



THE POSTING

ISSUE NO 7, JULY 2024

EDITORIAL: Errol Hatch

I've finally caught up with my commitment to get a monthly edition released. Junes edition took a bit of time to get the timings finalized for the reunion but we got there in the end.



The Saturday AGM and rehearsal start time are a bit tight but as I was saying to Doug Drysdale who commented on that issue, the AGM will take what time it needs to cover all the issues.

I have a very good friend (a Bass Player in fact) drop into the shop the other day and he has been retired for a while now but has yet to get into a cycle that keeps his days active. He has been playing with a few Big bands around Melbourne just to keep in touch but realizes that retirement is hard work. I'm glad I have the association to keep my writing juices active and the administration to help fill those quite periods in a day.

Remember, nominations for the executive are now open and lodgments need to be in as soon as possible. Who will be our next executive, give it some thought.

WAY BACK (PAST EDITIONS)

FEBRUARY 1996

It has been a real pleasure reading these past newsletters, the enthusiasm was in all the pages with those wanting to renew old friendships. This is what keeps ours and other associations going. Our problem is the recruitment of new members into the fold. As I said in a previous edition we are a association of memories past and to get new members they need to have been in the band previously.

This edition was no different with the reminder that it was only 12 weeks to the Victorian reunion and to get your booking forms in. A great little segment by "Digga" Coutts on nicknames was included in the opening pages.

The Sydney gathering I mentioned in the last edition did get off the ground in October with the Sydney Naval Band Facili-

ty being the host. There were many attendances on the day and plenty of discussions re the reunion in Melbourne.

LEUT Kevin "Red" Hillier resigned on the 31st of January making way for Phil Anderson to take over the Melbourne Band. There was quite a few personnel movements and promotions with Rod Coughhran-Lane being made up to WO and WO Dale Granger heading to Tassie to take the band down there.

As per previous editions there is plenty of correspondence between members so it is worthwhile getting on the website and having a read.

2024 LAUNCESTON REUNION UPDATE

Since the release of our special edition last month outlining the reunion weekend I have had a great response from those committed to attend.

I will release a detail list of all attending in the next edition of our newsletter so if you had booked and are not on the list you will need to let me know. Ralph has started releasing all the music to members but is having a bit of a PDF problem so be patient, you will get it.

2024/25 MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS

I have been getting a few requests as to when the invoices will be released for the 2024/25 subs. I will endeavor to start them once this publication is in your possession. I will also produce invoices to those that want them for the reunion payments.

In summary the association is in great shape financially and at the AGM I will release the financials for the financial period 2023/24.

WEBSITE UPDATE

There has definitely been an improvement in website visits since the release of our monthly newsletters. This is great as the site really did suffer from regular visits previously. As a note the last newsletter has had over 700 hits, that's great.

WELL DONE MEMBERS.

FOLLOWUPS AND MESSAGES FROM MEMBERS

JIM HAWKINS

Hi Errol,

I got a surprise reading the Sunday Telegraph on 28/7/24 when I saw 2 photos of former percussionist John "Cocky" Roach and his wife Joan celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary with one photo of them on their wedding day 1964 and another taken recently.

John came from Portland Victoria and we used to visit Casterton (Western Victoria) quite often and stay at the home of John Widdicombe where a few of us would form a small group and play for dances etc in the district, and at one stage hiring a hall in Portland and running a Saturday night dance, but I can't remember whether we made much money back then in the early 60's.

The band comprised of John on drums, myself on piano, Mal "Buggsy" Willshire on string bass and John Widdicombe on reeds. Others who were there at the time included Bob Breen and 'Paddy' O'Leary. I had a VW Beetle and had Buggsy's string bass in a waterproof cover on a roof rack. We had driven there from Sydney and had called in to the Violet Town Hotel on the way where Don "Icky" Buntine's Mum was the publican.

John's Mum ran a boarding house in the main street of Casterton and she was renowned for her excellent cooking which we took advantage of, and I recall Buggsy getting up early to make himself a coffee, and mistook the Gravox for the coffee. The Widdicombe's main residence was at Sanford, just out of Casterton which had a small pub and of course we made good use of this. John's father was tragically killed in a tractor accident on their property some years later.

They were great days before most of us got married and all went in different directions. I haven't seen Buggsy since catching a glimpse of him at Marg Widdicombe's funeral some years back, and because of the huge crowd in attendance, I missed saying hello but was told I could see him at the wake. Unfortunately, he didn't turn up so I missed my chance to touch base.

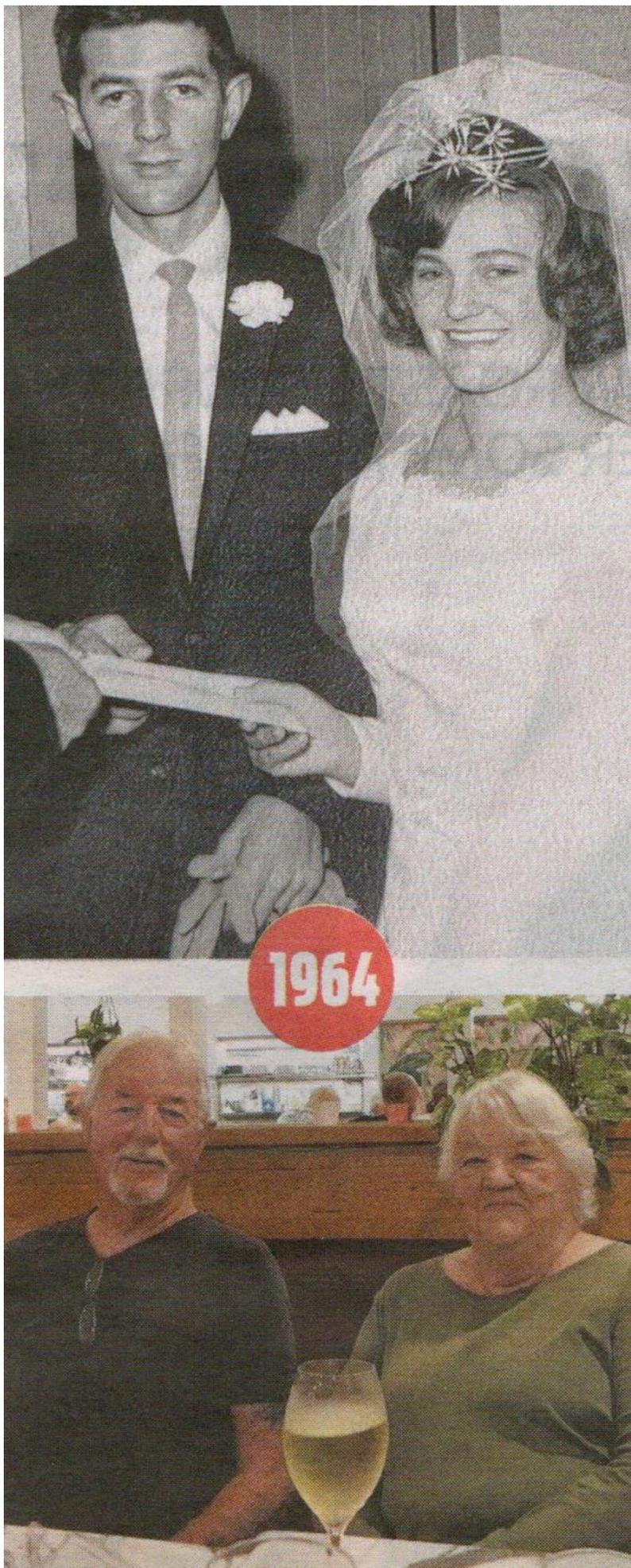
So, apart from not seeing Malcolm Clive Willshire from those days at Casterton, Bob Breen has 'disappeared' and nobody seems to know where he is, 'Paddy' O'Leary passed away far too young. John Roche and I lost contact years ago and he doesn't attend reunions, so the only person I speak to on a regular basis is John Widdicombe.

I have very fond memories of my younger years.

Cheers.

Jim.

John and Joan met in September 1961 at Central station when John was stationed on HMAS Melbourne. They were married in Arncliffe on the 20th of June 1964 and built their first home in the Blue Mountains. They had twin daughters Michelle & Nicole, and have five grand children. They retired to Bermagui on the South Coast of New South Wales.



BLUE McNALLY

I had correspondence to my "Remember when" from Blue McNally regarding the Sydney Band tour in Vietnam. Blue provided a map showing where camp Ziggie (Not Ziggy) was located from Vung Tau harbour and it was a fair way out in the middle of nowhere. Coming in to Camp Ziggie by helicopter (Picture Right) it clearly shows the massive clearing of forest around the camp and the intricate security fencing in place.

Somebody also asked me what Chappell & Co was. Now this person comes from the later era of Hal Leonard/Curnow and Henson Arrangements of the 80's on. The other common arrangements of the 50's and 60's were the Boosey & Hawkes selections of the popular Gilbert & Sullivan operettas. Who can forget them.

Speaking of arrangements. When the HMAS Melbourne band joined the Sydney band on the trip to the US to pickup Skyhawks I remember Kevin Foale purchasing a stack of Big Band arrangements and we attempted to play them on our return trip to Sydney. I say attempted because some of them had free form time signatures and Solo's that took us awhile to get around. There were some great Nestico originals from what I can remember. More on this trip further into this edition.

BELOW: The map is very detailed and highlighted all the camps and strategic points in the area looked after by the Territorial Forces



ABOVE: Waiting at Vung Tau Harbour to board the trucks for the trip to Nui Dat.

BELOW: After a concert at Nui Dat base we boarded the Chinook for the trip to Camp Ziggie.





Great photo from Kevan Thomas of the 1967 Fleet Band rehearsing in the mess. Where's the Piano?

DOUG DRYSDALE

Thanks Errol,
Looking good, but AGM with changed rehearsal time will mean a rushed meeting with plenty to discuss. Trumpet players need 20 minutes warm up time or more, I do anyway. No lunch ?

A clarification re timing.

With the proposed start time of 11.00am for the rehearsal Doug is right that there is not a lot of time for the AGM. I am certain that the executive will not rush the AGM if it goes over what time is allotted so be it. Regarding lunch. Brian has organized that a light lunch will be provided at the Café located in the Salvation Army's church.

JIM HAWKINS

Hi Errol,

You may wish to use this story in a future newsletter.

Many RAN Musicians were involved in playing the Sydney (or NSW) club circuit which sadly is no more. This also applies to former members of the Army, RAAF and Police bands.

I have fond memories of these days which kept me off the streets in my younger days.

Cheers

Jim.

SYDNEY CLUB BANDS IN THE 60's & 70's

Many Sydney clubs back in the 60's & 70's hired a resident band for at least Saturday night, with some hiring a band for Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday arvo entertainment. They also hired a "floor show" on those occasions, usually for two half hour shows or a one off hourly spot. Some of the larger clubs had three different entertainers, so the musicians had to sight read the music for these shows as there were very few clubs that paid for a rehearsal. A fifteen mi-

nute "look through" of the entertainers charts was about as long as the musicians got to back an artist for a one hour show.

Overseas musicians, particularly from the UK and the US were amazed that Australian musicians could "sight read" a show without a rehearsal as their unions would not allow this to happen. Some of the artists used very complicated arrangements which could cause problems in some smaller clubs where the musicians were very limited in their ability to sight read these charts, until an arranger by the name of Dick Buchanan came on the scene and supplied uncomplicated arrangements of popular songs written in the key desired by the singer, but with a similar format for that song, namely, play the song twice with a key change on the last chorus. This meant that most musicians knew what was coming, as opposed to the complicated charts supplied by some, resulting in a disaster in a few instances.

I often wondered why guest artists didn't have some of their complicated charts reserved for when they were performing with very experienced muso's in larger clubs, and a Dick Buchanan portfolio for the smaller venues, to avoid disasters. One might say that this idea would be too expensive, but the Buchanan charts were very affordable as he had most popular songs ready to print once the key for that singer had been established. These days are long gone from when even smaller bowling clubs for instance had at least a trio plus one guest artist on a Saturday night. Then entertainment called "Bingo" appeared in many clubs replacing live music, along with the more recent trivia evenings again putting muso's out of work.

The days of larger clubs employing 7-8 piece combos are long gone, with the last being Bankstown Sports Club which ended hiring a larger group around 10 years ago. The current boom in bands mainly featuring guitars also caused the 'reading' bands to disappear which was a big loss for musicians of all ages. I made enough money during these great days to help with a deposit on my first house, as did many other musicians as very few were fully professional back in the day.

In my 30 or so years playing the Sydney Clubs etc I only once had a resident gig that payed for a rehearsal, and that was actually a restaurant, The Viking Restaurant at Roselands Shopping Centre where luckily, the three musicians were reps who could time their runs to be at the venue late on a Wednesday for a proper rehearsal. They also had a resident organist who played for the diners between sets of the trio. This was an exception rather than the rule. It must be remembered that all of this entertainment back then was completely free as opposed to club entertainment nowadays. Poker machines meant that clubs had an advantage over hotels.

People simply arrived at their favourite club for a free show, be it a vocalist, juggler, dancers or groups like the Maori Hi Fives and similar. Now anything bigger than a solo guitarist/vocalist incurs a charge while the clubs and pubs not only have "pokies" earnings, they don't have to fork out real money to pay for members' entertainment.



HMAS Sydney and HMAS Melbourne bands performing I think it was Union Square in San Francisco. Sub LEUT Kevin Foale conducting.



KEVIN HILLIER

WHAT'S THE STORY RED

At our last Victorian lunch held at the Frankston RSL (More in the following pages) Kevin "RED" Hillier was showing a folder of photos of his time in the Band. Some I had seen around on our website but one was the original Navy photo of the HMAS Melbourne Band in 1971.

This band also joined the Sydney band on the trip to the USA as I mentioned earlier in this publication but one thing stood out. First row right hand side was Red Hillier sporting a HMAS Sydney cap along with Terry McMahon on French Horn. This photo must have been before our trip as Louie Burdett was in the band who went AWOL when we were in the states. (that's another story)

The answer talking to Red was :

He was loaned to the Melbourne while Henry Morgan went to Cerberus to do his PO's course. He and Terry McMahon (who also transferred) were on the Melbourne for RIMPAC 1971 but actually never did RIMPAC. The band were transferred to the USS Brice Canyon for a short period touring and performing concerts. He returned to the Sydney at Christmas time 71 but the Sydney band were already on Christmas leave.

The trip to the states was a busy time visiting Pearl Harbour, San Diego where we did the longest march I can remember then to San Francisco. The Sydney was not exactly the most comfortable ship with hammocks still the bed of choice. I don't remember actually where the Melbourne band bunked down on board.



VICTORIAN LUNCHEON

The Victorian Contingent enjoyed a welcome return to the very flash Frankston RSL for our half yearly lunch on Sunday the 21st of July. The turnout was excellent with over 20 members enjoying the refurbished club. We had not been to Frankston for well over 18 months and the club would to have to be one of the best RSL's in Victoria if not the country. With upgraded Restaurants, Bistros, Counter meals and areas just to sit and enjoy the atmosphere it really is a credit to the President and committee of the club.

As the photos show there were some new and some familiar faces enjoying the day and the stories of past years were flowing thick and fast. All enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the club and we welcome a return for our Christmas lunch.



LEFT: Paul Cottier was joined by brother Steve and Rod Coughran-Lane for a refreshing beer before lunch was served. All three will be heading south to Launceston for the reunion.

BELOW LEFT: Fran Leeke, Carol & Les Kent with Mick Leeke and Elaine Hillier.

BOTTOM LEFT: Lorraine & Terry Ekin with Doug Antonoff.



BELOW: Dale Granger with his son and to the right our host, Kevin Hillier (President of the RSL) and the lovely Gail Codling sharing a quiet moment after lunch.



TOP: Ray Mills, Mal Codling and Barry Pollock.

ABOVE: Allan Fenney, Sharon Hatch and Pat Pollock enjoying a joke or two.

BELOW: Gabe & Sue Kicsak in deep discussion with Rod.



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WA: Bill Farrell

RAN Veterans Band/Events Manager:

Ralph Daines

Web: www.ranbandassoc.net

WHO ARE WE

This column highlights association members with a brief history in the Band Branch.



DALE GRANGER

JOINED:

1975 as a Junior Musician

INSTRUMENT:

Joined on Trumpet and stayed on it.

SHIPS/DEPOT's SERVED ON:

HMAS Cerberus, HMAS Melbourne, HMAS Stalwart, HMAS Perth, HMAS Brisbane, HMAS Hobart, HMAS Jervis Bay

MATES WHO JOINED ABOUT THE SAME TIME:

Ray Mills, Wayne McNally, Chris Tozer, Rick Cooke, Buddy Hally

INDELIBLE MEMORIES:

- RIMPAC 78
- Bugler Gallipoli 2010
- Bugler Western Front 2012
- Commonwealth Games 82
- Still Serving

ROD COUGHRAN-LANE

JOINED:

Jan 1969 Adult Entry

INSTRUMENT:

Tuba

SHIPS/DEPOT's SERVED ON:

HMAS Cerberus, HMAS Melbourne, HMAS Stalwart, HMAS Encounter, HMAS Harman, DFSM

MATES WHO JOINED ABOUT THE SAME TIME:

Fred Blake, Dave Thomson, Kevin Hillier, Garry Sander, John Lennon, Terry McMahon, Leon Stucas, Ken McCallum, Blue McNally

INDELIBLE MEMORIES:

- HMAS Melbourne Fleet Band
- Exchange with Royal Marines
- International Tattoo Adelaide 1986
- SOM
- DFSM



Cover Art:

The 1970 Freedom of entry of Melbourne with massed bands and the whole of HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Melbourne contingents.

