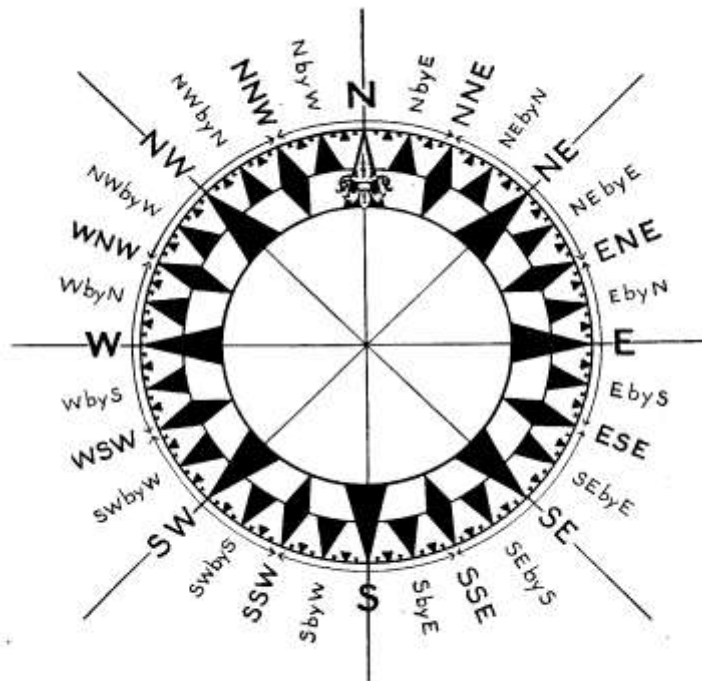




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Editor's Note

For those who would like some help in finding lost records Robin Hurst the Website Bosun in the UK would be able to help you if you contact him at www.vindicatrix-hqfsnet.co.uk. We were browsing the squad photos on this site and found mine. I can't remember it being taken, but looking at it I was able to put a few names to faces. We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mick & Jill Surfild

Skipper's Log

Anne and I would like to sincerely thank all of you who have supported the SA Branch of the Vindicatrix over the last year.

The reunion in Western Australia in November was attended by 11 from our branch. We had a great time catching up with old friends and seeing the sights of Perth and Fremantle. Plans are already in place for the next reunion in New Zealand on 31st October to 2nd November 2008 at Woolston, South of Christchurch. Marlene Robinson has information of cheaper flights in a group booking, so if anyone is thinking of going next year have a word with Marlene.

Our most recent social event was the picnic in the Botanic Gardens. Thankyou to the ever faithful who attended. It was a beautiful day. Unfortunately we had too much food left over, this being due to food being ordered for a certain number and then having late cancellations. However we had a good day, one of the highlights being entertainment in the form of a sketch from the talented Sandra and Vic Marden.

Our next meeting will be at our house, 6 Panter Street, Willaston, on **Sunday 20th January 2008** at 11am followed by a BBQ at approximately 12 noon.

Most of you have replied to the letter sent out regarding the meeting and the BBQ following it. Thankyou to those who have responded. For those of you who haven't please do so before the end of the year. At that meeting we will discuss the format for the New Year, re meetings, social events etc., so have all your suggestions ready. We feel perhaps it is time for a change, perhaps someone out there in our group would like to consider being more involved in running the group, we can't do it for ever, so we would appreciate hearing from any of you who may be interested.

Until then, we both wish all Vindi Boys, their Partners and Families A Very Happy Christmas and a Safe and Peaceful New Year.

Tony Iles

From the Almoner's desk

May I thank everyone for giving me the chance to fill this position and with your help, this *Vindy* lass will give it a go.

So pleased to report that John Hines is well on the road to recovery after knee replacement surgery. John has tackled his rehabilitation exercise programme with great determination. We extend our best wishes to John and Wendy.

It was great to see Ken McTigue at the last meeting, looking so well and enjoying the boat trip. Keep up the good work Ken.

Our singing troubadour Winston is in good health and spirits after undergoing open heart surgery. We look forward to hearing you in top form singing those golden notes for us next year Winston.

Very much in our thoughts are Vern and Eunice Evans. Vern is sailing a rough passage at present, but you can't keep a good *Vindi Boy* down for long.

Like me, you probably feel this year has flown by, it would have been good if someone could have tossed an anchor overboard to slow things up a little!

With the Yuletide season almost upon us, every good wish for Christmas and may the New Year of 2008 be a very happy and healthy one for us all.

Anne Withey

After the meeting on Sunday 30th September 26 of us ambled to the Port to board the Dolphin Princess for a leisurely lunch and a 2 hour cruise down the Port River. We couldn't have wished for better weather it was sunny with little or no breeze. Many of us ventured to the top deck where we were rewarded with a display from the local dolphins.



What are we waiting for?



Ready for lunch

Quote by Captain E J Smith, RMS Titanic, in 1907.

"When anyone asks me how I can best describe my experiences in nearly forty years at sea, I merely say, uneventful. Of course there have been winter gales, fog and the like, but in all of my experience I have never been in any accident of any sort worth speaking about. I have seen but one vessel in distress in all my years at sea. I never saw a wreck and never have been wrecked, nor was I ever in any predicament that threatened to end in disaster of any sort".

The Titanic sank at 2.20am on the 15th April 1912 with the loss of over 1500 lives. The sinking led, in 1913, to the first International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea which ruled that every ship had to have a lifeboat space for every person on board. (The Titanic had only spaces for 1178 of the 2224 people on board) It also ruled that lifeboat drill must be held at regular intervals and that all ships had to maintain a 24 hour radio watch.

(Radio operators on nearby ships were not on duty when the Titanic broadcast her distress signal) Shortly after that the International Ice Patrol was established in the North Atlantic. The wreck of the Titanic was not located until the 1st September 1985.

Thanks Vince

Two little old ladies were sitting on a park bench outside the local town hall where a flower show was in progress. The thin one leaned over and said, "Life is so darned boring. We never have any fun anymore. For \$5.00, I'd take my clothes off and streak through that stupid flower show!"

"You're on!" said the other old lady, holding up a \$5.00 bill. The first little old lady slowly fumbled her way out of her clothes and completely naked, streaked, as fast as an old lady can, through the front door of the flower show.

Waiting outside, her friend soon heard a huge commotion inside the hall followed by loud applause and shrill whistling. The smiling, naked old lady came through the exit door surrounded by a cheering crowd.

"What happened?" asked her waiting friend.

"I won 1st prize for Best Dried Arrangement

2007 West Australia Reunion

On Friday November 9th approximately 100 Vindi Boys and Girls (11 from SA) were to gather together once again, this time at the Cockburn Power Boat Clubhouse in Fremantle. We were told that transport had been arranged to take us to the venue and that we should wait outside the caravan park entrance. Imagine our surprise when a number 208 red double decker bus arrived with other Vindi Boys and Girls on board. No room below so we had to go up top. This was a casual evening with a buffet dinner with a joke or two from Tommy Cooper aka David Partridge and the usual raffle. Our table was lucky in collecting many of the prizes. We caught up with old and new friends and many of the members asked about people that they had met at Tanunda and wished them well. After many a tall story an early night was called for as we were going on a boat trip up the Swan River to Perth the next day.

Up bright and early, we once again made our way to the entrance of the caravan park to await the red double decker bus to take us to Fremantle dock where we were to board the boat for our 45 minute trip. The weather was perfect and the local people were out in the hundreds sailing in their preferred craft. One unlucky pair of lads even managed to capsize, much to our amusement, and were frantically bailing out as we passed by. We saw houses that belonged to the rich, and the most magnificent yachts that we itched to be sailing on. Sitting beside a Vindi Boy and his wife who lived in Perth he told us that he was one of the two boys who were born in Australia and trained on the Vindi.



Arriving at the ferry terminal we had the choice of returning to Fremantle and looking around or staying on in Perth. We chose Perth. The Swan Bells is an impressive building made of copper and glass and is just outside the terminal. It houses eighteen bells, these are the twelve bells of St. Martin-in-the-Field and five specially cast bells that were presented to the University of WA, the city of Perth and the people of WA to commemorate Australia's bicentenary. The sixth new bell was commissioned by the WA Government to mark the second millennium. A few of us did the tour and were able to ring the bells as one of the volunteer bell ringers was on duty that day, and we have a certificate to prove it. A walk around the city and a much needed cup of coffee and it was time to return to the boat. Once again we sat outside and watched the locals do their sailing.

After a quick shower and putting on our best bib and tucker it was back on the red bus for the Saturday evening revelries. The meal over we listened to Queensland member David Partridge read and then unveil a bronze plaque of his poem *Heroes* dedicated to Merchant Seaman. This was to be displayed at the War Memorial in Fremantle. The entertainment for the evening were two comedians and a belly dancer, much to the delight of those with a long memory and those who were sitting in the front row.

As Sunday was the 11th November a remembrance service was held at the venue of the previous evenings reunions. It was then time for us to say our farewells to old and new friends over a BBQ and promises to meet again in the near future. Some of the hardy members carried the festivities on into the evening at the Woodman Point caravan park.



This years BBQ in the parklands was attended by only eighteen members, the weather was perfect and we all managed to sit under the shade of a tree. A chicken and salad lunch was supplied and the odd plate of cake and even tin of lollies were passed around. Even with so few people we still managed to have a good time, with Vic and Sandra doing their party piece of a play on words.



8 year old Sally came home from school and with a smile on her face and told her mother.
"Frank Brown showed me his willy today!"
Before the mother could raise her concern, Sally went on to say, "It reminded me of a peanut"
Relaxing with a hidden smile, Sally's Mum asked,
"Really small was it?"
Sally replied, "No...Salty!!!"

The Life of Brian - Cont...

The BOAC course was a real eye opener. For starters I was one of the oldest trainees they had ever had. I was surrounded by a lot of pretty young things and that was only the men; and then there were the young dolly birds, wall to wall of beauty queens, the crème de la crème of British womanhood. Some it turned out were real airheads, just like a Galah, pretty to look at but a bit thick and I'm afraid they didn't last long on the course. Our studies took in a huge range of subjects including first aid, security, money conversion (for approximately thirty countries that we would fly to), how to make cocktails, address VIP's, preparing hot and cold drinks (even baby bottles), and looking up other airline flight schedules for ongoing connections. The most important training of all were the safety rules and regulations. We had to know where every piece of survival equipment on the VC10 super, VC10 standard and the Boeing 707 were stowed. Knowing where to locate first aid boxes, fire axes, extinguishers, emergency window exits, over-wing exits, life rafts and exit slides became automatic; also how to arm doors to engage slides and most importantly how to disarm them. We had full scale mock ups where we activated the slides and exited the plane (what steps would you take young man? Large ones sir, very large ones). Life rafts were taken out of stowage and manoeuvred through doors and over wing exits straight into a large swimming pool inflated and boarded. We had to know where first aid kits, food, water, barley sugar, beacons, sea anchor, survival clothes, instructions on how to erect the canopy over the life raft and where the fishing lines and hooks were to be found. They somehow forgot the spuds and deep fryer. These exams were taken twice a year, no pass no flying and you were grounded until you did. Looking back, it was forty years ago when this was going on; time flies when you are having fun. After many hours of study and burning the midnight oil, all the exams were finally passed. Our class was now reduced by 50% of the original starting line up. We had a final round of interviews from various course instructors, airport security, foreign office, bonded warehouses, customs and excise and one where an un-named man from an un-named department went through me like a dose of salts. He had a file in front of him that he kept

referring to, very off putting. Later when I caught up with the others to compare notes regarding all the interviews, I found that I was the only one to see this guy. Whoops have I blown it! What a bugger to get this far and then fail. I didn't sleep that night and was dreading reporting in in the morning. Nothing was said although a couple of instructors kept on giving me sideways glances. I found out later that the instructors didn't have full access to my personal files and they were as mystified as me (all will be revealed later). Graduation day, we had already been measured for our uniforms, hat, shirts, ties and raincoats. We picked up our manuals and went to the training class room to be presented with our half wing to be sewn on our jacket. In the middle of the wing was a large '###S'. People always asked what it stood for. Depending on who you were speaking to it was either steward, sexy or stupid. It always got a laugh especially with some of the young ladies. A big drum roll, this was crunch time, we were finally going to be posted to the fleet of V10 or 707 aircraft. The class was divided in two with surnames from A-J and K-Z, a coin tossed heads A-J VC10s tails to 707s. The VCs did the prestige run; New York daily and then down to the Islands, Bermuda, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago. The poor old 707s did a round the world. Oh despair is me, you can kiss my ass Jack I'm all right. Depending on what service we were on we went from London through Rome, Switzerland or Germany, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai, Karachi, Deli, Bombay, Calcutta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong, Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne (no international airport at Adelaide), New Zealand, Hawaii, Los Angeles or San Francisco up to New York and home. Sometimes we terminated at Sydney and came home via Hong Kong, Singapore, Iran and Iraq. By the time I had stopped flying nine years later (my arms got tired), there was no flying over these countries. This all started with the Shah being dethroned and sent into exile to America.

Every post delivery was eagerly examined for my first roster to arrive. Finally on April 29th 1967 it was there. My trembling fingers opened the envelope. Exotic destinations flashed through my mind. "Manchester," what the #@!. My flight was as a passenger, not even on a jet but a liver shaking old Vanguard with those funny things that go round and round stuck on the wings. We night stopped, had one of many great meals at a posh hotel, breakfast was the works, porridge, kippers and the biggest fry up that I had seen since being at sea. With burps and belches we got on the crew bus to the airport. The gleaming big (Speedbird) 707 sat on the tarmac. The Senior steward Mick Omerod, who I found out later was a Vindi Boy (sadly I saw his obituary in the Vindi News about a year ago) collected the passenger manifest, any VIPs, special diets, how many mothers and young babies etc and gave us the good news; overbooked 24 first class and 120 cattle class, sorry economy. We sat on the runway revving up engines, shivering and shaking (that was me) head down ass up and off we go to sunny Toronto in Canada. The flight took about six hours, not that I really remember, but I do know that my daisy roots were smoking and I didn't know if I was punch balled or counter sunk. When we arrived we were stacked over Toronto like pancakes. Somehow the sun had disappeared and snow ploughs were only just winning the battle to keep the airport open. The pilot was swearing a blue streak about landing on icy runways and when the Senior Steward came around and quietly told the crew to buckle up **extra** tight on landing I thought my flying career was going to be very short lived. But as you can see from reading this story, I survived. I'm glad because I have thin skin and bleed easily. On landing and getting rid of the punters we were whisked through crew customs. The officers were always glad to see BOAC crew. Being a newby I was right at the back of the queue but heard muffled whispers and the clinking of bottles and big smiles. 30 seconds later we were cleared and on our way to the hotel about an hours drive through all the slush and snow. On the crew bus a miracle happened, out of all crew handbags cuspidors (sick bags) either two cold beers or half bottles of wine appeared I'm glad to say they didn't forget me. This was just to stop us from dying of thirst on the run in. Arriving at the hotel and signing in we were to meet up 30 minutes later for a crew de-briefing in someone's room, yep mine, (always the junior steward), where once again magic happened. All kinds of booze appeared. What didn't follow the crew off the plane came out of a booze chest kept at the hotel. Out going crews always left what was not used in the chest. In nearly ten years of flying I never found a dry one. I got the taste for Campari and in the end they nick named me *The Campari Kid*. Even first class bars took a hammering with 20 or 36 passengers so some times the brandy, scotch, gin and vodka got a bit scarce, but very rarely the Campari, (upstairs for thinking downstairs for dancing). Having had dollars put into our hands and after a few drinks, de briefing, a quick shower and change it was time to go to the local Joe's Café or crew pub for dinner. This is where all the allowances were saved. Probably the cost was only 20% of what we were paid for. Another couple of beers then a short course in death. The 5-6 hours time change knocked the crap out of you, it was one thing you could never get used to. My blissful life on 707s came to an abrupt halt about 18 months later when the 707 fleet amalgamated with the VC10s. I saw a lot more of New York, Chicago, Toronto, and Montreal, all very good for the back pocket but a real pain the butt. The upside being the West Indian Islands, Nassau, The Bahamas, Trinidad, Tobago and Bermuda and before you all say it I know Bermuda is in the North Atlantic as it was here that I took up golf in the loosest sense of the manner. Every bloody rabbit on the course dived for cover when they saw me coming but the bug bit and another thread of my life would take shape. It was about this time in my flying career after a de briefing of a flight that I was called into a quiet office at Heathrow where once again I got to meet the mystery man of almost two years before when I was on my training course. He turned out to be a Commander of The Queen's and Duke's private body guard responsible for all their security. He introduced me to his offsider, a captain no name. It didn't take any working out that he was one of many SAS shadows you see in film clips of Royalty; never more than two steps away, a typical James Bond slim, trim and terrific, certainly not one to mess with. Once again out came my personal file. He said, 'I see you have already been finger printed five times and signed two Official Secret Acts, guess what - one more for

posterity, you have just been added to BOAC's Royal and VIP crew list.' At this time I was still a rear gunner/2nd steward and to my knowledge not many Kings and Queens and VIPs travelled with the great unwashed behind the first class curtain. Hey, but what the hell, another rung up the ladder and I was soon to take my next exam to steward 1 so things were looking good. I didn't get to serve the Queen personally but I did stand in line to be personally presented with the rest of the crew (three times). My first Royal flight was to take Prince Charles and Princess Ann on their first overseas flight on the New York to Los Angeles sector. They were headed for Sydney. He was sixteen and a real charmer, She was the same as she is now and the same went for Princess Margaret. I was lucky enough to be on other foreign royal flights with Sheiks and their harems and various Prime Ministers etc. But the biggest buzz were the top class sportsmen of their time: Bobby Moore and the English Football team, Australian cricketers, Rod Laver, Arthur Ash, John Newcombe and the rest of the travelling circus. Then there was Tom Jones when he was a greasy haired pimply young man; he had just recorded the Green, Green Grass of Home and Shirley Bassey (once again). The ones that most stood out in my mind were Harry Secombe, Dick Van Dyke and James Last, real gentlemen not like three other rat bags and aptly named The Rat Pack: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jnr noisy obnoxious drunken bums.

I am now a steward 1 in charge of either first class or economy under the Chief Steward's evil eye on 707s or VCs. Big news, the Jumbo or 747 was about to be delivered but BOAC in all their wisdom decided that they were not going to pay the flight deck crew any more money for having the responsibility of flying a plane double the size with almost three times the amount of passengers. A big standoff, and negotiations broke down. The pilots refused to train on the 747 simulators and our fleet stood on the ground for over six months. BOAC must have lost millions during this time. I was now a proud Dad of a lovely little girl named Karen, Steve was now three years old. The perfect couple one Guinness and one Red Barrel, my duty for crown and country was now done. Steve was getting all kinds of wonderful toys from around the world. I brought home crates, boxes and bundles and spent half my leave putting things together; I don't know who had the most fun. Pam's jewellery box was growing fat and as she received my next crew roster before I got home off a trip, she had already planned what I would be buying the next time. These were balmy days.

When the 707s and VC10s amalgamated, they brought a Super VC10 down through the East to Bahrain to show it off to the Sheiky Babies (they later bought the whole VC10 fleet. I think they were the only ones who could afford to run them). Next on to New York (this was one of the main money earners) then onto Hong Kong and finally Sydney where we spent a whole week doing publicity work for TV, radio, and travel agents from all over Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore (and anybody else who could score a freebie because we were not going to do the same for them). The VC Super was a great passenger plane with the engine aft and basically all the noise being left behind. The flight deck had more room than a 747 but as usual the galley and preparation areas were abysmal. We had to use the crew jump seats as table area was so scarce.



At that time the VC10 was the most powerful plane flying with its four Rolls Royce engines and only passengers on board (no baggage) the pilot used to stand the plane on its tail at take off. It brought a whole new meaning to the American briefing of please hold your nuts on take off; A quick 30 minutes flight up the coast before heading back. It was great fun, all free booze whatever they wanted. I've never seen so many get hissed in such a short time and that includes the six o'clock swill. They made me feel like an amateur. Horsey dovers were also served but we had plenty of time to have a chat with them and it was a great PR coup for BOAC. Still, talking about VC10s, one of my mates who was a Chief Steward got hijacked. I can't remember if it went to Lebanon or Syria but they spent

two days on the tarmac surrounded by police and troops. The SAS were called in but before they arrived negotiations succeeded and the passengers and crew were released before the plane was blown up. The only VC10 to come to a nasty end but BOAC managed to save two or three of the engines. The only other plane that was lost while I was flying was a 707 code named Whisky Echo. One engine fire balled on take off, so they did a quick circuit and landed. The Captain made a right mess up. He brought the plane to a standstill against the wind so that flames and fuel were blown against the fuselage. Once again it was a friend who was the Chief Steward; he lost one of his stewardesses and two passengers in the evacuation but over a hundred made it to safety. Cabin crews are not on planes just to serve food and drinks! So when you fly, take note of what the crew tell you regarding the safety briefing as not all planes are the same layout or size. Here ends the lesson according to Brian. I experienced a few hairy take offs and landings through windshear effect, loss of brakes and hydraulics and one very bad case of turbulence approaching Honolulu being hit by windshear. The plane landed so hard it had to have stress and strain checks by engineers and surveyors before it could be released a couple of days later to fly straight back to London with only the catering crew on board.

I know they say airline food is bad but I don't think it could work three times. That was the number of people who sadly

passed away on me (not all at the same time I might add). At least their trip got off to a flying start (sorry about the pun) seeing that we were at 30,000ft. Two we managed to load off at different countries on the way home but the third had his full fare's worth as we were past the point of no return and heading home. Big problem, full house and not one spare seat. The only thing we could do was make sure he was strapped in and covered with a blanket. We didn't want him going walkabout on landing. The people on either side of him weren't too happy but as we explained we couldn't even put him in the toilet because we would be unable to restrain him and the door opened inwards. If he fell off the loo behind the door it would be impossible to get him out. I think that they were offered a fare refund or a free flight in the future. Lucky they weren't flying TWA whose motto was 'Travels with Angels'! Ours was 'Better on a Camel, United Airlines was Fly United, Irish Airlines was Air Fungus, SAS Scandinavian was Sex and Sin and Qantas was Quickies available ####n toilet ask staff.

BOAC finally saw sense and agreed to pay the extra wages for the pilots and engineers. Now it was the cabin crew/catering staff's time to dig their heels in. We had them by the short and curlies and they knew it, game, set and, match to the lovely ones. It is a little known fact but flying cabin crews' millions of pounds in wages are amply covered by the profit of bar sales on board at tax free prices. I put my hand up and volunteered for Jumbos and was lucky enough to be in the first two crews to be trained. On 747 practice evacuation using the slides our young lovelies were told that they were not to wear nylon briefs as the friction could melt them (giving a whole new meaning to hot ass or hot pants), only cotton or go bare back. More things to learn: stowage for medical kits, life rafts etc. Take it from me it's a bloody big plane. At last a friendly plane to work on as far as the catering staff was concerned. Plenty of room for bibs and bobs but frightening to look down the cabin from first class to see a full house of over 300 punters. For the next year our Jumbos only flew to New York. I was there every eight or nine days: plenty of dollars and King Alfred cigars 35 cents (at home they were a pound a piece). At ten bob each I had a ready list of clientele. Eventually the services went down through the east taking over from the 707s. It was great! A once a week service meant we were getting three or four days off at every stop. Plenty of golf, squash, tennis, sailing and sight seeing and even time for the occasional beer. But all good things come to an end and passenger demand soon meant it became a daily service. I had been flying for nearly nine years now and because of the size of the crews on Jumbos promotion was now in the wind. Pam and I discussed this. Did I continue until retirement or look for something else? The kids were growing up fast and I was missing all the small things being away for six months of the year.

As I have previously said, the golf bug had bit and we were living in a lovely little village called Dibden Purlieu on the edge of the New Forest. The New Forest District Council (NFDC) announced that they had bought two farms at Dibden approximately two miles away and were going to build a golf course on the land starting almost immediately. I hot footed it to the council office at Lyndhurst to see the man in charge, a Mr Maurice Hunt who was only too willing to show me the intended plans and asked me why I was so eager as it would be at least nine to twelve months before opening. I told him of my background and that I was still serving with BOAC and would be interested in the Club Steward's position when and if it were advertised and he said to keep in touch. Approximately once a month I used to go to the course to see how things were progressing. Having seen the plans I could see exactly what was happening. About every two months I would go out to the NFDC and see Mr Hunt. I kept right in his face. Finally the date was set for the Grand Opening and once again I went to the NFDC to get the application papers to fill in ever hopeful for an interview. My big problem was that I was only a fifty fifty chance of being in the country. BOAC rostering was only one trip at a time (it was eventually done on a monthly basis). With the application forms I decided to put in two menus, one for the 19th hole snack bar and one a la carte for the evening meals. I took two BOAC first class menus left the wine, spirits and beer section and inserted my own menu; it looked most impressive. When I told my good friend Ron Longman a free lance photographer for the BBC (I had been bringing him back expensive lenses and camera equipment duty free from Hong Kong and Singapore for a long time. His name will crop up again later) that I was applying for the golf course job he told his mate who happened to be the cartoonist for the Southern Evening Echo, (also a golf nut) . He came up with a golfing cartoon as a frieze for the 19th hole. Everything was submitted and it was now wait and see time. I was later informed that over thirty couples, all existing club stewards and stewardesses applied from all over England for the job. Interviewing took place over a week or two and a short list was drawn up. By design or good luck or both Pam and I were placed straight on the short list. I was home on leave when the final three were summoned for the big show down. We were able to present our thoughts on how we saw the present and future ways the club could and would expand, plus our meals presentation. To our surprise we walked off with the job as it turned out we were the only couple who put forward a presentation. I think that was the clincher! The die was now cast, time to say goodbye to BOAC after nine and a half years. I had met a lot of great boys and girls, seen a lot more of the world and had some marvellous experiences. As I was leaving I requested a final trip down to Australia to say a goodbye to my mate Adrian and his wife Maggi who I mentioned at the beginning of my story as I didn't think I would see them again. Arriving at Heathrow with Pam I signed on. It was going to be a working trip for me and Pam was booked all the way through and back as a passenger. But Mr Murphy's law had other ideas. Big engine problem, the elastic band had broken. We finally got to the stage where the crew had run out of hours so we were all cancelled and standby crew members called in. This put me into deep poo. All the passengers were to be booked into the Heathrow Hotel for the night and hopefully an early morning flight. A mad dash to crew reporting to see the senior officer

in charge to tell him of my predicament. It ended up with me having to resign on the spot and doing my last trip as a passenger with Pam. More hardships - on most sectors we were upgraded to 1st class by the pursers. It was caviar and lobster all the way there and back. It was hard work but somebody had to do it. The whole lot cost me £10.00 for Pam's ticket and hundreds of pounds when Pam hit the jewellery shops in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Bramshott Hill Golf Course Dibden was my new address. I rented out our house as there was accommodation on the course. I now had a couple of hundred acres of garden and three gardeners/greenkeepers to look after it. Our view over the lower part of the course was straight into Southampton Waters and we could see all the liners and container ships coming and going. Pam and I had a couple of week's work recruiting staff, getting the furniture ready for the clubhouse, organising all the kitchen equipment and cutlery, crockery, glassware and all the other odds and sods that go with setting up a new catering venture. BOAC turned out to be a very good training although I had to quickly learn how to become a publican. Firstly I had to go to court to get my licence as it was my name going over the door. It was to be full licensing hours 10.30am-2.30pm and 6pm-10.30pm. There was a crash course in cellar management, ie temperatures, maintenance of beer kegs, pumps and lines, soft drinks dispensers, gas bottles etc. The council had aligned itself with Whitbread beers with the option of two more draught beers from other sources. I was asked for my opinion on the latter so I chose Worthington E and Heiniken as I was a bit partial to both. The opening was a great success, and we had several hundred people playing golf and generally rubber necking around. It was at this point that many people realised that we were in fact a public house and a public golf course that was open to all at any time. Our official grand opening was a few weeks later.

Somebody on the council knew the South African cricketer Tony Greig and invited him along with Gary Player, Graham Marsh and several other high class players who would be in England practising for the English Open to officially open the course. Gary Player arrived at Heathrow airport early that morning after flying all night from Johannesburg and was driven down to the New Forest. After a wash and brush up in our accommodation and a couple of packets of nuts and an orange juice he went out and shot the lowest round of golf, a 67, par was 72, leaving all of our local Hampshire pro's in his wake. After the speeches and presentations he even found time to give my lad a quick golf lesson, what a gentleman. If my memory serves me right he finished in the top five at the English Open. Things rapidly settled down on the course and trade was booming. Small golfing societies and other groups were clamouring to play the new course which was demanding. My golf handicap finally got down to 11 as I was playing most afternoons in my time off. Steve who was taught by the pro's got down to 10 by the time he was 11 years old. The following year he won the club's open championship, a junior also won the first open. After Steve's win all juniors were banned; they were too good for us oldies. The cup that Steve won was nearly half as big as he was. He looked like a young Jack Nicholas after they then had their own cups and medals. My wages consisted of free accommodation plus a reasonable retainer but all of the catering profits were mine and we were doing very nicely thank you until somebody at the NFDC decided to start stirring the pot. First of all the cashier/accountant who cleared all of my cash registers and did a stock take every fortnight started asking questions like, "Why doesn't your catering go through the till?" etc and "How much are you making?" and "Do you pay for any electricity to run the kitchens?" I explained to him that I bought all food for the clubhouse catering not the council, so I could hardly use their tills especially since I didn't have access to the till rolls (I didn't even know how much I took in a fortnight until we reconciled the cash with the till roll and hoped everything was OK. After four years my cash float ended up in the red by about £5). "No I don't pay for any electrics for the kitchens, it's my job to cater for the golf club and that includes all the cooking etc", and as for how much was I making from it, "None of your f#@! business". That didn't go down too well. A typical small minded outlook from a small minded man. Doesn't matter that the club was a success and doing well and that Pam and I were working about twelve hours a day each to help make it so. The thin edge of the wedge had been inserted and it was a slow decline in our relationship with the NFDC.

We had a couple of very bad wet and cold winters where the course was constantly closed through being waterlogged and big expenditure was needed to put in extra drainage. This hurt the total income of the golf club. Not only the green fees and of course bar takings throughout the day were found to be inadequate but also the club house heating. There were only storage heaters and by the time evening came they were cactus. I asked for fan heaters to help out. The whole engineering department arrived to look at the problem. They arrived at lunch time, had their glass of beer and a sandwich then pissed off. Three or four days went by, still no heaters. When I enquired about the outcome from the brains trust they replied that they thought it was very warm and comfy. Then you know what hit the fan! I called them a load of dead beats and to get their collective asses out here at seven in the evening to see if it was still warm and comfy and talk to any patrons that happened to be there. That produced three medium size fan heaters but no engineers (they probably didn't get overtime). The clubhouse was approximately 30m x 13m (that's 100ft x 40ft for all of you who remember them) and the whole front wall was glass floor to ceiling and standing on one of the highest points on the course. The changing/locker rooms, showers and toilets were downstairs; it wasn't cold down there it was ruddy freezing.

As things were very quiet my mate Ron Longman asked me if I wanted to go out on some filming expeditions and over a period of six months he trained me up to be his soundman when required. I ended up being in the Queen's presence

another couple of times when she visited Lord and Lady Mountbatten who had their country house just outside of Romsey. I was quite peeved when she didn't say hello Brian. I was also lucky enough to fly over to France a couple of times to film the Bordeaux wine festival and local seafood markets. This was all done in a light plane as the film had to be shot and got back to the BBC for developing and cutting for that evening's news. One big eye opener was our pollies flying over to Brussels for the opening of EEC Parliament. What a load of free loading wankers. Talk about gimme, gimme, gimme. I could see exactly where the tax payers' hard working pounds were going. But the icing on the cake came when we went to Brighton to cover the footy match that would see Brighton go up into the first division if they won. We not only shot the whole match but filmed and met all the directors, coaches and players afterwards. They had a guest of honour, an American who was travelling all over the UK, watching the various divisions play. He and his board of directors were getting ready to put a team into the American football league. They were to be called the San Diego Soccers and based at their massive baseball park. The outcome was that he invited the whole lot, us included, on a freebie trip over to San Diego to film Brighton and their team playing exhibition matches to drum up local interest. Due to the local TV and radio coverage it was picked up in Las Vegas by Tom Jones and Rod Stewart who played in local ex-pat teams every week (being soccer nuts). They invited us all up there after our commitments were finished in San Diego. Sadly the time had run out for the Brighton party but Ron rung up his boss back in Southampton and got permission for us to go up to Vegas to interview Tom Jones and Rod Stewart and do a film clip of them playing in their local league. Hardships, nothing but hardships. I must say they were very generous in their allowances but it didn't run to one of the big gambling hotels on the strip but a very nice motel on the outskirts of town. When everything was wrapped up it was back to San Diego and then home but Mr Murphy was once again waiting in the wings. Somehow the airline sent all the camera and sound gear and suitcases to Los Angeles. By the time we had managed to find this out and get some idea when they could deliver it back it was going to be about another three day's layover. They sent the reporter back as Ron and I could manage the equipment on our own. Once again the BBC coughed up a few dollars to buy shirts, jocks and socks so we spent our time wining, dining and sightseeing. It was a good job that Pam and the staff managed to cover me. The NFDC to my knowledge, never did know about my little bit of moonlighting.

It was a couple of months later that Ron bought a pair of 100 year old (in 1978) attached thatched cottages in Dibden about five minutes from the golf club and managed to get a public house licence. Everything inside was gutted out and a new thatch roof put on. I used to take out the thatcher's daughter while I was at sea. She drove a ruddy big motor bike and could down a pint with the best of them, no shrinking violet that one. The builder got on pretty well but came to a screaming halt when the tiling was ready to be done. You will probably remember tiling wasn't a trade in the UK at that time. Usually the plumber stuck a row of tiles over the bath, basin and around the sink and that was that. The floor was covered in a damp proof carpet. Not like the stupid system we have here where there is a floor trap and tiled floors all because the powers to be couldn't or wouldn't buy or produce baths, basins and loos with built in overflows. Anyway Ron knew that I had done a lot of tiling for myself over the years. Every house I had bought I either made a shower alcove or put one in over the bath. I was asked if I could start the tiling on one of the public toilets to keep the proposed opening date from falling behind and I ended up doing both toilets, all kitchen walls and floors, a splash back behind the bar and the floor in front of the bars. The builder's tiler never did show up but he asked me if I could tile out two car wash bays for his other job. Once again my future took an unexpected turn.

The NFDC at this time was building a new sports centre at Dibden: tennis, squash, badminton, basketball and netball courts plus a large cafeteria selling snack food and drinks. Instead of managing it themselves it was put out to tender. An instant return of their investment and within six months Pam and I plus all of my staff were made redundant and it was taken over by the same people.

Ron's public house was now open and doing a thriving trade. He named it *The Pilgrim's Inn*. Mick and Jill Surfield have regularly enjoyed the liquid amber and the ploughman's lunch on their visits to Jill's mum who lives only a short distance away. Last year, having found out I knew all about Ron and *The Pilgrim* they very kindly dropped in for a pint and chat and to say hello for me. It turned out that Ron knew Jill's mum and dad. What a small world! I gather that *The Pilgrim* is now about three times the size and is one of the New Forest's premium pub and dining experiences.

For the first time in my life I had been sacked, made redundant or given the big '###A'. Its not a nice feeling. A small conciliation was that I was still playing golf there and could monitor the way the clubhouse was being run and how the staff ran it. I'm sorry to say that the new management made a complete cock up and all the loyal customers we had gradually built up over the past three years were seriously disadvantaged and left in droves. Not that the NFDC cared. The local newspapers did an in depth review and were scathing of the new set up but life goes on. I saw an advert for a deli situated just outside of Southampton docks and surrounded by office blocks. I made inquiries re the turnover, rent, staff wages and all the other ancillary things that you have to look into when purchasing a business. Pam and I went in a couple of times over the next few days during their busy periods to suss things out. I also parked down the street for three whole days counting customers; things looked good. I made a time outside of business hours to have a one on one heart to heart about all the things they weren't telling the selling agent and to look at the premises, equipment and stock levels (a good

indicator of trading). When they realised that I was a serious buyer they showed me the books. All three sets of them. By the end of the week it was all nailed down and waterproof and we were back in business. The owners stayed on for two weeks to make the transition smooth and introduce me to our suppliers but the main thing was to show me all the lurks and perks and count the takings to prove their unofficial turnover was as they had said it was. I was very lucky all the staff stayed on. The previous owner had trained them well. They were all happy and outgoing characters. Just as well because everybody had to serve at peak times. They were even more so when I gave them an extra pound note in their hand every pay day; the business could certainly afford it. A lot of our very early trade (the shop opened at 7am) was from bus drivers (the bus depot was just around the corner) and taxi drivers. After doing a bit of market research, I found out that if I opened up an hour earlier I would catch all the oncoming as well as off going drivers. Making arrangements with the local bakery I collected the first twenty sticks of French bread directly out of the ovens; all other stock including cakes etc was delivered ASAP. The smell of egg and bacon sarnies were soon filling the air and trade took another step in the right direction. We expanded our services into the office blocks: plates of sandwiches etc for management meetings, office parties, Xmas and New Year. I even got a contract to cater for a converted tug that did twilight and jazz cruises down the river every weekend during summer, that was very lucrative. My neighbouring shop was a TAB, a large shop situated on the corner. It turned out that it wasn't doing too well and was being closed down. Luckily the same landlord owned both buildings and was more than happy to let us take over the lease and re-lease my shop which was a good site smaller therefore easier to re-let. I had a carpenter friend who helped me gut and rebuild the shop to my requirements. It ended up as a general store as well as being a take-away deli. This served two purposes. The office workers could buy most things they needed on a day to day basis but mainly there was no way the tax man could determine how much bread, milk and such was sold over the counter as a whole or out as sandwiches or take-away tea and coffee.

After nearly two years of very lucrative but very long and hard hours we began looking for a way out. Pam's sister's family had emigrated to Adelaide about six months earlier and were sending glowing reports back including local realtor cuttings. The seed had been sown. I told my boss lady that Pam and I were thinking about emigrating to Australia for the kid's future, although at that time we had only written to Australia House enquiring about the possibilities. We were lucky enough to be granted an interview so off we went to London where we had to present our total life stories to make sure we were of good character. Bloody cheek, seeing that seventy per cent of them were of convict descent and you could still see the ball and chain marks. They didn't seem too impressed with us, not enough brains, I think. They asked us what we had to offer, I said two young kids to help grow your country and us to pay income tax for the next 20 years or so. Shazam the magic words, hopefully. Don't call us we will call you. After a couple of weeks, where they did all their background checks the good news arrived. Ho, Ho and off to Australia we go. One of the other shopkeepers in the street had heard this whisper about us possibly selling up and made contact. After a bit of argy bargy and toing and froing we struck a deal. The only problem being was that he wanted to finalise everything for the end of the financial year six weeks away. Australia House had told us that we had a year to get ourselves sorted out, bloody panic stations! First we had to get the house on the market. I knew we wouldn't have any trouble getting a sale. I had converted a very small two bedroom bungalow on a quarter acre block in the lovely little village of Dibden Purlieu into a large two storey four bedroom, two bathroom, double garage with landscaped grounds. If you remember, the English way of selling houses was the potential buyer had up to six weeks to complete all the legal work and then could pull out at the last moment if they changed their mind. Yup, this happened to us three times. We should have been here in Adelaide in July or August but arrived a couple of weeks before Christmas. But I diverse, the selling of the shop went ahead on time but not knowing of a finalisation date on the house we couldn't book airline tickets or a container for all our household goodies or take the kids out of school etc. The boss said I couldn't sit on my ass, go and earn me some money. I'm sure you all know how that game works. I went into a large employment office in Southampton that specialised in temporary and short term work. The first job they offered me after reading my CV was a static guard position for Securicor, I should be so lucky, no thankyou. In the months that followed I counted tin assholes for teddy bears, left handed screwdrivers, operated smoke machines, sewed buttons onto flatulence. The best two were working for Mr Kipling on the end of conveyer lines packing cakes. One line was for Mr K the next was Woollies then Marks and Sparks etc, talk about having a choice. One very funny episode happened on a night shift. Four of us were on the team, two making up boxes from flat packs and two packing. In this case it was jam tarts: red, orange and green. Talk about being hypnotised, it was like looking at bloody mobile traffic lights. Anyway the shit hit the fan. I don't know whose fault it was, the people operating the machines at the very start, the speed of the conveyer belts being too fast or not being supplied with enough boxes for the run required. The outcome - about three square metres of tarts piling up on the floor - the conveyer belts couldn't be stopped because there were still tarts being cooked in the ovens. The charge hand wasn't amused but we were ruddy hysterical. My final job was back into uniform, hat, gloves the works, I became chauffer to the CEO of Bridgestone Tyres and my trusty steed the Commodore V8 with all the bells and whistles. Back and forward to Heathrow, long lunches and whatever else the boss had in mind. I think if things had been different I would have liked to stay in that job.

D. Day. The house was sold, a forty foot container was at the door being packed and airline tickets in our hot and sticky hands. I must say I was looking forward to the hot and sunny climes as it was just above zero degrees. The coach from Southampton to Heathrow arrived about 40 minutes late owing to the icy roads but that didn't matter because the airport

was just about closed due to freezing frost and icy runways with planes being diverted all over the continent as well as Britain. Finally we boarded our Garuda Airline flight; for some reason our two cats had to travel with Qantas. Garuda was the cheapest and just as well as the ruddy cats cost us £600 for cat boxes, freight handling and three months quarantine at the Torrens Island facility. As Peter, Paul and Mary sang, I'm on a jet plane ain't got time for a fast train. Off we go all down the far east until we arrived at the first point of entry Darwin where they tried to gas us with the insecticide bomb. I used to think it was great fun when I went through the cabin doing the same thing but I could bugger off behind the curtains in the galley and listen to the spluttering and coughing, not funny Jan. On to Sydney, change planes to a Quaint Ass International flight to Adelaide. I've seen better airports in the back of beyond and darkest Africa. Jesus wept no wonder they used to think of Adelaide as being in a different country, but hey the sun was shining and it was 40° for a week. Pam ended up getting a bit of sun stroke; not bad from zero to forty in just over 24 hours. Never mind, all of our extended family were here to meet us. Three carloads of people most of whom we didn't have the foggiest idea who they were, but don't worry mate she will be alright, have a good day and so off to sunny Findon where Pam's family lived. After a few beers and the first of many barbies it was sack time. First thing in the morning after getting our brains unscrambled and eyeballs polished it was off to see the sights of the city of Adelaide. That took all of an hour. Just joking, it's a lovely place. After 25 years I'm still finding my way around. The first and most important thing was to get an appointment with our Bank Manager to establish that our finances had arrived from the UK and to set up an account. Pam's first real encounter with a real rinky dink man, g'day mate and this must be your lovely missus (you can just imagine this in the great banking halls of London). Dressed in short sleeve shirt, tie, Don Dunstan style shorts, long socks and brown brogue shoes. Just call me (whatever his name was) don't bother ringing for an appointment drop in at any time, always glad to see ya. After the usual small talk about the weather a tray of tea and bickies arrive and then down to business. The only trouble was there wasn't any, our funds hadn't arrived from the UK. Oh shit. Don't worry mate what do you want? We had brought a reasonable sum of money with us but that didn't stretch much beyond paying for our keep and other odds and sods for a couple of weeks. How about a car, no worry, go and find yourself a set of wheels, I know how much is in the pipeline. John, my brother-in-law, had bought a car from Smiths at Port Adelaide and reckoned they were as good as any car yard around so off to the Port where I was once again acquainted with the Holden Commodore. After kicking a few tyres we said we would like to drive the Commodore SLE top of the range 3.8. Help yourself mate the keys are in the ignition, I showed him my drivers licence and asked if I could leave the wife as a deposit. No, just don't bend it. Thirty minutes later after following John all around the backstreets and seeing how wonderful the drivers of Adelaide were plus a few grey hairs we arrived back in one piece. We haggled over the price and came to an agreement. I then told him I didn't have any money. You should have seen his face. All was forgiven when I gave him the Bank Managers card and told him to give him a ring. The next day, after picking up a cheque from the bank, a lovely, nearly new, shining bright car was delivered to our door step (you don't get that type of service anymore). The race was now on to find a house and employment. After looking around North, South, East and West for a few days, the Southern suburbs took our fancy and we found a lovely new house that had just been finished in Bellevue Heights and that was that. Arrived the 22nd November 1982 and settled in by mid December. Then we had to wait for all of our effects to arrive which were coming by ship. Upturned boxes and paper plates were the order of the day, a few borrowed pillows and sheets and our new carpets were our beds until mid January, good job it was summer. I picked up a job within the week working as a ceramic tiler for a small company of plumbers. Steve who was an engineering apprentice in England couldn't pick up a job as all the apprenticeships for the next year had been filled. Pam and I decided to look for a small family business where she and Steve and possibly later Karen our daughter could be employed. We ended up buying a fruit and veg shop in the Old Burnside Shopping complex. Three mornings a week I would get up at 3.30am to be in the Rundle Street market for 4am when I could get in and order all of our goodies from the local growers and merchants, then it was off to breakfast. At six o'clock the bell would ring then it was a mad bloody rush around the market with our coster barrows trying to remember what you had bought from whom, then get back to the truck to load up and then back to the shop to stack all the shelves before Pam and Steve arrived for opening at 8.30am. The other two mornings I could lay in until 5am before going to market if needed and then it was off to work tiling all day before going back to the shop to take down most of the fruit displays as they had to be refrigerated overnight to keep them fresh. Oh gay days, I must have been out in the ruddy sun too long and scrambled my brains. This went on for nearly 18 months. We finally got Steve a position in engineering so the writing was on the wall for the shop, although we had increased trade and profits by 50% the rent and all the ancillary bills connected to a shopping centre were overtaking us, time to abandon ship. We found a buyer (a smart assed Italian) who thought he new it all as he was already in the trade and we were gone at a great rate of knots. Eighteen months later he went for a deep six never to be heard of again.

My luck is still holding, a Swiss guy opened a small tile shop in Blackwood, I went in and asked him if I could buy all my materials at trade prices. No worries mate, do you want any work? Me local, yes OK. He gave me two or three jobs and I found out later he had gone around and inspected them with a fine tooth comb. The work came piling in. His wife used to look after the shop while he went out tiling. About six weeks later I bought into the business on a fifty, fifty basis, Pam then went into the shop to help out. Hugo, my partner was a master Swiss/German Tiler/Craftsman, I think he had forgotten more than I had learned to that point but he soon put me on the straight and narrow. We were in the start of a new building and renovation boom. We acted as agents for three large tile warehouses including Beaumonts. We sold the

tiles, adhesives, all the ancillary things like baths, loo's taps etc and did all the work. Times were good but my god we worked for it. We soon had to get a bigger shop and showroom. Hugo had come out to Australia many years ago as a contract tiler to work on the Sydney Opera House, mainly on the roofs as they were all tiled. He loved the country found a lovely lady, worked all over Australia and finally landing up in SA. His parents in Switzerland were elderly and in poor health so he wanted to take six months off to go and stay with them. After all my flying I found out that I couldn't fly ten feet when a ladder slipped out from underneath me at home while doing some wiring. Oh dash and bugger, bugger, bugger, especially when I had to be taken to hospital in an ambulance to the emergency ward where after X rays they found I had busted my foot in six places plus all ligaments and tendons, a bigger BBB, six months in plaster from nuts to toe. Great fun having a shower, sitting in a plastic chair with a large black garbo bag on my leg to protect the plaster. Oh well it served me right for not chocking up the legs of the ladder. With Hugo wanting to go home and me not able to even think about work for six months, if ever, the surgeon told me, "Time to put up the For Sale sign.### We managed to get a quick sale to a family already in business who were looking for a cash flow golden goose. The only problem was that I had to stay on as manager and Hugo had to train the son in a crash course of tiling with another tiler they had managed to find to keep the business ticking over. Eventually I started work again and went back to the tools for them as Mum and Dad decided they could run the shop. This lasted a few months when once again I found that I was doing too much for too little so I said Ta, Ta and ever since I've been a self employed contractor. I started working for all the large builders and got stuffed around something terrible so I just did private work and that's kept me going for the last twenty years. I still do the odd job for past clients or if something lucrative turns up. My family is all grown up, my son is a self employed contractor, my daughter is married and working as a hostie for Qantas, her husband is a Captain for Virgin Blue, both working out of Brisbane. Sadly Pam and I called it a day after 32 years, I eventually found another soul mate in Vanessa, the original White Lady of White Lady Funerals, but sadly that only lasted a little over ten years. Upon reflection not a bad life for a snotty nosed young kid who went to the Vindi all those years ago.

I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you through your memoirs, so start writing today. Don't put it off. You never know what's around the corner. We Vindi Boys are unique and so is our history. Amen.



Cheers