

Bundanoon History Group

Monthly Newsletter

October 2020



From the President

Hello everyone.

Sadly, on 8 October Audrey Petersen passed away. Audrey was a long time member of the BHG and also our oldest member. We have a tribute to Audrey opposite and we send our sincere condolences to Chris, Erica and family.

Now for some good news! On 2nd November we return to the Memorial Hall for our Members Meeting. We have a fascinating presentation lined up from Francesca Beddie, our Bushfires Archive Project Co-ordinator. Francesca will be presenting and talking about the Morton 2020 Bushfires with slides, quotes and photographs collected from the Bundanoon community. **Not to be missed!**

And yet more good news. Amy and Steve Press have kindly filled the two vacant slots on our BHG Committee. A very warm welcome to them both. And for those who don't know Steve and Amy, they have written a brief introduction that I have included in the Newsletter. You can see what powerhouses they already are within our Bundanoon community.

Finally, **a date for your diaries, the 7th December.**

Our December meeting is traditionally our Christmas luncheon and despite the coronavirus pandemic, we feel this year should be no exception. Following a brief meeting in the Hall, we are still intending to have a Covid safe Christmas buffet luncheon. The Committee is busy planning the event and we will announce the details soon.

In this Newsletter: As well as a tribute to Audrey Petersen, we have an article by Philip Morton on how the Bundanoon Swimming Pool came about;

and I am including a story by Trisha Arbib about my special typewriter, as part of our occasional series on *Treasures From the Past*.

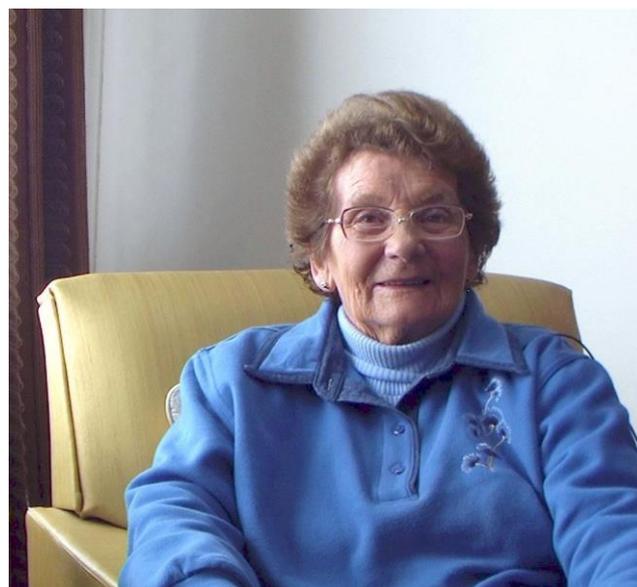
Best wishes and keep well, David

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Vale - Audrey June Petersen (nee Greason)

12 June 1921 – 8 October 2020



Audrey Petersen reached the grand age of 99 years – and she was Bundanoon's most loved senior citizen.

She was born in Bundanoon in Erith Street just along from the family's butchers shop which operated for over 60 years.

Audrey grew up in Bundanoon, second daughter and one of six children. She attended Bundanoon Public School and always loved her sports, winning all the foot races at the school picnic days.

Once she was off to Bowral High School, she joined the students who boarded one of two carriages – one for girls, one for boys - attached to the morning slow train stopping at all stations. It often had to go onto a side line whilst a fast train went through, which meant Bundanoon students often didn't get home until after 5.30 or 6.00pm.

Holidays were spent with her friends and siblings mainly going down The Gullies – with a pack of food to cook eggs and bacon for breakfast at The Amphitheatre, then walk around the Cliff walk and lunching at Fairy Bower where they made water wheels from reeds to set in the grooves in the little stream flowing down the rocks.

Audrey left school at 15 and worked as a 'Hello Girl' in the Bundanoon Telephone Exchange attached to the Bundanoon Post Office. She then worked for 3 ½ years at Greason's Butchers, doing everything from cutting the meat, to delivering to all the busy guesthouses in the Bundanoon area.

Audrey was a very good hockey player and was chosen for the NSW Hockey team to tour to Adelaide and Melbourne after the war. She also was a keen competition golfer, right into her eighties.

Attending Holy Trinity Church was part of Audrey's life, and she was christened there, confirmed there, married there, and now her life has been celebrated there. She attended Sunday School there, and later was a member of the Church Guild, Mothers' Union, and helped with Anglicare.

Audrey met Chris Petersen in 1944 in Bundanoon where he was holidaying. Chris was a 1st Engineer on merchant navy troop carriers during the war. After a short courtship, they married at Holy Trinity Church in January 1945. Their reception was held at Rosnel Guest House where there was a large ballroom. Their honeymoon was to drive to Wollongong for a week having saved four gallons of rationed petrol.

Audrey and Chris had two children, Christian and Maureen, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Audrey had a life-long association with Bundanoon and was active in almost every voluntary organization that existed over her long life, including: The Boronia Festival – precursor to Brigadoon; The Development Committee – precursor to the BCDA (Bundanoon Community Development Association) now the Bundanoon Community Association; The Bundanoon History Group; and the Beautification Committee precursor to The Bundanoon Garden Club

In 2001, Audrey was one of seven Bundanoon residents to receive a commendation from the then Prime Minister, John Howard, in the International Year of the Volunteer. She was rightly proud of that.

Bundanoon salutes a great lady – we have all benefitted from her involvement and enthusiasm in the village she so loved.

Marianne Ward

Message from Amy and Steve Press

Hi BHG members, we are Amy and Steve Press and we are pleased to have recently joined the BHG committee. We live in Bundanoon and have been BHG members for about 2 years and in non-covid time we have enjoyed volunteering at the History Shed.

We are both retired and originally come from western Sydney. We have four children, two grand children and two more due next year.

We enjoy playing croquet at the Bundanoon Croquet Club, we are board members at The Bundanoon Club, on the Bundanoon Garden Club committee and help out each Friday at Vinnies welfare office in Moss Vale.

Steve and Amy

Bundanoon pool built in 1959 with local support and a cheque from Sydney!

by Philip Morton

Bundanoon's popularity as a holiday destination began in the 1880s and peaked in the 1930s. Locals shared the use of amenities provided for visitors.

Leaver Park on nearby Reedy Creek was a popular spot for swimming and water sports that opened in the 1930s with kiosk, picnic facilities and canoes for hire. Its popularity waned in the 1950s, however, as fewer holiday-makers came to Bundanoon due to guest-house holidays going out of fashion.



NATURE POOL: Leaver Park, opened in 1930s

While Leaver Park became unkempt, several pristine bathing spots on creeks in the Bundanoon Gullies Reserve continued to attract locals and visitors keen to venture some distance on foot for a dip.

It was after the tragic drowning in 1956 of four holiday makers, two fathers and two sons, in the Shoalhaven River near Tallong that Bundanoon residents began to press for a supervised town swimming pool.

The Bundanoon Community Development Association sought financial assistance from the State but none was available. Undaunted, the members decided to proceed anyway as a pool was essential for tourists and for local children who then had to go to Mittagong for supervised swimming.

An initial 4,000 pounds was raised locally and handed to the Shire Council. This was sufficient for it to call for tenders and that of Adolfo Pittolo of Moss Vale was accepted, being for a large 25-metre pool, small children's pool and concourses.

A pool fund was created to raise further money and local people offered volunteer assistance. A site was leased from the Shire Council on land overlooking the Sports Oval and near the Bowling Club that had recently opened.

A memorable occasion occurred on the afternoon of Sunday 15 February 1959, as reported in *The Four Mails*: "Using a gleaming nickel-plated spade, engraved specially for the occasion, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman H F Jensen, turned the first sod in the construction of Bundanoon's Swimming Pool."

With around 150 people attending, the Bundanoon Association President, Russell Barton, commenced proceedings by welcoming Councillor H T Ellsmore of Wingecarribee Shire Council who introduced both the Lord Mayor of Sydney and Mr Gerathy of the Randwick Lion's Club.

Why the presence of Sydney's Lord Mayor and Randwick Lion's Club? Cr Ellsmore explained that this Club, of which the Lord Mayor was a member, had attempted to establish a country farm for mentally handicapped children at *Sylvan Glen*, a ten bed-roomed building at Penrose, with the assistance of local people. Due to insufficient children to work the farm, the project was abandoned and the property sold to become a guest house. The Lion's Club had decided to return some of the sale money to the Bundanoon district. A cheque of 300 pounds was presented. Official guests were then entertained with a lavish afternoon tea at *The Knoll*.

One of the champions of fund-raising for the pool was Dr Harold Cuthbert who took up practice in Bundanoon late in life, moving from Sydney in the 1950s with his second wife.

Remembered locally as a colourful character, he had an imposing presence and is said to

have called on everyone in the district asking for appropriate donations in cash or kind, otherwise threatening to withhold his services!



Another major pool contributor was Chris Petersen (senior), owner/operator of the town’s automotive garage, who took on the role of pool engineer, built the filtration and chlorination plant and operated it free of charge for 10 years.

The Bundanoon Swimming Pool opened for patrons on Saturday, 27 March 1960.

There were 460 swimmers that day, mainly young children and the pool kiosk lessee, George Pearce, reported good business.

The cost had been met almost entirely by local townspeople although the Shire Council did provide a ratepayers’ advance and other assistance including landscaping. The final cost was 7,200 pounds.

Later in 1960, on 15 November, the official opening was held. Cr Ellsmore welcomed the local State Member, Tom Lewis, and the Minister for Works, P N Ryan and his wife. Many visitors and district residents attended the function.



TOWN POOL: Bundanoon baths in 1960s

The people of Bundanoon felt rightly proud of their new swimming pool as, at the time of its opening, the only other town pool in the district was at Mittagong. Subsequently a town pool opened at Moss Vale in 1965 and at Bowral in 1971.

The pool at Bundanoon, now operated by the Shire Council, continues to be a fine community amenity, enjoyed by all age-groups.

Treasures from the past – David’s Toy Typewriter by Trisha Arbib

David Brennen is often to be seen typing away on his MacBook Air. But what none of us knew before now is that as a little boy, of 5 or 7 years old, he had a

treasured toy (if that is not a too denigrating word for it) typewriter. It was given to him at the Xmas party for children where his father worked as an electrical fitter for the Ministry of Defence. The party was on a Saturday afternoon in Cirencester, an old Roman town. He rode there on the back of his Dad’s motorbike. Xmas tea was cake, sandwiches and mince pies. But the high point was getting the wrapped gift from Santa, at the end of the party.



I like to think that David looked somewhat like this when he unwrapped his gift, a Mettoy toy typewriter. He used to type letters on it, and it actually did type. Mostly letters to himself or the family. David thought the typewriter really special, and despite often playing with it, looked after it, even to keeping it in the original box. And it is pristine today so many years later, as you can see.



On the internet similar ones are described as a “METTYPE Junior toy typewriter in bright colours on tinfoil, with some yellow plastic fittings”.

To look at it’s made of red tin with a blue roller carriage, a metal bar to hold the paper and a knob at the end of the roller to turn the paper.

A red and black inked ribbon is stretched across in front so that when the chosen letter is selected and the press bar activated, the letter types onto the paper. A yellow disk on top has the alphabet and numbers 2-9 around the outside

David's toys back then were mainly die cast or made of tin, although plastics were gaining popularity for their hygiene, ability to be washed and lack of sharp edges. It is nostalgic to discover that some of the most popular toys from the 1950s include toy cars of all kinds, rocking horses, wooden blocks, building toys like Tinkertoys, Erector sets, Hula hoops, Barbie dolls, play-doh, and pogo sticks. I'd like to know what the other children at that Xmas party received.

Mettoy Playcraft Ltd was the name of a range of toys manufactured in Northampton and Fforestfach Swansea, between the 1930s and 1980s. As well as toy typewriters Mettoys made slot cars, toy cars with clockwork motors, dollhouses, toy aircraft, boats, trains, and toy weapons ranging from toy machine guns to ray guns.

The Mettoy (Metal Toy) company was founded in 1933 by German émigré Philip Ullmann and was later joined by South African-born German Arthur Katz who had previously worked for Ullmann at his toy company Tipp and Co of Nuremberg. The firm made a variety of lithographed metal wind-up toys. Both Jewish, they moved to Britain following Hitler's rise to power in 1933. The firm is most famous for its line of die-cast toy motor vehicles of their Corgi Toys branch created in 1956. In the same year Mettoy merged with the Playcraft model railway and slot car company.

Ullman and Katz set up their toy-manufacturing business in Northampton, G.B. They initially produced very similar tinfoil toys to those being made in Germany. Within six years the Northampton factory was said to have 600 employees.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, instead of toys Mettoy manufactured a wide range of munitions and military equipment, including heavy steel Jerry can components and shell fuses, shell and mortar carriers, Sten and Bren Gun magazines and landmines, and a cooking stove for troops posted in tropical jungle environments.

Britain was far from wealthy after WW11 and into the early 1950s, when David's typewriter was probably made, and materials were still in short supply. There were restrictions on imports, and rationing continued to be a problem for all industry. But British manufacturers were helped by the creative German toy industry being out of action during, and immediately after the war.

After the war Mettoy quickly returned to toy manufacturing, and by 1948 had started building a new factory at Fforestfach on the outskirts of Swansea, South Wales since there was a ready source of raw materials, and the area suffered from an inadequate range of employment opportunities. The increase in the size of the factory allowed for the installation of high-capacity injection-moulding machinery, which in turn enabled the company to move away from the manufacture of tinfoil toys to those produced from plastic. So that David's toy tinfoil typewriter is a part of history, a survivor from very much an earlier time in the history of toy making.

Coming Events

Mon 2 Nov 10.15am:

BHG Monthly Meeting at the Soldiers' Memorial Hall. Guest speaker: Francesca Beddie. "The 2020 *Morton Bushfire*". As per last month, members must book in advance with Graham Morgan. Tel 4883 7714 or email: morgan_gt1@yahoo.com.au

Mon 30 Nov 2 pm: *BHG Committee Meeting*, location tbc.

Mon 7 Dec 11 am:

BHG Monthly Meeting at the Soldiers Memorial Hall followed by *Christmas Luncheon*. Members must book in advance with Graham Morgan. Tel 4883 7714 or email: morgan_gt1@yahoo.com.au. Luncheon cost \$10.