

Peach Trees Gazette

Peachester History Committee Inc. Newsletter
Number 196 ~ September / October 2024

NEWS AND COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY 1st SEPTEMBER: Father's Day breakfast at the Glasshouse Mts Tavern, from 8.30am. If you have not added your name and would like to join us, please contact Jan (54942301).

SEPTEMBER: As for last year, the Peachester Heritage Centre is taking part in the Council's Museum Mystery Madness Month. A puzzle will be available for children, and there are some local prizes. All entries will go into a draw for a major prize.

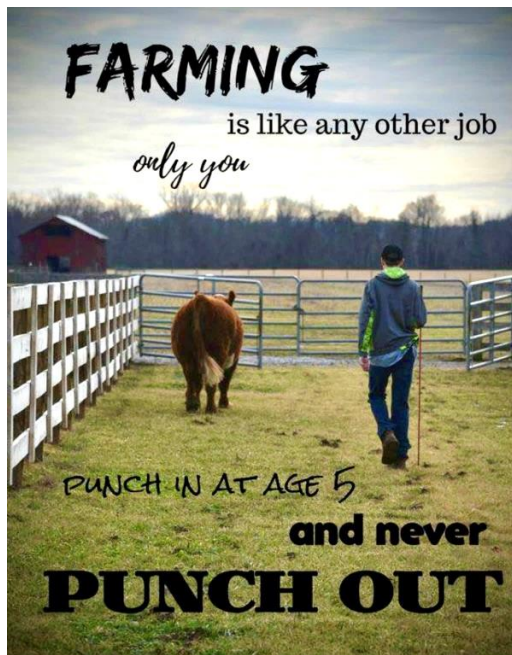
SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER: Regular open day at the Heritage Centre, open from 10.00 to 2.00pm.

SUNDAY 6th OCTOBER: Lunch meeting at Peachester Hall, from 11.00am. We will celebrate two 90th birthdays, Slim Moroney and Ron Trim. Photos and memorabilia on display. Please bring party food to share.

SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER: CWA markets at the hall, 8.00am to 12 noon. PHC are running the canteen again, helpers welcome.

SUNDAY 27th OCTOBER: Regular open day at the Heritage Centre, from 10.00 to 2.00pm.

Any questions or suggestions:
Helen (54949557), Trudy (0421760810)



NUCLEAR TEST MEDAL

From Jeff Bodley



A very long time ago, aged 16, I joined the RNZN (NZ Navy) hoping to see the world. North Africa, Europe, UK, all interested me. I had a map of the world on the back of my bedroom door marking all the places I wished to visit. (Alas, none of that happened until many years later at my own expense).

My first ship HMNZS Hawea, a WW2 loch class frigate, and a sister ship Pukaki set sail early December 1956 for Lyttleton (Christchurch). In the harbour we berthed right behind the Royal yacht Britannia. We then found out that with our icebreaker HMNZS Endeavour, we were to escort Prince Philip to the Antarctic (that wasn't on my map!) A few days later we were down in the ice. After we passed the 50 mile flat top iceberg (probably a lot smaller nowadays) the Britannia left us to return to the UK.

We three Kiwi ships crossed the 67dg line and spent Christmas with the penguins. On Christmas day the youngest on board becomes the Captain and the Captain is a junior seaman. I was second youngest so was the engineer for the day. My sister who lived in Christchurch at the time made a huge Xmas cake and unknown to me had it delivered to the ship, so on Christmas day the Captain (jnr seaman) presented me with this huge cake so I then had to return to the galley and slice it up into about 120 pieces.

Returning to Auckland a couple of weeks later we had leave. On my return we changed ships to HMNZS Rotoiti, same class as the Pukaki, and we set sail again with Pukaki to another unknown destination. A day or two later we were told we were going to Christmas Island, me thinking just north of Australia. NO, this one is in the mid Pacific just north of the Equator (that wasn't on my map either).

We were told that this was 'Operation Grapple'. The British had developed a huge base with air field and safe anchorage for

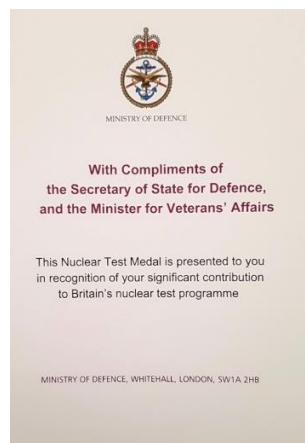
ships at "The Port of London". The island was populated with a mass of British servicemen from the three services. Our duties were to send up weather balloons – our ancient ships evidently had excellent radar for tracking weather balloons, also to track submarines, and escort intruders out of a 37,000 square mile danger exclusion zone. There were a dozen or more Naval ships including the aircraft carrier "HMS Warrior", also at least two Vulcan (Delta wing) planes, one to carry the hydrogen bomb the other for photography. From the day we left Auckland nuclear exercises began, setting up hoses to wash down the ship three times a day. This drill was under stop watch to improve our speed to clean the ship.

Our nuclear protective clothing consisted of Linen Action working dress with respirators and very dark goggles supplied. No skin was exposed, we were in the tropics, the heat was unbearable, sweating was constant, to the extent some servicemen had to be sent back home. After two weeks it was time for the first of four bombs to be dropped.

After breakfast we all had to be on deck in full battle dress. All ships, at least a dozen, were in a huge circle a mile or more wide. We had to lie on our stomachs with our backs to the bomb drop, folded arms with your head buried in your arms, eyes closed. We could hear the jets overhead, the ship's Tannoy (radio) doing the countdown: bomb gone, 40 seconds to bomb burst, the roar of the jets moving away from the flash, then the flash of the bomb at approx 40 thousand feet. You could see it even through closed eyes and facing away. An order from the bridge to stand, look up, an outburst of pure naval language rang through the length of the ship. The crew turned to see a fireball of red and grey twisting upwards. About 15 seconds later the blast hit the ship (you could see it coming) listing the ship slightly to starboard. The fire ball grew larger as it formed its mushroom shape towards the ocean which cooled the fire ball. This action was repeated three more times at two week intervals.

We were given a break during this period and we sailed to Tahiti for a bit of R&R. Across from our jetty was a "MacDonald's". They didn't sell hamburgers – it was a hotel that supplied everything a sailor needed whilst on R&R.

After our horrendous difficult living conditions, living below decks with no air-conditioning for almost two months, our NZ Government under Helen Clark, 60yrs later gave us a medal. This was followed 7yrs later by the British Government, to which I say "Thank you."



FAREWELLS

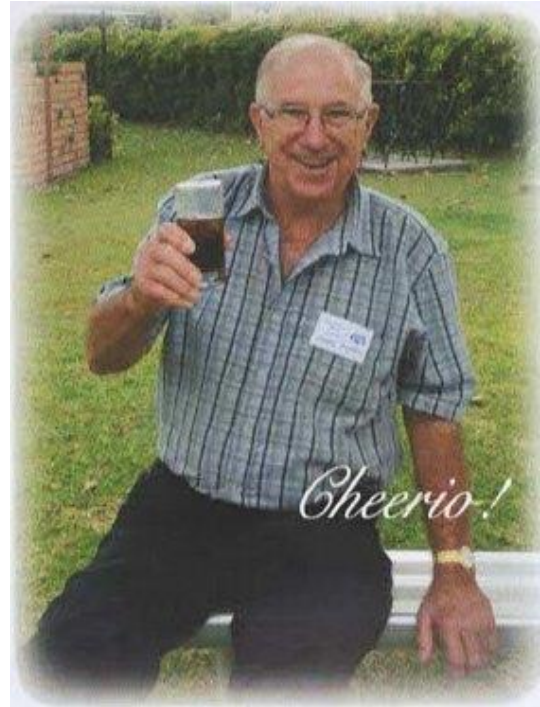
We lost three members and friends recently: Barry Ferris, Bernie Hoy and Barbara Leach, and we send our sincere condolences to their families.

Following are the family eulogies for Barry and Barbara, and we hope to include Bernie's in the next Gazette.



WALTER BARRYMORE FERRIS

1935 - 2024



Barry was born on 28 October 1935 in Maleny. Youngest child of Walter John and Ellen Fenwick Ferris, baby brother to Greg and Shirley. Barry started off life as a sickly child and in Barry's words "I failed to thrive". Funnily enough it was cow's milk that was the problem and once he was switched to formula he went ahead in leaps and bounds.

They lived on the farm at Cedarton and Barry commenced his schooling at Commissioner's Flat school. Barry enjoyed a wonderful childhood on the farm with Greg and Shirley. They had wonderful, loving parents.

The word is that Barry was a scallywag! There are many stories of the pranks he and his siblings got up to, particularly on the way to and from Commissioner's Flat school.

Rumors have it that Barry sold rides on his pony, Dot, to the Yankee soldiers that were camped on the banks of Stanley River in exchange for lollies. Barry told the soldiers, when they mounted, that they needed to touch Dot on her back behind the saddle. This was Dot's buck button! This only made rides on Dot more popular and this continued until the Sargeant refused to "pay" for his ride as he was not happy that Dot had a buck button. The Sargeant reported Barry's business endeavor to a higher authority, his mother. Buck button days were over.

From 1948 share farmers were on the farm and the Ferris family lived in Woodford.

At 14 Barry went to study at Gatton Agricultural College where he met his lifelong mates, Kev Hart and Norm Wollett, and to

them Barry was, and will always be, known as Darb. They proved to be a terrible trio, inseparable and the pranks continued.

Punishment at Gatton was harsh and the trio spent many an hour at the pool. To this day there is a sign at the UQ Gatton Pool that states: play up in class in the 1950s and you may have received the most severe punishment: handed a shovel and told "go dig the pool".

At the age of 18, like others, Barry completed his National Service at Wacol after which he returned to Woodford to work with his father doing building and carpentry work. They worked on many of the houses still standing in Archer Street and, along with Shirley's husband Norm, they were responsible for establishing the green at the Woodford Bowls Club.

When Barry was around the age of 20, Woodford Junior Farmers was formed. This was when he met more lifelong friends Ronnie Trim and Russell Wilkes. Barry was the first president and Ronnie was his deputy and so was the beginning of Dad's Army. This Dad's Army continued for 50 plus years and basically ensured that the Woodford Show still runs today. Both Barry and Ronnie were awarded Lifetime Membership for their commitment to the show society.

In 1956, Barry married Margaret Masters at Woodford Methodist Church and they went to live on the farm at Cedarton. Trudi was born in 1957, Susan in 1960, Meryl in 1961, and "short pause here" Stephen was born in 1971. Finally, Barry had a little cricketer.

Barry worked hard and made sacrifices to provide everything that the girls needed to join pony club and compete in gymkhanas and shows. The girls rate their pony club days as one of the highlights of their childhood. Similarly, later, he made sure that Stephen was able to play junior cricket in the Redcliffe competition, getting up super early to milk and be wherever the game was by 8.30 on a Saturday morning.

Throughout his life Barry was an avid sportsman. A talented tennis player, cricketer, and later playing golf with Trudi and Stephen. Barry loved his cricketing days. He was an international player (so he liked to say) because he did do a cricket tour of New Zealand once. He played Country Week every year in Brisbane and one year we turned it into a holiday at the beach... Redcliffe.

Cricket was not only sport to Barry. It provided him with a huge social aspect of his life, making many mates throughout the years. To mention a few, Ray Jenkinson, Stan Scheu, Brian Pratt, Don Elks, Claude Bleakley, the Phillips boys and 51 Cochrans and 73 Kleins.

Once Barry's children were married, he moved to the next rewarding stage of his life... his grandchildren. He loved it when they came to the farm. Glen and Scott and Monique came for holidays as they lived a distance away. Monique also came under punishment conditions when she needed pulling back into line. Barry liked nothing better than when he had Glen, Scott, Michelle, Brett and Monique there all at once. Lots of games were played between the house and the shed and yes you could get them all on the four-wheeler at once. Glen, Scott and Brett loved the cricket games which didn't always end happily. Glen and Scott relished helping on the farm, hunting and running mock auctions of calves. Shell and Monique had special

relationships with kittens at the farm and Barry worked tirelessly to keep the kittens alive as they liked to love them to near death. Barry gave them both a kitten. They were wild as, and Shell returned hers to the farm as a dud, while Monique persevered, having a love/hate relationship with Midnight until he died.

Later on, Stephanie and Cassidy arrived and they fondly referred to Barry as Babbe. They have a million fond memories of their Babbe. Dipping cattle at Doyles where Babbe's reckless antics could lead him to a trip to the hospital due to varying degrees of concussion as a result of broken girths, altercations with limousine-cross weaners and the rolling of quads. Babbe also loved watching McLeod's Daughters with the girls whilst Steve and Bianca were at touch footy (get to bed before your mother and father get home), helping them break in their stud calves, watching them at the local shows, athletics and swimming carnivals.

In the last five years or so, Stephanie and Cassidy spent a considerable amount of time helping Barry with day-to-day living. They made sure that as well as the essentials such as medication, insulin levels remaining same, and appointments, they ensured that Barry was exposed to the other important things in life like the making of tik toks, bloody awful noise that they called music, new taste sensations (Cassie's pancakes, smoothies and toasted sandwiches), fashion (from one loud shirt, to lots of loud shirts), kisses, cuddles and I love you's.

Barry went from Grand to Great when his first great-grandchild, Hayden was born in 2011. Barry went on to get ten more great-grandchildren, Luke, Charlie, Jessica, Evie, Isabelle, Lewis, Jackson, Beau, Casey and Joe. Unfortunately, he didn't get to enjoy them as much as we know he would have liked with four being born in the last six months, and two he never got to meet. Michelle's boys will have the most memories of Barry especially the chocolate milk and tim tams he shared with them.

Barry has always been a giver. He was never too busy to lend a hand to anybody, not just family. He spent most of his life giving to the Woodford community, and this community would be a much poorer place if not for his efforts. He was always fair and if he thought something was wrong, he would say so, but by the same token he never thought his way was necessarily the best way. Barry would never push for things to be done his way. He always said that if you discovered something for yourself you were more likely to remember it.

Barry passed away peacefully on Wednesday 12 June 2024 in Woodford Manor. He will remain forever in our hearts and will be sorely missed. Not having a Babbe in the world anymore is a scary thought, but we are all so lucky we had you. Thank you for everything Babbe, we love you.

Finally, in his own words... Cheerio, Hooray.



BARBARA LENORE LEACH, 1935-2024

Our Mum, the inimitable Barbara Lenore Leach (nee Dickson) was born on 10 January 1935 in Brisbane to James Ramsay and Elizabeth Mary Dickson.

Barbara was a devoted wife to Graham, her husband of over 57 years; cherished mother to Paul, Catherine, Anne, Stephen,

John, Trish, Andrew and myself, Tom; precious sister to Marie, Helen, Berenice and Judith-Anne; treasured Nana to Alex, Elise, David, Callum, Julian, Conor, Mitch, Grace, Stephanie, Maddie, Izzy, Hannah, Elodie and Spencer and great Nana to Angus, George and Lachlan. Barbara was also loving mother-in-law (and sometime second mother) to Jan, Greg, Bruce, Terry, Kylie, Ross, Paula and Corinne; loyal and cherished relative of our large extended family and beloved friend to many.



On behalf of the family, I express our gratitude to those who have joined us today to celebrate Mum's life.

We would like today to focus on the things that defined Mum as a person and give us all cause to celebrate what a beautiful and remarkable woman she was. In order to do this, we asked that Mum's four sisters, eight children and fourteen grandchildren each provide a few words that they feel epitomise Mum.

Kind, resourceful, measured, calm, stoic, duets together, happy and laughing, caring, gentle, resilient, versatile, adaptable, unflappable, sparkling (with love, inquisitiveness and vitality), non-judgemental, piano-playing, good cook, cross stitch, shopping, reading books and talking about them, generous of spirit and heart, curious, loving, buttery soft, steely strong, ever tolerant, baker, positive, lovely, brave, accepting, custard, a good listener, a cheeky sense of humour, up for anything, wise counsel, interested, intelligent, adventurous, jolly, considered, always appreciative, always room for dessert and boundless love for family.

These characteristics can be distilled into a number of intersecting 'loves' that truly reflected the person she was.

Mum's parents instilled in her a love of culture and music from childhood which prevailed throughout her life. It was a deep and core part of her being. Mum would spend endless hours playing the piano, often using music to create white noise and shut out the general chaos of the house! She also loved

connecting with others through music: playing duets, accompanying choirs and leading singalongs around the piano.

Her love of music extended from show tunes to Chopin, movie themes to choral music and everything in between. She was an avid dancer ranging from Scottish to line dancing and didn't mind an occasional boogie on the dance floor at a family wedding. Mum also enjoyed attending concerts and visiting art galleries and museums.

We siblings, in our own individual way, have carried this love of music forward and it is a true gift.

Food was one of Mum's key love languages. Although this may not have been immediately clear when one of her signature dishes growing up was Frankfurt and Potato Casserole!

However, irrespective of what was on the menu, the premise of gathering together to share food with friends and family stood true throughout her life. Whether it was the many years of quarterly family roasts – where our immediate family would come together, children and grandchildren, to share food and spend time together. Or the various experiences myself and all my siblings had in the kitchen with Mum. Or the general sharing of recipes and discussing food as a common topic of conversation. Often times, chats with Mum began with "What's for dinner?" or "What did you make for dinner?" followed by elaborate descriptions. I know Mum really cherished these moments.

Mum also combined her love of cooking with her charitable nature, with many a fundraising bake sale and cooking for families in need. This love also intersected, sometimes collided with her other loves. There were stories of Mum running around the house after her children (and probably also playing the piano), while an unattended pressure cooker was left to explode onto the ceiling providing a fortuitous analogy. I suspect a household of eight children often resembled that pressure cooker!

Travel was an incredibly important part of Mum's life. Mum did not take any overseas trips until the age of 46. But in the years to come she more than made up for it. Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and of course our own continent – she circum-navigated the globe several times. She was not afraid of travelling alone either having travelled to the USA for the birth of her first grandson in 1987. Her adventures were not narrow either. Some people go their whole lives without experiencing the frenetic pace of India but Mum flew there on her own at the age of 79!

The UK in particular held a special place for Mum. She and Dad travelled there many times. Mum then took further trips there after Dad passed including some memorable trips with some of the siblings and friends.

The travel bug is but another gift for which our family are all eternally grateful.

Mum was very bright at school, obtaining top marks on graduation. Dad always used to say she should have gone to university and married some doctor. Framed in these more modern times, I suspect what he meant to say was she should have *been* a doctor.

Although she never went on to study at university, her love of learning and her sharp intelligence never faded. Mum was an avid reader and always had a pile of books on her bedside table to read, sometimes reading a whole book in a day. Mum was also a word games and puzzle addict – words with friends, wordle, cross words, sudoku. She would say these kept her brain active. Together Mum and Dad encouraged us to see the value in education and development of our natural skills, in whatever our chosen career was.

Amongst the tragic sadness of losing her Mum suddenly at the age of ten, came the fortune of her father having two further daughters with Mum's step-mother, two other cherished sisters. Mum adored her four sisters and this sisterhood was a core part of her life. While the years after her mother passed were challenging, this trauma did not define Mum's life. In fact, I believe it may have galvanised her inner strength, fortitude and resilience.

After school, Mum began work at the Commonwealth Bank. The story goes that Mum saw Dad across the filing cabinet and said to a friend "I'm going to marry that man" – and the rest is history. Mum and Dad had a very harmonious marriage. They were incredibly loyal and kind to each other and their love for each other was undeniable. This was epitomised during a neurological episode towards the end of Dad's life where an attending paramedic asked if he could recall how long he had been married to Mum. Dad's reply was "not long enough". They both highly valued the institution of marriage and the stability it brings to a family, especially children. Mum used to say that you will get through times of adversity because you will get through them as a team.

In letters Mum's mother wrote to her sister Marie around the final days of World War 2, she described her and her two sisters at the time as her "dearest children". Mum carried forward this perspective with her own children, tirelessly working to make a happy, albeit sometimes chaotic, home with many people living under the same roof. I think this is also something my siblings and I have carried forward. The primacy of the wellbeing and opportunities we provide to our own "dearest children" is a fundamental value we all share. I am certain that each of our children, Mum's grandchildren, will now carry that forward to their own children.

Mum was a devoted and loyal friend with many dear friends playing important roles throughout life phases. These friends ranged from bank friends, school families, the church community, her choir and of course her more recent dear friends at Living Choice, her retirement villa. Mum deeply treasured her friends and these people provided boundless physical and mental support to Mum where family couldn't.

As I think we can all agree, Mum brought with her an immense level of calm. Often when myself and my wife Corinne had small children, if Mum stayed with us, our children would magically sleep well and long. We used to say it was like she carried some magic sleep dust with her. It in fact was probably her overwhelming sense of calm.

My only hope is that we can collectively send that same calming sleep dust to her now as we accept, she is now at peace, with Dad by her side, and we all continue to carry forward her great loves into our own lives and memories.

ARBOR DAY, SUNDAY 28 JULY 2024

From Gary Bacon

The origins of Arbor Day ("tree" day from the Latin arbor) go way back to the Spanish village of Mondoñedo which held the first documented arbor plantation festival in 1594. The place remains as Alameda de los Remedios and it is still planted with lime and horse-chestnut trees. Later, the Spanish village of Villanueva de la Sierra held the first modern Arbor Day, an initiative launched in 1805 by the local priest, don Juan Abern Samtrés, who according to the chronicles, "convinced of the importance of trees for health, hygiene, decoration, nature, environment and customs, decides to plant trees and give a festive air".

The fuse that ignited a later global coverage of Arbor Day was lit by J. Sterling Morton the editor of the *Nebraska City News* when he organised through the agriculture board the planting of an estimated one million trees on 10 April 1872 in Nebraska. The event was originally going to be called "Sylvan Day" in reference to forest trees, however, Morton convinced everyone that the day should reflect the appreciation of all types of trees, and "Arbor Day" was born.

In 1883, the American Forestry Association made fellow agriculturalist Birdsey Northrop of Connecticut the chairman of the committee to campaign for Arbor Day nationwide; Northrop further globalized the idea when he visited Japan in 1895 and delivered his Arbor Day and Village Improvement message. He also brought his enthusiasm for Arbor Day to Australia, Canada, and other countries in Europe.

The first Arbor Day in Queensland was held on 1 August 1890 organised by Philip MacMahon, Director of Brisbane Botanic Gardens, and the Acclimatisation Society with trees supplied to local state schools about Brisbane. The popularity of school plantings throughout the state peaked between the two world wars. The planting effort these days is with various community groups. Planet Ark's National Tree Day for example commenced in 1996.



The monument to the first Arbor Day in the world, Villanueva de la Sierra (Spain), 1805

FANCY DRESS BALL

From Joy Hodgens



A Beerwah Fancy Dress Ball, ca late 1920s. Costumes were hired from Brisbane for set of eight dancing.

Left to right: Esme Simpson, Fred Vieritz, Grace Simpson, Fred Hodgens, Hilda Campbell, Bill Manners, Marion Cahill, Walter Ferris (Barry's father)

Grace and Esme loved to dance, and with friends would think nothing of walking the railway line to Landsborough or Glasshouse for a dance. Fred would play the piano at dances.

OUT AND ABOUT

Photos: PHC members admiring the replacement plaques at the Cemetery; some new people who recently took up residence at the Heritage Centre; visitors to the Centre and a good place for a winter's morning.

