church of Christ had been in the area for many years, and many families were long-time residents.

Within a week I had to take the funeral of a newly born baby. Later in my time at Long Plains I took the funeral of a young lad.

I took Religious Instruction in the local schools in Long Plains, Owen and Pinery. Christian Endeavour was the name of the youth groups and they were held regularly at Owen, Long Plains and Avon. State Christian Endeavour Christmas camps were held in the Mount Barker Showgrounds. In the Churches of Christ, we were part of the Northern Districts Conference, that included Williamstown, Long Plains Owen, Balaklava, Port Pirie, Tumby Bay and Whyalla, and youth camps were held at Woolshed Flat near Port Augusta, and Longwood in the Adelaide Hills.

Over the years, good relationships developed between the Church of Christ and the Methodist /Uniting churches. At the forefront of this push for the churches in the area to work together was Max Polkinghorne who was a very enthusiastic minister of the Methodist Church in Mallala. Ministers met regularly. Not long after one of our meetings on September 29, 1965, I was

rung by a Methodist Church elder and informed that Max had been killed in a car accident on his way to teach Religious Instruction. It was the first time I felt shock at the loss of someone close. I attended the funeral, and when the funeral was over, I was there when his little son came to his mother, Max's wife with a plaintive cry, "Where's my daddy? Where's my daddy?" And she, who had just been through an awful funeral, explained lovingly what had happened. On my way home, my tears were such I had to stop the car and cry as I thought of this little boy. He had every right to a father. Later I heard that Max's wife studied and became a minister in the Uniting Church. What a woman!

All involved in the churches working together were adamant that the work Max was so involved in, should not be lost. The next year all the Churches in Australia were involved in the Church and Life movement. This involved community discussions on how we all wanted to have good communities and how we might work together for a common goal. As a result of this movement, the Owen Church of Christ and the Methodists, who always worked closely, eventually united into worshipping in one church building. There were millions of small white snails at Long Plains, and one day it seemed that our son had most of them in his mouth. We had karki Cambell ducks that loved them too. We also had some chooks.

There were grape vines at the back of the house, and the type of grape had very wood like seeds. I was the third person who lived in the house who had appendicitis and the grapes got the blame.

While I was recuperating, I was told by the elder Lance Marshman that a young man at Owen wanted to be baptized, but it could wait until I was healed enough to lift. I said that he was an elder, why doesn't he baptize him. It was a new thought and challenged him and eventually he took the baptismal service. I'm glad he had the experience.

In March of 1966, our second son was born in Adelaide. He needed a blood exchange transfusion just after his birth which was successful.

Our house was on a corner and during harvest there was a continual stream of trucks around our corner taking wheat to the Long Plains silos.

Over the road in a farm house lived a Mr. Good. When we first arrived, he explained that his wife had mental problems and was in a home. In the community there was a fear of mental illness as though it were catching. So people with mental illness were put away in a special place and cut off from family and no one visited them unless it was in secret.

We had a very close bond with his son Doug. He was often at our place and would baby sit our son Phillip. His memory of his mother and her schizophrenic behaviour before she was put away many years before was awful. But he was curious about his mother and while fearful wanted to know more about her. With his approval I went to Adelaide and visited his mother. She suffered from post-partum issues at a time when there was no treatment. I supported Doug and organized for him to visit his mother and they established a relationship which continued till she died.

Doug also questioned his future on a farm at Long Plains and after much thought and talking he eventually applied and was accepted to go to the College of the Bible for theological training. When he completed his training, he had a successful ministry in Black Rock in Western Australia and then in Fremantle where he ministered until he was murdered by an Iraqi who he was trying to help.

Sad and all that it was, Doug's life after he left home until the end was much more dynamic and meaningful than what it would have been had he stayed home on the farm.

While at Long Plains there was a mouse plague. We had a few in our house but in Good's barn the whole place was moving with mice. They often caught two at a time in an ordinary mouse trap.

I was contracted for a three-year term at Long Plains Owen circuit ending May 1967. Kadina Church was looking for a minister beginning in January 1967 and invited me to fill the position. This presented a dilemma, and eventually the circuit got someone to come, and after two and a half years I concluded my ministry on January 15th, 1967 and in that week shifted to Kadina.

There were many people in the district who had a long association with the circuit and church, and I think my task was to maintain the relationships and keep everything growing gently. Looking back, I think we achieved this goal.



LETTER TO SOMEONE I RESPECT

*In a writing group we were challenged to write a letter to
someone we respected.*

Here is mine. And I did send it to him.

To: Mr. Allan Parker, member of the Church of Christ Long Plains.

Dear Allan,

Just a note to express my appreciation for all that our association and friendship over the years means to me.

Before I actually met you, one of the locals was talking about you and how significant you and your family were in the district. At that time about twenty concrete trucks went up your road as you were building a new home. You certainly needed it having seven children.

Ours was a sad first meeting on the phone as you rang me distressed as your recently born son had died. So distressed were you that you only gave me your name and your message and then hung up the phone. I asked my neighbour where you lived and comforted you in your sadness and helped to bury your little one in the Shannon cemetery.

I warmed to you as a farmer, and to your gentleness and sharing of emotions. At the first church service I took at Long Plains Church of Christ, I was surprised to see it was you as the organist. My first impressions of you were that you were very thin, and when I visited you at shearing time, there you were shearing sheep. Your thinness certainly couldn't be equated with weakness.

I was interested in farm machinery and enjoyed seeing all the old-style binders and reapers, and horse drawn machinery used by your forebears, and stories about those times.

While you and your family were noteworthy in the district, and you owned a lot of land and had money, these things didn't impress you. You treated them all in a matter of fact kind of way. You were skilled in farming and were right up with stock and grain prices and the weather. I remember asking

a neighbour how they decided when the time to plant their grain was. The response I got was when Allan Parker starts planting, that's when you begin.

We went spotlighting for foxes, which were always a pest to you, and I was impressed with your knowledge of your property and your skill at driving, while chasing a fox. I well remember that instead of chasing directly after a fox you turned a different way because the direct route would have wrecked the utility in a hidden gully.

There were a group of young people at Avon and you and I went each week when I was there to conduct a youth program.

One Sunday night in 1966, I couldn't sleep because of pain like I had eaten too many ripe peaches. It became so intense, that at about 2am in the morning I needed to go to hospital, and it was you I rang, and you took me to Balaklava Hospital where I was admitted to have my appendix removed.

When Donald Campbell was attempting the water speed record at Barmera, we decided to go and look. We saw the Bluebird craft, we also saw Dawn Fraser swim, and we camped in a hall used for youth camps.

Remember how millions of hungry mosquitoes attacked us. It was too hot for sleeping bags, but we couldn't expose any flesh, and eventually we got a little sleep when we smeared our faces with raw Dettol.

There are some people we meet in life with whom we just click. Little needs to be said. There is enjoyment in just being together. You were one of those people for me.

I appreciate you as a unique person, a farmer as you really got things done, a family man, and someone with Christian values.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Clark.



We enjoyed our four years at Kadina. The church and town suited us as there was a good active group of people in the church community and in the town. All the churches worked together very well. I was pleasantly surprised, when I conducted a wedding in the Methodist Church and was encouraged to do so by the local minister.

The Salvation Army minister rode with us in the town motor bike club. I was able to hire a plane from a farmer at Bute. The active Church run motor bike club operated in the winter and we later put a team in the local tennis competition. There was a men's and lady's group, an active Young People's group who would meet in the "Shuffle Inn". There was the regular Religious Instruction, two services each Sunday, and services were also held in Moonta. The Pensioners Group had regular meetings in our hall. There was a choir practice each week, and the choir sang each Sunday. I conducted a number of weddings and funerals. Members of the congregation were significant in business and in the town.

The overall spirit at Kadina was one where we felt at home. Copper mines had contributed a great deal to the district and the spirit of the Cornish miners could still be felt long after the mines had ceased operation. The church had been active for almost one hundred years. There were a number of young people with whom we could relate well. I felt I could join the Church and Community very easily and contribute in a meaningful way. I attended the St John's Ambulance group and I used to try out my bandaging skills on my son who in later life became a MICA Ambulance officer.

We were at home in the manse and rejuvenated the garden which was a bit of a jungle, pulling out plants and shrubs, and planting eighteen roses around the perimeter, as well as a new garden along one side. It wasn't until after some time had passed that a young couple were brave enough to tell us that all the shrubs we had pulled out had special significance. A previous minister did not take payment for a wedding or funeral but would say buy something that we can plant in the manse garden in memory of the person or occasion.

The local baker was a member of the church and each year there was a special Cornish pasty bake. Orders were taken, and men would roll up to the bakery and organize the pasties, with some special ingredients to make them better than usual, and when they were cooked the pasties were delivered hot on a Saturday night. Money raised went to a special purpose, and a lot of fun and satisfaction was had by the men.

Mrs. Rowley was an elderly woman in the church with lovely coloured grey hair. She had a stroke and spent some time in the Wallaroo Hospital before she died. When I heard the news, I went to the hospital where the family were still gathered. The road from Kadina to Wallaroo goes directly into the west and there as I journeyed the sun was setting with beautiful colours in the clouds. I switched on the radio and the song playing had the words, "I've looked at life from both sides now."

I suddenly saw the significance of those words as I went to visit Mrs. Rowley who had just died. We were looking into a sunset, but through faith she was looking back at the sunrise of a new day for her. When thinking and speaking at funerals, I have often used this concept.

I was called to take a funeral for a relative of a man who had been the town saddler for over twenty years. Before we sat down to discuss the funeral he showed me some oil paintings he had done since he retired and asked me what I thought of them. I told him I thought they were good apart from one where the water looked as if it was flowing uphill. I took the funeral and later visited him only to discover he had taken to painting seriously and his paintings were so good he was selling them for over five hundred dollars each. He was making more money with his paintings than he had ever made with his business.

Our youngest son was born in Adelaide while we were at Kadina. He was very affected by RH negative blood incompatibility, and received four blood exchange transfusions, after which he developed normally.

I often thought we didn't do much during our four years, but on reading diaries from the time, I am surprised at how much work we really did.

In 1970 our time at Kadina sadly came to an end, and we had to look for another church ministry.

We considered two places in South Australia, one in Victoria, but I felt the need to have a city church for the experience. I flew to Liverpool West in New South Wales and decided to accept a call to the church there. While we were still thinking of where to go the Kadina church, because they could find no one to come, asked us to stay on.

We thought this would be unwise so said no and then went to Sydney. We still have some contacts with people from that time and their families. We look back with some pride at what we did in our time there.

It was a sad end to four good years. We left on the twentieth of December 1970. When we went back some twelve years later for the church's hundredth anniversary, only a few people remembered us. Such is the ministry. Ministers come and go, but the congregation goes on forever.



THE BEST IN TOWN

I never thought I would. My chosen career was to be a minister of religion. No way was it in my mind that I would buy a motor bike. Seventy-five dollars I paid for a CZ-150, a brand name I had never heard of. It was a light green coloured, registered motor bike, purchased from a young chap on a farm. With some excitement and wonder, the bike was lifted into my trailer, tied down, and I took it home where it was parked in the church manse garage. The registration plate had already been removed. All that was needed was to tape over the head lamp glass with insulation tape, remove any unnecessary items like the tail light, and tape up any sharp bits, and display a number 1. This was also done with insulation tape on the already covered head lamp.

This was my entry into the K.C.C.A.C.C. The number 1 was reserved for the President, a very shaky President, for I had only ever had one short ride on my brother's small wheeled motor bike on our farm.

Two old men from the country town of Kadina were reminiscing one day about their younger years, and their motor bike racing careers, and how it kept them off the streets especially as teenagers and given them a lifelong interest. With their yarning to different folk in town, an idea developed, that a motor bike group could use the vacant land around the once famous Wallaroo copper mines. A track could be set out in and around the slag heaps. Interest and enthusiasm grew over time in the Church of Christ, and by the time I arrived in 1967 the club was not just an idea but a well-organized town activity, held on every Saturday during the winter months. Anyone of any age with a motor bike, up to and including bikes of 250ccs could enter providing their machine passed the safety checks, and they obeyed the racing rules. Races varied according to the number of laps around the course, and to the amount of power in the engine. Handicap and non-handicap races, a start finish line, a starting flag, and a chequered flag to highlight the winners were organized. Prizes of all sorts, including spanners and oil were donated by different businesses in the town. Special cups and medallions were engraved by the local jeweler. An area was set

aside for the 'pits', and a news sheet was printed by Con (the missing) Link, advertising upcoming events, and listing points gained during the season, so winners could be awarded prizes at a gala event at season's end. At this event, further points were awarded for the best presented bike, when coloured paint, sparkles, mirrors, signs – anything, could be used as a decoration. An old car was once trailered in, and people paid per minute to attack the car with a hammer or sledge hammer, much to the delight of the onlookers. This generated funds for the club. The evening ended with all enjoying a strawberry and ice cream supper, which became a yearly tradition. Good support came from people within the church and town. Two teenage girls, (one the church organist), were the starters and time keepers and flagged the winners. Their P.A. system helped them to be heard above the noise. Primary school boys, with help from their dads or brothers, came with auto cycles. Teenagers from the church and town, a deacon of the church and me, the minister and president of the club, all competed. So, did the Captain of the Salvation Army.

Dressed in long dark blue overalls, with some padding underneath, I pushed my CZ up a plank on to the trailer, much to the excitement of my two young sons, tied it securely and headed off to my first meet. I kick started the engine and decided to do a lap of the course, so I'd know where it went and what to expect.

The first fifty yards were on level and solid ground. Around the turn and on to some bitumen was the next section. Off the bitumen, the track went off into slag heaps, over jumps, around trees, and with many sharp bends. The tailings in the slag heaps were like coarse sand, and with two feet ready to keep balance, I slowly made my way through a half a mile of track, without falling off. The gears were new to me, one up and three down to accelerate, and the opposite to reduce speed using the hand clutch.

Eight bikes lined up at the starting line, for the first race. Gingerly I chose one end of the line, so I wouldn't get in the road when they all took off. The noises of revving engines and the smell of exhaust fumes that included the burning of fuel with ethanol in it, was enough to scare every bird for miles. The yellow flag was dropped, and dirt from spinning wheels joined the mixture. Down the straight I went, at a fair pace, even surprising myself with

the speed. Around the corner, and down the bitumen! Hey! This is good. I can see why people get hooked on motor bikes. Off the bitumen, and over the first jump, six or eight feet high! I got through that OK.

Around a sandy corner, I suddenly found myself tossed off. This bike has a mind of its own. The front wheel went one way and I went the other. And my shin hurts! It must have bumped against the foot rest. I'm going to have to watch that. I pushed the bike off the track, kick started the engine, and off I went again. This scene was repeated another three times during the race, much to the amusement of the young people, and to the soreness of my shin, and a few other places as well. I went home challenged but happy about my first efforts. I did improve, but with many spills, that were not unnoticed by the committee. At prize giving, I received a medallion with "Champion Terra-Firma Lover 1967" engraved on it.

For three more years I raced my CZ, and when I left Kadina, I sold it to one of the lads, and I have only been on a motor bike once since. My involvement was not to race motor bikes, although I greatly enjoyed the adventure, but to contribute to the lives of teenagers, and those interested. The lad, who bought my CZ, married a Kadina girl and is now a Salvation Army Officer. Others have grown to become good contributors in the local community.

In the year 2000, the Kadina Church of Christ celebrated its centenary. Everyone was welcomed back, and during the afternoon there was a race meet of the K. C. C. A. C. C¹. How things had changed! New facilities and a new track using modern, more powerful machines, and the "jumps" were as high as a house. I cringed to see a ten-year-old lad fly through the air, propelled up the side of a huge mound of dirt, by a modern bike, to land safely so far away. It was my pleasure to hand out the trophies to the winners. With some fear and excitement, I accepted the invitation to do a circuit on the track. No flying on a motor bike for me. I pattered around the track, over the house sized jumps, and through the sand.

This was one of my 'bests'.... the best in the town of Kadina.

¹ The K.C.C.A.C.C. stands for the Kadina Church of Christ Auto Cycle Club

We left Kadina with a Chesney Caravan behind our Valiant. In Mildura the back assembly of the car had to be changed. We went on via Sydney to Chinchilla where we spent Christmas with my parents. From there we went up the coast to Harvey Bay, and Maryborough, then back to visit Clark relatives Aunty Nellie and Uncle Wal. We picked up Mrs. Hunt from the airport and continued our way at a leisurely pace down the coast to Sydney, starting ministry at the Liverpool West Church on February 2, 1971.

Phillip and Stuart started at school as soon as we arrived.

We placed the caravan near to the back door and because the house was small, we used it as a spare room for visitors. And because we were half way between Melbourne and Brisbane, we had a number of people who used us as a half way stop over. Doug Good, Marion's mother and Aunty, my parents, Folk from Marion's church in Ormond are some that come to mind. When we first arrived, Marion was bathing the children only to discover a member of the congregation standing there watching. She explained that the manse was our private space and they needed to ring the front door bell.

Unusual things happened at Liverpool West that I had not experienced before, and it prepared me for my later time at Life Line. Here are some of the unusual situations I faced that were part of the rich tapestry of the time at Liverpool West. These were people in need and I was privileged to be at the centre of Christianity in action.

The Church was supported by five families who lived outside the Green Valley area. One came regularly from Sydney's north shore. Another was manager of the Holden Dealership in Liverpool. Green Valley was an intense housing commission area, and I really felt for the people and the difficulties they faced. Here are some of my memories.

The Church had a Morris bus that seated about 20. It was provided by one of the congregation, and if I couldn't organize a driver then it was my responsibility to drive it. It was used to transport people from Green Valley to and from the church. On a Sunday there were a couple of bus runs that

picked up children for Sunday School which was before church. Then I taught Sunday School and did another bus run to take children home and pick up people for the 11am service. After speaking in the service, I then took everyone home. On Sunday evening the bus ran to bring people to the service and take them home again.

I was able to get a driver for a while, but the bus had an unfortunate gear box and it was possible to go from first gear straight into reverse, which the new driver did and put the fan through the radiator. The second driver did well until family issues prevented him. He and his wife had a small baby and during one night his wife just disappeared. He couldn't find her so as he had to get to work he came to the door with the baby to ask us to look after him. He had brought little in the way of clothes, so Marion had to buy all the things he needed, and we looked after him for some time. He and his wife came to visit us in Melbourne but with no baby. We wonder what became of him.

We had a small storage shed out the back of the block. A man came at a late hour and wanted to know if he could sleep there. He did and when I went to check on him the next morning I was sad to find he had been drinking Metho.

A band of musicians were looking for a place to practice that was out of the way. They cleared themselves a space in the shed and practiced regularly. I communicated with them often and once went into the shed while they played their music and my ears pained with the noise. I'm sure they had hearing problems later in life.

I got a call about a woman who attended the church. She was outside her house in the street, telling all the neighbours off, and they all came out to listen to her, and teased her which made her worse. When I arrived, I asked her to go inside her house and I would talk with her. When she did I said, "OK folks the shows over you can all go home now." She was a disturbed soul and I often spoke with her.

The daughter of a church member got pregnant and I organized with her and her parents to go to someone in Wingham who would care for her.

We had a couple who were nudists in the congregation. They were afraid we might reject them, and we certainly didn't. But when it was obvious we wouldn't be joining their club they didn't come to services any more.

I supported a woman who tried to kill herself, and when I looked in her refrigerator, the only food she had that she had eaten was pet food. I was shocked and helped her all I could.

I visited a young mother, the wife of someone who attended our services. She was beside herself as her baby was continually crying. After talking with her I found that the baby was full of wind and she did not know how to get it up. So from my experience as a father of my babies, I coached her so she could eventually calm the baby.

A man brought his wife to the manse saying, "She has her period and I've tried everything, and I don't know what to do with her, see what you can do with her."

They were both very good supporters of the church. She was active in the women's group and he ran the boy's club and was a deacon in the church and lead services etc. I visited them in the caravan where they lived with their two boys. He told me that their television had lost its sound. When the technician came to investigate, he found that the cockroaches had eaten all the cardboard from the speakers. On one of my visits, the refrigerator was pulled out from the wall, and behind it was a mass of small cockroaches that looked like packets of tea on the floor.

As time went on, they shared with me that they were not married. He had a wife and family he had left, and he promised his previous children he would be back to see them, and he had never been back. He wanted to make things right, so I helped him with getting a divorce, and eventually he and his present partner were married.

One family who lived on a dairy farm were named Halfpenny. He was a very interesting man and an astute businessman. He would barter on almost everything in an effort to save money. He even bartered with the jeweler when he bought his wife's engagement and wedding rings. In Myers when buying a shirt, he would see if he could get a discount if he bought two. He was dyslectic and wasn't able to read the bible in church. But he was able to

estimate the weight of a beast in his head. He came from a farming background and life must have been tough for him. On one occasion, Marion was visiting when he cut his arm badly, and instead of going to the Doctor, he sewed it up himself with a flesh needle without any pain killer.

With his skills he made money. On his dairy farm, he organized ways for his cows to be fed. He went to the fruit market and did a deal and was paid to cart away all the old fruit and vegetables. He fed them to his cows. He did the same with the wheat board, taking away all the rubbishy wheat and dust. He organized the same with the left-over grain and mash from the breweries.

There were metal nails and wire in all these left-overs that if eaten would puncture a hole in a cow's stomach and they would then die. He organized a powerful electro magnet, which would take out the majority of the metal. However, because cows were dying from the metal that was missed, he placed a strong magnet in each cows stomach where it would safely collect the nails etc. they swallowed. Eventually he expected to lose cows when the magnet could not hold the metal any longer.

He wanted a truck. In his travels he saw a good International truck that had been in an accident and all the top of the truck had been destroyed, but the bottom was still OK. He bought it for a cheap price. He came across a Commer truck that had a good cabin, but the rest of the truck was a wreck. He bought this for a good price and had his mechanic put the Commer cabin on to the International bottom making a truck that surprised people.

His phone didn't operate, and when the technician came, he found that a dog had chewed through the phone wire. He kept a lot of cash away from the banks. Marion visited his wife only to find her ironing hundreds of dollars. Rainwater had got into where he kept the money and she was getting it dry again. Marion did some wallpapering for them on one occasion.

While a tough business man getting money, he was generous giving money to good causes. He would give me money to help struggling families, and I was to give the money saying it was a gift from the church. I can still see a struggling mother receiving an envelope from me, and when she opened it and saw the money contents she cried and cried.

I was part of a team that provided Religious Instruction to schools in the area.

We lived on a very busy road, and there were two incidents near us, the police shot and killed a man down the road about 200 yards away, in the second a car crashed into the fence in the block next to the church.

There was a scrub near where we lived, and it had a lot of rubbish. I found some solid timber and a pipe and some chain and built a good swing for my boys.

We were in an area of the funnel web spider and warned our children about them.

I made a billy cart for the boys at Kadina. They left it out near the church and someone made off with it.

So, the boys would have a good covered play area I built in the back-veranda area.

We had fellowship teas at the church and had to make a strict rule that no one was to eat anything until after grace was said. Then it seemed the young people ate as though they hadn't eaten for a month.

In the last year we were there we sold our Chesney caravan and the Valiant car and bought a HQ Holden with a V8 engine. I enjoyed driving it very much. I attended a Dale Carnegie course on public speaking and human relationships while at Liverpool West and still can't believe that I came top in the class. I went on to be an assistant with the next class.

During our time the Woolworths store where we bought out groceries burned down in a spectacular fire. We went to a high spot to watch it burn. After living in four manses, in our last year at Liverpool West, Marion went to Melbourne and bought her own first new home where we lived for fifteen years.



ASHBURTON CHURCH

I was three quarter time at Ashburton Church. While I worked more hours than I needed, I didn't feel so guilty if I took some time off for personal interests.

The church was an off shoot of the Gardiner church and had some old identities who had been in the church for years, as well as some folk from the nearby housing commission area. The building was of a lovely architect design. Being in the city, there were many activities that were shared with other churches and special meetings. Ministry wise we were not isolated as there were ministers nearby who we could easily communicate with. There was a theological student on placement to work with us in the church.

Things I remember at the church were painting lessons, Square Dancing, going to Youth for Christ meetings, to College of the Bible activities etc. The focus of the church was to be more a fellowship, and not so much a ministry to problem people. There were problems but not so many as those encountered in the two years we had at Liverpool West. There were the usual weddings and funerals and Religious Instruction. I visited some members at work. One was at Telstra, and another had a factory with an extrusion process. I saw the value of work visits then but more so when I became an Industrial Chaplain.

The church manse was let to an Indian family, and this was our first encounter with folk from the Indian culture.

During the two years at Ashburton, I enrolled in Courses at Cairnmillar, that focused on human relationships and counselling. Like the Dale Carnegie Course this added to my knowledge and training, and this was becoming the emphasis in ministry training.

For a time, I was called Bill.

Do you remember how I got the name "Bill"? After a church service at Ashburton, I walked out the door and there was a young chap there, looking all shy. In my cheeky way I said to him, "how are you going Fred?" He looked daggers at me. He came back the next Sunday and I said the same again. This time he said, "me names not Fred". I replied, "I know it's not, but I'll call

you Fred until you tell me what it is". I've forgotten his name, but next time I asked, how are you going Fred, he replied, "Alright Bill" and it stuck, and I was Bill for about five years at Ashburton and Doncaster.

I think our work in this church was to maintain the group and care for the people, which we did.

Towards the end of 1974, we got an invitation to be the second minister at the Doncaster Church of Christ.



DONCASTER CHURCH

Doncaster was a big established church that began with the orchardists who grew fruit in the district. Their orchards were over run by the expansion of Melbourne and the building of the Doncaster shopping center. The congregation reflected this with a few old residents and many new families. My induction was on February 2nd and after the service a picnic was held so we could get to know members.

I enjoyed working in the church at Doncaster. There were plenty of opportunities with a small amount of preaching, a cell group, a group of people I visited, and especially I was one of a team of leaders who organized the CYF.

The CYF was for teenagers fifteen years and upwards. This group was considered to be part of the church's overall program and a service to the community and open to all. Its purpose was to provide opportunity for fun and fellowship and to challenge young people to become whole and Christian. There were about 35 members when I started and about 120 when I left in 1977.

There were regular meetings and activities and a number of camps, one in Glenelg that had Jonathan Living Seagull as a theme and was shared with young people from Brighton Gardens church in South Australia. At one Easter I remember that leaders washed the feet of the young people as Jesus did His disciples.

At one of the camps, one of the leaders had decided she wanted to express her faith and be baptized by immersion, and could I organize it at the camp, which I did. It was very cold and I baptized her in a dam on the property.

There was a heap of fun, but all with a serious focus to enrich the lives of the young people. To give you a flavour of the time here is a letter I received and my response.

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

LETTER FROM DON WILSON

Dear Owen, (or I should say "Bill", because I will always remember you as "Bill").

My name is Don Wilson and we first met at the Ashburton Church of Christ. I was one of the local kids you took under your wing as part of the youth group that was run at the church.

I found you a couple of years later at the Doncaster church where you once again were involved with the youth group.

I realize this is all a bit random and hopefully not too bizarre. I was doing random searches the other night on face book and I found your profile page.

I really just wanted to thank you for the fun times we had and the guidance you gave to a bunch of kids that just wanted something to do on a Friday night and maybe made a difference in our lives.

I wish you well and once again thank you for the memories.

Yours sincerely, Don Wilson.

MY RESPONSE

Dear Don,

It is great to hear from you. Thank you for writing. You don't know how good it is to hear from someone back in the Ashburton/Doncaster days. Usually we all say goodbye and are sad and there is no further contact. Such is the nature of the work with people. We travel together for a time, touch each other's lives, and then move on and part.

But I often wonder, what happened to those young people? How did life work out for them? I hope things worked out well for them, and they found meaning and happiness in whatever they did. Apart from just a few contacts, less than ten, I have no idea what happened.

I treasure the time spent with you all and had fun too. Mine was a cheeky, teasing approach and young people seemed to respond to that.

It was a sad and painful ending at Doncaster and that was nothing to do with the youth group.

I was forty and changed tack and after training in Counselling, I got a job as a staff person at Lifeline Melbourne where I worked for ten years. Then I

worked as an Industrial Chaplain and Counsellor at ITIM for twelve years and retired in 2000.

I'm glad you benefitted from the time we travelled together, and you can look back on good things we shared. I can.

I hope your life has been and is fulfilling. All the best for 2014.

Cheers for now," Bill". (Owen Clark)

Along with church activities, I was involved in the Doncare Counsellor Training Course, and worked with a group of leaders in marriage enrichment week ends at Jumbunna Lodge.

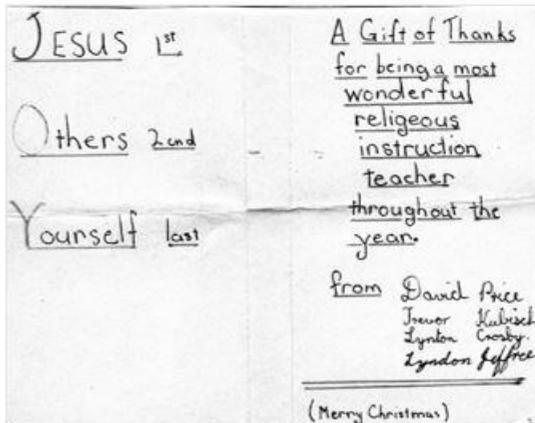
Our time ended sadly.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



LOXTON CHURCH OF CHRIST SUNDAY SCHOOL 1961 - 1963



FEEDBACK FOR ME
A RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION TEACHER



A YOUNG MINISTER



LONG PLAINS MANSE, 1964 - 1966



KADINA CHURCH OF CHRIST AND MANSE, 1968 - 1970

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



READY TO GO RACING KADINA



AUTO CYCLE CLUB RACING



AREA SET ASIDE FOR THE PITS



THE FAMILY WAS INVOLVED



ASHBURTON CHURCH OF CHRIST 1971 -1972



DONCASTER CHURCH OF CHRIST 1975 - 1977

LIFELINE

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP

Sometimes when I was droving sheep, a sheep at the back of the mob would suddenly plop down as if to hide. For some reason, this sheep went against all its inbuilt messages that say it must be part of the mob and follow its mates. There must be a reason for this choice. I look at this sheep carefully for symptoms. The check list goes, is it old? Is it poor? Does it have a lump under its jaw? Does it have no colour in the arteries in the white of its eyes? Is there something else that's worrying it? Sheep give up quickly on life, and I carry it home on my horse or come back later with the utility and pick it up. "All we like sheep" the expression goes. I've experienced human beings much like sheep. They have problems they try to hide, sometimes very successfully. Inside there are thoughts, reflections, and experiences, which can erode away their life force, their very lives. They share with no one.

In Lifeline training, a young woman showed every promise of being an excellent telephone counsellor. One training session she was absent. When followed up, her family had no idea where she was. She hadn't come home for two days. Sad news came to us that she had jumped into the blow hole on Phillip Island and killed herself. We wrung our hands and our hearts and asked why? WHY? She must have been grappling with great pain and pressure for a young woman to take such an action.

People will say flippantly, "If this doesn't work out, or happen the way I want it to, I will kill myself." It is also common in the movies.

Freud tells us there is a "death instinct". There are some who tease death. They live on the edge and this creates great excitement. If life is a bit dull, it can be made exciting by driving fast or doing something dangerous. This concept can be changed into something more in war, or wherever someone wants to be a hero. They take great risks to be remembered in history. Drug taking for pleasure is another expression of excitement while teasing death. The suicide bomber and others deliberately die for a cause, to be remembered, or for what they think is a greater reward, perhaps in the afterlife.

For the Lifeline trainee things were very different. Her grandmother was one of the few women to study Chemistry and become a Chemist in her generation. She made a name for herself. Her mother followed the same course and practised as a Chemist. All the family expectations were that she would study to be a Chemist like her mother and grandmother. It would be a family tradition. Any of her thoughts of wanting to study something different were strongly negated. She was given no freedom of choice from her family. Lifeline training made her aware of the great struggle within her, and that she did have a choice. This great civil war inside her and her feelings of powerlessness to take the course she wanted, I believe contributed to her suicide. Part of this was that she couldn't see her way forward.

I went to the funeral of a distant friend, Tom, who was very experienced in St John's ambulance and spent a lot of time in volunteer work. Employed by Telstra, he was a well-qualified technician. He and a colleague had talked in detail as to the best way to kill themselves. My friend was a nice but typical Australian ocker. In his forties the pressure was on him from his family, and from life, to grow up some more into maturity. He went to a remote spot, sent a message to his wife and family, and electrocuted himself the way he had planned previously. People will suicide because they want to continue as they are and can't cope with change.

A phone caller suicided because his wife left him and he wanted to stay married. He wasn't prepared to cope with the pain of change, and being single. He died as a married man.

Those who really want to kill themselves won't tell anyone. They will just plan it and do it. There are vibes and actions that are clues. They could be observed tying up life's ends, like in an unusual way saying good-bye to everyone and closing bank accounts. They may have been depressed for a long time and for some unknown reason they are suddenly very happy. A caller to Lifeline was answered by an inexperienced telephone counsellor. The caller spoke in a calm and happy sounding voice, and rang to say that he was going to jump off the Westgate Bridge at 3 o'clock the next day. He didn't sound suicidal, and the counsellor did their best. Next day at 3 someone did jump off the bridge. While people are struggling to decide if they will kill themselves, they have negative feelings and struggling

thoughts, but once they have made the decision to die, they can be happy. The struggle is over. The decision is made.

Similar to mental illnesses, many people are frightened of anyone contemplating ending their life. Yet their issues are the same unresolved life issues that people can face every day.

Each day I believe we make hundreds of choices to live. We eat, exercise, decide when we cross the road, and choose to drive our car safely. Suicide is making the opposite decision, to die.

The decision to die is very complex. From life struggles there comes powerlessness, a shrinking back into oneself, harsh judgement directed at the self, and a message that says, "It's all my fault" when that is not true. There are feelings of anger, despair, loneliness, depression, and sadness. All the unresolved problems, and all the cruel issues, that are not shared cause incredible psychic pain. So great is the pain, and the confusion of mind, that the person thinks, if I have this much pain, I must be an evil person, and it's better that I be out of the way and dead, OR with all this pain life is not worth living.

How can these people be helped?

Remembering that this kind of person could think all is against them, we must first establish a relationship and communicate that we are on their side. We accept their words as emotions. "I feel like killing myself" We respond, "If you are in great pain of course you do."

The helping goal is to open up the decision making process, and get the person to share what is causing pain and how they have tried to manage it. Have they tried every possibility to resolve problems? For the counsellor and the caller this is a joint search.

In training, a Lifeline telephone counsellor insisted there was no reason ever for a person to take their own life. He was warned that there were situations where the only logical way out for a person was suicide. He continued in his position and one night he had such a call. He rang me saying that he and the caller worked to find a way out and couldn't find one. Some people have such pain that they have every reason to give up on life. When I was at

Lifeline we worked with them on that decision. And there was great sadness if they took their life as every life is unique and precious.

One caller at Lifeline rang regularly. No matter how we tried, she would not seem to accept help, and one day we learned that she had swum out into the bay, and kept swimming until exhausted, she drowned.

As a result of working together, if a way of life is found, then a plan is set up in a practical way with supports so the unresolved can be resolved, and life can be empowered and managed. This is the result we work for. I was on duty one day at Lifeline when a telephone counsellor contacted me to say he had a suicide caller on the line. The caller had taken many tablets. As the tablets were taking effect, the caller became frightened and reversed his decision. He didn't want to die. Asleep, he could be heard breathing deeply as the handpiece dropped on his chest. I authorised a trace on the call, telecom gave an address, the police broke the door down and the ambulance took him to hospital where his stomach was pumped. Out of hospital, he rang me to thank everyone who rescued him.

I was chaplain for a company where a worker suicided. While everyone knew it was a suicide, the family gave strict instructions to the manager that suicide was not to be mentioned in relation to her death. I went to the funeral and was glad I didn't have to take it. Because of the family shame of having a daughter suicide, the atmosphere in the funeral service was terrible. Yet I remember another funeral, which I took, where a teenager's dad suicided. There was no hiding the fact and there was an atmosphere of love, support and understanding.

While this is a sad subject, it raises the question as to the meaning of life, how everyone needs encouragement, support and love, and a freedom to work through wrongs that occur and cause pain, yet a freedom to realize a unique potential. I am forever thankful for all that my experience of helping and thinking about suicide has contributed to my life.



There are “ups”, and “downs” in this life.
Some times are glad, some times are sad;
There’s happiness, “put downs” and strife.

‘It’s in my brain’, is a common refrain,
My chemistry there is not right.
Just know you can still, be helped by a pill,
A special one taken each night!

CHEMICALS

The glass half empty? Oh no it’s half full.
Just build on the life that you’ve got.
And focus instead, on your road ahead.
Gently moving will help you a lot.

ATTITUDE

Perhaps it’s a friend, will help in the end,
Or counsellor, listening on cue,
Like Beyond Blue, when they focus on you,
So you and your poor heart will mend.

HELP

There is dark night, but it’s followed by light
From the sun; that’s warm, and it’s bright.
There’ll come a new day, so search for the way
That leads to new thoughts, and delight.

DIRECTION

A dream that is true, far out from the blue,
Of time we will spend, when we reach the end,
Transformed in life here, we share in life there,
A city, four square that has no night there.

DESTINATION



MY COUNSELLING MODEL

My theology is not based on verbal inspiration but vital inspiration: it's vital to understand the Bible and Life. My search is for eternal life: "eternal" meaning quality and fullness of life. Life is a journey from innocence to Wisdom, and it is a learning growing process all the way. Crises and suffering are common in the growing.

Being at Life Line exposed me to the crisis intervention model of counselling. However, as staff I attended workshops of many approaches to counselling. Considering all models of counselling I knew, I developed my own Counselling model. As a Christian I used Christian principles that I believe are crucial to all legitimate helping and change. These can be seen as experiences paralleled in the life of Jesus Christ especially in the cross, burial and resurrection.

Basic principles from theology and the New Testament are as follows:

It starts with the incarnation: Jesus coming into our world. In counselling this is empathy, or walking in the shoes of the other.

This means as a Counsellor, while being in my own world I have to join the world of the person. Wherever the Counselling journey takes a person, I must be with them.

The circumstances associated with the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus provide the basic change process of life, growth and healing.

If we flow along with what happened to Jesus in His human experience and struggle, there are similar feelings.

His words, "Take this cup (of suffering) from me" equates to pain and suffering a person does not want to face."

"Why has God (life) forsaken me" is coming to grips with the reality. It is a feeling, an experience of the unfairness of life's trial: one feels naked and exposed as the awful truth comes out.

As a result of sharing an awful experience, the problem starts to change and die. It loses its power. With proper support, it can then be faced and explored. It can be seen how the problem began and developed.

Aspects of life that caused and supported this problem are seen. Gradually the old structure can be dismantled so the problem won't be repeated. This equates to a dying and a burial.

Then a new aspect of life can be explored and put in place, embraced and given support. How can I now live so I will be a more whole person, with a different and creative perspective? This equates to resurrection: new life.

Philosophically this equates to life's triatic process (thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis, then the synthesis become another thesis and the process repeats) I see this in death, burial and resurrection. Life is full of many small deaths, burials, and resurrections.

Whatever the theory or model of Counselling or helping, a crucial ingredient is the quality of the relationship. God's relationships bring healing and quality to life.



A WONDERFUL UNFORGETTABLE CARD

“Let's get together to say Goodbye to Owen and celebrate his ten years at Lifeline”. This was the invitation to come to my farewell celebration on Tuesday March 8, 1988.

Early December 1977, I began my Lifeline experience as a staff member with responsibility as the roster supervisor. This amounted to finding eighteen telephone counselors a day for every day of the year, from a group of around a hundred trained telephone counselors. They were required to do three days shifts a month and one overnight shift every three months. My job also involved caring for and supporting telephone counselors who took all sorts of calls on the phone, and who still had their lives to live.

I was at the point of dramatic change in my life. I had committed myself to train for and be a Christian minister in the churches of Christ and had spent four years training and seventeen years in six different parishes in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. While much good work was done during that time, my personality, approach, or authority issues, made it clear that there was not a good fit in this calling. This came to a head when I was moved on for a third time by a local church.

The counselor training, I had done at Cairnmillar, Doncare and in Hospital Chaplaincy, along with two Dale Carnegie courses, fitted me well to begin the task at Lifeline. However, the change of focus and calling involved many emotions of sadness and pain for me and my family.

Lifeline was now a challenge to me in terms of theology, organization, relationships, counseling and supervision. As an initiation into the culture of Lifeline, I did the basic training that all prospective telephone counsellors do and found it very supportive. The roster was a headache. I had inherited a computer-generated roster that was unable to take into account all the life styles and requirements of the many people. So, at my initiative and with the support of other staff and telephone counsellors, a new roster system was developed that worked well and as far as I know is still in place. I was continually learning about life and its rawness, and how to care for myself and others.

To help staff develop skills, Lifeline had a psychiatrist who gave feedback on the counseling cases presented to him. Also off and on, over the period I went to four different psychiatrists for support, personal issues and growth. The whole of Lifeline had an atmosphere, a culture that we all got caught in, and this is usually true of all tight organizations and communities. It was my world and I reveled in it, which was often at the cost of my wife and children. After five years of being the roster supervisor, my focus changed to the pastoral care of the telephone counselors, and then for the last three years I was phone room supervisor, trainer and counselor. I was one of five counseling staff who worked as a team and our roles overlapped. In the 1980's a new phone room with new phones was built, and a multilingual Lifeline with five different languages began.

Other changes came with the retirement of Bonnie Bates who initiated the Lifeline atmosphere. Social workers and psychologists brought in what seemed like a more modern but less caring atmosphere into the organization. It seemed like Wesley Mission who was responsible for Lifeline decided to change its culture.

I was first to be supervised into the new culture and the hidden agenda was that I should resign. This pressure affected my health and I was told by the mission to take a month's sick leave along with my holiday pay. My GP objected but eventually gave me more sick leave. I had taken very little sick leave during my ten years. After attempting to return I eventually gave way and resigned. After I left this same pressure came on another staff member, and she took her case to court and received a payout. The psychiatrist supervisor also departed from the mission in unpleasant circumstances.

The many comments on the card I was given at my farewell, along with those I received later, represent the cultural and real relationships I had during my time at Lifeline. I accept that it was best that I end, but my sadness for what was, makes it difficult to read the warm and positive comments written on this card and in other communications, about 75 in all. Here are three examples.

"I was devastated to hear of your leaving Lifeline. Somehow it had never occurred to me that you would not always "be there." Maybe you had become another crutch for me, as I knew in my low moments you would

always be able to understand and support and encourage.... (Will anyone else be able to do that so well?)"

And from a lady who said to me when we first met ten years ago that we would not get along because she didn't believe in God: She was also leaving. "Goodbye and thank you for your friendship over the years. Of all the staff you have always been very special to me, just to see your smiling face coming into the phone room always gave me a lift. I feel very sad about leaving a service that I have been so closely involved with over ten years. All the best to you!"

And another from a Jewish woman Telephone Counselor, who was in one of my training groups!

"The thoughts of you that fill my heart,
Will stay with me not to depart.
Our relationship it grew and grew.
Warmth it came to me from you.

You now depart to start a path anew
And not to share yourself with not so few
For me your friendship means so much
To know your life, me did touch.

Although from now on we may not meet,
I will remember you and am complete
My life is so much richer now,
For what I shared with you somehow.

So many thanks for the opportunity
To know you well in this great city,
So may peace and love be all your life,
And happiness, all free of strife."

So, a ten-year era of my life that I was privileged to live came to an end. Endings can be difficult and this one was, but this ending was right. Change

continues. I was able to use my skills in my next and last job for twelve years, with new challenges and new learnings.

As I have seriously visited these cards and their comments for the first time in twenty-seven years, I still have strong emotions of joy and sorrow. Now the question is what I do with the many cards and all the comments?

Good things are easy to get stuck in. I must move on. I felt relief when before I started at Lifeline, I burned all my sermons. Maybe my best action would be to offer up the cards and comments as a burnt offering in thanksgiving to the God I believe in, and who I have had the privilege to work with in caring for people and myself.

Lifeline contributed greatly to who I am, but I must be free to be who I am today, with Lifeline being a memory along with all the other memories. An Old Testament prophet's prayer is one I go along with, "Remember me Oh my God, for good".

PS My writing this is a cathartic statement:

"the release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit."



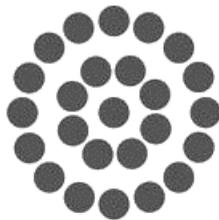
VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

LIFELINE REFERRAL OFFICER



OWEN CLARK 817 6307
(D.C. 12)

<u>DC No.</u>	<u>Phone numbers on Commander</u>		<u>DC No.</u>		
10			18		
11	CHRIS McLOUGHLIN	481 4090	19	POISONS	345 5678
12	OWEN CLARK	817 6307	20	PAGEBUY	692 2142
13	BRUCE TURLEY	848 6840	21		
14	JENNY GOLDSMITH	802 1335	22		
15	MUVRA DEVOLIL	29 6225	23	BANU MALONEY	818 7972
16			24		
17	LYNNE COULSON	531 6278	25	ROBERT MORRIS	267 1428



LIFELINE LOGO

TURNING POINTS

I wrote of a turning point when I went to Toowoomba Grammar School. My focus on life changed or matured after that experience.

I focus now on three other turning points to do with my parish ministries. They occurred at Loxton, Kadina and Doncaster. I link them together because on reflection at a distance, they all had a similar pattern. It is only with the passing of years and in hindsight I can see this situation more clearly. Each of these experiences increased in intensity, until after the third one my whole life and focus turned in a different direction from being a Churches of Christ minister in a parish situation.

I was responsible and not responsible for what occurred. As the minister I was the focus for two different groups of people. The first group was the Church congregation. They think they are the church and they are. They are the ones who support the services and the different groups and auxiliaries. They give of their time and money in an effort to maintain and grow the church numbers and interests. This is the church as an organization, a fellowship. They have a need to belong, to develop a Christian faith, to be a witness for Christ in the area they live. They see the minister as the one who will support them in their vision and individually. He is expected to maintain the status quo of these members. My task was to support these people and encourage them to grow even as I had to grow in understanding as to what a mature church would be like. They like the support, but the growth area was difficult to change as they had an idea they thought was right. I'm sure that Marion and I did all we could to befriend and support the people in many ways. We visited people and had people in our home for meals and went to their homes. Our relationship with them was very important.

They will say they want to outreach into the community and draw people into their activities and into the church. But in practice they have an image of an "in" group and an "out" group. People are welcome if they pass some sort of invisible test to join the "in" group. This has certain validity as to be Christian one has to believe that Jesus is the Saviour. But the expectation is that not only will they believe but they will act in such a way that will be acceptable in the "in" group. There always seems to be a kind of hidden test

as to whether a person is “in” or “out”, and often this was over very immature and arbitrary issues. For instance, one man was on the outer because he worked on a Sunday. Another family smelt. Another was “out” because they didn’t show a person in the church the respect they thought they deserved.

The second group of people I focused on was those in the “out” group. All were included in God’s love, and everyone was welcome with the goal that their lives would be enriched and grow into wholeness and maturity. I did all I could to relate to people. In Loxton we established a tennis team and built three tennis courts. If anyone I knew of had a problem, I saw that as an opportunity to befriend them and offer help. I worked to get people employment. I got close to some lads who had committed a crime. In all three churches, there was progress as we all worked together to make a difference in the church and community. In Loxton the Sunday School numbers went from around fifty to one hundred and twenty. In Doncaster the young group went from thirty-five to one hundred and twenty. In Kadina numbers grew in the motor bike club and in the youth group. One of my gifts is to engage with people and in all three churches I used this to draw people into the church environment. Wasn’t this what witnessing meant? Wasn’t our job as Christians to enrich lives, to do something for the poor and needy, to be an expression of God’s love?? That was what I was taught and what I believed. So why was I moved on or kicked out of the three churches. I thought I did something wrong and it was my fault at the time. I was told later I had an authority problem which I acknowledge. I did something to get the same result three times.

In Loxton our demise came about because the church secretary wasn’t happy with the way we were doing things. At one stage he threatened not to pay us. He seemed to think we weren’t doing enough as we were firm in not letting the church go charismatic. He wanted the Home Missions Director to come and sort things out, and eventually we agreed. The Director came and told the congregation one thing and came to our home and told us that he did that just to keep them together. He told us exactly the opposite and we were angry. He also told us to end our time at Loxton. This was at a time when the church was thought to be primary and ministers and

their families were expendable. Later the church secretary wrote us an apology for his actions.

In Kadina we were very happy. Even the people of the town thought the church was going well. We were into our fourth year and went on a holiday and came back to find that we were being asked to go at the end of the year. We could accept this if it was the church decision, however when people learned about how it was done, there was a lot of anger. Our happy time at Kadina came to a sad end. In all human organizations there are difficult human relationships and Churches are no exception. In Kadina the difficulty was the ruling elder. He exerted his power in a large business, over his family, and in the Church in a way that he dared not be questioned, and he was punishing when things didn't go his way. He had an electrician employee who was also a fellow church member, who decided that there was so much work around that he would go out on his own as an electrician. The elder was furious and black balled his former employee very badly, so badly that he had to leave the church congregation. On two occasions I confronted him in a way that showed I did not just go along. Because he disagreed with having a mission, the tape that recorded how it would happen was given to him, and he conveniently lost it. He returned it before we left.

After our confrontation I went to visit him when he was sick at home. He was surprised and asked why I came to visit him. I said he was one of the congregation that I cared for and would visit him as I would anyone else who was sick.

We went on a holiday cruise for a month and while we were absent he organized what was a deceptive vote by the congregation on whether we should continue with our ministry at the Kadina church. He asked the congregation at a service to put in a piece of paper with a yes or no on it indicating what they wanted as to our future. It was not explained that all should vote, nor was it explained that we needed to get eighty per cent of the vote to stay. The number in the congregation was ninety-four and thirty nine voted and we got seventy nine per cent of the thirty nine who voted, and so we were told when we returned from our holiday. Many members who didn't vote were angry about the process as they thought it was a

rigged vote. People in the community were surprised. I did what I could to keep peace, and our family coped by saying it is not what happens to us but our attitude towards what happens. We had to look for a new ministry, and the church had to look for a new minister.

Again, I was in the situation of trying to get the people who were “out” involved and because a particular person didn’t like what was going on and didn’t like the fact I would question his ideas or authority, I had to go so he could be comfortable.

I think that I was again in a pivotal point between the “in” people and the “out” people.

My original term at Doncaster was for three years, ending in December 1977. A Committee of three met with me in February telling me that my time at Doncaster would end in December and they thought it would be wise if I resigned and end in December.

I told them that I would not resign for two reasons. One, I had always told the young people that to be a Christian one had to stick with their decision to follow Christ no matter what. I was committed to them and I couldn’t explain to them that I was resigning. The second reason was that it was not true that I had decided to resign. So, I told them that if the committee or the officer’s board decided that I should end, I would accept that, but I wasn’t going to resign.

This was brought up at the next officers meeting, and Keith Horne and I were not present when this issue was discussed. Keith confidently said that it would only take a short while to affirm that my ministry would terminate at the end of the year, and that we then would soon join the meeting. However, the meeting went to 11.30pm and no decision was made, and people were free to speak openly about the issue. Keith’s comments when he spoke to folk coming from the meeting affirmed my suspicion that he had set up the committee.

The reason no decision was made was that about fifty percent of the meeting did not want me to conclude. It was clear to people who wondered why ministers only stayed in my position for three years and then resigned that they were asked to resign and did so. It became more and more evident

that Keith Horne was pulling the strings to suit himself. While I was inclined to go ahead in my way, he was threatened by someone staying too long. I'm sure he felt the fact that his training had been in the Salvation Army and not in a Church of Christ theological college. I think he saw me as a loose cannon, and in some way, I was with the CYF, but it was needed if we were to get young people to come, and I got the number up to 120. I think I was not as church oriented as he would like.

I found myself being in the same position I was in, in Kadina and Loxton. The people in the church were threatened by the new people coming into the church and I was responsible, so I had to go. I don't like this as it seems as though I and my presence is responsible for the rift and turmoil. The young people wanted to put a banner across the front of the church saying, we want Bill, and I had to tell them that the decision had been made and they can't reverse it.

A second Officer's meeting was held after a month, and Keith again thought we'd be able to join the meeting after a short while, but we never joined the meeting which ended at 11.45pm. This time a decision was made, and I was asked to conclude at the end of the year. I was told that it was all down to one person's vote and was particularly saddened by the fact that some of the discussion was about a condom being found in the church car park and that seemed to sway someone. I accepted the decision and I knew that my presence was going to be a continual upsetting factor in the church and I didn't want to be divisive in any way so shortly after I resigned.

At the time on April 20, 1977 I wrote this:

I have resigned. After two years and three months under pressure, yet I am sad and glad. Sad the way things have revealed themselves. I identify with the trees at the moment losing their leaves. As I walk around the block this leaf flutters to the ground followed by that one. Many are still to fall. It looks as though the tree is dying and in its dying its beauty is revealed. The ugliness of the death of each leaf is beautiful, the fluttering to the ground, the carpet of dead leaves on the ground, is all beautiful and sad. It is the end of spring and summer that is dying into autumn. The leaves will die but not the tree. Its leaves are all gone, and it will stand against the rigors of the cold. The leanness of its trunk and bareness of its branches seem dead and useless.

But it is only true in appearance. Hidden in the trunk is the sap that still flows, the buds that lie hidden are robbed at the moment of expression in green leaves and flowers and seeds, but the life is still within. It is imprisoned but not forever. Circumstances and seasons seem now against the tree, but don't be fooled. Don't judge by outer appearance. What is happening in reality is the reality. The roots are still strong hidden deep within the warm soil, stretching out towards the living water hidden deep below the bleakness and cold of winter. Watch!! You will watch many days and see the same and believe the tree is finished. But Watch!! Let the gentle warmth and sunshine come and the buds cannot help themselves. They will pop out!! So many of them in so many places! The believer in death will be shocked by the emerging life. It will creep up on him while he goes merrily along in what he thinks is reality. Life explodes, and he is shocked by the colour and aliveness. The same sun caused the death of the leaves months before as the leaves nearest the direct light of the sun were first to turn colour and die. That same sun now causes life that cannot be held back. O Lord I must believe: I do believe this is a picture of life. This is my life.

As it seemed that in spite of my best efforts to help the church, I caused trouble or division. I came to a very sad and painful decision that the God who called me into the parish ministry was now calling me out of it. After doing Counsellor training from then on, my direction was in being a Counsellor. I burned the notes of all the sermons I'd ever preached. Now I could focus entirely on individual people and their issues.

Some forty years after I made this decision, I feel free of the church organization and its constrictions. While I am very much a Christian and I do miss some of my past in the church, my focus is with a greater God. I accept that the church organization is the way it is. I am very grateful for my upbringing and development and ministry within the church, and I think it has a valid place for many people.

For me God has been and is active in so many ways in a far bigger picture than what I had imagined. A Meditation group is now one way I receive spiritual dimensions, and I meet together with many different people, and learn from them and share in life issues, and God is in it all!!!!

MEDITATION

When my connection with the parish church was broken in 1977 when I was 40, I had to find another way of spiritual challenge and support. In Jungian terms, the agenda of the first part of my life was coming to an end. That agenda was, how can I enter the world, separate from my parents, create relationships, career and a social identity.

Then began the second half of life with its emphasis on the inner spiritual agendas and addressing the larger issues of meaning. I found that meditation supported my inner journey, and I tried various ways of meditation, and eventually now I meet weekly if possible with others. After a short introduction we meditate in silence for half an hour. Some use a mantra like "Come Lord Jesus come" others use ways to quieten the mind so as to be more open to life and God. It requires discipline and effort to keep a meaningful space of complete silence even to silence thoughts so as to be open to God and life. I see this activity as practising the presence of God and here are my thoughts behind my meditating.

My thoughts are always being added to and here is a recent reflection. Those in a church fellowship have a certain church authority that they relate to or go along with. In my experience since leaving the church as an organisation I have had to interact with God without any intermediary authority. With just me and God I have chosen and been forced into a different sort of relationship. Having noted this I do enjoy the fellowship of my fellow meditators, because each of us is free to be and express who we are.

PRACTISING THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

"In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

And we all having been unveiled in face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of *the* Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.”

These three Bible verses speak of a sort of meditation as being in the presence of God. It comes about through choice and then practice that requires discipline. There is a flippant thought that is true, “If you are going to one day meet God, you had better have some practice at what it is going to be like.”

How rich it is to be in the presence of God!

While we are always in God's presence, meditation is a recognition of God's closeness. Our first task is to get into that closeness. The first focus is to recognise who God is and who we are. We need to be as completely open as we can be to who we are. Our whole selves, our whole life, our every thought is open before our God.

We have the assurance from Him that “those who come to me I will not cast out.” We might come with many things mixed but He has a welcome. What a thought, the great God of all welcomes us into His presence.

The presence of another person impacts on us, and we respond or react. Can we take in the presence of God? The question is how much can we accept and take in of God's love, God's riches, and God's dimensions of life? They are very grand and great.

They are high and wonderful and we cannot attain to them.

Our minds would explode if God put His full dimensions into them. Thankfully He starts small and gentle. He moves our thoughts gently so we gradually think and grow them. He doesn't smash us with His greatness, power and complexity. If we are bruised He doesn't break us. If our sense of life is a glowing ember almost going out, He doesn't smother it or blow it out with His mighty wind, but fans it.

When God says “Be still and know that I am God.” He encourages our stillness of mind and heart, a kind of surrender into the presence of His greatness. The process is to unveil our faces, to not hide anything of who we are, and then focus on reflections, often dim, of the glory of the Lord so that the glory we see will be added to previous glory we have seen.

This points to a joyous spot that even in a difficult world is always in the secret place of silence.

As our capacity and understanding of our lives and His life increases, He comes on stronger with more of His ideas of life. Our thoughts and understandings are stimulated. The more we go on in His presence, the complexities of life confront us. Both the picture of the grandness and the grottness of life increases. We develop a capacity to see the goodness and glory of life as well as the deceptiveness and destructiveness of life. Because this is the way God sees life. In His presence we see life as it is. This is one reason why quietness and stillness can be hard for us. We see the troubles and pain of life, the confusion, the lostness, the unreal, and the destructive. Here is a temptation in meditation. We can be silent but in the silence shrink from the presence of God, and it takes real discipline to keep in His presence. We are not meditating to escape and deny life's reality. We are meditating to learn how God thinks and loves and works things out.

In His presence is fullness of joy. In His presence while we live and contend with this world, we see the utter triumph of His love. Do we have or can we develop the capacity to see and understand all God's positives and all His attitudes to the negatives He allows? His ultimate purpose is to bring quality and purpose and maturity. While we accept the negatives and positives, His fullness and quality of holiness and glory and justice and love come out on top in the end. We have our fear of evil and destruction but while in His presence we see the overall victory we can taste in this life and in the grand finale.

In His presence here in this life we are expanding our capacity and understanding of mind, heart and soul and life quality in our day to day living so His life will fill our lives as much as we can take.

The verse says that after being in our room with a shut door, he will reward us openly. It is only human to look for an immediate result. We don't meditate for a result. Often we can see the result in health, in spirit, in guidance of our thoughts, but it seems rather the discipline of being in God's presence is a reward in itself.

A person can't be in the presence of God without it effecting who they are and the way they live. Meditation has been very significant for me.

ITIM – INTERCHURCH TRADE AND INDUSTRY MISSION

THAT MAN OVER THERE HAS PROBLEMS

After concluding at Lifeline, what was I to do? Even though I was shaken in the way I left, I was confident that I had skills that would make me employable. A friend suggested that I look at ITIM, The Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission.

This was an ecumenical organization that was an Employee Assistance Program, and the concept was brought to Australia from England, by the first ITIM Director Laurie Styles. Supported by the churches, it was created to provide Chaplains and Counsellors to companies and work places. The goal was to support all staff under the umbrella of what was called Pastoral Care.

I went to see a colleague who was already a Chaplain at Australia Post, and in all my enquiries, I felt very much at home with the concept that meant I could use all my Church, CPE Chaplaincy Training, Counselling and Lifeline experience.

So, in 1988 I applied and was approved as an Industrial Chaplain with ITIM. Contracts were organized by ITIM with Companies and Chaplains were then given the responsibility to fulfil the contracts.

My first company was Amcor Box Hill and with over 400 staff I had at first 4 hours a week, increased later to 6 hours a week to get to know and care for the people with the help of the Human Relations Manager. The model encouraged by ITIM was called a “Walking the Floor Model.” This meant that if there were no people with counselling issues, the time of the contract was spent walking around talking to people and establishing a relationship with all the staff.

Amcor was a company that made cardboard boxes. I will never forget standing outside the factory, feeling rather nervous at the prospect of walking through the door and introducing myself to the workers as the Industrial Chaplain. As a Chaplain, I am always considered as religious and

so I'm always good for someone to set me up as a joke. This is a test and if I pass the test people will see I am someone they can talk to.

This day I walked in and up to a Chilean man who was standing back from a machine.

"Hello, I'm Owen Clark, I'm the Industrial Chaplain that Amcor has employed to care for their staff." From him I didn't get the usual question I often got from that introduction which was:

"An Industrial Chaplain, what in the bloody hell is that?"

He asked me what my job was.

I explained that I was someone who was an independent person who was here to listen to people who had difficulties or problems.

With a twinkle in his eye his response challenged me.

He said, "You say you help people with problems. See that man over there" "He's got problems. You need to go over and talk to him." He pointed to someone working not far away.

When jokes are being played, I never back off, so over I went to the person he pointed to.

"Hello" I said, "I'm Owen Clark and I'm the new Industrial Chaplain and I hear you have problems"

He looked at me with disbelief, as though I was an idiot. After I left him in a dilemma for a short space of time I said,

"Well than man over there tells me, you have problems." pointing back to the Chilean.

He then saw the joke. This group of men loved to play jokes on each other, which was good for their morale.

I had many talks with this Chilean man, as he was struggling with fitting in with the different culture in Australia. In Chile, his Catholic faith was more controlling. Should he control his family his original way or be less controlling?

I visited him in his home, had many significant talks with him and prayed with him about his issues.

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

Amcor was a great company to work for. I was still their Chaplain 12 years later when I retired and had many good relationships with management, union representatives and workers. So began the last years of my working life that were hard emotionally, but very rewarding in what I learned and what I did.



A RIDDLE

*I look simple, my sides are straight,
 But if you think I am easy to make,
 You will be making a big mistake, I'm not.
 And coming from the wild, I need a lot
 To process me, and make me tame.
 Each step involves another name.
 A process revolution; the air does scream
 Of knives, and noise and guillotine,
 Flutes and corrugator, glue and steam,
 Dyes and rollers, belts and chain,
 Together make my wildness tame.
 My top is often pretty, my bottom rather plain.
 I need my special coat on, to travel in the rain.
 Prepared at last to do my duty,
 To have and hold a tasty booty,
 For what I hold, through lots of care
 Gives color, scent, and lovely air.
 Beauty, luscious to the taste,
 To miss it, would be such a waste.
 My booty's held with care and pleasure,
 Till shoppers come and take my treasure.
 And, unless they take me home,
 I'm cast aside. Finished: Done.
 My task is done: I've done it well
 Reincarnation, my end, or fire in hell.
 What I contain, begins my name,
 And starts you on the route
 To understand, and then you'll scoot
 To find the key to loose the lock.
 But you must be cunning as a fox.
 Those last four lines are made to rime
 To find the secret that is mine.
 My first word is a lot like "brute"
 My second very near to "fox".
 What am I? ANSWER: Fruit Box*

A manager shared with me about the murder of a woman working in a sister company. She was leaving her husband and he killed her with an iron bar and burned their house down to conceal his crime. Work colleagues were in shock.

What would I do? I explained about the need for a group debriefing, then added personal debriefing if it was needed ending with a remembrance gathering of all workers to recognize her life in the company, to grieve her loss and say goodbye.

He authorized me to do this and as a result this company sought a contract for a Chaplain.

An older Italian man told me that when he heard that his company had contracted to have a Chaplain, he thought it was the biggest bloody waste of money he had heard of. After being there six months, he saw my work especially with a young alcoholic and changed his mind one hundred percent. I had many creative times with him as he shared about his health, his marriage and life in general.

Overall, I was contracted to sixteen companies, many of which had different work sites, each with different cultures e.g. in one company the majority of workers came from Macedonia.

The Ordinance Factory was only one year, ICI was five, Amcor twelve and others varied. I only lost one contract as the workers were mostly young and my age worked against me.

Few people have seen the machines and the processes needed to make a common product like a cardboard box. When you see all the work needed, you will never see a cardboard box in the same way again.

I saw the making of a Hamel gun, it was the type used in the Falkland war.

I met an employee who as a boy loved making plastic models. His company paid him to make an exact plastic model of a large chemical factory near Gladstone.

I was privileged in that I could go anywhere on a worksite, and wherever people were, I went to chat. Once I went with the driver of a large mining

type vehicle down to the bottom of a quarry to pick up a load of rocks and back to the surface. I would take any opportunity to chat to people.

Keeping confidences, it was my task to listen to the concerns and complaints of everyone. As I was a Chaplain many shared their thoughts about religion and the Church. But it could be any subject like health, relationships at home, football, politics or an injustice of some sort. As a carer for the health and smooth operation of the company, Company concerns had a special focus. These included conflicts between workers, work conditions and pay, strikes and redundancies. Some were crazy like the manager who took off toilet doors because he said his workers spent too much time off work, or like the Unionist who seemed to be set on confronting management on some little issue. A Chaplain had to remain independent and objective and work to find creative ways in regard to finding a good resolution.

When a person experiences a shocking or horrific event they can be traumatized. Because this is a different experience from the norm, a special understanding is needed to help them through the process, and this can be done in a group or individually. This is called Critical Incident Debriefing. To be involved in this process is both challenging and fulfilling.

I was involved in a number of debriefings including the following incidents.

A robbery at the airport.

The electrocution of a man working a floor sander.

The Longford gas explosion.

A worker killed when he crawled under a machine.

A worker facing a loaded shotgun when he went to turn off electricity.

A worker whose hair was caught in a machine and his scalp was torn off.

A woman who slept with her husband's ashes.

A couple whose son drowned.

A young boy killed when struck by a truck.

A worker who suicided.

While these were sad occasions there were so many other times of celebrations, Christmas parties, weddings and visits to workers homes that were joyous.

Each month a report of the work done was required to be presented to each company. This meant up to ten reports a month, which meant a continual log of each day's activities, including time spent, significant conversations, formal counselling, home or hospital visits, weddings, funerals, or any other significant event. It should also have some reflection on the health of the company and the needs. ITIM gave some guidelines but I always struggled.

On one occasion I asked ITIM for a copy of what they considered a good report. When I read it, I was surprised to see it was one of my own reports. I must have been doing something right!

In reflection on my life I think I did my best work being an Industrial Chaplain and Counsellor. It was hard work emotionally, but I found it very fulfilling and enjoyable. I am very thankful for the opportunities and the learning about life.

I resigned only because it seemed I had run out of emotional energy at sixty three.



A PRAYER

In my role as an Industrial Chaplain/Counsellor I had a contract with ICI in Melbourne. My task was to care for the hundreds of Staff who worked on twelve floors of the building. On one occasion, I was in the building on a day different from the usual day I attended that company, and had a spare hour before I had to leave.

So I said to God, "If there is anyone in this building you want me to care for, you had better quick smart show me, before I have to go. Now I'm going to go through and visualize in my mind each of these twelve floors, and I want you to guide me to which floor."

For a short time, I concentrated on each floor, and the focus came on to Floor number six. Into the lift I go to that floor. I engaged and chatted with different staff for about ten minutes, and then I came across the person God wanted me to care for. It was his first day back at work after a break on compassionate leave. His mother had died suddenly, and he had to take responsibilities for the funeral etc. in the midst of his own grieving, and things were still raw for him on his first day back to work.

God did His bit in guiding me to the right spot, and I pray I did my bit in being there for Him/him.

One of the saddest comments about prayer is "he gave them the desires of their heart and sent leanness to their soul. Isn't this a warning about "Father Christmas" type prayers that miss the grand image and life program of our God? I shudder at "May our team win" and "May God be on my/our side" in conflictual and warlike situations. I'd rather have a "God, show us how we can be grander and more mature people, as we discover more insights into your will and your life."

I know someone who says, "I don't bother God with smaller things like 'God find me a car park', when there is no reason". But this person holds in their mind, a loving God like support around another who has need.

What prayer is develops as we develop in our relationship with God, and our understanding of who God is and what He wants. "Pray without ceasing"

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

describes the continual close connection to be had with God. What a challenge!!



WHAT A SUNDAY DRIVE

Fred and Mal had to work that Sunday, a warm sunny day, too good to have to work. They would rather be travelling to the beach. Leaving their usual boring route, their truck joined thousands of other holiday vehicles crowding the Highway. For a short time, they could pretend to be going to some place nice, even while going to collect mail and process it.

Jan had been a nurse, but now was the mother of three children, two boys and a girl. Her husband was working at a glass factory that Sunday. She took the children off to the Sunday school, while she attended the worship service in the Anglican Church.

On that Sunday, Mother's Day May 13th, these people were destined to meet!

The church service was over. People were talking. Children were playing about. Fred was driving in the left lane of a car packed freeway.

In what he thought was part of the game, Peter, a three-year-old, ran down stairs from the Church, and on to the footpath, with his ten-year-old brother Tim, sensing danger, in pursuit.

Seeing children playing, Fred slowed a little. Suddenly the little one turned and ran straight for the road. Fred braked furiously. The truck screeched to a halt. With a car beside him in the next lane, he had nowhere to go. Mal, with his feet on the cabin floor and close to the front bumper bar, felt the shocking thud. "Much like a thud when a car hits a rabbit at high speed" he was later to observe.

Tim was first to his little brother and dragged him off the roadway and on to the foot path.

Fred was out of the cabin and next to Tim. Mal, paralyzed in the cabin saw it all in the rear vision mirror.

Peter's mother arrived and was clutching her dead son, weeping and crying. The Ambulance soon came, but could do nothing but take the little body away. The Police came, and did what they could, to keep the situation safe. Shocked and dazed people eventually left the scene, leaving behind a small

boy's blood on the footpath. Fred turned the Australia Post truck around and drove back to the depot. Fred and Mal went home.

I had not heard of this accident until 11am on Monday, when the personal officer of Australia Post rang me. On arrival at the depot, it was decided that the General Manager, the Transport Manager and I, would visit Fred and Mal in their homes. On the way to Fred's home, I explained the idea of de-briefing as a way to help people process horrific incidents. On the way to Fred's door the General Manager said, "I've never been in this situation before, what do we do?" I explained that I would take the initiative, express our sadness and support, then explain de-briefing and set up a time for a meeting, and for him to feel free to say something at any time. After doing my part the GM explained that the drivers would be given as much time as they needed, and if they needed help to say so. Fred felt guilty for "killing the child", but we all assured him, he was not responsible and did all he could to avoid the accident and help the little boy.

The visit was concluded with prayer, expressing the struggle we have with this situation and asking for God's help.

At Mal's home, the GM felt more confident, took the initiative, and even at the end said, "Now Owen will lead us in prayer".

The de-briefing session was held in Fred's home and included the Transport manager. It was later revealed that his inclusion was because the drivers were afraid I would be "too religious" with them, and their manager would support them if this happened. I followed the usual debriefing guidelines. The driver expressed his grief verbally and with tears. At one stage it seemed that we had exhausted the details of the incident, so I asked for them to talk about any colours associated with the accident. Fred talked about the little boy's face and eyes, the colour of his clothes, the amount of blood on the road, washing blood off his hands, and getting home and seeing blood on his glasses when he went to clean them. There was a struggle with helplessness and blame. A lot of "if only" struggles. If only the drivers had taken their usual route this would not have happened.

Both drivers talked of other experiences that were now difficult for them. These included an advertisement on the TV showing a little boy being killed, Fred's three-year-old nephew who ran to meet him at the door when he

returned after the accident, and their fear of driving cars and trucks again. I too was hurt by listening to the painful event and went to visit another ITIM Chaplain for some support and care called “debriefing.”

The general manager and I visited Peter’s parents. During the visit we passed on the condolences of Australia Post, the drivers and the managers. We concluded our visit when the priest from the church came to organize the funeral.

I attended the funeral along with the driver, Fred.

The parents went out of their way to meet Fred, and after giving him a hug assured him they didn’t blame him in any way for their son’s death.

I was contacted a few days later by the Transport manager who was very concerned about Mal, who felt he couldn’t work with me because he felt he could not swear in the presence of a “religious”.

After some thought I decided to visit Mal in his home, and talked with him about the issue of swearing, until it was resolved. This led on to his difficulty in expressing his anger, and his fear of being out of control. He couldn’t stand the TV commercial of a child being killed.

He had been having a recurring nightmare, which was a replay of the accident. In his dream he got out of the truck, and as a result of his assistance, the boy lived, but died later in the ambulance. Also, in his dream the child’s parents held the driver and the ‘jockey’ responsible and were going to retaliate for their child’s death. The previous Saturday at a shopping centre he expressed anger at a parent of a child of about three years who was not restrained from running across a road. The parents were angry with Mal until they heard his story.

I held another debriefing to help Mal. He was afraid of his anger. If he got out of the truck after the accident, he feared he would become uncontrollable, and do something he would regret. Because he stayed in the truck, he felt he had been a failure, and his manhood was in question. We all helped him with this. The issue of blame in his dream was still a concern, but I was pleased with his overall relief at the end of the session.

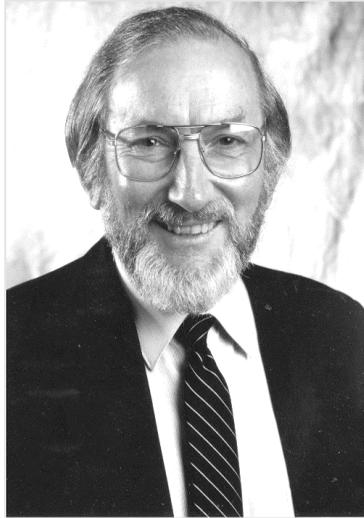
Fred was back at work in a week and Mal in ten days. They wrote a letter "...to thank the transport officer and Owen Clark, Chaplain for their counselling and guidance. It has helped us and our families a great deal."

I was chuffed when The District Manager of Australia Post sent a letter to the Director of the ITIM organization saying in part, (congratulations to ... Chaplain Owen Clark for his wonderful support and understanding towards two of my motor drivers staff.... His "summary of report of a critical incident debriefing" brought tears to my eyes...)

Peter's brother Jim was recommended for a bravery award for dragging his dead brother off the road. I have not heard if he received the award.

Peter's father and Jane chose to have another child, which meant that a vasectomy operation had to be reversed before a child could be conceived. A new child is now part of their family.





*ITIM CHAPLAIN/COUNSELLOR
1988-2000*



WRITING FOR PLEASURE:

BALWYN CENTRAL PROBUS - WRITING GROUP

WRITING FOR PLEASURE

Beginning in the year 2004, I enrolled in a U3A course entitled, "Writing For Pleasure". I learned a lot.

Two years later, I joined Probus and in 2011 I started a Probus Writing group using the same name that continues to this day (2019.) This affirms writing to be a good retirement activity.

I have always felt more comfortable writing about real events so most of the articles have happened to me or have been told to me with the assumption they have happened so they will reflect their historical context. Some life events could be considered family history and will add to what is known of ancestors. The shorter writings come from the writing group, and those longer than two pages are descriptive or what people have shared. While at times I wait for inspiration, overall I've enjoyed writing, I hope you will enjoy reading.



ON NOT WRITING

I'd like to write. But I don't feel like writing. I wait for inspiration. Some thoughts spin around amidst all the other mundane thoughts I think that focus on all the mundane things I do, like what to eat, what to wear, what groceries to buy, what issues to raise with the doctor, the referral, the script and blood pressure.

I like to think when I'm walking, "Now that's a nice flower, perhaps that would fit in our garden. There's a beautifully shaped tree. The wind is cold, but it's so nice to have the sun, it's warm on the skin. I like sitting down after a walk with a cuppa."

But that's not writing. Back to find a subject. There's that sad little boy in Queensland. Just the way he was beautifully dressed for school and standing so forlornly in front of a fire hydrant. Tears filled my eyes at how deep and awful his sadness was. His parents separated, and his nice grand parents and school friends returned to England. Now he was sadly alone.

Then I could write about old maids we recently talked about. How do they come about? Do families fashion someone not to marry so they can look after their aged parents or do people choose not to risk marrying. Maybe they can't cope with closeness!

I remember visiting an old maid in Wallaroo, a nice kindly lady in her own way, living on her own amidst a lot of furniture and treasures. Her only outing for the week was to be driven to church and home again by another nearby widow. Her carpet had never been vacuumed for months, maybe years. The dust lay thick apart from tracks between doorways and around the lonely looking pieces of furniture that showed where she padded across the room. Her interests seemed scarce. Perhaps she was content!

Surely there is something I could write about Queensland and the car trip up and back. How warm and different it was there. What a beautiful dome of sky in southern New South Wales as we travelled.

Or maybe I could recount the dream I had last night, where I found a unique old gun, a type of blunderbuss. I tried it out and shot down a low flying small

plane and was trying to work out how I could explain that to the police, who I knew would come. Weird! What would a psychiatrist make of that?

Perhaps it's laziness, lack of focus or attention, being too gummed up or too busy. I just can't get to write.

Do all writers have to contend with all these emotions and thoughts? I envy them if they don't. Perhaps it is part of the creative process? I'm free so I'm giving writing a miss this time.

Maybe next time the inspiration will run free!!



A MURDER AT BRIANS

When in Queensland I live next door to Brian. In this part of the world the sun rises very early. I don't. But I am awakened early with the noises of the early risers: the people who get up with the sun and the birds announcing the day has begun.

From my bed I hear many sounds in the distance, and I have some idea of life outside my drawn curtains. There are conversation type noises indicating that there is a peaceful situation outside. There are sounds that could be compared with the distinctive sounds of humans getting breakfast. I hear chatter that goes on for a time followed by silence, waiting to hear if there is a response from a distant colleague. A similar message comes back indicating that others are up and starting the day and conversing, "We are up, we are OK. We are getting on with our day. It's good to hear from you. We may bump into you later on in the day." I am reminded of the sounds of dairy farmers who arise at some unearthly hour with their normal noises of having breakfast, and the clanging of milking buckets and cans along with the noises from the cow shed.

But then a new sound arises. Someone has arrived at Brian's house and they start making a new kind of noise. It is a bit like someone making an announcement, like the town crier calling to the people, or a church bell calling for all to come to church. The sound is persistent and urgent across the morning silence. It's not long before the caller gets some response. They have got the message and they are on their way. When they arrive, they join with the original caller to reinforce the message that a meeting is on at Brian's, and they had better hurry up. Those in the distance respond, saying "We are on our way, we'll be there soon, wait for us and don't start without us." The original callers keep the pressure on, saying "Hurry up, we are waiting and we can't wait all day."

Eventually a large group has gathered from far and wide, and the noise of them all talking at once shows that the meeting has begun. Rather quietly and subdued at first, the sounds and voices rise in volume. It's a bit like a teenager's birthday party, noises getting louder with some singing, and lots of talking. This "carry on" continues and includes at least thirty in number,

all having something to say. Quite a dramatic and exciting meeting is held. All sounds seem to say that a good time is being had by all.

Suddenly, when it appears the excitement has died down and all have made their contribution, or are sick of the show, or maybe the agendas have caused conflicts, a single voice will announce that the meeting has run its course. The time has come to be thinking about going home and getting on with the normal things that make up the day. The message is, "It's time to finalize your business so you can leave." It's only a matter of a few more minutes when they all agree with the leaving announcement and leave, and one can hear the noises going away, much like the noise of a car driving into the distance.

For a while silence reigns, but then when they arrive home the quiet conversations take over again with a message sent, and then silence, waiting for a response that says, "We have arrived home safely, all is OK, thank you very much." Apart from interruptions when outsiders threaten their territory, or they are under attack, their days pass peacefully.

This was supposed to be a murder. Well was it a murder? Or not? There was a lot of carry-on especially in the intensity of the meeting, but it didn't sound like a murder. No yells or screams, no really angry voices. No calling of police or ambulance. I looked up Mr. Google on the subject of crows, and yes according to him it was a murder. A murder of crows was held on Brian's roof.



AN ODD LOOK AT AN ODD STORY

WHERE IS THE TRUTH?

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

So our parents taught us rather wide eyed children. It all sounded so amazing at the time but then all of life was amazing and a bit unreal. We didn't question. That was just the way it was. Few would still question.

In the child's mind the focus would be on the image of Humpty Dumpty, a fat egg shaped figure. A bit odd. But that was the way it was. Then the fall, the fear of all small children, and this was reinforced by the fact Humpty Dumpty broke and no one could put him back together again. All tragic but that was the way it was.

Later comes the question. That's all a bit odd what is it all about? So one question leads to the next. I begin to imagine and ask:

Do you think parents would call a child Humpty Dumpty?

Imagine going through names like Jack Horner, Georgy Porgy and Humpty Dumpty, and they chose Humpty Dumpty?

I don't think so!

Surely he was given an ordinary name like James Stuart and Humpty Dumpty was a nick name.

What did the children see when James Stuart went to school?

A plump roundish body with short arms and legs!

"Dumpy, Dumpy, Dumpy" they teased.

They played with the name, till it sounded fitting and Humpty Dumpty cruelly stuck.

His shape was not his fault. He was a child of his father and mother. His family did not eat healthy foods. They did not exercise, always finding an excuse: it was too hot, it was too cold, or it was too windy.

So they sat at home in comfortable chairs growing their unfortunate shape. James Stuart ended up with a Humpty Dumpty self-image.

He did not feel OK at home, and felt even worse when he ventured out.

Being dumpy, it was hard for him to join in play and he sat around feeling a misfit.

He tried to make friends. He couldn't find other children like himself and if they existed, they were having fun, or so he thought.

So, like little Jack Horner, he sat in his corner, miserable, unhappy and dangerously alone, looking inwards.

One day, sick of sitting around, he decided to walk.

He wasn't going anywhere in particular, and ended up against the town wall.

"If I could get to the top of the wall," he thought,

"I would be higher than anyone else in town, and higher than the children at school."

With difficulty and excitement, he climbed to the top of the wall and sat dangling his short legs. He enjoyed the view. He looked down on his school.

"I'm the king of the castle and you're the dirty rascal," he mused.

Uncomfortable with a rollie pollie body sitting on a hard surface, he turned to get his feet back on the top of the wall.

He overbalanced and tumbled off. His broken body lay on the road that ran next to the wall.

All was silent!

A passer-by saw him and rushed to tell the king. Obviously this person had not done first aid. He left the scene of the accident, he didn't check for a pulse, or organise a clear airway.

And how appropriate was it to tell the king? Didn't they have an ambulance here?

And what would the king, caught up in his kingly duties, care about someone falling off the town wall?

But this king had a heart, and did respond to the crisis.

Did HE call the ambulance? No.

He called out his entire army, and his entire cavalry.

This was an overreaction. The city wasn't being attacked.

Someone just fell off the wall.

And what did soldiers and cavalry know about first aid?

Perhaps they did it in their training?

Obviously not! For when they got to the scene of the accident, they were useless, walked about helplessly, getting in each other's way. They didn't fix up his broken body.

Back at their home base, they said, "We lost that one. We do better fighting battles."

And what about Humpty Dumpty?

Was he picked up and taken to the local hospital and put back together again?

Or did he die, and after a funeral service was buried in the cemetery?

The reporter didn't finish the story. He leaves his readers frustrated.

And how will Humpty Dumpty be remembered?

An unfortunate egg head with an egg body who lived in a crazy world.

Really this story is bad news and a "stuff up" all round.

Whoever wrote it needs to get real.

This dismal view of the world is all too easy to embrace. We can use our power of choice and interact with the world with courage and responsibility, and bring about a satisfactory end to our personal life story.

One woman remembered Humpty Dumpty when she sought help from a therapist.

"I feel like Humpty Dumpty," she said.

"My life is all broken and in pieces."

The therapist replied,

"All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again, but if we work together, WE CAN."

A happier ending for a 'Humpty Dumpty' image in another time and another place!

Well that is good imagination and an attempt to make an odd story have some meaning. History alters things and the real truth is often lost and changes in time.

It seems that in 1648, Colchester was a walled town with a castle and several churches and was protected by the city wall. It was under attack in a civil war. The story is that a large cannon, which the Colchester website claimed was colloquially called Humpty Dumpty, was strategically placed on the wall. A shot from the Parliamentary attacker's cannon succeeded in damaging the wall beneath Humpty Dumpty which caused the cannon to tumble to the ground. The Royalists (or Cavaliers, "all the King's men") attempted to raise Humpty Dumpty on to another part of the wall, but the cannon was so heavy that "All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again."

The original rhyme did not refer at all to an egg but went,

*Humpty Dumpty sate [sic] on a wall,
Humpti Dumpti [sic] had a great fall;
Threescore men and threescore more,
Cannot place Humpty dumpty as he was before.*

The personified egg image, Humpty Dumpty was an eighteen century slang for a short and clumsy person. So this image, significant and catching to us all has been used, and is still used in many ways in plays, songs, riddles, and even in science to demonstrate the second law of thermodynamics.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall but his egg like image didn't just end all smashed and broken, it is put together again and again and will be forever used in the future in many forms.



A CAT . . . ASTROPHIE.

A true story by Frank Weaver. Poetry by Owen Clark.

With mothers cat flying from Sydney to Cairns,
Her daughter was thinking and making big plans.
She found a good box and bought special pills
To make all things calm, with no panic, or ills.
A short time before, she got pills from the pack,
And gave them with food, just to calm the poor cat.
A flight of four hours is longer than two,
More drugs, they are needed to help see it through.

But being no chemist, she gave it too much.
Poor puss is now dead; and turning to dust.
What on earth have I done? How can I mend it?
Mum wants her old cat, I'll just have to send it.
The clerk from the check in, peered out from his grill,
"This pussy is awfully, awfully, still."
"Oh No it's not dead, I gave it a pill."
So even in spite of her fast-failing plans

She just had to send the dead cat up to Cairns
And even if the cat was stiff,
Her mother was expecting it.
The Townsville airport where they flew,
Had waiting workers, right on cue,
To check the cat's survival.
They just had to say: it was D O A,
Their verdict: Dead on Arrival.

The Airport boss was in a stew,
What on earth was he to do?
The airline they will likely sue,
We'll be the ones who'll cop it.
Let's find a way to stop it!
At last he had a bright idea,
'Twas devious, but quite sincere.

I want no staff right here to stay

Until you find a healthy stray.
Look in the street, look all around,
If you must go, go to the pound,
I don't expect that you'll be back,
Until you've found a certain cat
Alike in age, and height, and fur.
One when you pat it gives a purr.

And we hope no one will spot it: This switch.
With the one that was dead, when we got it.
"A new pack and cat was sent right away,
Arriving in Cairns the very next day.
His staff, and Frank were a bit in dismay
Hoping and hoping, and tending to pray,
That no one would notice the cat was a stray.

As for the cat that arrived very dead,
They buried it out the back near a shed
Reverently putting a cross at its head.
There were no airs, they didn't say prayers,
But the burial came with reverence and grace,
When they laid the cat down in its last resting place.
The next day Frank had forgotten it all.
When his office received a significant call.

Oh No thought Frank, in a slight bit of pain,
I don't want to hear of that stray cat again,
I want it forgotten, all dead and all gone,
It was very good till this call came along.
But the lady who called, was a very good sport,
Her good sense of humour had really been caught,
I enjoyed your good miracle, Frank, she said,
You've not only brought back a cat from the dead.
You've altered its sex---- and you've neutered it too;
I think many thanks are all due unto you.

And though it came a little bit groggy,
I kinda like this recycled moggy.
You're like that man from Nazareth,
I'll call this new cat Lazarus.

THE SEQUEL.

The story in Townsville, it then flew around,
Through D.C.A, the RAAF, and the town.
Stuffed cats, from old Felix to one's modern day,
Were left in Frank's office, all stirring in play.
The Hotel in the town called the Sugar Shaker,
Had awards that were given, to any newsmaker
Whose actions in travel would be of worth,
Providing the bar with blunders and mirth.

The bar upstairs was a well-known hub
Known far and wide, it was the Rogues club.
Here "Rogues of the month" awards were given,
And in April nineteen eighty-seven,
With lots of fun, and speeches lyrical,
Frank won the award for his cat miracle.
And because this was all so very queer,
Frank also won "Rogue of the Year."

A treasured memory hangs on his wall,
Reminding him of a very close call.
And it plainly says, with no apostrophe,
'For trying to avoid a cat.....astrophy.'
Meanwhile in Cairns now enjoying his life,
Lives a stray puss, that is always in strife,
Now it's all changed, and his living is spiff.
His lives is up high, all thanks to a stiff.

*He has no idea, about all of the fuss,
He likes his new name: it's now Lazarus.*

We stopped in a small place in the outback for fuel. It was the last place with fuel for some time. We continued our journey out on a gravel road, rough with corrugations. The scenery was typical of central Australia, salt bush, small scrubs and trees all in the setting of small hills in the red center. The winter sun was warm and it was a delightful day.

In the distance there was a gate, one of many we had encountered on our travels. Usually there is a grid constructed on the road with a gate to the side so stock can be shifted. Observing this one it looks as if it doesn't have a grid, so one of us will need to get out and open the gate, then shut it when we had driven through. But as we approached, it looked strange. The gate across the road is just that, a gate across the road. There are no fences joining on to the gate. Someone is having us on, a gate with no fences! We could just drive around the gate and back on to the road. This gate is useless. Getting closer, we see the construction of the gate is very different. It is not made of the usual materials of wooden posts, wire and metal pipes, like others we have seen often. It looks as if it is made of bluish aluminium of some sort. It is very clean in this dusty outback environment, and it has a slight shine, a kind of silver glow.

We can't make it out. We stop and walk cautiously towards it. Closer we see it is not solid at all. It is a gate that is projected on to the road. We can walk through it to the other side and back.

My brother said "This is spooky, I don't like it, let's get out of here"
"But there has got to be something about this we haven't seen. Let's see if there is something we have missed" I replied.

We walked backwards and forwards through the image looking for some clue. And there it was, the image was coming from a small pipe in the ground like a water pipe, and the image was being projected through a slit in the side. I tapped it with my foot and the gate image disappeared for a few seconds and then reappeared. I tapped it again and an electronic voice spoke saying, "Name the password"

“How can we know the password?” I asked, “And anyway, even if we did know it, what would happen if we used it?”

We looked about a bit more to see if there were any other clues as to what the password might be. We tried some random words like kangaroo, emu, Uluru, apple and Microsoft, but that was like looking for an atom, not just a needle in a haystack.

“Let’s listen carefully to the message again” my brother suggested, “surely there is a clue.”

So I tapped the pipe and the gate image disappeared again and returned as before.

Then I tapped again and the voice spoke again. “Name the password. “

“Did you notice anything” I asked.

He responded, “The only thing I noticed, that I didn’t notice the first time, is that there is a pause between “name” and “the password”.

Maybe that’s it. Our name is the password.”

“Do you want to give it a go?” I asked.

“Hey, do you think we should?” asked my brother, “we don’t know what we are getting into.”

“We’ve got this far,” I said, “There’s really no going back. If we did not go forward, wouldn’t we be continually regretting and wondering what would have happened if we said our names? Let’s speak our names and see what happens. You go first then I will say my name.”

“Bill” said my brother.

“Garry” I said.

Suddenly the gate started to open and it opened out on to a tunnelled roadway that sat on top of the gravel road. It led off into the distance.

“I’m game,” I said “are you?”

“Let’s go” he said, and we set off walking along the mysterious road.

Eventually we came to some buildings on either side of the street. They were filled with endless walls and on the walls were attached boxes of different sorts and sizes. They reminded me of basements filled with storage

containers. The street seemed to go on and on. We walked further, but all we could see was boxes and more boxes.

We walked over to inspect the boxes more closely. I touched the front of a box and suddenly it became a screen, and there we both saw a moving sound and coloured picture of an Egyptian Pyramid being built. Slaves were pulling great blocks of stone as it really happened. They were whipped by the overseers and two were crushed when a great stone fell on them. It was like seeing the real event.

Bill touched the screen and it disappeared to an ordinary box again.

We walked further, touched another box front and on the screen came up the running of the original Greek Olympic Games. We touched the front of other boxes and each time we were shown some world event, Julia Caesar's assassination, the great fire of London, the love life of Cleopatra, all there at a touch.

We realized if we had time we could watch a live record of all the world's happenings.

We walked on and still the street had no end.

As we walked on, one box with a bluish border caught our attention. We touched the front, the screen appeared. On the screen came The Age newspaper from Melbourne with the headlines:

Two brothers missing in the outback! Their four wheel drive was found intact near a mysterious stake. There is no evidence of foul play. Despite intensive search by police using helicopters, tracker dogs and civilians, the brothers appear to be lost in time.



CRUELTY

This story was told to me.

I was a little girl of six or seven and attended a Catholic school. The nuns were very strict on the whole, but Sister Mary was my favourite. I liked her because she would play with us and was very kind to all the children.

One day when I went to school she was not there, which was not unusual. The following day she had still not returned.

The next day the whole school was told at assembly to line up in front of the chapel. After a short wait, children began filing one by one in and out. It was taking a long time for us all to go through, and those coming out went off to class looking quite strange. We weren't told what was happening, as nothing had been said as to why we were there.

When it was my turn to go through the front door, the head nun who was always very stern, told me to go to the front of the chapel and kiss Sister Mary. Still innocent as to what was happening, I walked to the front where there was a large polished box, the like of which I had never seen before. There lying in it was Sister Mary, my lovely Sister Mary. She was still and white with eyes closed.

A horrible sickly feeling came over me that shrunk me up inside. Obediently I kissed her on the forehead. She felt cold and awful and looked and felt like white marble. With horrid feelings inside me that I cannot describe, I walked outside and vomited up my breakfast. I felt terrible, and the rest of the day was a blur that I can't remember much about. I do remember that we were told that we all must attend the funeral service being held for Sister Mary, the next day in the chapel, and we were given a note which said as much to take home to our parents.

Although in a daze I took the note home to my mother. I told my mother I wasn't going and was staying home from school. My mother being a good Catholic wouldn't hear of it. The nuns were the authority and we had to obey them, so I had to go.

The box with Sister Mary in it was still there, but with a lid on it. I realized for the first time this was a coffin. All the children were there, and some

special priests came and took a service that was different. After the service the coffin was taken away. I still felt awful inside and when I eventually got outside the chapel, I vomited. It has horrible. This was my introduction to death and to funerals. I think it was very cruel how it was done without any preparation or explanation. If they intended to shock, they certainly succeeded with me. It wasn't until I was quite old that I understood more about death and funerals and what happened to me, and why I struggled with death and funerals most of my life. It has only been in later years that I think I have come to grips with this incident. Sometimes I wonder if I ever will.

Today I hope things are different. I have a grandson who has parents who talk to him and answer his questions. He had a black fish in a fish tank that he called "blacky". He was thrilled to have it and would feed it and watch it. One day he found it floating on the water. He was distressed and cried, and his parents gently explained that blacky had died and had gone to "fish heaven", and that we need to say a special "goodbye" and bury him in the backyard. This was done with the little boy crying as if his heart would break, and the parents also shed tears as they saw their little son hurting. When the second fish died, it wasn't so dramatic, as death and burial were more accepted. I think that is far healthier than what happened to me.



THE PUSHY CUSTOMER OWEN CLARK 8/18²

A police car pulled up in the street, two policemen looking rather neat
Head through the gate up to his door.
I wonder what they've come here for?
A tragedy? Or legal matter? Obviously not here to chatter.

Don was not long home from work, away from stress and people talk,
His devilment and sense of fun, relaxed him when his day was done.
Today he had no time to dwell as two policemen rang his bell.

"A chaps complained that it was you, who bumped and hurt his Subaruoo,
We're here to ask if that is true, and if the guilty one is you..."
"Guilty as charged," was his reply, a humorous twinkle in his eye.

Police get answers often bland well this one it was rather grand.
Recovering from the curt reply, "We heard it from this other guy
Who made a jolly lot of fuss, when he came to complain to us.
We want to hear your story too, and then decide what we will do."
"Come in" Don said, "And take a seat, this tale to you I will repeat."

"As I came home from work today, I got some diesel down the way.
I filled the four wheel drive and then, I went to buy a wash token.
While in the queue without a care, an angry voice rang through the air."
"I was here first, I'm before you..."
Now what's this guy about to do?
"I was here first and I'm in a hurry." He spoke like a bully all in a flurry.
He won't get the best of us. He'll take his turn like the rest of us!!

The atmosphere was rather rare, his gruff demeanor caused a scare..
And not another word was spoken, I paid my bill and got my token.
His very presence *cut* the air, and I was glad when gone from there.
Around I drove my four wheel drive, with no urgency to arrive.
To the wash and all was steady, with my token at the ready.

² From an idea of Darren Holt Queensland, my nephew.

As I approached the wash console, a car that seemed out of control
Came down my side, from out the blue, a greeny coloured Suburoo.
I was surprised, and shocked to see, it jumped the rails in front of me.
The driver leapt out from his car. He yelled at me. I felt the jar.
“I was here first and I’m in a hurry,” it was that shop guy still in a flurry.

My thoughts were coming rather bad, and inside I was getting mad.
Now he had bought a token too, and into the wash drove his Suburoo.
A wicked thought came to my mind. T’was funny and a bit unkind.
Will I? Won’t I? Oh yes I will, Now this will really be a thrill.
I did not have to drive too far, to the back bumper of his car.
From there I pushed his Suburoo, until it disappeared from view,
And as I was the next in line the car that’s washing next is mine.
My thought just then, I can relate. You said you’re in a hurry mate
Well with my help you’ll soon be home.
Get on your way, be off, be gone.

This furious driver I could see, jumped out and ran, confronting me.
I locked my doors, and with a pause, a gush of water helped my cause.
The car wash program then begun, with me enjoying all the fun.
Was this my pleasure really sin, I saw him soaking to the skin?
If this guy’s hot and in a fit well this will cool him down a bit.
And as he’s caused an ugly scare: he’ll pay my wash: I think that’s fair.

Then through the misty wash and spray, a sodden figure made his way.
When he wrote down my car rego
All this I did I know was wrong, and I’d be caught before too long.
I’m guilty as charged, but it was worth it, I’ll pay all the costs and I’ll not
shirk it.

Both policemen laughed at this odd case,
Then changed to keep a straightened face.
We must treat this as a complaint, no matter if the stories quaint.

While facing humour, and the law, and not being in this spot before
The police revealed a hidden smile, his punishment he got with style.

So now, still keeping to the task, some further questions they must ask.
Did you exchange information Don? No, he just drove off, and he was gone.
With knowing looks the police now saw, he drove off, and he broke the law.

They got what they had to know, they stood up and were keen to go.
We'll have to check your story line, with those folks present at the time
And if your story proves all true, that is the last thing we will do.
We will reach you *if* there's more, they said, as they went out the door.

He has not heard, he will not hear, for he has nothing more to fear.
Don sits at home and is content, he smiles and relives this event.



Why should I have children? Was a question my niece asked me? I was surprised at the question. It challenged the assumption that they would automatically have children. I can understand people who are older and not caught in physical, sexual attraction, who can think and see the implications of having a child, choosing not to have children. The struggle, discomfort, inconvenience, always being challenged, feeling inadequate, not knowing what to do, or what to say, upsetting a marriage status quo etc, along with joy are all issues parents are confronted with, after a child arrives. With children, life can be beautiful but it can never be the same again.

However, in spite of all this I would choose to have children. Children bring new life into the world, but for parents they bring new dimensions into the human growth process, highlighting immaturity, and presenting a challenge for parents to grow up into maturity. It is the best and most challenging of growth process.

Creating children puts human beings into the shoes of the Creator. We have a greater understanding of God and His creation when we create life. When the “created” have free will and a life of their own, with a need to be taught and grow in the basics of life, the creator parents have quite a challenge on their hands. How do they handle their child? How do they work together like (Father Son and Holy Spirit) for the best good of the world and life they have created?

The challenge for parents is to take more steps in growing up into maturity. Growth from the known and stable into the unknown, is something we often shrink from. Yet life’s journey is forward. Then how do parents bring up their children? Let them do as they like? Have laws and rules and punishment? Use the law of natural consequences? Try to make things really easy for their child? Struggle with what values to pass on? And no matter what parents do, they won’t be perfect, hopefully good enough.

Even if they were perfect parents, perfect creators, when the children exercise their right to choose, anything can be the result.

God is the perfect Creator, but when one looks at some of His children, no one could say He has perfect children, and this all because of the free will issue, there is freedom in the creative process to affirm or destroy the creation. I hate the way a beautiful and innocent child is smothered and overwhelmed by all the immaturity and stupidity and destructiveness of parents. What chance has a beautiful little baby got to escape from the destruction of the world they are born into? The hatred, prejudice, cruelty, horror and terror of the world is passed on. The darkness of the world so often seems to overcome the true light that lights every baby coming into the world.

Yet it seems God's love is the only answer in this. Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing could be for many parents too. Viewing a small baby, just created, is so beautiful, yet I would wish and pray with all my heart for a beautiful world for them to come into.



SO NOW I AM OLD!

So now I am old! What does that mean? My mother-in-law often said, ‘When I am old, I’ll let you know.’ Being old is a choice and an attitude of mind. Some young in years are old and defeated. Often within a wrinkly body is a wild spirit, still burning with the passions of life.

I don’t feel old. That small boy that went to school, still feels the same inside me. Somehow, I was expecting ‘old’ to be different. The world outside has changed. At the time when I could say, “So now I am twenty, thirty or forty, it was different, as I didn’t know so much, and I had different responsibilities, and different things to live for.”

There is excitement, there is challenge, and there are joys, at every age. There are pains, disappointments and failures at any age. There is always an open door into the next era, and often a reluctance to go through to the unknown future, as the present is known and seems safe. Failures or unfinished business in one era can result in a person becoming paralyzed and stuck in the preceding one. Life is like riding a bicycle, if we don’t go forward we fall off.

Usually we have some clues from those who are ahead of us in age or experience, as to what the next stage will be like. There is an exception with old age as the next big step is into the unknown, and our death haunts us. We’ve seen our elderly die, and we have little feedback as to what they experienced and the “beyond”. Yet we have observed them being old. Their body which has been faithful to them over the years begins to break down. And this can be accompanied with the dulling of the spirit, dependence on others and helplessness. Facing this sort of future, some elderly become more helpless and wish to die and just want to get death over with. Others fight but realize that in spite of their best efforts, in the end they will lose to the grim reaper.

So again, comes the question, what is the meaning of old age? This is more pertinent today as medicine and science has given us many more years of old age compared with previous generations. There are more of the population living longer.

We can deny all we like but old age is a reality. It slowly sneaks up on us. This truth is best accepted, so plans can be made how we live with it. For some the body breaks down, yet the mind and the spirit is clear, others lose their mind, yet their body seems fine.

Whatever the situation, there are limitations, and meaning is found in living fully within the limitations that keep closing in. Life is wonderful when we are exploring and growing, but as it shrinks, anger, sadness and frustration can be a legitimate response that is best understood. But we must not close the door on ourselves. Our learning never ceases especially in our day with so many answers to our questions available through computers etc. We are able to do practical things. People who live to one hundred years are learning and doing and this keeps a sparkle in their eye and a spring in their spirit if not in their step. How many people retire, and if they don't find something further to live for are dead in a few years.

Even if we are completely immobilized there is something we can do. It is interesting that as we age we lose our short-term memory, but forty-year-old memories are as clear as ever. Memories can haunt us, or we can work with them and affirm and enjoy them. To process memories, using pictures, writing, sharing and meditation, can be such a useful and strengthening experience in the older years. To be gentle, to forgive, to understand and have mercy on the person within us in memory, can contribute so much to older life. It can bring peace and satisfaction. This process is much like ruling a line under the account of our life and affirming that we have made our mark during our living. We have balanced our memory books. Then in this state of aliveness, or wholeness we can, when the time comes, peacefully die.

In older years we are challenged to grow into maturity. We are not just growing old we are growing up. Our vision of life is so much bigger. We can see the stupidity in the world, the battles that have so little meaning and purpose. The loss of life that could have been lived grandly, the destruction in life that affects all of us. Our tastes in reading, music and in every other sphere of life are reflected on and enjoyed with a greater maturity. While there is still a lot of life that does not make sense, older people can see a lot more sense in what so often seems meaningless. We can see how through

our own mistakes, and suffering, we appreciate so much more in life. We can laugh at things that previously we thought as important enough to fight for. We are freer to laugh. Our ethics and values can change and hopefully not being defensive we can be more open to life with all its feelings.

I vote for being old as long as I have wisdom from the well of a God given Spirit. This will give the courage to get through a meaningful old age, a peaceful death, and a meeting with the God of all life. This I pray for all "oldies".

SUGGESTIONS TO FOCUS ON IN OLD AGE

Having a different concept of time: having time to think

Reflect on: Being verses Doing

Knowing how to show appreciation

Having a sense of proportion and being indulgent

Having a sense of continuity.

Having a new sense of beauty.

Rubbing shoulders with death having a sense of God

Giving a meaning to suffering

Sharing life's memories and good things with others.

Moyra Divilil

TEARS

I have a little bottle marked Natural Tears. They are not genuine tears because they have not been cried. They have come from a good mixture designed by a chemist, but they have not come from the human heart. They are not mixed with deep, meaningful emotion that is an expression of sadness or love or any feeling in between.

So often there is a harsh and cruel judgement about tears that kills their meaningful beauty stone dead, and chokes off and destroys something precious. A good cry from the heart is very cleansing, clearing, and releasing. People often associate crying with weakness, embarrassment, shame, making a fool of one's self, being sookie etc... all cruel concepts. The saying "Big boys don't cry" needs to be banned and replaced with "real men do." Crying is not a sign of weakness. One has to be strong and confident in genuine expressions of emotion to cry. People apologize for crying, but accept smiles and laughter as genuine, yet what is the difference?

Whether there is hurt or happiness, there is a need to recognize the internal pressure of emotions, and that permission needs to be given to express them appropriately. In the cruelty or joys of life, strong emotions can become so much for the human heart that the only release is in tears.

Humans have a control mechanism and they can put tears off, but to block off tears completely can result in negative health and relationship issues. Time can be set aside to cry, in the same way time is chosen to go out and express happiness and laughter. The experience of crying can be very lonely, for in crying we are very much with ourselves.

One of the reasons people see a counsellor is to give themselves a safe place to cry. Many people fear crying, because they are frightened if they start they won't stop. This is usually because they have dammed up a reservoir of tears from past sadness or joys, and when they give themselves permission to cry, it opens up the tears that should have been cried in the past. They think they won't stop, but when all the tears have been cried, there does come an end. Tears need to be seen as part of healing: something is being released, cleansed or resolved.

Tears need to be understood. There is a reason for crying, and help may be needed to unravel the cause. Tears can be an expression of sorrow, they can also be an expression of joy. When events occur like a wedding, people often cry. It is an event that is both happy and sad at the same time and crying relieves both emotions at the same time. To weep with those who weep. To rejoice with those who rejoice is a skill that all need to cultivate.

Because of great sadness, some people have few tears of joy. There is a need to find what it is that brings the great joy, a joy so great that it can only be expressed in tears. In a beautiful relationship of love and trust people can cry together, in joy over the birth of a baby, or in sadness over the death of a friend. It is also important to be free enough to allow another into our hearts to weep with us.

It is significant that Jesus wept at the death of a friend. The Psalmist talks of God keeping tears in a bottle and recording them in a book. This suggests that God has a “memory of tears” bank where he keeps all the precious tears of his children?

Sometimes the only response to the deep issues of life is in tears.

Maybe God weeps over the destructiveness of his children just as we do for our children.



HOW I FEEL ABOUT CHRISTMAS

For me Christmas is a mess, a jumble of sounds, colors, traditions, activities, family struggle, presents, cards, religions, and loneliness.

It has not always been so.

As a child, my family was not well off. Christmas was a simple, special celebration. The preparation and anticipation was enjoyable.

Around a farm house there was need for a tidy up. The wood chips from the woodheap were raked up from where they had spread during the year. Old bones and little bits of rubbish were collected and carted away. All was clean and tidy.

A good shaped, cypress pine tree, that was just the right height to fit between the floor and ceiling of the back verandah was prepared and placed in position, secured by a wire that was attached to a ring that was permanently screwed in the ceiling.

Large sheets of crepe paper were cut into streamers and decorated the tree, and anything else that took our fancy.

We got one present. On numerous occasions it was a present that had been lovingly made by our parents: a cart, a doll, a wooden train etc.

For a number of years, Christmas was one of the only times we killed a chook and had a chicken dinner. Some special potted meat, maybe ham, along with potted vegetables, were followed up with plum “duff” with real sixpences in it.

It was all designed to be a special family day. We didn’t go to church, but we knew the significance of the celebration.

Keeping it uncomplicated, Christmas is for children and the “child” part of adults.

For the thinking adult part of us in today’s world, Christmas can be a very different concept, burdensome, sad, lonely, and even tragic.

The child part of life likes simplicity and idealism. We often try to regain this at Christmas. It can be shattered by grown up realities of the world we now live in.

“Peace on earth, and good will” seems a hopeless concept.

Christmas for many is experienced as a sad, lonely, and cynical time, as it highlights personal and family difficulties, tensions and strife. And this is made more unbearable when everything else and everyone else is saying this is a happy time.

Materialism has taken over. The advertisers and businesses have a field day, as everyone is expected to buy, buy, buy. Trapped, people spend beyond their means.

More drink, more food, more presents, more Christmas parties and break ups is supposed to equal more of a good time.

Whose birthday is it anyway? Santa Claus?

Is not all this focus on the outer life?

Where does the love for neighbor, joy, peace on earth and good will, fit in when one has to work, or one is slogging over a hot stove, struggling with crowds and traffic, and presents, and shopping, and cards, and family, and religions, and world terrors? Didn't the person whose birthday we celebrate, live and die to impact on all our humanness, our suffering, joys and nonsense?

Is our cynicism going to dominate and rob us of our humanness and soul?

Christmas like everything else can be overwhelmed by darkness, but those who celebrate it can do so to foster the light, the beauty, the love, the spirituality, the peace, the joy, the fun, and the grandness of life.

Idealistic? Yes. But not to dream is to live in mud!

To make an ideal real, demands much effort.

The joy of a baby is not possible without labour, pain and effort.

Aware of all this, my most recent enjoyable Christmas dinner was sitting on my son's verandah in Bairnsdale, accompanied only by my wife and son, looking at a beautiful scene, eating a ham and salad sandwich, with a spirit of relaxation and thankfulness.

I am happy about celebration and the deep meaning behind the birth of Jesus Christ, but I get sad and concerned when the deep and joyous aspects of celebrations are lost, amid the shallow, shiny and materialistic spectacles.

THE TIMOTHY CAT PARADE (A NONSENSE POEM)

A family from Ballarat,
Chose a name to call their cat.
A silly name it seemed to me.
The name they chose was Timothy.
When each cat went, a new one came
And was called Timothy the same.

Timothy one was known to roam,
He stayed out late one awful night
And blinded by the sandy blight
He's not yet found his way back home.

Timothy two ended up in the zoo,
We fed him too much, he grew and grew.
So large he grew he could easily beat us,
He had to be caged so he wouldn't eat us,
Now in the zoo for all to see, he's part of a tiger family.

Timothy three climbed his family tree,
And he climbed up into an English town.
He's still in the air with relatives there
And still hasn't found a way to get down.

Timothy four won a grand trophy
From the Bendigo academy.
And you wouldn't really believe it,
That when he went up to receive it
He was bitten by a flea.
It smashed when he dropped it on the floor,
Into a million pieces, maybe more.
Oh what a sight it was to see
A flea bitten catastrophe.

Timothy five married a cat name Sally.
But the marriage ended, it didn't survive,
For nothing would keep that marriage alive
When he found out he'd married an alley.

Timothy six ate a computer mouse,
And started clicking all around the house,
He can't find an app, so had to adapt.
But his whole scream has now been zapped,
And his brain is all out of joint,
Because he clicked a PowerPoint.

Timothy seven got a tick and a flea.
They were programmed to bite him regularly.
A tick and a flea, a tick and a flea, a tick and a flea.
Because they didn't ever stop,
This made him think he was a clock.
A tick and a flea, a tick and a flea,
Kept him ticking so constantly
That he just ran out of breathe.
The end: it tickled him to death.

Timothy eight, a delightful drummer,
He drummed away all over summer.
Though he was told not to go,
Off he went up to the snow.
And as the sad tale is told,
His tail snapped off with the cold,
He's ended up a de-tailed drummer.

Timothy nine is the last in line.
They shifted to Melbourne at the time.
By train they came from Ballarat,
With no container for the cat.
In a suitcase they found some space

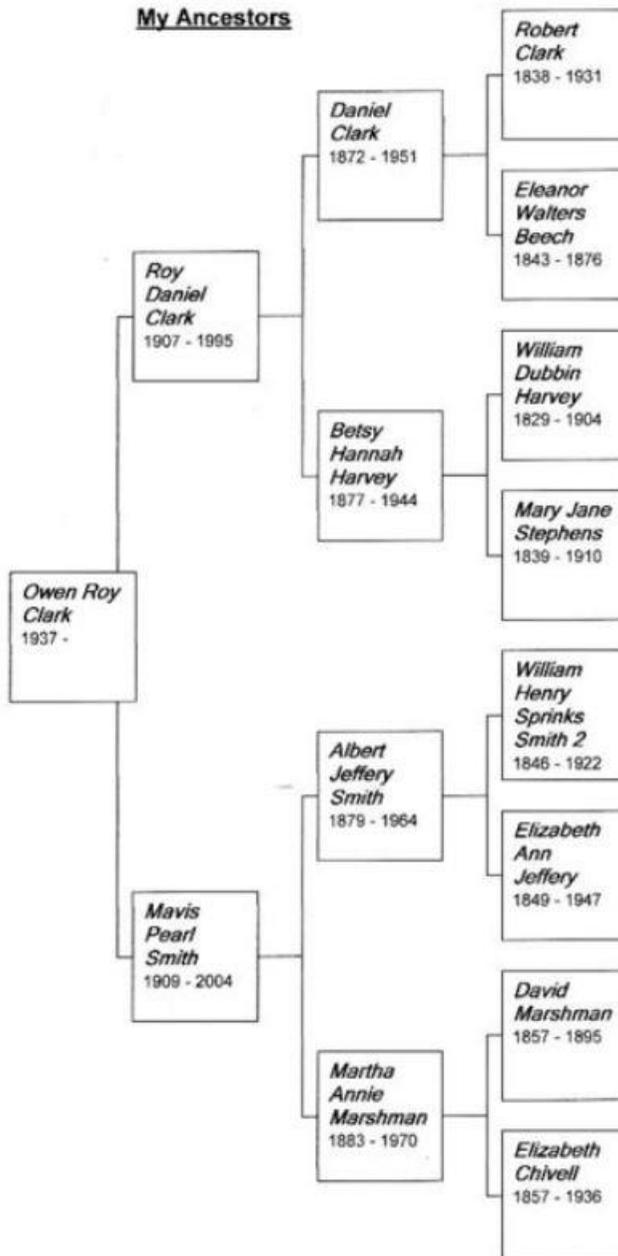
To take him on to their new place.
The case was opened on the floor
And they forgot to close the door.
And in a bolt from out the blue
He shot out, and then shot through.
He was out the gate at a furious rate.
This result caused them all a lot of pain
As they never saw that cat again.
The Timothy cat parade ends in time,
For number nine was the end of the line.



SECTION 2 – Family History



ANCESTOR CHART



INTRODUCTION

My wife, Marion, and I have been interested in Family History for about 30 years, and it has given a lot of pleasure searching and suddenly finding a treasure. Originally information was gathered by interviewing and questioning people, but now with the internet and computers so much more information is available if you know where to search. And the good researcher can still find tit bits that surprise.

The family history focus in this book starts with every family coming from England. The Clarks are dealt with first moving to and in Victoria, and later to Queensland. Those who married the Clarks are included with particular interest is William Harvey, a convict, whose daughter Betsey married Daniel Clark and they went in 1907 as pioneers to Queensland.

Then the focus is on the Smith family, who are first in Tasmania, then Victoria after spending time in Sydney and San Francisco. From farming in Victoria, the Smith descendants also went as pioneers in 1907 to Queensland. Smith marriages to Jeffery and Marshman are shown.

The Clark Smith families come together with the marriage of Roy Clark and Mavis Clark in 1936 in Queensland.



A majority of the Clark family history comes from the Clark historian Harvey Clark who has researched thoroughly and has put his research into a number of small books. He has far more information than what I have included. You can contact Harvey on harbeth79@gmail.com. He will sell you copies of the books he has written. He lives in Mooroolbark in Victoria phone 03 9726 6246.

The Smith information comes from a number of sources. My Aunty Jessie Rankin, my Great Aunt Flo who I interviewed, Audrey Thiele who did a lot of research, and various other Smith connections in Victoria. E.g. Steve Davies who now lives in Wangaratta, has done a lot of research and you can find his page on Facebook. Then there is Bill Piper in England. I have also

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

Marshman and Chivell information from a little blue book about Samuel Chivell and his descendants.

We are all indebted to Sandy and Gav Davey for discovering the old Smith family photo: what a treasure!! It has given us a good idea of the original Smith family and an image.

Living next door to both blocks of land selected by the Clark and Smith families I have added my own knowledge.



CLARK FAMILY

Clarks are generally down to earth people!!

Being a farmer or labourer is the basic fall back working life for many in the Clark family. Robert Clark born 1838 was an engineer and first-class steam engine driver. My father Roy Clark was also a first-class steam engine driver which he used in sawmills before becoming a farmer. My Uncle Alan Clark was a minister of religion. Another Uncle, Ron Clark became a businessman in building Clarkway kit homes. Uncle Bill Clark fought in WW2 before ending up on a peanut farm. Uncle Ted Woodruffe was a railway worker, and Uncle Don Rankin was a soldier in WW2 and worked in the PMG. William Harvey drove Bullock Teams and coaches. Uncle John Thomas was a builder. Others were builders, farmers or labourers.

In the next generation I note the following exceptions to farming or laboring. An engineer who created a peanut harvester. The following professions are all to be found in this generation: Draftsman, Nurses, 4 ministers of religion, school teachers, accountants, artists, sailors, teacher of the deaf and radio announcer, Truck Drivers, Courier drivers, The Snake Comic creator, Airforce, lawyers, shearers, mechanics.



The Clark line originates in the industrial area of the English midlands 22 kms North West of Worcester and 32 kms South West of Birmingham. William Clark our earliest ancestor was born here on February 10, 1792. He describes himself as a labourer, probably loading boats on the river or working on farms until he was 15.

This is to certify that Private William Clarke of Bewdley enlisted in His Majesty's 39 Regiment Foot on February 10, 1807 at the age of 15 for unlimited service

William's regiment fought against the Napoleonic Troops in Spain eventually defeating them and pushing them back into France.

In 1814 his regiment was dispatched to Canada to fight against the USA. After some unsuccessful skirmishes from Quebec, the Thirty-Ninth was recalled to Europe in June 1815 to help with the war in Europe. He missed Waterloo, but in December 1815 was one of the peacekeepers in Paris until the break-up of the unit in 1818.

Part of the 39th arrived in Cork, Ireland in December 1818 where he married Lucy Dempsey in 1821 and the couple had a child, James. About that time he was discharged from the army because he had a pregnant wife, in spite of a good record. William had served in the army 14 years and 190 days but his 3 years of service while under 18 was deducted.

In his Discharge Papers he is described as about 30 years old 5-foot 7-inches, brown hair grey eyes, brown complexion and his trade was listed as a labourer.

For a time, William worked for relatives before enlisting with the 19th battalion of the British Army who were there to keep the peace in an Ireland that resented the British presence. On August 30, 1826 his fare was paid by the army from Cork to Bristol officially terminating his time as a soldier. He travelled with Lucy and 3 children. He worked for a time in Liverpool and then returned to Bewdley in 1830. After which he worked as a labourer,

perhaps in the timber industry, loading boats on the Severn River, or working on a farming property. He and Lucy had a total of 11 children.

William died in 1845 aged 55 of a hemorrhage and is buried in the Bewdley Cemetery.



WILLIAM CLARK 1794-1845 AND LUCY DEMPSEY 1801-1863

The couple married in 1824 in Ireland. Lucy was a bonnet maker, and in older years William was a boot maker.

William & Lucy Clark had 11 children. Robert was their 3rd son.



ROBERT CLARK (1838 –1931) & ELIENA BEECH (1843-1876)

Robert was the 3rd child in a family of 11 born to William and Lucy. He was born at Bewdley, England in 1838, Robert claimed that he had only 2 days school in his life, and that was only when his mother could afford the 2pence, but his writing says otherwise.

Robert's was initially apprenticed to a hardware factory, possibly an ironmongery business. He told his children he made pots, pans, boilers and locks. He also worked molding, lathe and bench metal work, and qualified as a journeyman. He made taps and in 1865 describes himself as an iron-cock maker, possibly valves for steam engines and pumps.

He became a First Class Steam engine driver, and later described himself as an engineer and engine driver.

In August, 1865 Robert married Eliena Beech (named after her grandmother) on August 1865 at Holy Trinity Church, Wednesfield Heath, Bewdley. Her father owned a brazier's shop and the family was well to do, enough to employ a domestic servant girl.

The couple's first child, Joseph, was born on October 7, 1866. Eliena born in 1843 came from a well to do family and was named after her grandmother Eliena Eddows³.



³ *Eliena's relative Catherine or Kate Eddows was murdered on September 30th 1888 by Jack the Ripper.*

Robert Clark Oct 14 1838 – Nov 1 1931
m WIFE 1 Eleina Beech Jan 10 1843 – May 23
1876
on Aug 7 1865
CHILDREN
Joseph Clark Oct 7 1866 –May 29 1965
m Sarah Hobson Laws
Harriet Clark Oct 10 1868- Aug 13 1870
George Clark Aug 25 1870
Daniel Clark Nov 27 1872 – Dec 31 1951
m Betsy Hannah Harvey Apr 4 1877-Dec 1944
John Clark Jan 2 1875 –Jun 5 1948
ROBERT CLARK
m WIFE 2 Martha Smith Sep 12 1857-Dec 8
1815
on Jun 7 1877
Robert Clark May 5 1877 –Aug 1 1967
James Clark Feb 9 1879-Nov 30 1954
m Isabella Hawkins
Lydia Mary Clark Jun 16 1880-Nov 5 1973
m Tin Dhu Lee Herbalist of Stawell
Harriet Clark Jun 25 1882 – Feb 27 1980
Martha Clark May 24 1886-May 15 1968
m Alexander McDonald
William Clark May 31 1887 -1899
Charles Clark Apr 4 1888-Jan 8 1984
Christopher Clark De 25 1891- May 6 1950
m Myrtle Alice Hawkins
Alice Clark Aug 8 1873-Aug 15 1893
Thomas Clark

FAREWELL TO OLD ENGLAND FOREVER

In 1865 Robert's older brother had sailed to Brisbane where he set up a successful bakery in Ann Street. Times were hard in England and with the possibility of land and gold in Australia, three family members and Robert migrated.

Robert and family were subsidized migrants under the auspices of the Commissioners of Emigration, and needed to work in Australia to pay back their fare. They were also required to chaperone single women travelling to the colony.

Of the 388 passengers on the sailing ship 'John Temperley' 60 were children, and over 200 were single women, 30 were couples and apart from the crew there were only 96 men on board. The ship berthed in Melbourne on October 7, 1867 after a journey of 3 months and 4 days.

As an assisted migrant Robert was obliged to work as a pastoral labourer. He was posted to "Shevy" at Moolap 10 miles SE of Geelong. Present day Wallington would be in the middle of the property. Here a daughter Harriet was born in 1868.

In 1869 having paid his dues, the family shifted to Specimen Hill Ballarat East. Here their daughter died of pneumonia, and another son George was born 12 days later. Meanwhile Robert has 'gold fever'.

GOLD FEVER

Robert is hoping to strike it rich. After 2 years in Ballarat, the family shifted to Haddon 12 miles to the west. Here a son Daniel was born on Nov. 27 1872. (Owen's grandfather).

In 1873 Robert's wanderlust took him west to Stawell. Here the family settled. They had a timber house built in Bennet St and had some milking goats in the back yard.

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

TRAGEDY STRIKES MAY 1876

Aged 32 years Eliena died of diarrhea with which she suffered for 3 weeks. Robert buried her in the Stawell Cemetery on 23 May. Her eldest son Joseph, just 9 years old remembered walking in front of the coffin and 80 years later spelt the word Mother in white pebbles on the surface of the unmarked grave.

With four children Robert secured more permanent work at the Grant Quartz Crushing Battery which was a quarter of a mile from his home, and he walked to work. He employed a 19 year old Martha Smith (or Hampton) as a domestic.

She provided other service and a child was born, and a month later they were married in June 1877. For eight years they lived in Bennet Street, having four more children by 1884.

FIRE JANUARY 6 1884

Stawell News: "The alarm of fire was rung out on Sunday afternoon last, at about half past two o'clock when a four roomed wooden cottage occupied by Mr. R Clark, employed as an engine driver at Grant's Crushing Machine was discovered to be on fire. ..The brigade was unable to save the building which was soon totally destroyed. The place was insured for 100 pounds."

Following the fire, Robert selected 236 acres of land at Callawadda and still continued to work at the Gold crusher. He constructed a well-built slab house on his land on the week-ends. However it only had a gravel floor until 1908.

CALLAWADDA 1884 - 1926

He relied on the help of his family: he had 16 children in all and 11 with Martha. He established a poverty farm on land known as 'Mud Flats' it was so wet. Conditions in the slab hut, with little room, lack of money, and always scraping for food and other necessities, made great demands on his wife and children. The older boys worked for no wages or left home as soon as they were able.

Early each Monday morning Robert would walk 16 miles to his job in Stawell and stay in a house he owned there during the week and walk back to Callawadda on Friday evening. He was a good gardener.

CREAMY CLARK

Because of poverty, lack of money, overcrowding, sickness and drought, and lack of food, life was very difficult. He is indebted to the government for the land and wrote many letters pleading for more time to pay. In 1889 aged 51 for some reason he resigned from his job in Stawell and became part time, and then the full time manager of the Callawadda Creamery in 1896.

Before mechanical separators, milk was tipped into pans and left to set. After two days the top thick layer of cream was lifted off, put into buckets and beaten into butter. The butter factory was in Stawell.

Robert not only processed the farmer's cream, but he became the focal point in the community for messages, transactions and favours to be exchanged.

A BANK LOAN OF 30 YEARS

Robert was still in debt and the Government Bailiff was sent in 1901 to investigate, and in 1903 the government had run out of patience with him and was about to foreclose. Almost forty five pounds was owing and Robert took out a bank loan and paid to make his property freehold. This bank loan took thirty years to finally pay off.

The children walked two and a half miles to school until a teacher severely beat a boy for wearing a handkerchief. Their mother Martha then sent them to a different school four miles in a different direction.

In 1903 Robert now sixty five returned to engine driving perhaps in a flour mill, but he became a strike breaker in industrial trouble. He eventually resigned and went back to the farm.



MARTHA SMITH - ROBERTS 2ND WIFE

After 20 years together and 11 children and 3 child deaths, Robert and Martha parted in 1899. Martha had left twice previously giving her reason as "Just too many children."

At first, she was seen as the awful step mother to her 4 step children who wanted to leave home to escape her. But the expectations placed on her, the primitive conditions in which she lived, responsibilities she shouldered with the houses, the farm and the children were immense. After she left, she found domestic work to support herself and the younger children. She died at the young age of sixty-one years.

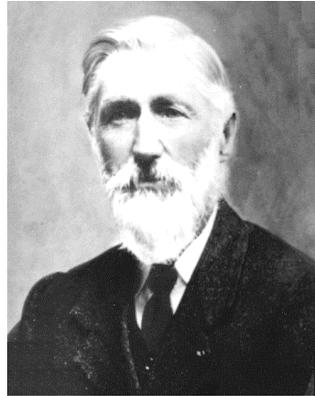
A BIT OF A CHARACTER

Robert was a teller of tall stories. His stories would always go one better. His youngest son said he was jovial, happy, friendly, strong willed, efficient, reliable and not touchy. But he could be moody, officious, and stubborn. He was only 5 foot 4 inches tall. He loved an argument and was described as a domineering little man. His younger daughter said her father always had to be right. He was pig headed and a know all and when she ventured an opinion, he always knew better, and she was always wrong.

A grandchild said he lived his life by the clock. At 12 noon he would sit, thump the table, say grace whether anyone was there or listening and expect to be served on time.

He died of senility and cardiac failure on November 1, 1931 aged 93 years. In his will his assets went to the boys. The girls who had worked for so long in often extreme circumstances got nothing.

His fourth son from his first marriage, Daniel Clark, born 1872 in Haddon Victoria, is Owen Clark's grandfather. He married Betsey Hannah Harvey who was born in 1877 on Dec.31 1902.



ROBERT CLARK 1838-1931



*ELIENA CLARK 1843-1876
(FIRST WIFE)*



*MARTHA SMITH.
(SECOND WIFE)*

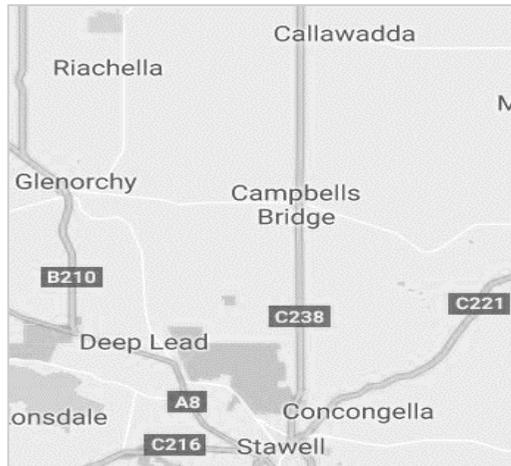
VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



**BEWDLEY, WILTSHIRE.
CLARKS
ENGLAND HOME**



**WORKED AT WALLINGTON
TO REPAY COST
OF PASSAGE**



**HOMES AT STAWELL
AND CALLAWADDA**

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



OLD CLARK HOME 34 D'ARCY ST STAWELL

DANIEL CLARK & BETSY HANNAH HARVEY

THE DANIEL CLARK FAMILY TREE

Daniel Clark Nov 11 1872 - Dec 31 1951

Betsy Hannah Harvey Apr 4 1877 - Dec 1944

Betsy had 2 illegitimate Children fathered by John
Nicholson

Frank Harvey died young.

James Ernest Harvey, later Clark

m Ivy Wilhelmena Branch in 1935

Daniel & Betsey married on Dec 31 1902

Walter Stevens Clark Aug 9 1904 (see following)

m Victoria Gertrude Ruby Worgan

Ronald Charles Clark Mar 3 1906

m Phyllis Abigail Armstrong in 1928

Roy Daniel Clark Aug 11 1907

m Mavis Pearl Clark in 1936

Eleina Mary Clark Nov 11 1909

m Edwin James Harry Woodruffe in 1948

Allan Beech Clark Jan 19 1911

m Louise Cole in 1939

Edna May Clark May 3 1912

m Thomas Alfred Lawler in 1936

Honour Belgium Clark

m John Alfred Thomas

William Thomas Clark 1921

m Joyce May Pearson

Daniel's mother, Eliena, died when he was three years old. Cared for by his step mother Martha, who was herself in very difficult circumstance, he eventually saw her as cruel and idealized his own mother. For this reason, and like his older brothers he "hit the road" when he was 12 years old. While farm labour was available, following shearing from Victoria to North West Queensland provided the best income. Daniel spoke of leaving a gun at the Thurlagoona Station near Cunnumulla. He worked as a cook's assistant, a rouse about or with wool, skirting and bailing. He was "on the road" from aged 12 to about 30 years. On a property named Moorilda, he met a girl who drank wine so decided to end the relationship he had with her but later in life used the name Moorilda for his own property.

While working at Rupanyup around the time he managed his father's property at Callawadda he met a girl called Nellie who wasn't sure about marrying him, so he got on his horse, rode into Stawell where Betsy Harvey agreed to marry him. The couple had met previously when Betsy spent time with her brothers who leased a property near Callawadda.

DANIELS VALIANT EFFORTS

A "Jack of All Trades:" To make a go of his life and as a pioneer here is a list of all he did.

At 12 he began work in shearing sheds as a cook, a skirter, a wool baler and a butcher. At other times he was a butcher of cattle, sheep and chooks. He tried his hand at gold mining. He was a farm manager on 3 occasions which involved clearing, ploughing, seeding harvesting and cutting hay. He even tried growing cotton. Saw milling was a good backstop on many occasions. Cutting, carting, tailing out, plane-ing, sharpening saws, operating the steam engine, shifting the mill; he did them all. He built houses first for his own family and then for others. He dug and concreted an underground tank. He set up dairying, building yards and 2 lots of bails and broke in cows for milking. He even rented cows from neighbours to milk. He ringbarked his property, he fenced his property with wire netting to protect sheep from dingoes. He set out a 2 acre garden and later a market garden. He managed one general store in Brisbane and one in Toowoomba. He set up a blacksmith shop, and repaired sulkies. As a hobby he made bridles from

kangaroo leather. He went trapping possums and wallabies to get money. He carted cream and butter. He got a Council contract to repair the road. Leaving Moorilda he and his son worked on an orchard near Stanthorpe. It was only after the sale of this orchard that Daniel was debt free for the first time in his life.

WHAT WAS DANIEL LIKE?

Daniel idealized his real mother who died when he was 3 years old. A small man of 5 foot 4 inches tall. He left home at 12 to work because of his step mother but told of her more in humour than bitterness. He was never unemployed, and though always in debt he accomplished much. His wife complained that he chopped and changed too much. He worked hard to give his family the best. Without any experience he tried new things like saw milling and fruit growing, managing a general store and building houses. He was a very practical working man. He worked with other pioneers. He had Christian beliefs not exclusively Methodist and had his children christened. When he was home, his children have warm memories of him. He was a quiet man who didn't seem to be troubled by anxiety. He was seldom angry and only on a couple of occasions physically punished his children with "a smack in the ear 'ole' or a "kick up the behind". He lost a hand in an accident with a circular saw.

Business wise it seems he was too trusting, believing in others and a kind of handshake agreement, which meant he had struggles because he didn't seal the deal in a businesslike manner and others took advantage of this. Betsey had Parkinson's and died in Toowoomba. In Dec 1944. Daniel was talked into taking the pension. He remarried and died in Wynum in 1951.

OWEN'S MEMORY OF DANIEL AND BETSY

My Clark grandparents were around when I was born. At first I see him as a shadowy figure, and I seem to see his grey moustache and face through a baby's developing eyes.

When five I came face to face with my grandfather at his home in Toowoomba. The very red soil seen in his garden had stained the concrete

path that lead through a gate to an open garage area at the back of the house. I thought, this is a shop. There displayed were wooden cases of fruit and vegetables, potatoes, carrots and silver beet just to name a few. He bought from the market to keep up his stock for neighbors to buy. This was a service as well as something to keep him busy and provide some income in his older years. He had moved to this house, from a fruit growing orchard near Stanthorpe in Southern Queensland.

He was distantly welcoming. Perhaps he was reticent about welcoming us very exuberant grandchildren who had invaded his space. He seemed almost as shy as I was at five years of age and we both didn't say much. "A very quiet man," my father would comment. And he was.

Suddenly I just froze, as I noticed the stump. Missing was his left hand, cut off at the wrist. I embarrassingly looked at it, and then looked away. I felt guilty looking at it, yet I couldn't help myself peering again and again when I thought no one else was looking. He seemed to manage and go on doing things as if it was normal, but it wasn't normal to me. I was very interested in how well he did things without a hand.

Inside the house, we had afternoon tea provided by Aunty Nellie. Then came the only time I met my grandmother. She was a plump woman sitting in a chair. Again, I froze. It was strange the way she was shaking: the tell-tale sign of Parkinson's disease. A shy five-year-old only knew something was different or wrong. I wasn't confident enough to ask questions of my parents about these strange observations.

When I was ten years old, the family visited grandfather again. Grandmother had died, and grandfather sold the house in Toowoomba, and shifted to Wynnum, a suburb of Brisbane, and married again.

Our family visited grandfather and stayed the night. We children were sitting up at the breakfast table. Coming to the meal table grandfather's hair was looking very unruly.

I said, "Grandfather, your hair looks like a bird's nest."

My sister joined with the same words.

Our parents were embarrassed and curbed us. Without a word, grandfather got up from his chair and went back to the bathroom and combed his hair.

Later, I said to my father, that grandfather was rather grumpy, but my father would hear none of it, for he idealized his father.

I was fascinated to see how grandfather ate his food, having only one hand. He had a metal band especially made to fit firmly over the stump and it had a fork welded to it, so he used this fork well and was able to cut and eat his food without difficulty. It was no longer a mystery.

In April of 1924, Grandfather thought he had been bitten by a spider, as he had suffered brief periods of giddiness. He was working as a bench man. This was not his usual job and involved pushing logs through a circular saw. In attempting to brush a piece of bark off the back of the saw, he suddenly held up his hand and said,

“Look what I’ve done”

The saw had caught his left hand, severed it through the palm, and stripped the bone of his thumb. Pieces of his hand landed at the feet of his fifteen-year-old son, who had nightmares for a very long time after the experience. Blood was spurting from his hand like a fountain. A piece of binder twine stemmed the flow when it was tied around his wrist until first aid was given. The ambulance, some fifty miles away along an unmade bush track, was rung. Grandfather was taken eight miles in a sulky before meeting the ambulance. His hand was amputated at the wrist, and after some difficulty the stump healed.

My Father commented “He had faith in God, hope for the future and love for people, especially his own family. He never drank beer, smoked or swore and endeavored ‘to provide things honest in the sight of all men.’”

“Daniel Clark died a peaceful death in his sleep at Wynum, Queensland, in his eightieth year. Although he had lost a hand, he still had his own teeth and hair.”

He was my grandfather...

Before leaving Victoria Daniel had agreed to manage the family farm and pay off his father’s loan if the farm was left to him when his father Robert died. He worked with this as an agreement. This was when his father left the farm to work as an engine driver, but then was sacked as a strike breaker and returned to live in the slab hut.

Living conditions were so crowded that Betsy and Daniel and two children had to get out and decided to go to Queensland.

But when his father died, another agreement with his youngest son had been made. Daniel only got 100 pounds. This issue, perhaps through misunderstanding created a feeling of injustice in the family.



BETSY HARVEY'S ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN

Betsy Hannah Harvey was the youngest in a large family. Girls in those days got a weekly wage plus keep to be live in house keepers, domestic servants and child carers. When Betsy was fourteen, she gave birth to a son, whose name was Frank Harvey. He lived only ten months and was buried on December 31, 1892 in the Stawell cemetery. When Betsy was twenty, another son was born in 1897, named Jimmy Harvey. John Nicholson who Betsy sued in 1898 for maintenance at 7s 6d a week was the father. With this knowledge my grandfather Daniel still married her. Jim lived with his Harvey Grandparents, until 1910 when he went to Queensland. He was adopted into the Clark family, and with his origins well known, he was accepted by everyone as one of the Clarks.

Knowing all this Daniel married Betsy on Dec 31st 1902. They had two sons born in Victoria, Walter in 1904 and Ronald in 1906.

To Queensland 1907 – Daniel Clark & Betsy Harvey

After getting a good price for the stock they owned which provided capital for their future, they travelled with their two children from

Stawell to Melbourne by train.

Melbourne to Brisbane by the ship Bombala.

Brisbane to Warra by train. This was a time when Warra had no platform.

Horse Dray and Bullock Wagon from Warra to Kogan.

Their land was not ready

Because a number of settlers from Victoria had arrived and the land survey had not been completed, to earn money a group calling themselves the Horsham group decided to build a saw mill on Braken's Creek on the Warra Road near Kogan. Knowing nothing about sawmilling they got two men from Victoria to teach them and Robert Clark came up and bought a steam engine to power the mill. This was the first sawmill in the district. They all camped in tents, cooking in camp ovens. On one occasion when the Clarks went to Warra when they returned to camp they found wild pigs had ruined just about everything. On July 6 1908 the lease for the land was granted.

REAL PIONEERS. 4 SURVEY PEGS ONLY

NO ROADS! NO HOUSES! NO FENCES! MEDICAL SERVICES 50 MILES AWAY!

Fortunately there was a group of families all in the same situation. They continued to call themselves the “Horsham” group. They had each other, lived in tents and built houses in the corner of their four blocks for support. Other pioneers kept coming.

In December 1908 a district picnic was held in Tara and there is a photo of this event. The mill was shifted 12 miles to Ted Smith’s lagoon and their houses were built with their own sawn timber.

Moorilda was built near the Wambo Creek.

They also sold timber which provided capital to build, improve and stock their properties. By 1910 due to the dry season the lagoon did not have enough water for the steam engine so it was shifted closer to the Wambo Creek. Here a flood caused loss of timber and damaged the mill. At this time Daniel sold his share in the mill to Ted Smith.

LIFE AS PIONEERS

Two children Wal and Ron came from Victoria, and six more children were born 50 miles away in Dalby and the youngest was born in Miles making 9 in all.

WATER was an issue! Tank water was for drinking, but creek water was for washing and often for bathing which generally happened in a bedroom. Wash days saw a procession to the creek: children carried tubs, washboards, pegs, lines and soiled clothes while the mother carried the baby. During severe drought water was carted many miles from the Condamine River.

ACCIDENTS HAPPENED!

Ron, a son was badly scalded. A girl had her finger chopped off. Ron held a bullock whip so long the wagon ran up the whip and over him. With no telephone or ambulance he had to be taken unconscious twenty six miles to Warra to catch the 3am Mail train which took him to Dalby. He recovered. Ron fell out of a tree while looking for a bird’s nest and broke his arm. Another trip fifty miles to Dalby.

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

A neighbour had a heart attack while fencing and died. A tree limb killed an axe man. Bodies were taken to Warra in a buggy for burial.



WALTER CLARK'S ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

In July 2011, the phone rang: I answered.

A woman named Jenny introduced herself and said she could be a relative of mine.

"Is your father's name Roy" she asked

"Yes" I replied.

"Does he have an older brother called Walter?"

"Yes, he has, and he is my Uncle Wal." I added.

"Well my mother Elizabeth was the daughter of Walter Clark and Dorothy Hart of Kogan." She explained.

"Is that right? I've never heard anything of this. I wonder if any of the other cousins knew anything of this." I replied in a kind of disbelief.

So, a skeleton locked in a cupboard for eighty-five years was out.

Jenny and I talked excitedly for some time, finding out all the information we could about new additions to our family circles.

Here is an email sent to me by Jenny sharing about her mother Elizabeth.

Hi Owen, Thanks so much for the information. My sister Heather and I were so excited to find out more about our family history. As I told you over the phone, my mother Elizabeth (1926-2010) was the daughter of Walter and her mother was Dorothy Hart. Dorothy adopted my mum out to her sister Elsie Leitch and her husband Robert Leitch. My mother Elizabeth grew up in Kogan on her grandparents (Able and Sarah Hart) farm called "The Pines". She went to the Kogan State School; she knew some of the Clark's when she was growing up.

Jenny mentioned her mother Elizabeth playing tennis with some of Walter's younger siblings or relatives. She didn't know they were related, until an uncle told her who her real father was. Elizabeth served in the Land Army during World War 2. She married my Dad (D'Arcy Wells) in 1948 and they moved to Brisbane. Mum and Dad had ten children- Robert, Pauline (died May 22, 2011), Christine, Margaret, Linda, Heather, John, Peter, Steven and

myself Jennifer. Most of us have settled in Brisbane. All of us have children (except one brother) and some of us are grandparents.

Elizabeth was a devoted wife, mum, grandmother and great-grandmother. I will try to send you a photo. I may have to post it to you, as I don't have a scanner. I'll see what I can do. So, my Mother and you are first cousins, seeing as Walter and your Father were brothers. Where does Donny live? Phone number? Or would it be better if I tried to ring his son?

Thanks so much for taking the time to send me the information. Kindest regards, Jen Christie

I gave Jenny the address and phone number of Uncle Wal's son, Don: warning that it might be a shock for him to cope with the new information she was about to give him.

She decided instead to ring Don's daughter Robyn, only to hear the news that Robyn was writing out Don's obituary. Jenny told me, and I was sad she had missed talking to Don.

I sent an email to all the Clark cousins with information about the new family and Don's death.

Two days later I rang Robyn to say I was sad her dad had died.

I got an unexpected reply,

"Oh no he hasn't died! He is still alive but sick with asbestosis cancer that now has developed into secondaries. He is in Palliative care; I was getting ready for his service"

Jenny and I had misunderstood her message about the obituary. We assumed he had already died.

Don's family had decided that, because of his illness they would not to tell him of the new family.

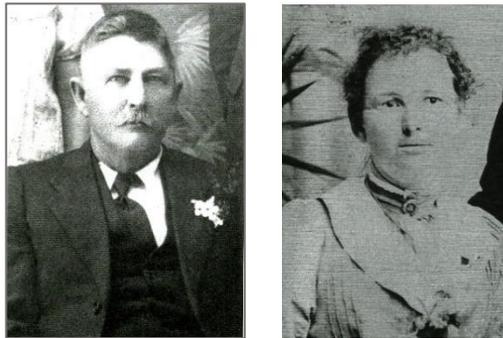
I rang Don and spoke to him in his hospital bed and told him I hoped to see him when I would be in Queensland in a month's time.

I felt most embarrassed as I sent another email to cousins saying Don hasn't died but is very sick.

Two weeks or so, later, I got the news Don had died so I sent another email to the Clark cousins to say he definitely had died.

At noon on September 10 2011, Jenny and I organized, and invited all those related to Walter Clark and Dorothy Hart's daughter Elizabeth, to come to a family luncheon at "Sails" Suttons Beach Queensland. The group enjoyed being together.

The skeleton is well and truly out of the cupboard!!



Daniel Clark & Betsy Hannah Harvey



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



Daniel CLARK - GENERAL STORE BRISBANE



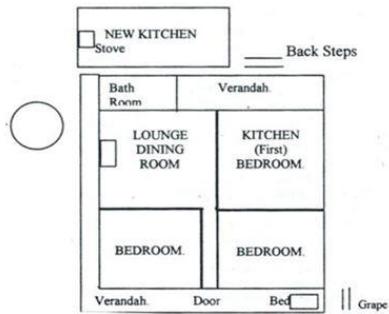
STANDING: NELLIE, ALAN, BELL, RONALD, EDNA, ROY,
SEATED: WALTER, DANIEL, BETSY, BILL. 1936



STAWELL VIC. TO WARRA QLD - 1907



MOORILDA homestead - built by the clarks



House Plan, Moorilda

WILLIAM DUBBIN HARVEY - 1829-1904

William, father of Betsy Hannah Harvey, was born in Brighton, Sussex and went to school there and also in Paddington.

His parents were George Harvey, a stone mason and Priscilla Dubbins. His mother died when he was two. He lived with his father and step mother at Irongate Wharf Road in Paddington. His first offence at fourteen was to steal a purse from his aunt. He also stole a watch. He could have been flogged and spent fourteen days in prison as punishment, as this was common at the time.

The Old Bailey

On August 19 1845 William Dubbin Harvey stood in the dock before Mr. Edward Bullock Esq, and Mr. Alderman Hunter, in the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey. He was aged 15 years. Charged with Stealing "one piece of the current silver coin of this Realm, called a Half Crown, of the money of Thomas Payne, then and there being found, feloniously did steal, take and carry away, against the Peace of our said Lady the Queen, her crown and dignity."

Sentence No 205: William Harvey 15, Stealing half a crown of Thomas Payne and former conviction of felony. Confessed: 6 calendar months in a house of correction, and seven years transportation over the seas.

The Old Bailey is located about 200 yards northwest of St Paul's Cathedral, just outside the former western wall of the City of London. It is named after the street on which it is located, which itself follows the line of the original fortified wall, or "bailey", of the City. The initial location of the courthouse close to Newgate Prison allowed prisoners to be conveniently brought to the courtroom for their trials.

As William had been in trouble before, a second offence meant a mandatory sentence. He was taken directly to Millbank gaol where young offenders were assessed and then sent to other prisons. He stayed here for 3 months.

TO PARKHURST PRISON

William was transferred to Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight in November 1844. Chained together a selected group travelled in third class carriages to Southampton, and then by ferry to Cowes, marching the final two miles to the prison.

Parkhurst Prison was initiated about 1840 as a training establishment for boys sentenced to transportation, generally to Australia or New Zealand. About 4,000 boys in all passed through Parkhurst, until the practice of transportation ceased.

To be selected to Parkhurst was a privilege as he received education, trade training and good food. There was also agricultural training working in a 22-hectare garden. Emphasis was on tidiness, cleanliness, and obedience to orders, and drill for proper marching. The uncompliant were returned to harsher prisons or punishment.

LIFE IN PRISON

A Doctor examined each boy and there is evidence that William was interviewed by a Rev Thomas England, the Prison Chaplain who had an influence for good on William's later life. The routine was strict, but there were rewards for good behaviour. His lessons in reading and writing were conducted in a large classroom with room for seventy. The boys stood and wrote on blackened areas of the wall, and the rule was of absolute silence. Trained by former army officers, they demanded discipline and exactness. He was instructed in tailoring, shoe making and agriculture, even to the extent of making his own gardening tools. Cell blocks were extended, the work being done by the inmates, who gained experience in stonework, carpentry and ironwork.

With emphasis on rehabilitation, transportation to Port Arthur and Lord Howe Island was discouraged. Even Sydney did not want more convicts. But labourers were needed in Victoria and so a system referring to offenders as "Exiles" was worked out. When they graduated from training facilities, if they were approved and received a royal pardon, they were sent out as free

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

labourers as long as they didn't return to England for seven years. Over 1700 exiles came to Port Phillip and William Dubbin Harvey was one of them.



FAREWELL TO OLD ENGLAND FOREVER

William received his Royal Pardon on May 28 1847 after 2 years and 7 months at Parkhurst. Now, aged 17 years, he left with 83 other youths to board the sailing ship 'Joseph Somes' weighing 780 tons, bound for Australia in early June. The new ship built in 1845 was on its second trip, taking exiles to Australia and had 251 exiles on board. After 112 days at sea on 24 September 1847, the Joseph Somes anchored off Point Henry, Geelong. All arrived safely apart from one youth who was put off at Hobart due to ill-health.

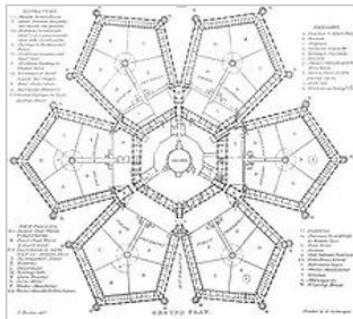
Point Henry was the place where many of the early European settlers landed when coming to Geelong. The shallow waters and sandbar made it difficult for larger vessels to enter Corio Bay, so Point Henry became the closest landing base. After embarking, passengers and their luggage were taken into Geelong on wagons.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



WILLIAM WAS TRIED AT THE OLD BAILEY



Plan of millbank prison



TRANSFERRED TO PANKHURST PRISON

CAMPASPE STATION

Brodie Brothers owned Campaspe Station in 1848. They sent their Squatter's Overseer Mr. David Matthews on to pick up 3 young men assigned to work as General Servants on the Station. All could read and write. Pat Curran, Henry Matthews and William Harvey.

They would be employed for 6 months at the rate of 20 pounds per annum to work on the property of 20,000 acres that was stocked with sheep. William Harvey worked on Campaspe 1847–1851 William worked as a shepherd, a shearer, clearing land, a fencer and general labourer.

A SHORT BURST OF GOLD FEVER

After serving 4 years on Campaspe Station, William left and went 44 miles to Clunes, near Ballarat, in search of gold. He then travelled 15 miles to Lexton to buy equipment. Needing 30 shillings a month for a gold license, and finding little gold, he decided not to return to Campaspe but would get work on one of the local stations as shearing was about to begin. He got known by Mr. Gibson, the Postmaster and innkeeper in Lexton as here he bought his supplies.

Tender for delivery of Mail

“Tenders for the Carriage of Mail, from and to Burbank (Lexton) and Horsham by way of Glenorchy on the Wimmera, once or twice a week. The rate of traveling, including stops to be not less than six miles per hour.”

A fine of 5 shillings will be imposed for starting 5 minutes late or arriving 10 minutes late. A mandatory one hour break was required each mid-day.

As well as delivering mail to Glenorchy and Horsham Post Offices, letters and newspapers.

The Argus and Geelong Advertiser will be delivered to the number of homesteads along the route. A number of overnight stopping places and horse changing stations will be organized as well along the route.”

Vic. Gov. Gazette, 1851

On January 1 1852 William began as the Wimmera Mailman and travelled 27 miles to Crowlands. The second day he travelled to Ashens and the third he arrived at Horsham.

After delivering and collecting the mail at Horsham the next day he began his return journey to Lexton. This he did each week for 2 years. The route was west of the Wimmera River .

Being the mailman for two years put William into the position of privilege in who and what he knew. It gave him two advantages; he fell in love and gave him opportunities for future business as he started working for his future father in law.

BULLOCKY BILL CARRIER 1834-7

When his mail contract ended, William accepted the offer to drive the bullock team of a contact in Glenorchy named William Stevens with the view of buying his own bullock team which he did in a few months. Cartage rates were 4 pounds per ton per 100miles.

With the gold activity a carrier needed to make as many trips to Geelong as possible while the gold lasted. While there were difficulties in both dry and wet weather, demand was high and good money was made, some getting 80 pounds a ton.

Towards the end of 1857, William decided he had had enough of the arduous, even though profitable life of a bullock driver. Being on the road months on end, along with very cold or very hot weather was bad enough, without the devious methods of the Glenorchy pound keeper who was forever impounding his bullocks, so he began looking for another business.

HOTELLIER, POSTMASTER, BULLOCKLY MAILMAN

William negotiated to pay off Bill Bowden for the Hotel. He also became the Postmaster in Glenorchy earning 20 pounds per year. However in 1859 a new hotel was built causing a loss of income. He had no choice but to sell and at a loss still owing Bill Bowden money. Bowden had an extensive carrying business and offered William a job as a bullock driver so he could pay off his debt a little at a time. This was 1857 – 59.

While working as a bullock driver William was on the lookout for other work. Mr. Caddy a Glenorchy storekeeper had won the tender for mail and he was

able to take a passenger or two from Pleasant Creek (Stawell) via Glenorchy to Horsham.

But on Dec 3 1859 Mr. Caddy was thrown from his horse and later died. Bill Boden, William's boss won the renewed contract, and William applied for and got the job as long as he and his family shifted to Horsham, which they did in early 1860.

Coach Driver 1860-1864

By 1860 with the growth of mining towns Ballarat, Ararat and Stawell, Lexton was by passed and the main road and mail came by Cobb & Co to Stawell, but then went through Deep Lead and Glenorchy on the north side of the Wimmera River, a road William knew well.

With no bridge at Glenorchy till 1861, the river had to be crossed at a ford. During flooding the horses had to be swum across and a log punt was used for the coach passengers and mail. Once William was raised shoulder high by passengers in appreciation for his skill in getting the coach across the river.

Competition for mail contracts and passengers was fierce with each carrier competing on price until Boden and Gillies combined their efforts in July 1863. William continued driving and shifted his family to a small miner's cottage in Stawell, their permanent home.

THROUGH TO COBB & CO

Eventually all the small operators sold out to Cobb & Co. Facilities were improved. Horse changing depots were every 12 miles. William drove the new American Concord Coach with a unique leather suspension instead of steel springs. Its only weakness was that passengers would get motion sickness. The whole Coach system was well organized until it could compete no longer with the railways.

DRIVING COACHES

Nine passengers with luggage on the roof was allowed on the Concord Coach. But the roads especially from Horsham to Ballarat were atrocious at first, little more than tracks through the bush. Horses toiled over hills and marshy flats. Horses and coaches had to swim at times across floodwaters.

Cobb & Co management demanded more speed and efficiency. They introduced night coach journeys that were fearful and often dangerous. With only a carbine or candle lantern it was easy to get lost.

On 3 August 1878 William lost the track and being blocked left the coach with passengers to find the way, and became lost. The passengers took the coach on and notified police who searched. William had a health turn, lost his light but eventually found his way home arriving some fourteen hours later in a very weak condition. On another night a colleague was lost on a foggy night and drove into Lake Burrumbeet. The passengers scrambled to safety on to the roof. One horse drowned and the mail was soaked.

POULTRY, PASSENGERS, AND BUSHRANGERS

Horses were harnessed and the coach prepared at Stawell in the dark for an early start. Two chooks were roosting on the coach axle, and were still asleep when the coach took off. A distance into the journey William noticed one had gone, the other continued on its jolting perch and was still there in a dazed stupor in Ararat 20 miles on. William lifted it to the ground else it would have stayed until the coach got to Ballarat.

A bushranger and his men stopped William's coach and demanded gold. While faces were hidden. William recognized the voice of one of his convict mates from earlier times in Parkhurst prison and later at Campaspe station. "Jim Story, what do you think you are doing? Don't you recognize me, I'm William Harvey. Surely you wouldn't rob an old mate."

Without saying another word the bushranger wheeled his horse around, signaled to his men and disappeared. William could tell his grandchildren that the coach and passengers were never robbed while he was in charge.

WILLIAMS LATER YEARS

On February 5, 1879, the day the railway line to Horsham was opened Cobb & Co was finished. A difficult journey of 8 hours then took 2 and a half hours by train.

He became a Cordial Manufacturer from 1880 to 1893. William worked for a Mr. John Maddocks, a soft drink manufacturer in Stawell. Later he made bubbly soft drink at home as a hobby.

W. D. Harvey Grand Master. He was a foundation member of the Manchester Unity Lodge since 1863. A popular lodge providing social and financial help in the community. Both in 1883 and 1893 he was honoured by being elected Grand Master. Both William and his wife Mary were positively active in the community and the Primitive Methodist church.

Death. William died of Cerebral Thrombosis on November 24 1904 age 75 years. Mary Jane died of dropsy and Dilation of the heart on May 5 1910 aged 70 years. Both are buried together in the Stawell Cemetery.

William's 9th child, a daughter, Betsy Hannah Harvey born 1877 at Stawell married Daniel Clark and is Owen Clark's grandmother.



HARVEY FAMILY TREE

William D Harvey Apr 23 1829-Nov 24
1904

m Mary Jane Stevens Feb 18-May 5
1910 on Jun 20 1855

CHILDREN

John George Harvey 1856

m twice wife 1 Olive Harvey

Priscillia Ann Maria Harvey 1858

m Samuel Mooney

William James Harvey 1859

m Maritana Jemima Sutcliffe

Elizabeth Jane Harvey 1862

Henry Thomas Harvey 1864

m Martha Joan Langley

Mary Wilhelmena Harvey 1870

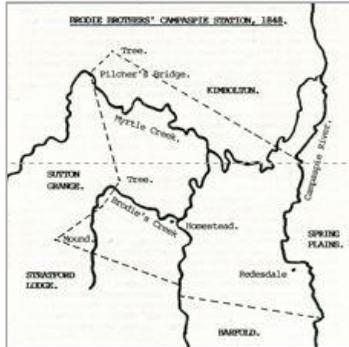
m Charles Jame Floyd

Georgina Francis Harvey 1873

m William Stafford Bobart/Billett

Betsy Hannah Harvey 1877

m Daniel Clark 1872

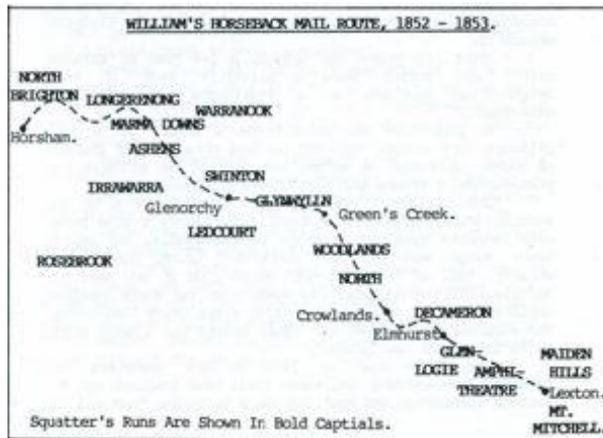


CAMPASPE STATION
BOUNDARIES

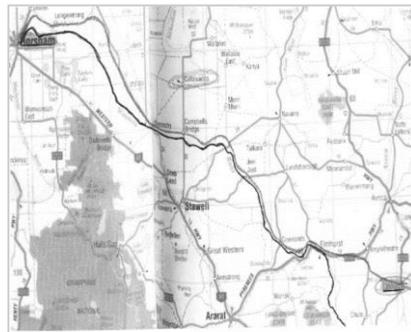


CAMPASPE STATION

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



STATIONS ON WILLIAMS MAIL RUN



MAIL RUN WEST OF WIMMERA RIVER



THIS COACH IS READY TO GO



CONCORD. BEST COACH WILLIAM DROVE

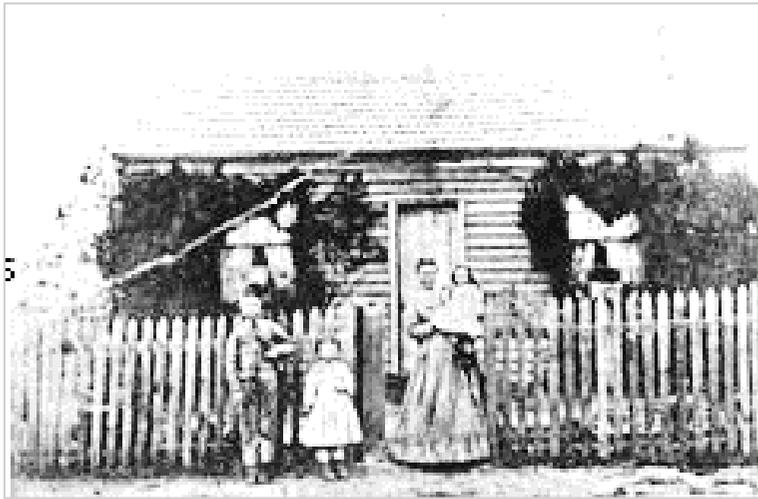


COBB & CO CHANGING STABLES BUANGOR



WILLIAMS BRUSH WITH BUSHRANGERS

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



*Mary Jane, Henry, Mary, Georgina Harvey abt/ 1875
STAWELL WEST, VICTORIA*



WILLIAM DUBBIN AND MARY JANE HARVEY

MAKING A LIVING

There is a photo of the door of Daniel's meat shed. With unfamiliar land and weather, trial and error was needed to find the best income. When Daniel sold his share in the sawmill, he bought a dairy herd. By 1911 he had cleared and fenced 3 paddocks, built the house, dairy yards and bails, designed 2 acres of garden, ring barked 220 acres, and netted his boundary against dingoes. The dairy prospered with 3 good seasons. He borrowed and bought sheep and set up killing yards and a fly proof meat shed and started butchering and delivering meat to the district up to 20 miles away. By 1916 the property had been ring barked and was described as highly improved. However, the 1914-5 drought caused the loss of cattle, horses and sheep. There was poor stock to butcher, and the wool price collapsed causing a disaster and an inability to pay rent and loans.

SOUTH BRISBANE SHOP 1916

For various reasons mainly financial, a 12 month lease was taken on a General Store in South Brisbane.

Jim kept an eye on the farm, and it was a temporary release from a number of problems. In Brisbane the family lived on the premises. Ron and Roy had a paper stand. Financially the store was a reasonable success, but ill health was a big problem. The children got measles, mumps, chicken pox and whooping cough. Ron got pneumonia and was sent back to Dalby, Betsy had sciatica bad. So the lease was not renewed and the family returned to Moorilda to the news their rent would be reduced.

IMPOSSIBLE!!

The pioneers came with their dreams but the situation was impossible from the start.

The holdings of 1280 acres were too small for the land quality and climate. They were encouraged to produce the wrong commodity. In the long term dairying was hopeless. Sheep and wool could be successful but on much bigger acreage than what they were allowed. Even today 5000 acres is not enough. When the land was cleared there was always a problem with scrub regrowth. The Land's Department expectations were unrealistic and

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

impossible to meet. The Department was more interested in prickly pear being cleared and rent being paid than whether farmers were succeeding or not.



SMITH (SPRINKS) FAMILY

SPRINKS-SMITH FAMILY TREE

William Sprinks Married Keziah Mckenzie on Dec 5 1813

Their son: William Henry Sprinks (later Smith)
Sept 18 1814-Jun 11 1894

m Wife 1 Eliza Burnett on May 8 1835

m Wife 2 Catherine Sawyer Apr 13 1821-Oct12 1897

William Henry *Sprinks* Smith Jan 12 1846-Aug 20 1922

m Elizabeth Ann Jeffery Sept 30 1848-Feb 13 1947

Henry (Harry) Sprinks Smith b. Dec 30 1847

m Mary Ann Chelsey SILVEY, b. Dec 8 1853

Mary Elizabeth (Matilda) Smith b. May 8 1851

m. William Henry COAD, b. 1850? d. Dec 31 1914,

Charles Daniel Smith b Oct 31 1854-Apr 20 1893

m Ellen Ann Plant b Aug 18 1869-Aug 8 1963

Catherine Charlotte Smith b. Aug 4 1857 – Apr 9 1860

Annie Maria Smith b. Dec 11 1859-1941

m. 1883, James William Hanger

Edward (Ted) Alfred Smith b. Jan 26 1863-Feb 25 1951

m. Apr 7 1887, Adelaide PLANT, b. 21 Sep 1867 - Jul 30 1940

William Henry Sprinks was born on Sept 18 1814 in Camberwell, London in the County of Surrey. He was the first of 9 children. His Parents were William who was a baker and Hezekiah. He served his apprenticeship as a baker.

On May 8 1835 He married Eliza Burnett at St John the Evangelist Church. Two daughters were born in England: Ellen on Jul 13 1836, and Jane Eliza on Dec 1 1837. They then had another baby in the March quarter of 1840. He was named William Henry Sprinks and was registered in Lambeth before they sailed in 1840 for Hobart on the Elphinstone.

This means Eliza was nursing him on the voyage to Australia. Sadly he died and was buried in Adelaide S.A. on January 11th 1841. A third child Rosa Jessy was born in Hobart on Nov 13 1841 and the birth certificate says William was a baker.

ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE HOBART NEWSPAPER

After being in Hobart both Eliza and William put the following lavish advertisements in the Hobart Courier.

In the Tasmanian 1842 Census, their address is Liverpool Street, Hobart and their Occupation is given as “Shopkeepers and other retail dealers.”



W. SPRINKS

BREAD, SHIP AND FANCY BISCUIT

B A K E R

Begs leave to inform the inhabitants of Hobart Town that he has commenced business in the above line at 36, MACQUARIE-STREET, Two doors from Barrack-street, where he trusts, by strict attention and good articles, to merit a share of public patronage, and flatters himself (having served his apprenticeship in one of the first shops in London) he is able, in point of workmanship, to make goods equal to any in the colony. Rich wedding cakes, plain ditto, rout and ball ditto, all kinds of pastry, rich chrystal and rout biscuits, fancy breakfast bread (particularly recommended), sally lunns and spice wigs hot from four till seven every evening, biscuit Powder for infants (strongly recommended by the faculty). BAKINGS carefully attended every day. A Liberal allowance to shops and schools.

April 26, 1842

ELIZA ADVERTISES IN THE SAME PAPER AS WILLIAM IN
THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER.

REMOVAL.- *Eliza Sprinks begs leave to intimate to her friends and public generally, that she has REMOVED her DRESSMAKING ESTABLISHMENT from 36, Macquarie-street, to the more eligible situation 44, Liverpool-street (the premises lately occupied by Mr. Cole, watchmaker, &c) which she has opened with a splendid assortment of French and British Millinery, selected from the latest spring arrivals: and she trusts, from her long experience in the trade in London, that the goods she has selected will meet with general approbation.*

She also begs to state that (being a subscriber) those ladies who patronize her establishment may always meet with the latest magazines of fashion from London and Paris. Ladies own materials made up on the shortest notice."

INSOLVENT

The first concrete evidence of finance difficulty comes in the Courier Friday 28th April 1843.

“By order of the assignee to the estate of ‘William’, Haberdasher, Milliner, and General Dealer, now insolvent.”

Goods listed for sale are:-

*“Bonnets, hats, ribbons, lace, flowers
Dresses, trimmings: and the usual
assortment (too numerous to mention) of
varieties generally dealt in by
haberdashers, milliners and general
dealers.*

*One draught horse and tilted spring cart,
travelling emporium, also without
reserve. One superior Spanish mahogany
star-top Loo table. (Loo is a district in
Russia)*

*One ‘do’ chest drawers, (“do” may stand
for “ditto”) One bidet and pan, One
excellent eight day clock, warranted time
keeper; one ‘do’ four-burner lamp; One
‘do’ picture, in frame; one chest cabinet
maker’s tools, containing hollows and
rounds, plough, felster, gouges, chisels,
and variety small tools Flat irons, lead
pencils; Oil baize, shoe brushers; Windsor
soap; Brass locks, French latches: One
hundred gross screws, various; Cut brads,
and a variety of sundries. Terms- Cash”*

Note the tilting spring cart and draught horse and travelling emporium. Was he trying to sell bread or hats?

On Friday 14th May 1843 the Courier notes a meeting of discharge, indicating the insolvency sale must have generated enough to satisfy the creditors.

So in spite of both their efforts to make a living, they become insolvent, and then they separate. In less than a month, on June 6th 1843, William sails for Port Jackson, and starts again as a baker. A Sydney paper of June 14th reports.

From Hobart Town, the same day, having left the 6th instant, the schooner, Sisters, 90 tons, Captain Wardell, with hay, potatoes, grain, &c. Passengers-Mr. Sprinks and Mr. Winford.

William left his wife and 3 daughters behind. Rosa Jessy is put into the Queens Orphanage on May 24th 1844 and discharged into the care of a Mrs. Stevens of Glenorchy.

There is evidence that the 3 daughters and a chaperone went back to England. Where Mrs. Eliza Sprinks went is a mystery yet to be solved.

Bill Smith? A likely Story!!

“Do you William Henry Smith, take Catherine Sawyer to be your wedded wife?” so droned the pompous and controversial Reverend John Dunmore Lang, minister of the Scots Presbyterian church Sydney on the 11th day of January 1845. Yes, these two were lawfully married, but as they say, every marriage has a ‘hitch’, and especially this one. William Henry Smith aged 29 years has a conjugal status of ‘bachelor’. Is that true? And is his name Smith? The answer to both questions is “No”. It was common at this time for people to move from one state to another, (from Tasmania to New South Wales in this case) and marry while still being married to a spouse in the state they left. And ‘Bill Smith’ would be a wonderful name to hide behind, (also true in this case.) Whatever is not true, it is true that this marriage brought together my great, great, grandparents. Strictly speaking, it is also true that all the thousands of descendants, who have the name of Smith, do not wear the correct name. His name becomes William Henry Sprinks Smith 1st.

CATHERINE SAWYER (1821-1897)

Catherine was born in London and was 40 years in Victoria. After eight years in Australia she married William, aged 24 years old. Their first son is born in 1846 and his name is also William Henry Sprinks Smith 2.

A second son Henry Sprinks Smith is born in Parramatta in 1847. Sometime after this he and his wife and family sailed to San Francisco, where in 1851 a daughter Mary Elizabeth (Matilda) Smith is born. The presumption is that he went there chasing gold and baking is his back up.

He probably hears of the gold being discovered in Victoria and he and his family return to Victoria where in Geelong in 1854 a son Charles Daniel Smith is born.

Their next move is to Buninyong where in 1857 a daughter Catherine Charlotte Smith is born. Sadly she dies aged 3 years.

There follows the birth of a daughter in 1859, Annie Maria Smith and a son Edward (Ted) Alfred Smith in 1862 both born at Buninyong.

AT EUREKA?

His Granddaughter, Florence Staker said he had something to do with the Eureka uprising. I haven't been able to find any Bill Smith that fits with the skirmish.

I had visions of him manning the barricades, and fighting with the police, but it seems he was one of thousands of miners who signed the petition before the Eureka event, protesting against the raw deal given to the miners with miner's licences and conditions. There are 6 W. or William Smiths on the petition. This actual petition can be viewed at the Melbourne Library.

I suggest about 1880 when his son and family shifted to Wonwondah, he shifted from gold mining near Ballarat to the Cohuna District and spent his later years farming. Other members of his family shifted north with him and descendants can still be found in the area.

He died in 1894 at Wee Wee Rup and is buried in the Pyramid Hill Cemetery in an unmarked grave in the Methodist Section.

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

At some stage, perhaps when the family dispersed from Buninyong, Catherine went to live with her daughter Annie Hanger in Brighton, and towards the end of her life she suffered from blindness and senile decay. She died in 1897 and is buried in the Brighton Cemetery.



*William Henry
Sprinks Smith I*



Catherine Sawyer



*CHARLES DANIEL 1854-1893, WILLIAM HENRY 1846-1922,
HENRY SPRINKS 1847-1921, ANNIE MARIE 1859-1883.*

*SEATED: MARY ELIZABETH 1851-1930,
WILLIAM HENRY 1814-1894, EDWARD 1862-1951,
CATHERINE 1821-1897*

WILLIAM HENRY SPRINKS SMITH 2 & ELIZABETH ANNE JEFFERY

FAMILY TREE OF WILLIAM HENRY SPRINKS SMITH 2
& ELIZABETH ANNE JEFFERY

*William H. S. Smith 2 b. Jan 12 1846
– Dec 31 1922*

*Elizabeth Ann Jeffery b. Sept 30
1848-Feb 13 1947*

Were married on Feb 6 1873

CHILDREN

Miriam Kate Smith b. Dec 7 1873

*William Edward (Ted) Smith b Aug
18 1875*

Lavinia Jane Smith b Jul 2 1877

Albert Jeffery Smith b Jul 5 1879

Grace Smith b Jun 14 1881

Daisy Ann Smith b Oct 7 1883

James Willisford Smith b Jul 28 1885

Arthur George Smith b Apr 1887

Emily Elizabeth Smith b Aug 28

Lucyetta Smith b Oct 31 1889

*Florence Myrtle Smith b Oct 23 1891
(Great Aunty Flo)*

William Henry Sprinks Smith 2 (WHSS2)⁴ was born in Sydney in 1846, went to California in about 1850 for about 4 years and then he returned to Buninyong where he was a gold miner.

In 1873 he married Elizabeth Ann Jeffery who was the daughter of a builder in Melbourne.

Four children are born between 1873 and 1879, and in 1881 the family moved from Buninyong to Wonwondah (near Horsham) where he was a farmer for 12 years and where seven more children are born.

On March 9 1893 the family shifted to Maidavale about 14 miles out of Hopetoun on to a farm.

⁴ Owen's great grandfather.

While in Sydney for a Lifeline Conference in early September 1986 I visited and interviewed great Aunty Flo at her home called Beechings. Florence Myrtle Staker (nee Smith) was born on Oct.23rd 1891 and died on Feb 1st 1990 at Gosford. At the time she was the only one of the original Smith family still alive, which makes her information all the more significant. I recorded our conversation and you hear her speaking in the following quotes.

Speaking of the time the family lived at Maidavale Auntie Flo said “When we were first there, there was nothing. He built the house himself. Made homemade bricks out of mud bricks and built the house for the family. You can image with water tanks there and everything. Well there was no schools, no nothing, no hall, and of course with all around in those days, and everybody more or less went to church and that sort of thing. Now all of the new settlers got together, and they built a big hall. And my sister Grace that one...she died... she had TB. She died at 26, and she started a school for all the children and they paid sixpence for a week. That was what they had to pay. Sixpence bought a lot in those days. The hall was there. They used to have concerts. They used to have Band of Hope you know. All those temperance things. You are bringing it all back to me, things I have forgotten.”

When the railway line was being built from Melbourne to Mildura William fixed up a van and carted foodstuff for those working on the line. His wife dressed poultry and organized the food.

“My Mother, look she was absolutely spotless in everything she did. She was a wonderful cook. There wasn’t anything that mother couldn’t do. Maybe they expected too much from her. When they first went up there (Maidavale) they lived in shacks and she used to do all her cooking in a camp oven. And the washing you can imagine, for six girls, at harvest time we would have all the men that worked for us with the machinery, they would

⁵ Youngest child of William Henry Sprinks Smith 2 & Elizabeth Anne Jeffery.

all come and line up at the one kitchen table and she would feed them. I wonder how she did it in all that heat because it is a hot place over there.

I asked Flo if her Mum and Dad ever got angry. She replied, "Get angry? No, I can't remember them ever having a 'box-on' at all. One thing I remember is him coming home after visiting his sister in Melbourne. He came back by train and there was no one to meet him so he walked 14 miles home from Hopetoun. And I can see him coming now and he'd run across and he'd catch mother by the waist and swing her round and round and round. I was a kid and I used to think that was terrific. Neither of them were quarrelsome. Dad was easy going, too easy going really."

Lord Hopetoun he was the man, he used to come out from England in those days and he was brought out to our farm. Of course, there were six girls all lined up and they always have a great joke about that and I have never forgotten it. Mother used to make all our clothes and everything. When Lord Hopetoun was going along chatting to us. I said Look I've got pretty red drawers on".

In 1907 William Henry and Elizabeth Smith migrated, along with other family members, to Queensland arriving at Warra station and then travelling about 30kms to the two blocks of land the family had selected. Like other pioneers arriving about this time they had four survey pegs marking their land and they had to build everything: houses and fences and clear the land as well as make repayments of loans to the government.

With the help of family and timber from Ted Smith's sawmill they built a home they called 'Beulah', close by to their son Albert's house.

After eight years at Kogan in 1915 they shifted to Greenslopes in Brisbane, where they purchased a home. They lived there many years.

William died of a heart attack in 1922 after collapsing against the toilet door. His daughter in law, Martha, my grandmother who still lived at Kogan at the time, saw an image of him in her house and asked, "What are you doing here?" He suddenly disappeared, she knew that he had died before she eventually got the news.

Owen's memories of Elizabeth Anne Smith (nee Jeffery)⁶

As a child I saw my great-grandmother. She was an old lady at the time sitting in a chair. I asked my cousin Lloyd Smith if he remembered our great-grandmother. He said, "Yes. I remember an old lady sitting in a chair and she had big ears, the biggest ears I have ever seen. I was surprised yet this comment restored a memory for me. She did have big ears, very big ears. It 1945 when I saw her. I was 8 years old and she was 98. Our family had called to see her, and during the stay my sister and I went for a ride in a military vehicle driven by a relative, Mick Smith. The ride was with a small dog that kept making horrid smells in the rear of the truck. Fortunately, the trip was short!!

I remember my g grandmother as a very kind lady who spoke nicely to my sister and I. I felt sad when she died not long after this time, when she was 18 months off the magic hundred. We were all hoping she would reach it.

Since that time, I have learned so much about her. She was born at Joybridge, Devon England on 30th September 1848, and named Elizabeth Ann Jeffery. She was later called Lizzy. She came out from England in the 1860's and lived in Malvern in Melbourne with her parents from 1870 – 72. The family moved to Malvern Hill, where she lived until she married William Henry Sprinks Smith the second on February 6, 1873 at Buninyong. She was 24 years of age. They were married by a Church of Christ minister Mr. L.T. Hamill. Her father is described as a Carpenter and she is a domestic. They lived first at Buninyong , Wonwondah , Hopetoun and Kogan. Their final home was Greenslopes in Brisbane. From here Elizabeth died just 18 months before her 100th birthday.

Letter re. Elizabeth Ann Smiths death
(to Mavis Clark from her daughter, Bess)
(Elizabeth Anne Smith died 13/02/1947.)

'The Haven'
Queen's Beach

⁶ Owen's great grandmother.

Redcliffe
Feb. 25 1947

Dear Mavis, (Clark nee Smith)

You will see that we are at the sea side for a little rest. Mick (Smith) drove us down last Wednesday and we were very thankful as we were all very tired out. It is hard to realize that our dear little Grandma has left us and we will all miss her sweet face, her prayers, and wise council which she gave us all to the very last. It was really wonderful how she kept up and every day did her hair and washed herself without my help. The day before she got letters from all the absent members of the family and I read them all to her and she mentioned them all and then asked me to read the Scriptures which I did, reading portions of John 17 and other promises of the coming glory and she said, "that is glorious. I can say Amen to every word. I will soon be there."

Next morning she had an early cup of tea and bread and butter which she enjoyed and washed and did her hair as usual and talked quite a lot to us, and had a little laugh with Auntie Vin over something, when she got home from the hospital at 10 o'clock. Then suddenly at 11 o'clock she took an attack of pain in her side, it was so severe she was exhausted by the time the Dr. came and she said, "Dr. I am going this time, the Lord is calling me." The Dr. gave her an injection in the arm which eased the pain, and she didn't speak much after but went to sleep and about 10 to 6 in the evening she passed peacefully away while Auntie Vin, (Elizabeth's daughter) Mrs Foot (a friend) and I stood beside her praying. I felt as she passed away the great surge of joy into which she had entered and knew she has entered into a glorious life with the dear Lord she loved and served all her life.

We can all thank God for her brave, wonderful spirit and the example she has left us of a godly life. She took a very real interest in all her grandchildren and prayed much for you and Roy and the children, and I know she had a very special corner in her heart for you, and though so sick for some weeks kept on reminding me of your birthday. We expect to stay here till next Monday and are then moving to a small cottage at Margate, which a school teacher friend of Auntie Vin has given us the use of as long as we need it, so we hope to stay on for some weeks yet and get a bit built up before going home.

We expect to go and see Jessie (Elizabeth's granddaughter) next week after we get settled.

Now I hope you are feeling much better after your little holiday; also Roy and the children.

Auntie Vin joins me in love to you all.

Yours lovingly,

Aunty Bess. (Daughter)



Albert was born in Bunninyong. He is said to have had a horse team and transported goods from Port Fairy even up to Ouyen. He also carted fruit east of Melbourne.

When older Albert Jeffery Smith lived in the Brim District at Beulah while the family was at Maidavale and he attended the Church of Christ there. This is where he met and married Martha Annie Marshman (Mat) in 1907. After the wedding they went by train to Melbourne, by boat to Brisbane, train again to Warra and then by wagon to Kogan and their land.

With his father they selected two 1280 acre blocks of land with the usual four survey pegs marking out the territory. They had to build everything. As mentioned, his father built Beulah, and he built a rammed earth dwelling he called Edenhope affectionately known as the 'Mud Huts'.

He was 6-foot-tall, had sparkling blue eyes and a red moustache. Owen remembers that he would sit the grandchildren on his knee and sing songs to them.

It seems Albert received 100 pounds from the government and with this bought Montrose Estate and sold Edenhope. In the early 1930s Heatherlea was bought and then the house on high stumps was built. During this time a broom crop was planted and the family would go up from Montrose Estate to cut the crop and stack it. The family also bought a Marquette car and Dave was the only one who could drive it. Otherwise they drove in a sulky or rode on horseback. Albert died of weakness from Prostate Cancer. When he died he was still hurting about being legally kicked out of the Chinchilla Church of Christ and said so to Roy Clark. This was one of the results from a division in the Church caused by a missionary group Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade. Sadly families including Alberts were also split as a result.

Martha Annie Marshman was born at Balaklava in South Australia on August 16, 1883 to David Marshman and Elizabeth Chivell. Her family shifted to

⁷ See information about Martha Annie Marshman's parents below.

Brim in Victoria when she was at the early age of 7. Being the third of 6 children, she supported the family. She provided help for another family in the area who were having difficulties. She completed a dressmaker's course and was able to design clothes. She sewed many of the families' clothes.

Meeting at the Brim Church of Christ she married Albert Jeffery Smith in 1907 and came as a bride to take up a selection that was portion of an area known as Perth station at the Wambo Creek, south west of Kogan.



Excerpts from Warracknabeal Herald relating to Martha's pre-wedding social and her wedding to Albert Jeffery Smith.

A very enjoyable complimentary social was tendered to Miss Mattie Marshman, by the members of the Church of Christ at the residence of Mrs. M. Hovey. During the evening, Mr. Oram (evangelist) in a neat speech, spoke of Miss Marshman's sterling qualities, her good influence, not only in the home, but in the church and school. He wished her God's richest blessing in her future life. He then called upon Mrs. Oram to make a presentation. Mrs. Oram said that, on behalf of the members of the Church of Christ at Brim, she had much pleasure in presenting Miss Marshman with a small token of their esteem --- (a small silver tea-pot). She hoped her future life would be bright and happy, and that she would be able to do the Master's work in her new sphere as well as she had done at Brim. Miss Florrie Bannerman, on behalf of the members of Miss Marshman's Sunday school class, presented her teacher with a pretty silver and crystal cake dish. Mr. Putland, superintendent of the Sunday school, spoke in high terms of Miss Marshman's work in the school. Her place would be hard to fill. Mr. W. Burgess and Mr. Barnes, in short speeches, joined in wishing Miss Marshman much happiness and prosperity in her new home.

WEDDING AT BRIM

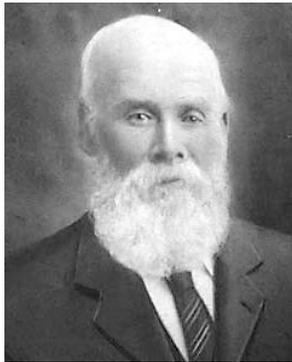
A very pretty wedding was celebrated at the Christian Chapel, Brim, on Wednesday week, when Miss Mattie Marshman was married to Mr. Albert Smith. The church had been beautifully decorated by the girl friends of the bride with greenery and white flowers. An arch of pretty green foliage and

flowers was erected in front of the chancel, from the centre of which was suspended a snowy white wedding bell. The bride, who was given away by her uncle, Mr. Albert Chivell, was accompanied by two bridesmaids, Miss Hovey and Miss May Marshman, and wore a pretty gown of cream voile, and the customary wreath and veil. Mr. Albert Marshman was best man, and Mr. F. Hovey was groomsman. Four little white-robed girls, members of the bride's class, carried baskets of flowers, and strewed them along the aisle as the wedding party entered and left the building.

"The presents, which were many and costly, included the following:- Mother of the bride, household linen; Mr. A. Marshman, cheque; Miss May Marshman, silver salt cellars; Mr. and Mrs. Scoullar, silver serviette ring; Mr. and Mrs. A. Chivell, cheque; Mr. and Mrs. T. Everett, cheque; Mr. and Mrs. H. Everett, cheque and table cloth; Mr. and Mrs. M. Hovey and family, silver salad bowl and servers."

How remarkable that a list of all the wedding presents and the names of the givers was printed in the local paper!! Most of the actual presents mentioned still exist in the home of a grandson Rodney Smith in Chinchilla Queensland.

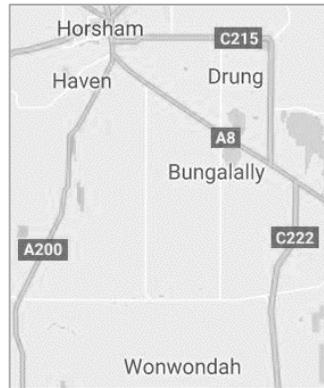




WILLIAM HENRY
SPRINKS SMITH 2



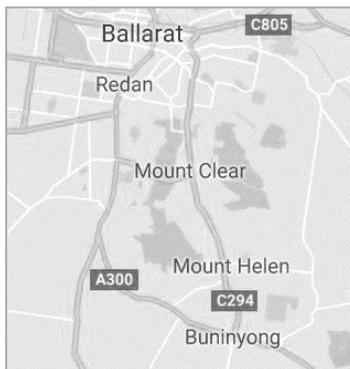
ELIZABETH ANN SMITH
NEE JEFFERY



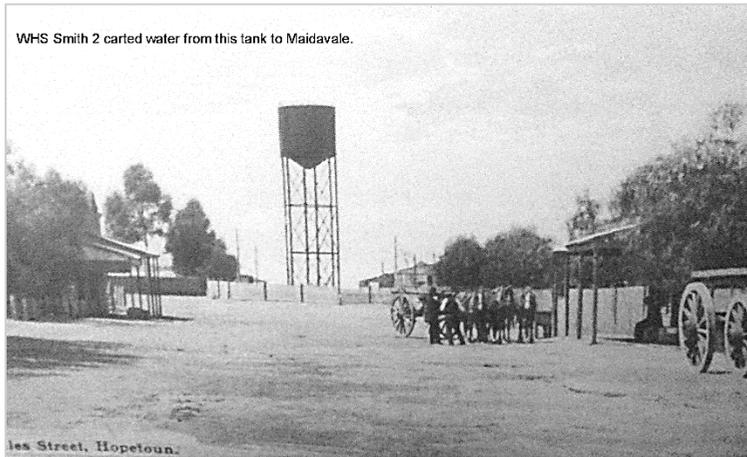
Home Locations:

Above left, Hopetoun, Above right, Wonwondah

Below: Buninyong.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



Hopetoun Tank supplied water to Maidavale – carted by wagon



Florence Smith (Aunty Flo)



*ALBERT JEFFERY SMITH
1879-1964*



*MARTHA ANNIE SMITH
NEE MARSHMAN*



*OLD BRIM CHURCH WHERE THEY
MARRIED*



*A WEDDING PRESENT
(custodian, Rodney Smith)*

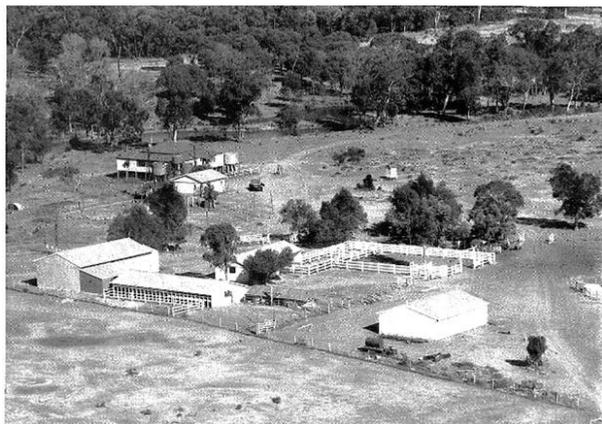
VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



EDENHOPE, FIRST QUEENSLAND SMITH HOME, ALSO KNOWN AS "THE MUD HUTS"



SECOND HOME MONTROSE ESTATE

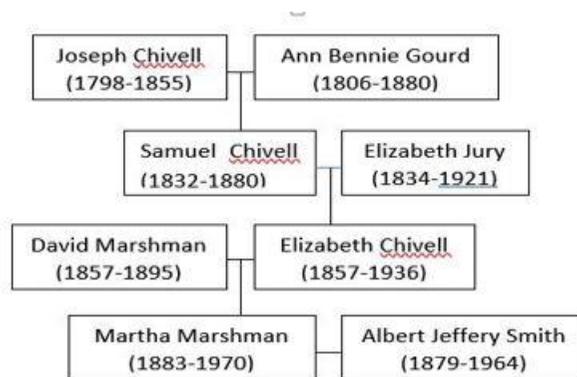


HEATHERLEA. BLACK SOIL FARM



*Standing: Dave, Mavis, Jessie, Jeff
Seated: Bert & Martha Smith*

CHIVELL & MARSHMAN ANCESTRY



JOSHUA MARSHMAN⁸

A notable Marshman forebear who was a missionary with William Carey in India is Joshua Marshman. Born in 1768 in Wiltshire England to poor parents who could give him little education, he was ever learning, studying at the Bristol Baptist College and being active in the Broadmead Baptist Church. He eventually gained a Doctor of Divinity.

In 1799 with his wife and two children he sailed to India to Serampore a few miles north of Calcutta where he worked with Carey as a missionary. He was involved with social reform and intellectual debate with educated Hindus.

Like Carey he was a talented and gifted scholar and together they translated the Bible into many Indian languages, as well as translating much classical Indian literature into English. He contributed to the development of Indian newspapers and Indian education and encouraged children to be taught in local languages when colonial leaders preferred they be in English.

He continued his studies into Chinese and with a colleague Lassar is credited with the first Bible translation into Chinese.

In 1818 the prospectus written by Joshua Marshman on behalf of himself Carey and Ward, the missionary team, was issued for a proposed new “College for the instruction of Asiatic, Christian and other youth in Eastern literature and European science.” So began Serampore College which still operates today.

Joshua died in 1837 and is buried with his wife and fellow missionaries in the mission burial grounds at Serampore.



⁸ 3rd Great uncle of David Marshman.

Whoa Whoop!!!” yelled the farmer, as he pulled on the reins of his horse team. The horses were very happy to stop as they had been ploughing for what seemed like hours. The soil was of sandy loam and seed needed to be planted in this paddock before the coming of the winter rains. The teamster agreed with the horses, and he was tired of walking, and keeping the plough straight so as to make sure all the ground was turned. But this man Joshua had a hidden agenda. The last time the team passed the house, he called to his daughter Miriam,

“Please come and mind the horses while I take a break.”

Miriam was annoyed because she had obliged before, and felt taken advantage of by her father, as she sat for what seemed like hours to a young girl before he came back to continue with the ploughing. The horses were “parked” at the town end of the paddock. The town of Mallalla was close by, too close to be free of temptation for in Mallalla, a town about forty miles north of Adelaide, there was a building, very attractive to this farmer: The Hotel. While successful in business, Joshua along with his brother Robert, had made a reputation for themselves for being too frequent visitors to the hotels, and embarrassing themselves and their families because of it. In the not too distant future, Robert caused great distress to his family, when influenced by alcohol or depression or both, he fell or deliberately jumped into a well at the back of his house in Grace Plains and drowned.

Joshua Marshman was born in Westbury Leigh, Wiltshire England in 1824. He married Emma Hague in 1843 at Dilton Marsh Wiltshire. They had two children born in England, and one died aged one year and nine months on the ship as they were coming to Australia. Here is a summary from the ship’s log.

“May 29th the weather was fine today, but more pain. Michael Marshman brings more sadness as the little boy breathes his last breath. He was just 1 year and 9 months old. The sadness in the parents of those who have died is almost too hard to bear. His father Joshua seemed to be taking it very badly. Captain did the service as family and friends bid their farewell.”

All their other children were born in South Australia, all in Adelaide except the last two, who were born in Peachy Belt. (Information from the internet reveals that Peachy Belt is an area north of Adelaide. This general district gets its name from Quantong or native peach trees that covered the area)

With Joshua came his brother Robert Marshman and his newly married wife Hannah on the same ship *Sibelle*. They sailed on 6th April 1848 at 5am from England and 101 days later arrived at Port Adelaide. They both lived in the same districts in South Australia for a number of years. The brothers were the sons of William Marshman, a weaver of Westbury Leigh Wiltshire England.

During 1865 the two brothers went to Grace Plains, north of Adelaide and took up land for farming. Descendants of both families are still to be found in about a 20-mile radius, namely Grace Plains, Mallalla, Owen and Balaklava. At one period the sons operated a blacksmith shop on the property, and also a butcher's shop, besides farming operations. While Robert continued at Grace Plains till his death in 1891, Joshua moved to Victoria in about 1890 and died at Lah near Warracknabeal on 21 Mar 1902. He was 79. Cause of death was cerebral anaemia and bronchial pneumonia.

Joshua had eleven children and David (my great grandfather) was the seventh of the children born in the Peachy Belt to Joshua and Emma. Emma has been described as a very Christian woman, quite strong and independent. Note has been made of the fact that many of her children's names are not common in the names of her husband's family, and she chose names of people who lived in the street she lived in when younger in England. Most of the names chosen are also names from the Bible, reflecting her Christian faith, including Jesse as a man's name. Emma died at Warracknabeal on 28th September 1897. Cause of death was Aortic stenosis. She was 72 years of age.

David worked in the Mallalla area until he married Elizabeth Chivell at the Christian Chapel in Mallalla on 09 Jan 1879. His farm was on the north side of the road from Long Plains to Pinery, and his older children attended the Pinery school. The third child Martha Annie Marshman, (my grandmother) who was born on August 16, 1883, told me she remembers this farm and farm house. At the front of the house was a well, and she remembers cutting

her finger on wire around the well. It bled freely, and my cousin Rodney tells me that bleeding is a problem for some members of this branch of the Marshman clan.

The whole David Marshman family moved to Victoria in 1893, going overland with wagons and stock, when land became available as stations were cut up for closer settlement. They had a farm close to Brim just across the railway line. David died of Typhoid fever in 1895 and is buried at the Warracknabeal cemetery along with his daughter Emma Elizabeth. He was 37. The family then moved into Brim Township staying there until 1930 when Elizabeth moved to Horsham to be near her family. She died in 1936 and is buried in the Horsham cemetery. She was 79.

As well as losing her father at aged 12 my Grandmother, Martha Annie Marshman also lost her two older siblings when she was 15 and 16 years respectively, making her the eldest child alive in the family with 4 younger children without a husband and father. In spite of difficulties she completed a dressmaker's course and was able to design clothes. She sewed many of the families' clothes. Her responsibilities were great, but her practical skills like sewing, cooking and managing a home and farm were invaluable in her future pioneering role. She was very active in the Church of Christ in Brim, until she married Albert Smith and shifted to Kogan in Queensland.



MARTHA SMITH (MATTIE)⁹

I remember Joey boy, the rosella parrot taken from a nest in a hollow tree. His cage, in my grandmother's house, was large and homemade. It had bird wire on the front with wood on the other three sides and the top and bottom. There were four legs that kept the bottom of the cage about two feet off the floor. The parrot was easy for a small boy to see. From as early as I can remember I was captivated by Joey, flitting about, taking a bath and having a wonderful time, eating bird seed and kicking seeds on to the cage and veranda floor. Copying Joey, I picked up the seeds and enjoyed crunching them with my teeth. Grandma taught Joey to whistle a tune. What a treat it was when she got Joey to whistle it while I was there. It was a delightful memory until I was older, when an Uncle sang words to the tune. He sang:

"Go home to your mother, you red headed bugger, you don't belong to me"

This soiled the memory as swearing was forbidden in our family.

"Be careful," Grandma warned, "Joey will bite you."

Of course, when no one was looking, I couldn't resist putting my fingers through the bird netting to see what a bite was like. Joey did bite, and I pulled my fingers out quickly, but the bite was more like a hurtful nip. I liked Joey.

I remember the Cocky at Grandma's house: a white yellow crested cockatoo, that was chained by the leg and sitting out on a perch. I didn't like cocky. He did have lovely white feathers, and a nice-looking yellow crest, but he was large and screechy, and made an awful loud noise. And his eye! I couldn't help looking. His eyes were a beautiful black; and shiny. He cocked his head on the side and viewed me with a dark, mysterious, sinister look. He was dangerously attractive, and I was drawn, but I didn't like him much. He had a black beak and a funny round black tongue that went in and out. How he got sunflower seeds, from the end of his beak, where he chomped them, past his round black tongue going in and out, down his throat was a mystery

⁹ *Owen's Grandmother*

to me. He must have succeeded because scattered on the floor were all the seed husks, but no kernels. And he really could bite. I tried the poking finger trick: only once. It hurt!! And I saw my cousins go off bawling to their mother, spluttering, "Cocky bit me" only to be told loudly, "How many times have I told you not to go near that cockatoo? You know he bites, now keep away from him."

Grandma lived ten miles away from our home, and when we were children we often went on to where she (and Grandpa) lived after church for Sunday dinner. Their house was the typical Queenslander design, with a central section, including a large lounge room and two bedrooms, with a large wide veranda all around. The veranda had a corner walled off for a bathroom and another area was for the kitchen and dining room. The whole of the eastern side of the veranda was made into a flat where Uncle Jeff and Auntie Emma lived until their family expanded into the new house that they built.

My grandparent's house was on high stumps, with twenty-four steps to reach the floor level. These stairs were a novelty to my sister, my brother and I as we only had three stairs at our house, so we would run up and down while counting them or playing on them. From the landing at the top of the stairs, the view was of small bushes, fences, ploughed fields of black soil with trees in the distance. We couldn't see that far from our house. At times we played with Rodney and Graham, our cousins and children of Uncle Jeff and Auntie Emma. My memory of them is that they talked to one another in their own strange made up language that no one else could understand. I also remember that they would bite us. They must have been trained by the cockatoo!!

Grandma was the first person I spoke to on the telephone. The connection was made from our party line through the telephone exchange in Kogan seven miles from my home. There were four homes with phones including ours that were all connected to the one wire and to the exchange. We could talk to anyone of the others on our line at any time, but to get to the outside world the connection was made through the exchange with an operator who went off duty at nine pm.

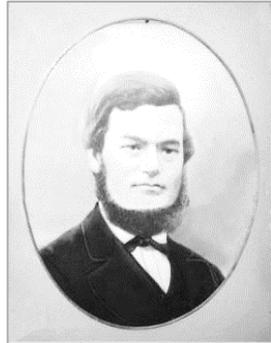
To ring Grandma the scenario would be like this. My mother would ring one long ring. The exchange would answer "Kogan." My mother would say, "This

is 4K here, could you please connect me to 3S.” 3 was the number of the party line that my Grandma’s phone was connected to. ‘S’ was Grandma’s Morse code letter (three short rings represent dots in Morse code) that the exchange rang. Our Morse code letter was K which was a long ring, a short ring and a long ring, representing a dash a dot and a dash. Grandma would answer and talk to my mother, and then I stood on a chair as the phone was on the wall at adult standing mouth height and talk to Grandma. When the call was finished, my mother would say goodbye and then ring off with a short ring to notify others on the line and the exchange that the line was now clear for others to use. – Owen Clark



*JOSEPH AND ANN CHIVELL
CORNWALL*

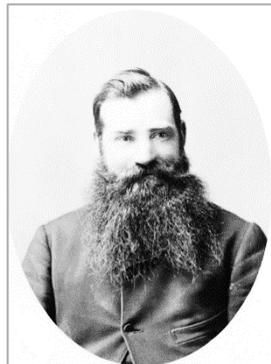
VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



*SAMUEL CHIVELL
1832-1880 SETTLED
MALLALLA*



*ELIZABETH CHIVELL
NEE JURY
1839-1921*



*DAVID MARSHMAN
1857-1895*



*ELIZABETH MARSHMAN
1857-1936*

CLARK AND SMITH FAMILY UNITE

Mavis Pearl Smith (1909-2004) Married
Roy Daniel Clark (1907-1995) on Feb 25 1936

CHILDREN

Owen Roy Clark 1937
Eula Mavis Holt Vogler nee Clark 1940
Barry Daniel Albert Clark 1944



My father and mother came from Stawell in Victoria to the Kogan district as 1907 selectors. They arrived at Warra in May 1907 and started the Horsham sawmill three miles from Kogan on the Warra road. I was born at Nurse Fishburn's hospital in Dalby on 11th September 1907. Being the fourth child of a family of nine children.

My parents were still living in tents at what was called the Horsham sawmill at that time.

There was an original Perth school south of the Tara road. A new Perth school was built north of the Tara road.

I was educated at the Perth primary school, having started school at the beginning of 1912, being four years and four months old and double banking on a horse with my brother Ronnie, for the four miles to school.

I was conducting a horse carrying business two days a week in 1920, at 13 years old. I left school at 14 years. I worked for sawmills and drove horse teams until 1926, when at the age of 18 years I was managing a sawmill near Kogan. I obtained a third class steam engine drivers certificate at 18 and added a second and first class in later years. The depression years closed down the sawmill and I worked at dam sinking, rabbiting, on sawmills and sugar mills and carrying with motor trucks.

I bought my first interest in land with my brother Ronnie at Millmerran in 1929 but kept working in mills, both saw and sugar mills. I went to Bible College in Glen Iris in Melbourne in 1933 to train for the ministry, but because of depression times only stayed 3 months. This prepared me as a local preacher in the Church of Christ. Coming back from Bible College I had a shop in Toowoomba, with Ronnie for about a year and this we traded away to establish a mill in the Kogan district with 1280 acres of land.

In 1935 I dissolved the partnership with Ronnie and he took over the sawmill and I took the land. I expanded my land holding until I had 10,000 acres, running sheep. For 7 years I worked my sheep property and worked in the sawmill until I got on top of finances.

Mavis Smith was born in the same hospital in Dalby eighteen months after my birth date. We grew up in the same district, attending the same school and played tennis together. A romance was beginning to blossom and in February of 1935 we announced our engagement the day we won the tennis tournament in May.

I married Mavis Smith on 26th February 1936. The night of the kitchen tea (surprise) Mavis was still in her cow yard clothes churning butter. We had three children. Our first child Owen was born in May 1937, Eula in 1940, and Barry in 1944. I learned to shear in 1937, and eventually got up to 115 per day. I sold the property, Iona in 1961 and came to Chinchilla to live. I bought a number of out of repair houses and repaired and rented them until I had nine tenants. I sold my interests in houses in 1976. I began as a local preacher in the Church of Christ in 1935 and I have continued ever since until the present 1992. When I left the farm in 1961, I went as an interim Church of Christ minister for short periods to Gladstone, Redcliffe and Roma. I was chairman of the Church of Christ circuit committee in the Chinchilla district for over 30 years.

I was also chairman of the Millbank school committee, the Millbank tennis club and chairman of the Malara dingo destruction board and its organiser. I was the president of both the Chinchilla and district Saturday tennis association and cricket association. I was joint organiser and opening bat of the first cricket team to go to Brisbane to take part in the country week carnival. In the past I had represented as a player, the Kogan and district tennis association in 1923 at 16 years old. I had 5 years as secretary of the Chinchilla bowls club and was a trustee.

I wrote a booklet "Let's Remember them" in 1976 and the book "The Little Smoke" in 1978-79. I wrote many poems. I learned to water ski in 1979 aged 71. I bought a speed boat and passed the test and obtained a speed boat license in 1981 aged 73 years. I am still water skiing in 1985 aged 77.

Rob Holt who conducted his funeral service commented,

There is so much more but to summarise I see a man with high principles, with a pioneering spirit, adventurous, but a Christian gentleman through and through. He had very strong convictions and gave of himself to teach his own family the Christian way. He had a big heart for needy people and for

example he introduce Life Line bins in this town (Chinchilla) when they were not readily accepted by townsfolk at the beginning and now many bales are sent by rail to Brisbane.

His Christianity was practical which is demonstrated by his care of families in the Kogan district. He always provided transport for children to attend Sunday School, and Band Of Hope meetings and parents to town for shopping. At a recent Millbank reunion, people were expressing their appreciation for all he had done.

Other points of interest to his life are that in 1950 he supervised the moving of the Tannymorel hall to Dalby where it became the Church of Christ building. He also supervised the shifting of the Bald Knob hall near Maleny to Caloundra where it became the first Dicky Beach Camp site building. With his saw milling skills he supervised the cutting of the timber for the Chinchilla Church of Christ building. Roy died in the Chinchilla hospital from the effects of prostate cancer after a long illness.



PRAYER FOR THE HUMBLE MAN OR WOMAN¹⁰

Lord Thou knowest better than I know that I am growing older and will someday be old.

Keep me from getting talkative and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details: give me wings to get to the point.

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of other's pains: help me to endure this with patience.

Shut my lips to my own aches and pains.

They are increasing, and my love for rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint; some of them are so hard to live with but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy.

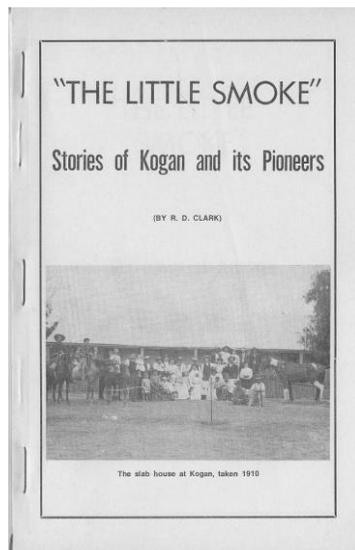
With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all but Thou knowest Lord, that I want a few friends at the end. Roy Clark.



¹⁰ Prayer found in the papers of Roy Clark after his death.

'THE LITTLE SMOKE'
BY ROY CLARK IN 1979

STORIES OF THE KOGAN DISTRICT & ITS PIONEERS



MAVIS PEARL SMITH (1909-2004)

Mavis Clark nee Smith speaks

When my parents first came to Qld in 1907, they had 2, 1280 acre blocks they had selected. They lived in tents while the house was being built. My mother did the cooking in a camp oven on an open fire.

I was born in Dalby in a hospital still standing in 1989 opposite the Dalby bowling club. Nurse Fishburn was the midwife. My mother went home to Edenhope with me by train and sulky.

Edenhope: The mud that was taken for the house made a little dam, fairly close to the house. This water was also used for house purposes in dry weather as there was only one tank on the house. The dam water was cleaned with lime or ashes. With only one tank for water, we were only allowed one bath a week in a wash tub, in the bedroom as in those days there was no bathroom. The same water was used for everyone and ended up in the garden. The water was heated in the stove in a kerosene tin.

The outside of the house looked very nice when finished, painted bluey grey, with red and white painted imitation bricks around the windows. The walls were 10ft tall and the grey blue colour was from a wash made up of a mixture of lime being coloured by "blue bag". (Blue bag was added to washing to make whites, more white.)

Edenhope had an ordinary corrugated iron roof. It was built close to the ground and there were lots of snakes underneath. One got in the ceiling and terrified Jessie and I as the open manhole was in our bedroom. The verandah had netting around and grapevines.

There were four equal rooms with no passage, a verandah right around, and double glass doors facing east. There was a fireplace in the kitchen but the stove and pantry was on the south side verandah. The stove was covered with tin when the storms came and when it rained.

The bags of flour and sugar were stored on this verandah. They were bought in large amounts: 150lb bags of flour and 60lb bags of sugar. Everything had to be baked including bread. The stove cooked well under these open air conditions. When butter and eggs were plentiful mum put them down in

brine. The butter was done up in lbs, wrapped in muslin. It was rewashed before using. Pigs were killed and had to be cured, and smoked in the chimney. We had goat meat sometimes and plenty of kangaroo and wallaby meat, mixed together they made nice rissoles. Kangaroo tail soup was also very nice. We lived off the land a lot, and at one time Dad had a vegie garden on the Wambo Creek about three miles away. When greens were scarce we cooked pigface, a fleshy weed that grew wild. At one time we had an incubator and hatched chickens. We killed the roosters and sold the hens. Dave and I did most of the plucking and cleaning of the roosters.

When I was 4 in 1913 we went back to Victoria to see grandma Marshman (my grandmother) and great grandma Chivell. I remember grandma Chivell in a rocking chair, the first I'd seen. There are quite a few things I can remember, especially seeing my great grandma, and my first train ride, and I got giddy in the train. At 7 I learned to milk a cow. I was 8 when I first saw the sea and 11 when I was first inside a church.

We held church services in Grandpa Smiths home called Beulah, when I was small. Auntie Bess taught Sunday school and Grandpa was the speaker. When Grandpa left my father taught us. Our cousins the Scoullars and Ted Smiths children Doll, Jean and Grace, used to visit on Sundays. They were our main friends and play mates. We children did a lot of singing, we used to spend hours on a Sunday night. We sang mostly from an old blue Sankey book which was the one before the red one. Jean, and Grace who was called Snow, used to go to the Congregational Church in Victoria and they taught us some hymns out of the Congregational Hymn book too. Mick and Doll were the other two older kids in the Ted Smith's family.

Beulah had a similar 4 rooms to Edenhope, but only a verandah lean to, facing south. It was about a hundred yards away and was made of timber cut at Ted Smiths mill rather than mud. It was whitewashed on the walls. There was a shearing shed at Beulah, just one stand and hand shears were used. Dave and I got into the bales and helped stamp the wool down. Dave was so small he had to be helped in.

Because Grandma got very sick and nearly died they decided to shift away to Brisbane. I was aged about 7, 8, or 9 and "balled my head off" because I missed them so much. Aunty Bess went with them. When my father Bert

went possuming the family went to Brisbane and stayed with grandma, Dave and I went to the Greenslopes School and got friendly with Liala Yarrow at the Baptist Church, and we wrote to each other for many years.

We had a house cat and a wild cat came and fought with our cat, until Bert shot it.

One evening when grandpa, grandma and Aunty Bess were visiting us, we had just finished our evening meal, when the cats started to fight. Dave got such a fright, he jumped on to the table amongst the dishes and never broke a thing.

When Mum brought Jessie home from hospital in Toowoomba she came to Warra by train and then home by horse and buggy. On the way home they ran into a fierce storm, but managed to keep the baby dry.

Working men wore flannel shirts, dungaree (like jeans) trousers, hob nailed boots, and straw hats. Jack Murry, a bachelor, lived in a hut made of slabs on block 6 a few miles from Edenhope. The hut had a small tank and a dirt floor. When he came home from Warra, he sometimes stayed at Edenhope for the night. Once I very well remember when we woke in the morning he was asleep on the verandah, wearing just a flannel shirt and no pyjamas, the rest to the imagination! In the early days there were no toilets on trains, so Jack told the others in the carriage to look away and he used a paper packet and threw it out the window. He had dirty habits like spitting and not washing. He had a tobacco pouch made out of the skin around kangaroo testicles. While he was a great singer, he was the worst stutterer I have ever known. When he stuttered the dogs would bark at him. Once he had sandy blight and was trying to tell folk, "I've got the s..s..s..s come out you cow, blight."

He lived hard as a bachelor, smoked a pipe, cleared prickly pear and dug a hole in the Wambo sand to bury it to kill it. He carried it in his arms. He was a Church of Christ member in Red Cliffs in Victorian and when he sold his block he went back there and the church there gave him an 80th birthday party.

There was little furniture in homes in these days and a lot of "make-do" furniture. In my bed room for a duchess I had 2 kerosene tin boxes and a

mirror on top. Kerosene tins held 4 gallons, and they came in wooden boxes. Beds were made with bags tacked onto a wooden bed frame. We had proper beds in Victoria and at Montrose.

For a food cupboard my mother used 4 kerosene boxes. Both the duchess and the cupboard had cretonne curtains around. Food was dried stuff such as peaches, apples, pears, apricots, peas and many kind of beans, rice, sago, tapioca, currants, sultana and raisins. Mum made mixed peel from citrus skins which was very nice.

Schooling was a problem, at first there was a half time school at Malara. It was a provisional school built by parents. There was a school building across the road from Edenhope, but it didn't last long. It was kept going with three pupils for a while, the three being Dave, another neighbour's boy and myself. Then it had to be correspondence school which meant a lot for my mother who was the supervisor. I really liked it. Things were explained well and being in the higher classes we could follow the instructions. There was one thing that made it hard, the method of doing sums had changed. If a child was willing to learn, well and good. If not it was really hard to get them to settle down, and that made things very difficult for the supervisor. I finished school in 1923. I went to school with Jean Smallicomb who married J.C. (Clarrie) Naughton who was in his nineties in 1996. I also played with Percy and Laurie Smiths daughter Grace.

After a big drought, when I was 15-16 my parents decided to go to Gippsland, Maffra and take on a share dairy farm. They went by train and stayed with Grandma Marshman on the way. There is a photo of Grandma and the family at the Melbourne zoo. In 1924-25 we stayed on this share farm for almost 2 years.

The rest of the family went to school at Bundulaguah where my brother Dave did very well. In 1991 he still has a big dictionary which one of the locals gave for the pupil who had made the most progress in the year and Dave was the fortunate one. There was a write up in the local paper that gave a lot of credit to the Qld correspondence school.

Milking cows by hand was a big long job. I started milking when I was 7 years old and milked by hand up until I was married in 1936 aged 27 years, and I did continue for a year or so after that. We stored the milk in 4 gallon

kerosene tins and used to lift them up into the separator vat, and it took a lot of time to turn the separator by hand. It was a free but not an easy life, but I loved it. A lot of the time we had to walk for the cows in the droughts, or otherwise it was on horseback. We would run into storms while bringing the cows home, and the cows would stop and put their backs to the storm and not move.

The inside of Edenhope looked nice with papered walls and lace curtains. In the winter we used the open fireplace in the dining room cooking onions, and potatoes in their jackets in the coals, very nice! In the heat of summer we slept on the verandah, and put an umbrella up to keep the moon light out, some said to stop us getting "moonstruck". We saw very few people and us kids got rather shy especially Jessie. When visitors came she'd clear off and after they went, on one occasion, we had to look for her only to find her asleep in the hen's nests.

We saw very few cars, one now and again. My brother Jeff was riding up the middle of the road on a bike and a car came up behind him and blew its horn. He leapt off the bike, left it in the middle of the road, and took off for the fence, so as to leave the "monster" go on its way. Later when there was a few more cars around, our neighbour got a Ford T Ute and found it hard to change the gears after driving horses all his life. One day he was going up a creek and she got out of control and so she hit a bank. He thought he was driving horses and yelled out, "WOO WOO WOOP".

Sister Jessie was always swinging backwards on a chair and was warned many times she'd go back over one of these days, anyway the day came. We had a teacher Miss Doherty who Jessie seemed to think was just it. So back she swung saying "I'm Miss Doherty, I'm Miss Doherty." The next thing the chair went over backwards with a big crash and a mighty yell. We reminded her that we have never seen Miss Doherty do that.

At one stage our men netted in the property to go in for sheep. Unfortunately the netting wasn't high enough and the dingoes got over. They got so bad and so many sheep were lost they had to go in for cattle and dairying.

My grandparents and mum and dad were always particular about their appearance. My two Aunties, Flo and Lu Smith were dress makers in

Toowoomba and would send mum good cloths (shirt and trousers) to unpick. She'd spend hours doing this before she'd lay the pattern on the material. People would say how well dressed we were. Mum held a certificate for dressmaking. She also had a certificate from school. Of course we thought she was clever, and so she was. She could do almost anything those days from making soap, to leg ropes for the cows. My father was mainly self-educated, and had little schooling in the early days. But you would never know, when one is willing to improve themselves.

There were 11 in my father's family and sometimes food was scarce and he'd take bread and treacle for lunch at school. My Aunty Bess was mainly self-educated too. She studied and passed an exam in Warra and became our school teacher in the provisional school at Montrose and Malara. These schools were three and a half miles apart, one week she'd drive by horse and buggy to Malara and I used to go with her. A horse named Betty was bought especially and she pulled a buggy. Jeff has a photo.

I can't remember how long this kept up. Aunty Bess was also a self-taught organist, and after they shifted to Brisbane she played in some of the big churches down there. Once when school was at Edenhope, during one dinner hour the boys were playing around our small dam and one fellow fell in and of course came out dripping wet. So Auntie had to find something for him to wear. The best she could get was my grandfather's clothes. He was a man of 6 feet. When school was called in there was a lot of giggles that went around the classroom. He looked like a scare crow.

Father sang nursery rhymes to us at night. We sat on his knee and he told us funny stories and poems that he had learnt. He taught the Smiths and us in Sunday School. For years we had no church until about 1922-3 when services started in the 16 Mile hall some 7 miles away. Mr Spratt and Mr Vanham came from Roma monthly and Fletts and Davis's came every second Sunday. It was drought time and the horses were poor. So Brother Dave and myself decided we would walk to the special services that day. On our way we caught up with our elderly neighbour and she walked the last four miles with us. On our way home we had a lift for a few miles. Mother read bible stories to us at night and when I was little I can remember her singing us to sleep. The first song I ever learnt goes like this, Each night I lay me down to

sleep, The angels are looking on me, I know I'm safe for angels keep, The angels are looking on me, All night, all night, The angels are looking on me. The small dam at Edenhope was deep and a kangaroo was chased into the dam by the dogs. The kangaroo drowned and Roy (Clark) had to dive in at night and drag the roo out as he had to go early in the morning to cut blocks. Dave, when he was very small went to stumps and pulled the bark off looking for spiders. One day one ran up his leg and into his pants. He pulled his pants off and ran home crying blue murder. He used to also put bark up his nose.

The first time I remember about lies. Dave said there were beads on a well up the bush. Mum said he's telling you lies. Don't believe him. He also said there were black fellows up the bush.

When Dad went possuming us kids went to our grandparents in Brisbane and Dave and I went to school. Jessie would take off when the tram came and Aunty Bess would have to take off after her. I remember she used to take off when the train came to Goramba. (A local railway station)

Mum was a fast runner, and won a race against other women even though she has had two children. Her prize was a gold pin with a chain and a heart. At 13 I taught myself how to play tennis and I was scared when I came to play my first match.

Dave was my only playmate. We did everything together. Jessie was six years younger.

In the early days we never had ice cream, only when we went to Brisbane. So Jessie decided she would make some and put it on a post out in the frost. Next morning it was ice. She ate it and it made her vomit.

I used to tease Dave a lot when we were little and my grandfather said "If you don't stop that I'll give you Toffee on the end of a stick." It sounded good but when I found out what it meant I changed my mind. It meant a stick around my legs.

All our shopping was done by post, by catalogue, and small samples of materials even hats and shoes.

Dad used to play the tin whistle and mouth organ and mum played the little pedal organ.

Mum was the barber.

In those days clothes were patched and patched. Sox were darned. Every week there was mending and patching to be done.

There were defined roles. Generally the men worked outside and the women inside. Although my mother helped my father in the branding of poddy calves. Us kids all had jobs to do, everything had to be done before Sunday, as it was a day of rest.

Castor oil was the "cure all" along with some homeopathic medicines.

I did housework with Aunty Bess, Grace and Jean in Brisbane. I stayed with Grandma and did housework one month before I was married. They lived at "Beulah" 182 Juliette St. Greenslopes Brisbane. I used to go with Aunty Nell at Stone's corner to the Baptist church.

A telegraph line was built in the early days from Dalby to Roma and went through Iona and Edenhope. It seems to have had two wires on insulators. When the railway went through in 1880 the lines went along the railway lines. However I saw the posts and the insulators. They were later burnt in fires. Bush fences were made in the early days as holding yards. My Grandpa helped my dad at branding time.

Jeff made a garden and when people used to walk around the house they would walk on the garden so he put stakes around it. Uncle Ted came over to get a loaf of bread and he fell heavily over the stakes and we kids laughed as he groaned. It was no laughing matter as he couldn't go to work the next day and he had a large lump on his leg.

My father had a stockwhip and Dave loved to get his hands on it even though he was not supposed to touch it he took it and went out chasing poddy calves. He swung the whip and it got hooked on a calf and he had to chase it through the scrub until he got it back. We used to play with the calves and ride them. They were usually quiet but I got a tooth through my lip when one suddenly bucked. This was our entertainment.

Mail The first mailman who came from Warra with a horse and buggy was Bob Range. He went three routes, first past Edenhope, second at the end of (Doweyes) Dooies lane i.e. the lane at the bottom end of the Beulah block, and third through Evandale (Armstrongs) on Montrose Road. Charley Gase

also came in a sulky from Warra. He had a horse called Barney. He'd yell "Get up Barney" and then said "it takes Barney a long time to get speed up" and even then he was only going at a jig jog. His was a two day trip and he stayed overnight at Whitsels. Archy Mackay was the first mailman with a car, a single seater, red in colour with a dickie seat. He was followed by Alan Clark and then Klieidon, who used to shoot roos and put them in on top of the mail and we'd get it all bloody.

My father was 6 feet tall. He had fair hair, sparkling blue eyes and a red moustache. His death was caused by weakness from Prostate cancer. The Smith family had a Marquette car at Montrose Estate. My father worked hard but was not a good manager. Men didn't help women. There was a great deal of poverty. I was brought up in a time when men went out to work, and women stayed at home. In the Smith family, I did all the housework for my brother, Dave, (his washing, ironing etc.) just as my sister Jessie looked after her younger brother, Jeff.

In 1922 the whole income for one year was the sale of one pig. And in that year Christmas dinner consisted mainly of cooked onions.



VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE



*ROY DANIEL CLARK
1907 - 1995*



*MAVIS PEARL CLARK
NEE SMITH 1909 - 2004*



Owen Roy, Eula Mavis & Barry Daniel Albert

OWEN ROY CLARK & MARION HELEN CLARK, AND FAMILY

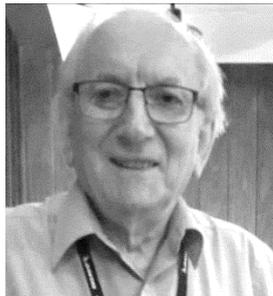
Owen Roy Clark 1937 married Marion Helen Clark (nee Hunt in) Sept 1961

CHILDREN

Phillip Leslie Clark b.1962

Stuart Gregory Clark b.1966

Russell David Clark b.1969



Owen Roy Clark & Marion Helen Hunt



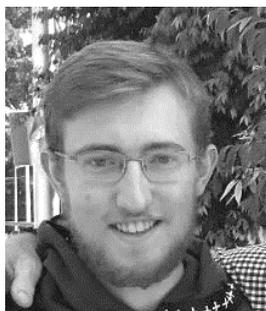
Phillip Leslie, Stuart Gregory & Russell David

VIEW FROM THE BOUNDARY FENCE

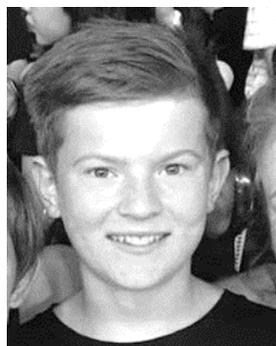


*Above: Amanda
Below: Andrew*

GRANDCHILDREN



*Above: Daniel
Below: Oliver*



*Above: Lachlan
Below: Hamish*

CONCLUSION



I HAVE A DREAM . . .

I have wants, wishes likes and ideas that are impossible but will you the reader let me have my impossible dreams??

I want to see people continually learning and growing, transformed in spirit by all of life's experiences and continually creative.

I want to be inspired by human capacities, wisdom and values that transform.

I want to know and give forgiveness that holds no grudges.

It would be great to see people who are deeply in touch with who they are, connected to the gold at the centre of their being and hear their songs, laughter, joy and happiness that really lasts.

I'd love to see families who really love one another.

How grand to hear beautiful music that reflects life and enriches the soul.

I want to see all people happily sharing in all the treasures of the earth.

I'd like to see all people empowered and having a real sense of who they are, without putting others down.

I want to see children encouraged, loved, guided and understood and playing happily.

Wouldn't it be great to know everyone has good food and water and enough to eat and drink?

I would like to see people live fully in harmony so prisons would not exist.

I wish people could handle their differences and conflicts, so they might grow and increase in their love, understanding and appreciation of each other, and enrich each other's lives.

I wish people a faith that could accept and work with the hard and difficult things of life, so they might mature and find grandness of character and soul.

I would like people to experience the satisfaction of a job well done, of great effort and sore muscles, followed by good food, well-earned rest and peaceful sleep.

I wish every baby could be born into a good home with loving relationships and experience a beautiful world.

I wish people would accept the consequences of their choices and actions without blaming someone or something else.

I want to hear stories, see paintings and read books that inspire and challenge.

*I wish people would be open hearted, open minded and ever learning.
I wish people would understand that there are many phases in life and every phase has its struggle as well as richness.
I like to see adults who are still in touch with the bright eyed and happy child they once were or were intended to be.
I want all the senses to be fully active to experience the fullness of life without alcohol or drug induced unreality.
I want to see satisfying and life enriching movies especially stories of struggle that end in success or triumph.
I like to sit in the sunshine that is nice and warm.
I like to wear clothes that make me feel good and proud of who I am.
How beautiful it is to breathe deeply clean air that makes lungs and body alive.
I like to laugh at good clean jokes.
How great it would be for sex to be pure, beautiful and fun.
Let me enjoy roses, flowers, scents and gardens.
Let me also enjoy a forest, its giant trees, its bushes, its moss, its smells, its running water, and its waterfalls.
How great to hear birds singing, see them flying, and see eagles gliding.
How great it would be to fly up in the blue sky and flit among the clouds.
Let me see beautiful sunsets and sunrises.
I want to see animals, birds and fish free from cruelty and pollution and able to enjoy their environment.
Wouldn't it be great for everyone to experience new places, new people, new cultures, and travel to see the beauty of the whole world?
I would like words to have their full meaning because life has its full meaning.
I want to appreciate complete silence without any discomfort.
Let me experience and appreciate the blackest night away from all human light and contemplate the beauty of the stars without being afraid.
I need wisdom to appreciate life's treasures from the past as well as the present.
I would like the concept of divine love to be a motivating factor in all life.
I want life to be a rich and varied adventure for all.
I would like to live fully till my body dies, and then after that live fully in another grander dimension.
What I want and wish for myself I wish for every person.*

*I am dreaming of what I might like the kingdom of God to be even if it is impossible.
It is not your dream, but I do hope you have one that is inspiring and grand.
But thanks for listening to MY DREAM.*



My Last Prayer - May, 2018

In 2018 Marion and I decided to give our bodies to the Melbourne University's Body Donor Program when we die. We have set this up knowing it means that we are donating our body to the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience for the purpose of teaching, study, examination and investigation of human anatomy. On completion of such study and teaching, the body will be cremated and the ashes disposed of according to our prescribed wishes.

In this matter here is my wish and prayer.

May my body that has served me well for a goodly number of years to serve God and my fellow man, in its last expression be used to contribute further to the education and skills of health professionals to further enrich the lives of others.

