



THE ASOPA VINTAGE

NEWSLETTER FOR THE 40-YEAR REUNION OF THE CLASS OF 62/63

Number 4 – 3 March 2002

NOW 50 OF THE CLASS OF '62 ARE LOCATED

Sadly, last week brought confirmation of the death of Mike Hatch in the early 90s. We are seeking more information.

Welcome Val Rivers, Mike Wilson, Helen East (Thomson), Sonya Grainger and Maxine Mundell (Grainger).

Col Booth tells how the latest search happened:

"We found Val through the electoral roll and after a clue from her, Maxine (Blackheath, grandchild due May) and Sonya (Lithgow).

"Val thought Sonya was with the NSW Educ Dept, so Wendy tracked her down with inadvertent help from a friendly personnel officer. It transpired Sonya registered with NSW in the early 70's, but worked in the Catholic system for some years, moving from Bowral to Lithgow only a month ago having given up teaching 8-9 years back. It was really good detective work and a bit of a punt as NSW Educ was following the privacy laws. But Wendy saw a gap and jumped in."

We are still trying to find Sue Lega, Brian Smith, Marie Burns, Rory O'Brien and Ted France, who has recently moved from the Alice Springs address we had for him.

IN TOUCH WITH ... 2 - PAM KRÜGER

"I teach in a Danish Primary School run by Bjerringbro Council. I married Palle Krüger, who is a sales representative in industrial filtration. We live on a small farm (20 acres) and run sheep. I've become a real country girl and bake my own bread and even make sausages. We grow Christmas trees commercially. We have a 33 foot sailing boat and plan to sail a bit more in the Summer months.

"We have one daughter, Christine Krüger Hansen, born 1975. Christine has an MA in history and is expecting her second child. I have a beautiful granddaughter, Rebecca, three years old.

"I expect to retire in 2005 and hope to still be riding my horse and expect to spend more time with my grandchildren. If finances can cope it would be nice to visit my family in Australia. It is three years since I was last there."

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Class of '62 now lives in Queensland (31%), NSW (31%), Overseas (10%), Western Australia (8%), South Australia (6%), Victoria (6%), NT (4%) and ACT (4%).

QUESTIONNAIRE

Send it to the address below. We've received

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IN TOUCH WITH ... 3 - MIKE WILSON

"I got a wonderful insight into the Commonwealth Public service when I was sent to PNG by mistake after failing second year. I spent two months at Konedobu doing filing and then went back to ASOPA to re-do second year.

"I took six years to finish my three year bond. I guess you could say I wasn't cut out to be a teacher. I did however enjoy PNG when I was driving transport trucks between Lae and Mt Hagen and training to be a chef at the new Melanesian Hotel in Lae.

"In 1970 I was introduced to the craft of goldsmith and jeweller through my wife Wendy who grew up in the Eltham district of Melbourne. I knew immediately I'd found what I'd been looking for. I've practiced the profession for the last 30 years."

Mike is now a successful Melbourne businessman who's won many major design awards. There's a website and suave pic at www.michaelwilson.com.au.

PRITHEE, IS IT YOUR INTENTION TO JOURNEY TO PORT MACQUARIE?

We need a non-binding indication to assist the planning process. Submit a YES, NO or MAYBE to Keith at either of the addresses below.

During the week I was elated to hear from many of you, especially Colin Huggins and Jean Lowe, who included some terrific anecdotal material with their forms. Here's an edited extract from Colin's delightful memoir.

A NICE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Dregerhafen, 1965: At the girls boarding school there was a prank-driven female teacher, Judith, who, strangely enough, belonged to the Bible-bashing fraternity but mixed with the best of them in the Drinking-fraternity. In this respect Judith was a rarity. She and I were good friends and she taught me how to cook, as my haus-boi's food hygiene left much to be desired (and that was when I was looking). To surprise me, he once baked flying fox. He achieved the surprise but copped a verbal thrashing for despoiling my new electric fry-pan.

One night around 9 pm, Judith and I were sitting on my verandah listening to a new batch of records when, coming down the road towards the school, we heard the clip, clop of feet on the coral roadway. It was Peter, the junior expatriate teacher. As he neared my house, his pace quickened reaching full flight. He eventually slowed and in due course we heard the clang of the dormitory 'lights out' gong and then the clip, clop as he made the return journey. Again the pace quickened and with a sustained burst of speed he flew past my place and around the bend out of sight, only slowing down as he made his way towards his house on the Finschhafen point.

This strange event intrigued Judith and me. The next morning at school assembly, I sidled up to Peter and asked why he'd rushed by my place. He informed me sheepishly it was because of the marsalis in the old cemetery near my house. He'd received this startling information from the driver-boi of the school truck, who lived on the other side of the cemetery. For the rest of the week, I observed this burst of speed from my verandah and ascertained it was not a one-off happening.

The old cemetery, perhaps a relic from German days, had returned to jungle - but a tall white cross was still prominent. Judith and I decided on a malicious plan, but first a path would have to be cleared to the cross.

With a great deal of trouble I convinced some of the boys on punishment duty to hack their way with serafs to the base of the cross. The cemetery was full of pythons and other reptiles and this work detail sent many snakes to their happy hunting ground.

Having completed the path, all was prepared. Judith and I could not have wished for more perfect weather on Peter's next night of duty. A full moon and tropical breeze cooked up by Warner Bros or MGM. Shortly before nine, Judith and I, carrying white sheets and torches, gingerly made our way to the foot of the cross. We donned our robes (Ku Klux Klan style), readied our torches and awaited the clip, clop of boots on coral.

As Peter got within his "speed up" zone we commenced a sing-song howl. He kept coming then spotted us just as we switched on the torches and started to sway and howl even more diabolically.

He seemed to rise rocket-like into the air, his feet rotating like Catherine wheels, but making no audible sound of alarm. Perhaps his vocal chords were frozen with fear.

As we continued the ritual, he flashed past at breakneck speed, his feet seeming to make no contact with the road for the next 200 metres. We gaped in amazement at this acceleration.....it was as if he had been fired from a cannon. We heard the gongs, but when we called it a night at 2 am, flushed with success, he had not reappeared.

At next morning's assembly a distraught Peter appeared from the direction of Finschhafen. After his almighty scare, he'd continued his flight all the way to town. The fright was severe enough to have made a shocking mess of his underwear, which he showed me in verification of what he had seen. His gibberish version had marsalis jumping all over the cemetery, a'hootin' and a'hollerin', with white lights flashing all around place!

When I was transferred to Wau in 1968, I was told Peter had been retrieved from his next school - at some outpost - and flown back to Australia in a straight-jacket. Ah yes, they were very strange days in the land of the fuzzy-wuzzy.