

WELCOME TO THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION'S MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER. THIS MONTH, I WOULD LIKE TO REPORT ON THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND THE GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 2018, I WILL MENTION AWARDS TO THREE OF OUR MEMBERS AND LATER A LITTLE DISCUSSION ON CURRENT FEDERAL POLITICS.

Annual Meeting:

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) had two important agenda items. The presentation of the Treasurers Report and the election of Association's new executive and a committee for the current year.

Treasurer Bob Hamblion presented the Financial Balance Statement for 2017. The financial report was published in last month's newsletter. The report showed our finances to be in a sound position, low-interest rates notwithstanding.

On behalf of the members of our Association, I would like to express my gratitude to Bob Hamblion for all his hard work. The role of treasurer is not an easy task, Bob has to manage incoming receipts for the annual trip away and newsletter postage and then there are the payments and banking. I would also like to thank our auditor, Allan Fairbairn for his hard work.

The next formality at the AGM is the election of executive and committee for 2018. John Louden was elected Returning Officer and after thanking the outgoing executive and committee, he declared all positions vacant. The results of the election are published in this month's newsletter (*see page 2*). We are fortunate as an Association to have such dedicated people on our executive and committee.

Thank you, John Louden, for once again doing an excellent job as Returning Officer. I am sure John if it had been your desire to work for the Australian Electoral Commission, you would have gone far in that organisation. I can picture the nameplate on your desk, Commissioner Louden.

Vale Frank Eagles

I am sad to report the passing of member Frank Eagles on Monday, the 26th February 2018.

I am sure that many members will recall that Frank worked on Subscriber Installation in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. For the SCG and Showground venues, he was greatly respected by the staff at both these venues. Frank was their go-to man.

Frank was an unforgettable character, a friend to many. Frank was very active in our Union and served for many years on Branch Council and the Subscriber Installation Committee. On the industrial scene, Frank had his own unique style of doing things. Some found his methods and tactics difficult to follow; most of the time he came through for the members. He was kind and caring to the unfortunate; some who were homeless. Frank always stood-up for causes that he believed.

Frank moved to the Gold Coast after his retirement but returned to Sydney in the last couple of years as he became increasingly unwell.

You are going to be missed, Frank Eagles.

Special Awards to Ross Keys and Warren Morley

After the AGM was closed, the February General Meeting followed. We had two special presentations to make.

The *Retired Members Association's* constitution allows for persons from external organisations to become a member, providing their previous Union does not have an equivalent to our Association.

We have had the privilege of having two such members from the State Public Service. Both members, Ross Keys and Warren Morley have been with us for ten years. They are regular attendees at our general meetings, attend most of our social functions and the annual trip-away. Despite their lack of technical knowledge, they are great fun and joy to have among us. Ross has helped John Lane with the organisation of social functions and Warren has recently joined us on the Committee.

To celebrate their ten-year anniversary, John Lane suggested we commemorate with a light-hearted special presentation (*the "Ring-in and Phonies" Award*) to Ross and Warren.

President's Message March 2018

Vince Haywood



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Retired Members Association
March General Meeting
Thursday, 22nd March 2018 at 10.15 am.

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Retired Members Association

Office Bearers:

President	Vince Haywood ☎ 02 9457 9828 ✉ vinceglen@gmail.com
Secretary	Bruce Muirhead ☎ 02 9639 0990 ✉ muirhead@bigpond.com
Treasurer	Bob Hamblion ☎ 02 9502 2525
Assistant Secretary	Bruce Noake ✉ bnoake@bigpond.net.au
Welfare Officer	Peter Hack ☎ 0408 969 530 ✉ hackysnr@bigpond.net.au
Social & Secretary	John Lane ☎ 0417 238 687 ✉ a-lane@bigpond.com
Website	Bruce Coxall ☎ 02 9597 2224 ☎ 0418 414 658 ✉ webadmin@cwuretired.org
Editor	Paul Rewhorn ☎ 0418 626625 ✉ pdrewhorn@me.com

Committee

Allan Fairbairn, Alan Stevens, Col McQueen, Jim Spencer, John Bryce, John McAuliffe, Paul Rewhorn, Ron Milosh, Steve Flynn, Terry Livingstone, Trevor Anderson, Warren Morley.

Retired Members Association

March General Meeting

The March General Meeting will be held on
Thursday, 22nd March 2018 at 10.15 am.

The venue for the annual meeting is the
**Financial Sector Union (FSU), Level 2,
321 Pitt Street, Sydney.**

*Members are most welcomed to attend,
especially members who may not have
attended a general meeting.
It is great opportunity to catch-up with former
workmates.*

**Goulburn District
Reunion**

**Wednesday,
11th April 2018
From 11 am**

**Employees from PMG,
Telecom and Telstra**

**Goulburn Division,
Goulburn DTB,
Country Wide
NDC & Country Installation**

**Goulburn Soldiers Club
15 Market Street,
Goulburn**

Contacts

Bob Speer	0408 863 900
Ross Kirkby	02 4821 4754
John Bradley	02 4861 3700
Ron Willson	02 6226 2266
Allan Barker	02 4871 1161

Muirhead's Corner

Kids today don't know
how easy they have it.
When I was young,
I had to walk 9 feet
through shag carpet to
change the TV channel



Frank Allan Eagles



The *Retired Members Association* is sad to inform members that Frank Eagles passed away on Monday, 26th February 2018.

A funeral service was held for Frank in the South Chapel Crematorium, Rookwood on Monday, 5th March 2018. The Association's President, Vince Haywood gave a eulogy at the service.

Frank had been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for over nineteen years.

Frank was very active in our Union, he represented members from the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, served for several years on Branch Council and was on the Subscriber Installation Committee.

Frank was a colourful character, it is fair to say his approach to industrial issues could create confusion on all sides of the divide, the NSW Branch of the Union and management. Most of the time he delivered for the members and was staunch in defence of their rights at work.

Everyone enjoyed Frank's company. He showed kindness to the less fortunate in society. Simply, a decent man.

Frank worked on Subscriber Installation and had responsibility for the SCG and Showground venues. He was well respected and relied upon by grounds staff and broadcasters at these venues. At a major sports fixture, Frank could be having a discussion with you, then called away to fix a problem for a broadcaster, then in quick time re-join you, problem resolved.

Frank did service in the Royal Navy in the early 1950s.

Frank moved to the Gold Coast after his retirement but returned to Sydney in the last couple of years as he became increasingly unwell.

Frank, you will always be remembered because there will always be a story to be told about you. We will miss you, Frank Eagles.

Paul Rewhorn



Vale Brian Quinn

Members who knew him will be saddened to learn of the passing of Brian Quinn on Tuesday, 23rd January 2018, just short of his 75th year. Brian was a 1960s Technician in Training, and spent most of his working time in the Hunter Valley and Newcastle, with a couple of years with the Training School in Sydney. During his time with PMG/Telecom/Telstra he was very highly respected by his peers for his technical competence and knowledge, his integrity and his reliability - a thoroughly valued workmate.

Brian was not known as a highly social person, but with those who he knew well and those with similar interests he was quite sociable.

Since being made redundant in 1997, Brian has spent a lot of his time in travelling throughout Australia and on several overseas trips. His major interest was chasing and catching freshwater fish throughout the world but particularly in Australia and New Zealand.

He was diagnosed with cancer of the colon in 2015 and in the following two years sought a solution to overcome the primary and secondary effects through surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. This included a one month period of radical treatments in Japan in 2017.

A private family funeral has been held for Brian. He will be greatly missed by all his friends, and especially by his wife Rosalind and his children.

Bill Edwards



Jim Wootton

The *Retired Members Association* has received the sad news that Jim Wootton passed away on the 10th December 2017 at the Taree Hospital.

Jim was a 1959 Technician in Training and last worked at Penrith Network operations.

Jim had been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for nine years.

The Association extends its deep sympathy and condolences to Jim's family and friends.



Social Functions for March and April

This Month: March

Mosman Rowers Club Lunch



3 Centenary Drive, Mosman Bay

Thursday, 29th March 2018

Lunch commences about 12 pm

The intention is for us to disembark at Cremorne Wharf then take the picturesque walk to the club. Members and friends who do not feel up to the walk can stay on the ferry and disembark at Mosman Bay then take the shorter walk to the club.



Next Month: April

Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre on Garden Island



Ferry Departures for Circular Quay are at 12.31pm, 1.29 pm, 2.05 pm and 2.29 pm. We need to leave the Island by 3 pm

Thursday, 19th April 2018

Ferry Leaves Circular Quay (Wharf 2) at 9.57 am for Garden Island (7 min trip). There is a later ferry at 10.57 am. An entry fee of \$5 per person applies.

The RAN Heritage Centre at Garden Island gives members an opportunity to explore and experience the story of the Australian Navy from colonial times to the present day within the north side of Garden Island against a backdrop of beautiful harbour views.

The Heritage Centre has over 3000 artefacts from the history of the Navy. Displays include a range of large weapon systems to sailor's personal items.

The Heritage Centre has a café where you can purchase sandwiches, tea or coffee for lunch. The Centre has asked us to advise them on numbers, it would be appreciated if you could e-mail John Lane (a-lane@bigpond.com) if you plan on coming.



A Message from the President (cont'd)

However, before John was allowed to make the presentation, we insisted Ross and Warren undertake a short technical quiz. The quiz comprised of multiple choice questions, we did allow Ross and Warren to confer and tolerated prompting by members in attendance. Despite, a lot of incorrect prompts from the members present, Ross and Warren managed to pass the quiz with a score above the mandatory pass mark of 60 percent.

Ross and Warren, we trust we will continue to enjoy your company for many years to come.

You will see a photo of Ross and Warren receiving their award on page 5.

There was a sad footnote to the presentations. Former instructors in attendance at the meeting were alarmed at the number of incorrect answers that came forth from members who were at the meeting. They have recommended we place on our website, a number of technical publications such as "Applied Electricity" and various Engineering Instructions and perhaps introduce a system of random technical assessments throughout the year.

Paul Rewhorn Receives Honorary Life Membership

I had the honour to move that an Honorary Life Membership is conferred on our Editor, Paul Rewhorn.

The newsletter is the lifeblood of our Organisation. Many of our members look forward to the newsletter for information. Paul took over the editor reins in 2010 and turned our very good newsletter into a work of art.

In his earlier years, Paul was an Industrial Officer with our Union and was instrumental, along with Assistant Secretary Bob Parkinson, in the implementation of the Metropolitan and Country Exchange Maintenance Organisations and the reclassification of office-based technical positions. As well, they handled shift closures and staff level issues.

The motion was seconded by John Lane and Tod Mirgis and Steve Flynn also spoke, endorsing the wonderful job Paul does with the newsletter. The motion was carried unanimously on the voices. Congratulations Paul on a much-deserved award.

General Meetings at Woy Woy and Emu Plains Confirmed

Our general meetings for the month of May and July will move from the Sydney CBD and held at Woy Woy and Emu Plains respectively.

Over the break, I journeyed to Woy Woy with Bruce Noake and Bob Bartley to book the Woy Woy Leagues Club for our traditional May General Meeting there. The club has been revamped but the personnel and catering facilities remain excellent.

O'Donoghue's at Emu Plains has also been booked for July.

Both venues provide their facilities free of charge, for which we are most appreciative. The meetings are held the same as the Sydney General Meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month. The newsletter will have more details as general meetings draw near.

Political Hypocrisy

Last month, I mentioned the political instability we are starting to see throughout developed nations. People are becoming disinterested and disengaged with their governments. One of the factors for this situation is political leaders are focused more on their own interests than confronting the considerable challenges their respective countries face. They place expectations on citizens, that they are not prepared to undertake themselves; this is basic hypocrisy.

There have been examples of hypocrisy during the past month in Australia. First, we had the Barnaby Joyce saga, I will put aside moral judgements, instead focus on the allegations of favouritism and nepotism that I hope will be investigated by an upcoming Senate Estimates Committee hearing.

Forced to resign from parliament over his dual citizenship, brought about by his failure to complete a straightforward declaration form. Mr Joyce needed to be paid a salary by the National Party and was gifted free accommodation in Armidale for himself and a new partner while he contested the by-election.

Apparently, he was unable to save enough out of his \$400,000 parliamentary salary and his partner's \$200,000 salary to sustain him during the by-election period and until he returned to parliament. Mr Joyce assures us everything was above board, you may recall his strident criticism of former Senator Sam Dastyari for asking a donor for a loan and accepting foreign donations. I was unimpressed by Mr Dastyari's actions and indeed his career in politics, at least he had the good sense to resign his Senator's position.

Then we have Australian Border Force Commissioner, Roman Quaedliveg who has been on paid leave since May 2016 with an annual salary of \$ 619,905. This is while he is being investigated for an undisclosed matter.

Mr Mike Pezzullo, the Department of Home Affairs Secretary revealed that the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity had handed down it's finding in "the third quarter of last year". There has been no public disclosure since. Commissioner, Roman Quaedliveg still remains on paid leave. Senator Wong asked whether a similar circumstance could ever occur for a cleaner employed in parliament house. On the subject of parliament house cleaners, remember that they have had their pay reduced. The cleaners received expressions of sympathy from parliamentary members for their plight but little else.

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A Message from the President (cont'd)

Remember, this time last year, when we had the "Robo Debt" scandal. Centrelink and the Taxation Department had their respective databases linked, and letters of demand were sent for alleged overpayments when discrepancies between the two databases were identified. The software program linking the two databases failed to properly align payment periods between the two departments' databases.

As a result, overpayment notices were issued to the poor and disadvantaged welfare recipients. A large number of these overpayment notices were proven to be wrong. The "Robo Debt" process placed great stresses on welfare recipients, the onus on them to prove the notice's information was not correct. It was left to Unions, charities and other advocates to assist these people, after the Centrelink debt recovery action had already commenced. Unlike Border Force Commissioner, Roman Quaedflieg's amount upwards of \$619,000, there was no waiting around to collect money from welfare recipient.

Finally, the federal government is still trying to push through parliament a Bill that would lengthen the wait time for a young person (under 25) to receive a Newstart payment. The double standard and hypocrisy are just breathtaking.

I trust I have not gone on too much on politics, however, at times something has to be mentioned.

This month's newsletter has some exciting news about our annual trip-away, this year to Moree and surrounding area (see page 7 of this newsletter). John Lane has been working hard putting together a package with the tour operator. All the details are in this newsletter. I for one will certainly join this year's trip-away.

Finally, remember **our next general meeting is on Thursday, 22nd March 2018**. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Ross Keys and Warren Morley Special Awards for Ten Years of Valued Membership





Retired Members Association

John Lane

Trip-away Moree and Surrounding Districts

Bus Coach Tour: Sunday, 14th October to Saturday, 20th October 2018

Last month, I advised that we had decided on a seven-day bus coach tour to Moree and its surrounding districts. I now have more information to share with you.

The dates for the trip away are from **Sunday, 14th October through to Saturday, 20th October**. The majority of us are likely to join the bus at Central, there will be further pickups at Hornsby and on the Central Coast.

The cost of the trip is \$ 890 per person. This price includes coach travel, motel accommodation and all meals (the exception for meals is while travelling to and from Moree).

It is important that I point out that Pegasus Coach Tours will be arranging the entire tour, therefore we are subject to their payment terms and conditions. Pegasus will require a deposit of \$100 per person, the Association will collect the deposit and final payment and forward your details onto Pegasus Coach Tours. Pegasus will require the balance two weeks prior to departure. Their cancellation policy is as follows:

- **Until August a full refund applies**
- **Notice of 21 days or more - 50% refund**
- **Notice less than 21 days - No refund**

There is an opportunity to reduce the cost to \$ 820 per person, if our group has forty or more people. For this reason, I am seeking early advice of your intention to allow me to know the size of group. I would ask that once you decide, to let me know and make your deposit. If I can provide further information, please email or call me (my contact details are on page 2 of the newsletter).

Payment can be made at a General Meeting or you can post a cheque to the Secretary, (see page 2 for contact details)

or via electronic payment:

**Credit Union Australia (CUA) BSB 814-282,
eSaver Account No: 10642769**

I believe we have an interesting and exciting trip planned, I look forward to seeing many of you at Moree in October

Day One: *Travel to Moree*

Leave Sydney (there we additional pickup stops at Hornsby and on the Central Coast) and travel through Musellbrook, Gunnedah and Narrabri onto Moree where we stay for the next six nights. There will be comfort stops along the way.

Day Two: *Moree*

A leisurely day in and around Moree. We will learn the history of Moree. The tour will also show the historic buildings. Later, we visit the Mehi Gallery and Study formed by local aboriginal students from around the Moree Area.

The afternoon gives an opportunity to enjoy our motel's private artesian spa and take your own walk around Moree.

Day Three: *Lighning Ridge*

Today we travel to Lighning Ridge.

Lightning Ridge is one of the few places in the world where the black opal is found. After a lunch there is visit to the "Chamber of Black Hand" to view a collection of sculptures, hand carvings and paintings, all carved in the sandstones walls of an underground mine.

Day Four: *Pecan Nut farm*

After breakfast we have a visit to the Pecan Nut Factory, situated on the on one of the most productive pecan nut plantations in the Southern Hemisphere.

After lunch, we are free to enjoy the artesian spa and stroll around Moree.

Day Five: *Wariada and Inverall*

We travel to the Cranky Rock Nature reserve that has a jumble of giant boulders heaped in fantastic positions by a past volcanic upheaval. We then travel onto Inverall situated on the Macintyre River. We visit an interesting Pioneer Village which will give us an understanding of the area's history.

Day Six: *Goondiwindi*

We travel to the border town of Goondiwindi situated on the border of NSW and QLD. Goondiwindi has beautiful tree lined streets, well kept gardens and the Macintyre River. A local tour guide will show us the town and a cotton farm. We will also have time to explore on our own.

Day Seven: *We Make Our Way Home*



CHAPTER SIX (Final)

Area 4 – Ralph Britten

A S I HAVE ALREADY EXPLAINED THE BORDERS OF THIS AREA, I WILL BEGIN AT THE CORNER OF YORK AND ERSKINE STREETS AND MOVE NORTH TOWARDS THE HARBOUR BRIDGE.

The *Commonwealth Health Department* was located in a building on the north east corner of Erskine and York streets, here the medical people such as doctors, nurses and a large number of ancillary staff took up the top or second floor. The *Commonwealth Serum Laboratory* and associated staff took up the first floor, while all clerical staff, including the switchboard were located on the Ground floor.

The medical staff took care of examinations for government employees for permanent appointments and inoculations for people travelling overseas. The switchboard was controlled by a very happy girl who I will call Shirley. Shirley had a little machine, she would use to roll her own cigarettes. While doing this she was able to knit and handle a very busy switchboard, quite an amazing lady who became a very good friend. When Shirley found out that my wife was expecting, she presented me with a pair of blue booties. Little did I know that after our daughter arrived in August 1957, the booties would be well used.

The Switchboard with Eyes

The next building was a large and old four-story building occupied by large stationary firm called *Alex Cowan and Company*. The telephone switchboard was controlled, and I mean really controlled, by a mature lady named Dot. The switchboard was an old AX type with about ten exchange lines and forty extensions. It was a very busy board and Dot handled the traffic in a very capable manner and in her own way of course.

This type of switchboard used eyeball indicators; anybody reading this and experienced these indicators, knows that in busy locations sometimes they stick and need to be repaired with a little graphite or similar substance. They are covered with a glass panel which needs to be removed to get access to the eyeballs. The first thing you notice here, there is no glass panel, so you assume that the glass has been broken, Wrong! Never assume anything, when anyone suggested to Dot that the glass had to be replaced she replied, ***“it’s not broken, I removed it so when these bloody things stick, I just flick them back with my finger nail”***. You get the message very quickly.

I got to know Dot very well over the next couple of years, it was always a pleasure to go there, either to work on faults, do an inspection or even socially.

When the switchboard had to be replaced with a new lamp signalling switchboard, Dot was very unhappy, she said ***“no lamps could replace her eyeballs”***, indeed, she was very emphatic about it. The job having been done, a new switchboard in situ, Dot would work it and swear profusely.

There was a lane called Clarence Lane, running behind these buildings, *Alec Cowan and Company* had a loading dock which ran onto the lane from where goods were received and dispatched, the dock was manned at all times for those reasons.

We manhandled the old AX switchboard down to the dock and then onto a truck that was headed for the Sifting Room at Sheas Creek. As the truck left the dock and moved down Clarence Lane, the bloke in charge of the dock was heard to shout, ***“Where’s Dot?”***

The next building in York Street was the headquarters of the *NSW Railways*. It was a six-storey building called the *“Green House”*, probably because it was painted green. The railways had their own telephone technicians, the only switchboard the PMG maintained was a battered old Sterling board which served the Solicitor for the Railways. As a result, no stories came out of that building of any note. From the ground floor of this building escalators ran down to *Wynyard Station* serving the suburban railway network. The Railways also owned offices in a building on the south west corner of Margaret and York Streets. The north west corner was taken up with two old tenement style buildings, in later years these were demolished to accommodate a Motel which I will mentioned later.

Petty's Hotel

Next door and on the corner of Jamison and York streets was the *Australian Red Cross Blood Bank*. It was originally *Petty's Hotel*, a former very upmarket meeting place for socialite people. This building went through to Clarence Street and the loading dock area. Moving along south you came to the *Australian National Airways (ANA)*, a two-storey building that housed a terminal with bus transport to Mascot on the ground floor. Reservations were on the first floor along with a PABX and switchboard.

The Ralph Britten Memoirs

Final



Ralph Britten

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Ralph Britten Memoirs - Final (cont'd)

The *National Instrument Company* was on the second and top floor. The instrument company burst into flames and the whole top floor was gutted in 1958. This building was fortunate to be solid concrete, damage to the other floors was caused by the incredible amount of water that came down like a massive waterfall.

Pat Dilworth and myself packed sand bags around the doors to the PABX and the switchboard room, the telephone switch girls were very busy telling the callers, "sorry we can't take your call, the building is on fire", it was quite an unbelievable scene. We managed to keep the equipment dry and remained in service right through the fire and the ensuing repair exercise.

Ansett Airways took over *Australian National Airways* (ANA) in the late 1950s and became known as *Ansett ANA* for a number of years, finally reverting to just *Ansett*. I have a chapter on PABXs later in the book.

A number of shops stood on the southern side of Margaret Street, between York and Clarence Streets with a newsagent on the corner of Margaret and Clarence. Coming south on Clarence Street, number 26, a six-storey building housed wine and spirit merchants, *Swift and Company*. *Swift and Moore*, a smaller wine and spirit firm were next, then *William McKeown Carriers*, very friendly people whose trucks were prominent around the town and suburbs delivering flour and other goods for *Mungo Scott Pty Ltd*.

Then we come to *Nicholas Pty Ltd*, the *Aspro* people, a subsidiary of *Gollin and Company* at 50 Clarence Street. We will hear more about *Gollin* in the PABX chapter. Importers *Harrisons Ramsey* were next door at 56 Clarence, a six-storey building which also housed about thirty small businesses as their tenants. One, I suppose in 1958 was the forerunner for a very large multi-national company, the *Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company*. (the *3M Company*). *MacDougalls* a very large typewriter company was next door, then a couple of smaller businesses before you got to the *Cosmopolitan Hotel* on the corner of Erskine Street. Mine Host of the *Cosmopolitan* was Mr Bob Duncan whose two daughters Carmen and Paula, became well known actresses later.

Moving across the road to the west side of Clarence Street, between Erskine and Margaret Streets, we find some most interesting places and buildings. On the corner of Erskine stood and still stands to-day a small sandstone building for many years was used as a police station. These days used for a number of Government services. Next door, a five-storey building housed a large footwear company, *Goldberg Footwear*. Mr Joe Goldberg was a most generous and interesting

person who made it his business to know any person involved with work in the building.

Between this building and the *Australian Electrical Industries* was a firm called *Eric. J. Gray Pty Ltd*, electrical suppliers. This firm was run by a most genuine person, the late Mr Max Gray. Max was a gentleman, it was a privilege to know this man. Max while very busy running the place and carrying the rest of the family, always found time to have a chat and convey goodwill. I lost touch with Max for about ten years, one day on my way to our Head Office in Kent Street (I worked at Dalley Street in the 1970s) walking past the *Cosmopolitan Hotel* and heard my name being called from inside, Max appeared at the door. During the course of several beers he informed me that he had terminal cancer. Max died a few months later, I cherish his memory dearly.

I mentioned in the previous paragraph, *Australian Electrical Industries* (AEI, formerly AGE) were next door and were housed in an L shaped building, the large or base of the L-fronting onto

Kent Street, with a rather narrow shopfront facing Clarence Street. The offices were located on the upper Kent Street frontage while a number of docks supplying delivery trucks were at ground

level. The shopfront was actually a showroom with all their products on display, electric ovens, heaters, refrigerators and many other products stood on the floor while hundreds of various types of light fittings hung from the ceiling.

The office of the Managing Director, the late Sir Jack Stevens, was located directly above the showroom and there was virtually standing room between the floor of his office and the ceiling of the showroom from which the light fittings hung, this was to allow electricians and telephone technicians and others room to work. One had to be very careful when in this area and make sure the feet were only placed on the rafters because the caneite ceiling did not support much weight. Some smart-alec had placed lengths of floor boards across the rafters at some spots to make life a little easier. I was working overtime one night with Reg Funnell, an Englishman who had not been with us very long. Reg thought a piece of caneite was a floor board and went through the ceiling. He was able to grab two rafters with his elbows and hung there without doing too much damage to himself. However, you should have seen the mess in the showroom, dust mixed with smashed ceiling materials all over TV sets, washing machines to say nothing of the carpet and desks. So much for AEI, we will come back to the PABX later.



Petty's Hotel built in 1836 and demolished in 1976. Petty's Hotel closed on the 1st September, 1950, sold to the Red Cross. The following day, the Sydney Morning Herald ran a report on the last night at a much loved Sydney institution.

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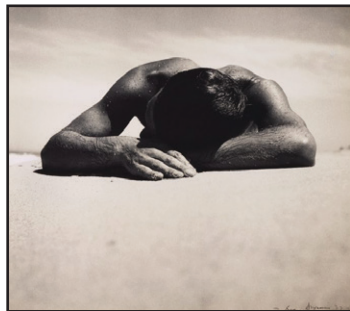


Ralph Britten Memoirs - Final (cont'd)

NSW Rum Corps

Moving North, the next building was a very interesting one. *It was originally built as a stable for the horses of the Rum Corps.* It had a number of large openings or doors where the horses were brought from the stables at the rear. These openings had been converted into docks and the remaining space became offices or small factories. An upper floor had been constructed to give more office space to each firm. The most interesting part of this historic building was the, "Coat of Arms", when you looked at the building from the other side of the road (albeit painted over with many coats of paint) it could be seen and the historic value noted. The wreckers, moved in and the rest is history, it remains indelible in my mind. It seems a little sad that these pieces of our history cannot be preserved. We then come to *Clifford Love and Company* (the rolled oats people) and the office block of *Philips Industries* on the south west corner of Clarence and Margaret Streets. The girls at Philips were characters. Their favourite trick was to call the *Hast Tasty Restaurant* at Kings Cross, on one pair of cords then a Chinese restaurant at Dixon Street on another pair of cords, throw both keys and sit back and listen to the confused conversation.

I made the fatal error of leaving his bag of tools in the switch room there one day and went to lunch. The first job after lunch was to repair the bells on the phone of the managing director of *Gollin and Company*. His office was large and sumptuous with thick pile carpet. The screws holding the bell frame were missing, spares like this were kept in the bottom of the bag in round tobacco tins. On opening the tin to get a couple of screws, a whole bunch of confetti went everywhere. You can imagine hundreds of bits of confetti sticking in in his office carpet. Just as well the boss of *Gollin* had a sense of humour.



Max Dupain - Famous photo
"The Sunbather"

Max Dupain

Moving along Clarence Street towards the Harbour Bridge, you find two interesting buildings, numbers 49 and 35 Clarence Street. Number 49 housed a large printing firm called *Hartland and Hyde* extending over a number of floors. George Wills, a large importing firm that specialised in children toys occupied the second floor. **Photographer Max Dupain** had a large office on the 5th floor, Max was a lovely bloke who came to prominence with a photograph of "*The Sunbather*". Strangely enough his name became more prominent after his death in 2003. Number 35 Clarence Street was known as the *F.T. Wimble Building*, they were very big in distribution of printers ink, largely to newspapers.

The boundary of Area 4 then extended west to the waterfront and in the 1950s and 60s was a hive of industry. Nothing much in Kent Street but Sussex Street had the *Union Steamship Company* of New Zealand, the *Big House Hotel* and above all the Wharf Labourers' Pick up Centre with the *Stevedoring Industry Authority* up the open stairs in Napoleon Street. The *Union Company* had about six finger type wharves which housed everything from officers, storerooms, carpenters and fitters' workshops to a fully equipped clinic to attend to any injury the wharfies may sustain.

The wharfies pay day at the pick-up centre was an incredible event, it was like a supermarket where you could buy enough meat and seafood for the week at a most reasonable price. Clothing for both men and women was always in plentiful supply. An amazing place to work and the author is very thankful for having spent three years in the Sussex Street environment.

Well, there you have it, Ralph's memory of his early career in the 1950s. Ralph never finished what he had planned to be a book. Ralph stopped writing the book (sometime in the early 2000s). He gets to Area 5 with just the name of team leader, Warren Henry mentioned. I am sure Warren did a fine job in his Area 5. Ralph frequently mentioned he had stories to tell about his time in PABX, sadly he did not continue long enough to get to PABX

Ralph went on to rise through the technical ranks before he retired in the 1990s. Like all of us, Ralph witnessed many changes in an industry heavily impacted by technology, in a space of twenty-five years from the 1950s, the Sydney CBD communications would change beyond recognition, the skills that many would have had acquired were no longer needed. Ralph did adapt to change where he could see the reason for a change. Ralph's natural leadership abilities encouraged others to adapt with him.

His career in telecommunications may never have happened, remember him telling us that he pondered whether it was worth staying, given the strange behaviours of some around him. It was a far cry from the cake industry from where he came. Ralph described many buildings that today no longer stand, a victim in many cases at the hands of developers. Sure, there was at times, friction among the technicians; Ralph touched on a few of these stories. However, there must have been great mateship evidenced by Ralph's recall of workmates willing to help each other and they seemed to enjoy each other's company.

Over the next few weeks, I will compile all of the chapters into a single pdf document and place it on our website. I will let you know when the file is ready for download.