

Memories Part 6 from 2009 to this day

by Len Hall

I just had a look at my memories and I thought I could still add a little bit more of the story... whilst I am able to type!

I have had many emails from people far and wide about my memoirs and it is quite extraordinary how many original Walthamstow people continue to look at this website which is managed so well by the site custodians.

Please drop me a line by email at lcpmhall@bigpond.com : I will be delighted to hear from you where ever you are.

“Almost ¾ of a century old now and hoping to get a telegram from royalty in another 25 years”. If royalty still exists then.

Well, readers, I just can't be bothered to read my boring old story in the previous parts again, so please excuse me if I repeat myself now and again.

It is now over two years since we decided to 'Escape to the Country' and leave the city of Perth behind. We are avid watchers of that English television programme of that same name by the way, and we view the British countryside with envy. Despite what we read and see on television there is still a lot of pleasant countryside in Great Britain if you want to leave the towns for 'a place in the country'.

A couple of years ago we departed from the retirement house that we had painstakingly constructed with so much attention to detail, with the intention of incorporating many years of experience into getting our final resting place just right.

However after having lived there for 8 years we decided that we had 'itchy feet' again and so we started looking in the area where our youngest son Richard (who is our only Australian child) lives with his family.

We have 9 grand children and 3 are in England, I am sorry to say but Richard has two young children whom we thought could use our services as baby sitters etc.

After a while we found an already constructed house that we liked in a pleasant rural district called Henley Brook, I suppose that conjures up a picture of meadows and a babbling brook and fields of sheep and cows etc. Sadly that is not the case, and some of these estate names are devised by computers I think so that prospective purchasers are fooled into thinking that they are buying a piece of land in Utopia.

Actually the area used to be a horse area and prior to being subdivided into home sites that whole area was inhabited by horse breeders and fanciers. Thus all the streets in this area are named after horses and associated items, e.g. our road is Horseshoe Circuit and nearby we have Shetland Road etc. The area is pleasant to live in and there are natural lakes which have been made into recreational areas and across the road the blocks of land are 5 and 10 acres.

Ours is just a ¼ acre plus block which is big enough for Pam and I to manage, and we have a nice manageable garden.

The nearby district of Ellenbrook is a new town, but it is now 10 years old with an expected population of 30,000 people when completed in about ten years from now. That is where we do our shopping and most requirements can be had there.

Ellenbrook is divided up into a series of ‘villages’ but they are nothing like a British village I can assure you. These villages are just names really like Morgan Fields and Charlotte’s Vineyard to mention a couple. Once again just fancy names to incite buyers to come and live there.

We find the country roads around us are quiet enough for us to venture out on our tandem, and I also ride my bike with several mates every week and there is a keen cycling group that rides with the local bike shop every Saturday. Also there are several cycling clubs in Perth for the racing enthusiast when the need arises.

We are actually in an area known as ‘The Swan Valley’ and it is a tourist Mecca with wineries and breweries and restaurants all over the place. We are gradually working our way through the many restaurants but there are still lots to discover.

This year of 2011 has been rather a sad one for us because our beloved poodles Bonnie and Muffin both passed away in the first part of the year. They were both around 15 years of age and when they got to be very ill we just had to have them put down. Bonnie died in February and Muffin in July. Those days were so sad and we resolved to never have another dog as the grief was so hard to bear. If you have ever been a dog owner you will know just what I mean. We have had dogs of all types over the last 51 years but those two poodles left an indelible mark on our memories.

However after a few months I started thinking about a dog rescue and there are so many homeless dogs out there that are being cared for by foster carers while they try to find homes for them.

Recently Daniel (Our Daniel from WM) sent me a really lovely item by Eugene O'Neill entitled the last will and testament of an extremely distinguished dog. In the will the dog implores his owner to take on another dog when he passes away. Here is the poem reference:
<http://www.superdog.com/petloss/lastwill.htm>

Finally we found Freddy who is an 8 years old Apricot miniature poodle with a very nice temperament and so we decided to adopt him.

The trouble with adopted dogs is that you cannot be sure of their history and we have found that Freddy has been a spoilt brat and we are now in the process of de-sensitizing him from being 'top dog' to a lower rank.

This re-programming is now going really well and we are able to remove food from his mouth if the need arises and he is now learning that there is a better way and he is fitting into our family very well.

This is all being done by love and kind words as Freddy is a really nice little guy deep down.

Freddy already sits and stays etc. and does most other good behaviour things.

So now we are approaching another Australian summer and hoping that it is not going to be as hot as it was last summer when we had so many hot days that even I started wishing for winter to start.

The major problem in Australia of course is the bush fire hazard and it seems that every year we get a disaster either here or in the eastern states.

One has to be so vigilant with fires and at times we have a total fire ban in the open air. Unfortunately last year a man (who should have known better) was using an angle grinder on his trailer and sparks set the bush around his house on fire. That ended up by burning down 72 surrounding houses, fortunately no one died this time.

Another hazard is that people do tend to get eaten by sharks when they tempt fate and swim in the sea. Another man went missing yesterday morning in Perth seas off Cottesloe Beach and they have only found his bathers so far, the damage on them indicates that he was taken by a Great White shark.

Before we came to Australia we were so worried about snakes and I can now tell all you worriers that I have seen more snakes in Great Britain than over here. Make no mistake that there are snakes all around us and they are very poisonous but in 41 years of living here we have seen about 3 and they were all going away from us.

There is another myth about Australia and that is that kangaroos hop down the main streets in towns. Well that is not true of course but in our local roads we do get kangaroos hopping along and it can be very hazardous as they cause a lot of damage to cars around here. Also a few friends have collided with one whilst riding a bike and then my friends have come off the worse for wear.

Another hazard that we have at present is Magpie swooping during their nesting season. I have had this happen to me several times this week and what usually occurs is that I would be riding under some trees and suddenly I have felt a 'Whack' on the back of my cycling helmet as a Magpie hits me on the back of my helmet with his beak or claws to show his disapproval of me being in his territory. It usually only goes on for a few weeks and then they stop being so aggressive, however a few people have lost eyes etc. in the past.

At present in 2012 we are planning to visit our son and his family in Hassocks which is in West Sussex and possibly go on a bus tour of England and Scotland as a Swan Song before we get too old to travel and hire cars etc.

The problem is that a holiday like that is so expensive now and you may recall that I used to get a B & B for 10 shillings and 6 pence when I cycled over there. I think we may be looking at much more than that now, One hotel near Marble arch named The Thistle charges \$370 per night for a double, I think that is outrageous.

That's all folks - for a now anyway - from Len Hall