

Editor's Note

2009 is now with us and we wish you all peace and good health for the remainder of the year.

For the ladies.

It was suggested that we open up the 'Secret Women's Business' that we started for the SA Reunion. Some of you wrote of how you met your Vindi Boy and with your permission we would like to print them in the Newsletter. If you haven't already done so, perhaps you would like to give it a go.

Mick & Jill Surfield

Skipper's Log

Dear Friends

HAPPY NEW YEAR and welcome to 2009.

In spite of the world's problems, the Vindicatrix SA Branch will continue the success and have a great year.

One hopes that we will all stay in good health and that those who are feeling some discomfort that their pains etc are eased somewhat for this wonderful year.

The year started off with our first meeting at our home, although it was more of a social occasion as there was not too much to report. Many thanks to those who brought along sweets and salad's, we supplied the sausages and steaks, which all went down very well. A total of twenty one attended, coming from way down South plus Mike Day from Pinnaroo. Many thanks for your dedication Mike.

Subs have been paid to the UK for 35 members, a drop of three. Sandy Reeves has retired, now in his eighties, he thoughtfully sent his resignation by mail to me and we wish him many more happy years. There is no renewal of membership from Jimmy James or webmaster John Williams. The good news is that we have retained our fees at 3 pounds sterling for members in block as individually this is now seven pounds sterling.

See you all at the next meeting at Port Adelaide on **March 29th**.

Tony

From the Almoner's desk

Our Vindi year began on a sombre note, with the passing of Anne's mother. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Anne, Tony and family.

We have heartening news about Vindi boy Vern Evans. Vern is progressing well and looking forward to a busy year and perhaps a holiday away in his beloved caravan, well done Vern and Eunice.

Catching up with John Hines is always a pleasure. John tells me he is going along well with his second knee replacement. His daily routine as carer for his wife Wendy is challenging, and yet full of courage and optimism. Wendy has recently undergone spinal surgery. Our very best wishes go to John and Wendy.

Now, how is this for an achievement...Anne and Jack Nicholls will be celebrating their Diamond wedding anniversary in March by treading the path of nostalgia in England. 60 years of marriage is a wonderful event. Hearty congratulations Anne and Jack, may you have a marvellous time.

In January Keith and I celebrated a double event of 50th wedding anniversary and 50 years in Australia. My gift to Keith was a beautifully sea chest crafted by talented Vindi members Mick and Jill Surfield. It is splendid with the Vindi badge on the lid. As we reside in a bush fire prone area, I was informed if the occasion arose where evacuation was warranted, the chest would be the first item to be put in our car..!

From my niece in New Zealand came the gift of a hand bound book about the P & O liner *SS Strathaird*, very sentimental with good memories as we sailed aboard her to begin our new life in Australia. My niece had done research from the Internet and covered every aspect from menus to boarding passes, even our very own printed tickets, complete with cabin number etc. Such history and a proud record of service over many years at sea.

It seems I have gathered a great respect for sea chests old and new, so I put my imagination to work and wrote this poem, from the point of view of the sea chest of course..! Cheers to everyone.

Anne Withey

GETTING IT OFF MY CHEST

Anchors aweigh..! I have a tale to tell
About years traversing foreign climes
And sailing the ocean swell.
In creaking cabins aboard tall ships
Often stowed aloft horse drawn coaches
With coachmen cracking whips.

I've been jauntily hoisted on seafarers shoulders
In far flung foreign ports of call
Weathering storms and heat that smoulders.
I've been filled to my gunwales with ladies frippery
Times of sweet scented lacy elegance
At the beck and call of holiday trippery..!

Crafted by a man of heart and dreams
My splendour a tribute to his endeavour
Of proudly polished timber and fine seams.
Destined not to leave his village green, in fancy, he too has been,
Serenaded by sea shanty and rhythmic horses hooves
Hauntingly echoing the ever changing scene.

Alas, my roving days seem over, gone is my wanderlust
I'm now confined to a dim corner
In this antiques shop gathering dust.
My timbered heart still echoes, wheeling seagulls' cries
And the pitching fathoms travelled by
The adventurous and the wise.

Majestic sunsets vie with silvered moonlit ways
Ostlers tending weary horses at days end.
Such inspiring scenes coloured all my days.
Herein lies my story, make of it what you can
My heart of Oak for ever England
Soundly honours my village artisan.



In our May 2008 newsletter we printed Anne's story as she embarked on marriage and a new life down under with Keith. At the January meeting many of us were there to raise our glasses to them on celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on January 17th 2009.

VINDI ANNUAL DOWN-UNDER REUNION 2009

Vindicatrix Queensland has the pleasure of being the Host for the Vindi Annual Down-Under Reunion to be held on 6th – 9th November 2009 at the Powerboat Club, Golden Beach, Caloundra, Sunshine Coast.

Registration Forms will be available at the March meeting and for further information go to www.qld.vindicatrix.com or contact Tony or Mick.

PORT BOWEN – THE SHIP THAT CAME BUT NEVER LEFT.

The Port Line steamer Port Bowen, 8276 tons, under Captain Francis William Bailey, his first command, was entering Wanganui Roadstead in the North Island of New Zealand on the morning of 19th July 1939 when she grounded at low water a mile from the mouth of the Wanganui River. On the 20th July the tug Kahanui attempted to pull the ship off the beach without success. Two additional tugs from Wellington also failed to move the ship and by the 22nd of July six attempts by the three tugs to move the ship had also failed. Meanwhile, significant quantities of cargo had been discharged into lighters and bunker coal had been dumped overboard, and two boilers had been placed on board to ensure that the refrigeration plant kept working. On the 28th July the new Lyttelton tug, Lyttelton 2, arrived but still the ship resisted all attempts by the four tugs to refloat her and she continued to inch her way up Castlecliff Beach, driven by bad weather, until she was only 350 feet from the shore at high tide. Sixty-six waterside workers were marooned on the ship for four days due to the bad weather. Thirty-five tons of salvage equipment was shipped from Sydney and Captain D W Gibson was put in charge of the salvage operation by the underwriters. A fortnight later Captain J W Herd arrived to look after the interests of the Salvage Association, which operated under the umbrella of Lloyds of London. At the end of July it was decided to build a two-way staging from the beach to the ship to allow motor vehicles to travel out to the ship and unload the frozen carcasses. Discharge of the meat commenced on 7th August but heavy weather continued to dog the unloading operations and the ship was still moving up the beach causing the ship's heavy cables to part and fresh water pipes from the shore to carry-away. By the end of September all cargo and coal had been removed, the final carcasses being loaded onto lorries on the beach as the landing-stage had by then collapsed due to the bad weather. A final attempt to re-float the ship was made the 30th September at high water on a Spring tide, but failed to achieve any movement of the ship, but succeeded in breaking both lines to the mushroom anchors that had been originally deployed to try to stop the ship moving up the beach. By 11th October preparations were made to remove all the stores and Captain Gibson returned to Sydney. In mid-October, all the salvage gear was removed and shortly afterwards over 300 people attended an auction of the equipment comprising large quantities of wire rope, blocks, shackles, and the twenty-six large baskets used for dumping the bunker coal. On the 2nd November a Magisterial Inquiry was held in Wellington to determine the cause of the stranding. Captain Bailey and the Fourth Officer John Devlin, who were on the bridge at the time of the stranding, were the principal witnesses. Captain Bailey told the inquiry he had realised immediately that he'd over-run the Roadstead distance by three quarters of a mile that morning and had immediately stopped the engines. At 12.11am on July the 19th the ship touched ground and despite all efforts the ship would not move. Captain Bailey told the Court that he'd been at sea for twenty-eight years, the last twenty-four years with Port Line, and had been an officer on ships using the Wanganui Roadstead about six times. Although the Court returned Captain Bailey's Masters Certificate, it found that the stranding was due to an error of judgment on the part of the Master as follows:

- In coming in too fast after picking-up the Castlecliff light, in view of the fact that he had not picked-up the leading lights at the anchorage.
- In not paying sufficient attention to the record of the echo-sounding device.
- In not stopping the vessel when the sounding of eighty feet was recorded, which indicated that the vessel was close in- shore.

The Court concluded "As we feel that the error of judgment was brought about rather by lack of knowledge than any culpable act, we consider that the circumstances do not call for suspension or cancellation of the Master's certificate" The Court also made no order for costs.

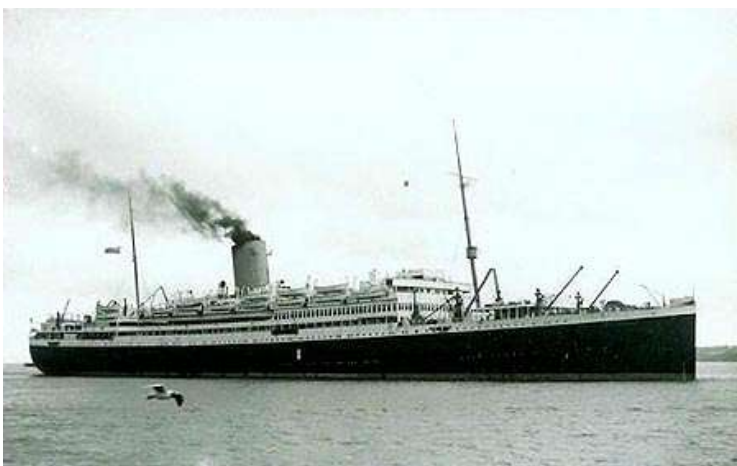
In June 1940 the New Zealand government announced that it would arrange for the ship to be dismantled for scrap, with all the ship's equipment being used for the war effort. Work commenced in July with the cutting of two large holes in the hull so that trucks could drive into one and out the other. Equipment was removed for use in Wellington hospital, Kakariki freezing works, Waiouru military camp, dairies, lime kilns, and one of the generators was large enough to supply all the electrical needs of Wanganui hospital. Copper piping, navigation instruments, cabin fittings, and winches etc were used in the construction of nine NZ built minesweepers. Considerable quantities of non-ferrous metals, and even nuts and bolts were also valuable war-time commodities. Dismantling of the ship was completed in August 1943 with nearly 6000 tons of scrap having been recovered. Port Line reduced Captain Bailey to Chief Officer and he was in this role when the Port Wellington was attacked by the German raider Pinguin, killing the Master and Radio Officer. Captain Bailey became a prisoner of war for the next five years and was awarded an M.B.E. for his leadership in the camps. Captain Bailey was appointed Master of the Port Hobart in 1946 and subsequently commanded the Ports Jackson, Pirie, and Brisbane. He was appointed Commodore of the Port Line in 1958 and retired in 1959.

This story was condensed from an article by Ian Farquhar, published in N.Z. Marine News and I am grateful for the permission of the author and publisher to use his excellent article.

Vince Vincent.



Our first meeting of the year was a BBQ at Tony and Anne's. It was a somewhat noisy occasion as we tucked into a plethora of food and liquid refreshment. I (Jill) listened to many stories from Jack and Ann Nicholls and it would be great if some of them could be written for the Newsletter.



Alcantara 16,034gt was a Royal Mail Boat built in 1926. During the war she served as an Armed Merchant Cruiser and troopship. In 1948 she was returned to the Royal Mail Line. She was scrapped in 1958.



Just when you thought it was all over.

Can you spot Father Christmas in the above photos?



George and I went to Mt Gambier for a couple of days, and met up with friends at Robe for lunch. It was Andres' birthday and as we were all greeting her, a man tapped her on the shoulder, she turned around and they both burst out crying. It was her brother and his wife, John and Joyce Mathews from England who had come to surprise her for her birthday! The next evening in Kingston SE, 19 of us were enjoying tea when it came up in conversation that two of the men had been our milkmen more than 40 years ago. A funny coincidence we all laughed at. The conversation turned to everyone's youth and it was a delightful and great surprise for George and John to discover that they were both "Vindi Boys". John did his training in 1954. George and John thoroughly enjoyed a good old chinwag about the good old days! We brought in the New Year with them and a good time was had by all.

We had John and Joyce around for tea when we all arrived back in Adelaide. George gave John some mementos, a copy of the Vindi song, newsletters and other bits and pieces. This was another lovely evening which George and John enjoyed with more reminiscing.

John and Joyce would have loved to have come to a Vindi meeting but left for home on the 9th January.

Betty Hutchings

From a More Ancient Mariner to a Very Ancient Mariner

My last employment was with Australian Electrical Industries at Auburn (Sydney) NSW, where a few of us started a photographic club; mentioned in last Vindi Newsletter. In April 1956 after six years in Australia I booked a passage on the *Largs Bay* from Sydney to London, keeping a promise I made to my mother, that I would see her again in five years.

My younger brother Tony had been working in London (Willesden) with British Thompson-Houston since the day I joined the Vindi at Sharpness. They were manufacturing street transformers for overhead wiring which AEI was about to start manufacturing in Australia. I had been handling production progression of Switchgear Dept on the shop floor and was given leave of ten weeks to get to BTH without it affecting my long service leave. In June the shipping company notified me that *Largs Bay* would hold up for six months with boiler replacement, so I went to the Mercantile Marine office in Sydney to see if they had any ships leaving for the UK that I could sign on. I had just missed one that day but they gave me a train ticket to Adelaide to join there. It turned out to be an old Aussie coaster which had been on the coal and iron ore run to Indonesia for the past 18 months and was in a real shocking mess; dirty crew quarters, galley etc. I refused to sign at Port Adelaide shipping office, took the taxi from outside the door, which the Captain had ready to go back to the ship and let go. While I was there he told the Shipping Master that he didn't expect to get to England till after Christmas as he had another coal run or two to Indonesia. I had my gear on board and managed to throw it onto the wharf and jump as the gangway was being lifted.

I had been to Adelaide on a couple of occasions to visit friends at Victor Harbor, so knew it well. I caught the train to Victoria Square and was walking to the Port Office when I saw a shop sign down the street for Hazell & Moore. I knew it was the brother of the Westcott Hazell I first worked for the day after I landed in Sydney. I went in to ask if they had a vacancy for a storeman or clerical worker. After explaining why I was in Adelaide, with no money and accommodation, and promising I wouldn't skip in a week or two if a ship for the UK came in, I got a position of storeman/counter sales person. One of the other lads told me of the landlady he had just left, so I got fixed up that night with full board at Unley, right by the tram track to Victoria Square. That was the first week in July 1956. *Largs Bay* came into Adelaide en route for the UK on 10th October and that evening after work I went to see the Purser to see if I could book a passage. I was met on the gangway by the Bo'sun. I told him I wanted to book a passage to the UK and he asked me if I wanted a job as they were short of AB's and Ordinary seamen. I signed on two days later after paying my landlady. I still only had the gear I had taken to join the old coaster, so no problem with disposing of or packing anything else. I shared a cabin with another AB and was issued with clean bedding each week. There was very little painting etc as the ship was going to be sold and scrapped. Passengers were mainly old people returning to the UK to die. Going across the Bight was really rough and the saloon steward only sold a couple of cases of beer. I paid off in London on 20th December only to find I was signed on as AB uncertified. I had my Discharge Book, Lifeboat Efficiency Certificate, EDH Certificate when I signed on and



proof that I had sea time during my RAN in Australia. I paid off with £80.00 and deductions of barber shop items, cigs etc. as he was selling out his shop on board and I needed Christmas presents for the family.

I stayed with my brother in Harrow where he had an upstairs bed-sit. The next day I went to BTH with Tony and was given employment in the production office as job chaser on the switchgear manufacturing that I had originally been going to in July. I had to sign papers saying that I would stay a minimum of 18 months. Apparently so many Aussie's were backpacking in England and Europe and employers were fed up with them only working a few weeks and then leaving. I started on December 31st at a salary of 168/11½d per week, plus a weekly incentive bonus of approximately 18/- . My hours were 8am – 6pm Monday –Thursday, and 5pm on Friday. My job was to keep track of materials through the manufacturing stages on the factory floor and iron out any problems holding up any stage of production. We had a canteen and had a full cooked dinner at 12.30pm daily at our own expense. I cycled to work with my brother Tony and Stan, the landlord of his bedsit; he was one of the boys at the Children's Home with us 1932-1940 in Newcastle- on –Tyne. Quite a number of days it was so foggy that we had to follow the curbstone all the way to work. In the summer evenings Tony and I went swimming at Gladstone Park Lido, and in winter soccer training; Tony played for the Rayners Lane team. While on my 18 months stay in England I went on a one day excursion by train to see the Blackpool Illuminations. It was the second time I had been to Blackpool, I went there for a day with my mother, younger brother and an aunt the week before we went into the Children's Home. I don't remember much about it except that it was my first encounter with the SEA. During the summer holiday at BTH I took a coach trip to Newcastle to visit the Children's Home. It hadn't changed much, there about 28 children who lived as two separate families (boys) except for mealtimes. The gardener was still there in the lodge. If you remember I had been a garden boy after leaving school in 1939. I also spent some weekends in Buxton catching up with local changes and friends.

At the end of September 1958, I wrote to AEI in NSW to say that I was returning to Australia and would report on my time spent with BTH. I received a reply from them saying it was difficult to predict what positions would be available at the time of my arrival. They told me to contact their Employment Officer to discuss what was available. To cut a long story short, I paid for my passage on the *Fairsea*. I shared a cabin with three of the Aussie Commonwealth Games team that was returning from Wales. Contacting AEI when I arrived I was informed that they couldn't employ me. I was staying with friends and needed to get work straight away. After seeing the Employment Officer at AEI, I called in at the British General Electric factory next door and landed a job in the production office as a progress clerk. I made up material list from the drawing office personnel to put into the factory which produced stoves, fluorescent lights, irons, toasters and refrigerators. While working at AEI I rejoined the RAN Reserves. I was there from 3rd February 1959 until 31st January 1962 when I was lucky enough to be given the chance to visit the UK again with the RAN.

The government was getting 6 minesweepers from the UK Navy and called for volunteers among the Australian Reserves to bring the ships out. There were 800 applicants for 200 positions and I got lucky, being the only signalman in Sydney Reserves. I had a two week refresher course at Flinders Naval Depot in Victoria and received all the usual inoculations while there. Once again I packed up all my belongings from my lodgings in Chester Hill and stored them with friends. My sea bags went as unaccompanied freight on 4th July. The 200 Reserves contingent was made up of reservists from all the states. We left Sydney at 12.30pm on a Qantas flight and arrived at Perth at 18.45pm, the next stop was at Cairo for a few hours. We had to fly in civvies, which was OK by me as I did a lot of travelling in the UK during the three months I was waiting for *Ibis* to be fitted out by civilian dockyard workers. The Aussie crew boys had to work with the civilians in their separate departments of engineering, catering, and seamen. As the ship was in civilian hands no communication materials such as code books, coding and de-coding machines etc were allowed, I had little to do. However, I sewed the flags on the dressing lines wire-roper, and toggles on ensigns, checked the Aldis signal lamps and batteries and did some mast painting.

My brother Tony had taken his summer holiday in July 1962 and with his landlord, wife and children booked a caravan in Cornwall for two weeks. As my ship *Ibis* was at Poole, Dorset and as I had nothing much to do in the dockyard I got the weekend off, caught the daily Royal Blue coach line from Bournemouth to Newquay and on to Maugan-Porth. I spent the day with them at the caravan on the beach and returned to Poole the next day. Somehow I lost my RAN Identity Card. Our first accommodation in England was on board *HMS Victory* in Portsmouth for two days then to the Royal Marine Barracks *HMS Vernon* in Poole. The first course I did begun on the 19th July on board minesweeper *HMS Causton* for eight hours at sea, which was dull grey and cold. It was out to sea again the next day. That weekend I went by coach to Manchester and Gt. Harwood to see friends and stayed in the YMCA that night, the following day visiting my cousin. Arrived back at Portsmouth at 6am on Monday and went out to sea on *HMS Sheraton* for the remainder of the day. Dressed the next day in No 3 (Gold badges etc) I caught the bus for a 15 mile ride to *HMS Mercury* for radio and coding practice. Then it was back to packing my sea bag and sending it off to Poole. My weekly pay for this was 30/-.



We stored up the *Ibis* on Sunday 16th September and sailed from Poole at midnight 19th September for Lochinvar arriving on the 21st. Most of the evening was spent writing and typing up logs and turned in at 5am but was out again by 8am to the sick bay (seasick on the way to Lochinvar). *Ibis* left at 4.30pm sailing under the Forth Bridge making her way to Dartmouth and arriving two days later. I was on Duty watch Tuesday and Friday finished at 4am, washed down bridge 6.40am then had breakfast. Loading stores again, then onto radio circuit at 9- 9.30am and back to loading stores and stopping at noon. Typed signals in the afternoon. I spent the evening

with Tony at Harrow, catching the last train home. Monday 1st October was a wild day and the Admiralty closed the English Channel to all naval vessels. The six minesweepers were due to leave with *HMS Supply* at 8.30am and as we were then under RA Navy orders and not British we left. It was so rough that all hands except officer of the watch, helmsman and signal man were ordered below. We arrived at Gibraltar on Saturday 6th October (mostly under water, like submarines). I was transferred to *HMS Supply* at 10am. We changed into No 10 uniform (whites). *HMS Curlew*, one of the six minesweepers, had engine trouble so we left a day after the others for Malta. Arriving at Malta on Friday 19th February I got shore leave and called to see my ex typist from BGE and her family, I had seen them off from Sydney five years before with a new baby. Getting a ride in a Daisha (Horse drawn Maltese buggy) I was back on board for the 4 o'clock watch. Twelve days later, on a sunny Sunday evening in November we arrived at Malta and by 9pm I was ashore with the Captain of *HMS Curlew* and had to wait until 11.50pm for a boat back. The next day I went ashore to do some much need shopping.

During the Mediterranean passage all ships had to be re-painted Mediterranean Grey, a change from Atlantic Grey. I was on *Supply* which was a big tanker supply ship, so we had lots of painting in and out of port. I had been transferred to this ship at Gibraltar because the Skipper said I was too seasick on the way out of England and he wouldn't care to carry me further on *Ibis* (Although I was on my feet on the bridge with him and the helmsman all the time). The weather from Gibraltar to Singapore was calm and on arrival I was sent back to *Ibis* for the remaining journey to Sydney. At Singapore all ships had to be re-painted a different shade of grey for Pacific waters. Each ship in each port had a day off for the crew to go ashore, taking it in turns. *Supply* was due for leave the day I was returned to *Ibis* and she had her turn for leave the day before. So once again I have been to Singapore by sea and air and not been able to get into town. The journey to Darwin wasn't too bad but from then on down the east coast it was rough, but I wasn't seasick again. We had arrived at Darwin on 27th November and got to Sydney mid December. We were paid off at *HMAS Waterhen*, the minesweeper depot in Sydney Harbour and interstate crew's went off home the day we arrived and NSW lads went off the following day. The navy wanted volunteers for a night watchman at *Waterhen*, and as I had let my place in Blacktown on a short term lease and couldn't move in for a week I took the job until 10th January. Occasionally I went home to Blacktown to supervise the moving of my tenants, they lived in the next street and had needed extra accommodation for their old mother who had been evicted from her accommodation before I left for the UK. I moved back home in the middle of January.

I started a new job on 20th January with English Electric as a progress chaser and had to be there at 7.30am, this meant that I had to change trains with a half hour wait for my connection at Lidcombe. In the first week of March I bought a secondhand Vespa 125cc scooter. Trains used to take me 1hour and 10 minutes, including a bit of walking, door to door on the scooter only 27 minutes. I was made redundant 17th July 1964 due to lack of orders. There was a position advertised in The Sydney Morning Herald that I applied for, and got, as a production planner at Hoover P/L, Meadowbank. I started on 24th July but as the job progressed to a lot of other duties with constant differences of opinion between me and management I left on 30th October on a day's notice. During my time Hoover's I had booked a passage in *MV Fairstar* for my mother to come out during the English winter.

I started work at James Hardies asbestos and cement products on 9th November 1964 as special products planning clerk at \$54.50per week. This entailed the planning of special products like railway embankment frames, house ridges, bird proofing panels and odd shaped custom ordered asbestos products. I worked there for 4½ years, during which time decimal currency was introduced in Australia and we had to work both currencies in costing for overseas customers.

On the evening of 19th November 1965 and a quarter of a mile from home, I was hit by a car as I left the local service station. I was on my scooter carrying four one gallon cans of kerosene and petrol. The car driver was parked on the grass verge outside his house on the main road and attempted to make a U turn without looking behind. He hit the front of the scooter and my left leg breaking two bones. During my two weeks stay in Blacktown hospital, my friends came by train from Lidcombe 12 miles away to clean my house ready for my return. My leg was in a thick plaster cast from toe to groin and was given a pair of crutches by the hospital. On pay day, two of my office mates drove up from James Hardie's (15 miles away) to deliver my wages.

Taking the left pedal off of the bike, I was able to ride across the 500 metre wide paddock behind my house, to the deli to do my weekly shopping. Not having a telephone in the house I would use the plumber's across the road when I needed to call a taxi to go to the hospital. For Christmas and the Sunday service church members would pick me up, but if it was not too hot I would catch the local bus two streets away. One of my tennis club friends, who worked at Westmead Children's Hospital used to come up by train and taxi with groceries for me during her lunch break. I returned to work on 20th January with my leg still in plaster. The following week I had a rubber heal inserted into the cast and was then told by management not to return to work owing to insurance risks. At the beginning of March I had measurements taken for leg irons to my left leg; telephoning two days later I was told that they were still not ready. Later that day the police let me know that they were ready. The cast was finally dispensed with on 2nd May and was replaced with adhesive bandage from toes to knee, that came off at the end of May. During my 'plaster days' I would be collected each Sunday by one of the tennis club members and driven to St John's Park. Even with my leg in plaster I still managed to play doubles.

At the end of June I rode to James Hardie's on my scooter, this had been collected from the police station in February. There was a large dent in the left front which had been very handy to hold my plastered leg when I went shopping in town. The point duty policeman knew me and didn't stop me at the intersection on the main street. Finally on 11th July the hospital said that I could do away with the crutches and use a stick. On the 25th July my leg was re-bandaged and I was OK'd for work, I started the next day.

My position in the production office had been taken by my young offsider whom I had been training I was given a place in the receiving store office writing up the paperwork from the two storemen. The railway wagons used to unload outside the office door by

dropping the asbestos and cement materials into a grill which sucked it through to the factory and I was often covered in cement dust. After a few weeks I was transferred to the costing department making up wages. During my return to James Hardie, my solicitor and

barrister had been trying to get the driver of the car that hit me to attend court and on two occasions I had to take a day off work to attend only to find that he didn't appear. I got paid by my employer for the time off and also by the Court at Parramatta after each day. This dragged on until March 1969 by which time I'd had enough of work and the Court had awarded me damages. I was claiming for all expenses, hurt and the CES money I would have to repay. The CES money wasn't added and I had to pay them out of my awarded money.

I had been corresponding with a lady who had advertised six months earlier in the Blacktown local paper in the 'Letters to the Editor' section. My attention was caught by the address in the outlined box as it was the street in Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, that ran alongside the Children's Home that I was in for six years, and which I used to go to and from school. She was waiting to emigrate with her four young children her husband had died whilst they were planning the move.

As I wanted to visit England again and had the money from the accident, I let her know that I was going. I booked myself a round the world air ticket to visit my friends in the USA and Canada on outward journey and on the way back to Australia see friends in Europe, Malta, Italy, Switzerland and Egypt. It was intimated between us that it may result in marriage. However, the week before I flew out I received a letter from her sister in Newcastle telling me that she had died and that the children were being cared for by her brother.

I did my trip to the USA and Canada using plane tickets and Greyhound Coach ticket's which I could use instead of flying on some of the routes that were on my itinerary. When I was booking my flights I also pre booked all my accommodation. I was also given a visa to work in America by the US Consul in Sydney when I applied for my entry visa.

I flew to Honolulu straight from skiing in the Australian Alps. This was weekend skiing trip that was arranged by the Sydney University club, it was put on hold until enough students could be organized to make the weekend viable. It was the October long weekend and the weather was getting warmer, but we had a couple of days of blizzards. The coach dropped me off at Sydney airport but there wasn't enough time for me to change out of my winter clothing. My luggage had been stored at the airport before I went skiing. Arriving at Honolulu the ablution area at BOAC section was dismantled for up grading, therefore passengers and crew had to use other airlines facilities. Changing my clothes in the Alitalia washrooms I just had time to check in for my flight to Los Angeles. I spent three days in Los Angeles, visiting Disneyland. I wanted to take a coach along the coast that would get me to San Francisco the next day but this wasn't possible, so I caught the last plane out that night at 11pm.



Sightseeing in San Francisco for two days and staying in a motel, I was then ready for an early start by bus to see the Grand Canyon, stopping at Flagstaff overnight for the trip around the rim and a donkey ride to the canyon floor. The next day I returned by coach to San Francisco, then once again I made my way to the airport, this time to catch a flight to Chicago. I had planned to go to Alaska for the rodeo, but when I went to collect my tour tickets at Sydney Airport I was told that I had too much mileage for the price of the whole trip. They had not advised me of this a couple of weeks before when they posted the itinerary to me so I had to cancel the Alaska tickets in my book.

My accommodation in Chicago was on the 12th floor of the YMCA hotel; I had three days to explore the city and visited the Ford Motor Museum. Leaving Chicago on a Greyhound coach for Toronto via the boarder town of London, I was off to spend three weeks with Canadian friends. While there I made a short plane trip to see another pen friend in Newcastle, New Brunswick, changing from the small plane at Federation and catching a bus for the remaining 50 miles to Newcastle. My friend was a Baptist Minister and I stayed a weekend with him and his wife before flying back to Toronto.

As I was unable to get my money transferred from my bank in London, I flew to Chicago on a coach ticket I hadn't used and was reimbursed \$90.00 from Greyhound Head Office for a lost book of coach tickets. Someone had picked my pocket when I was sightseeing in Chicago and was caught trying to use the tickets. My money arrived the next day in Toronto when I flew back from Chicago. Leaving Toronto for New England USA by coach via Buffalo and staying for a day at Niagara Falls. Sleeping on the coach overnight, we stopped at Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York City. I had a full day in New York and went out to the Statue of Liberty by ferry and climbed up inside the arm to the observation windows in the torch. That section is now closed and the observation windows in the crown are as high as the general public can go. From New York I flew to London on a 12.30pm Pan Am flight arriving at Heathrow 11.30am. Catching the No 140 bus I was off to see my younger brother in Harrow, he was working late shift and came home at 1.15am that Saturday. My luggage had been sent of from Toronto so I went off to BOAC to collect it. During the following week I went to South London to buy a Vespa 180cc scooter that had been advertised for sale, I would use this as my mode of transport while looking for work and touring.

My escapades in England will follow.