

MAY 2004

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Dear Fellow Member,

Following is a copy of an email I sent out to members where I had their email address. To have limited the distribution of this info to just these people seemed pretty unsatisfactory so I bought a lot of stamped envelopes and copied the email about 100 times and got these away by post..

"Dear Fellow Member,"

Please accept my apology for the long delay in getting out Newsletter No. 21.....I just had a look and NL No. 20 is dated Sept 2003 so that's 8 months ago...Also I believe some members have tried to contact me by phone without success...I know the old saying " Never complain...never explain ! "but I think some explanation is warranted so I thought I'd at least get an email away to those members with email addresses and explain the reasons for the delay, and difficulty in contacting me by phone..

Quite a few months back I had a stroke...Fortunately not a major one but it was a "wake up call "...It affected my speech ( I found it easy to slur my words ! ) ..my writing and my swallowing but not my mobility or limbs....The cat scan showed 2 small areas of my brain had been affected by thrombosis...The Dr. said I should recover completely and he has been proven correct as I now have no symptoms remaining..I only had one day in hospital so I reckoned they weren't too worried about me...Nevertheless it did bring home to me the fact that we are all mortal and I mightn't be so lucky next time..Also a few days after the stroke, I was carrying a 25 litre keg of grapejuice from the top shed (where I had crushed it ) down a rough track to the house, when I stumbled and injured my sciatic nerve...a problem which I still have not fully recovered from...So with trouble in both brain and body I thought perhaps I'd better look after myself a bit more than I am in the habit of doing..

The major rethink was what to do with "Pindari"..my home for the past 44 years...I am now 76 and will turn 77 next August so reckoned I wouldn't be able to look after "Pindari" too much longer...It had always been my hope that one or the other of our two sons would carry on with the place, but for various reasons it became obvious that this was not going to happen...Then I thought that we would survey 520 acres off for sale and I would continue to live here on a 40 acre block..Then I had the stroke and the prospect of living alone here was not such a great idea !!

I'll just digress here for a moment as it has a bearing on what happened next..

Our youngest child, daughter Ruth, became very ill at the age of 21 ( 20 odd years ago) with a mental illness..schizo-affective bi-polar disorder is the best description I can think of...She has had a hard time battling this disorder, but then so have Margaret and I..In 1996 we helped her buy a house in town in the hope that she would be able to make a life for herself...Marg said she'd go and help her settle in for a couple of weeks and I stayed on at "Pindari" by myself, and looked after the farm...The "couple of weeks" stretched on and on as it was quite obvious that Ruth couldn't make it on her own..Hope springs eternal in the human breast and of course I hoped that Ruth would improve sufficiently to allow Margaret to come back to "Pindari" and we'd spend our twilight years to-gether..I was wrong again !!

Ruth has for some years had a boarder to help her pay the bills..Some were good some not so good...the latest one was a young fellow from Gunnedah who was a student at the Tamworth TAFE college..But he was into drugs and Ruth told him he had to go..which he did without any fuss..Not long after he left I had my stroke and was having a rethink about my own future, so I rang Ruth and asked her would she like a "mature age, drug free boarder ? "

She said she thought she'd give him a go, so that's where I am now, and have been for the past 6 or 7 weeks..I still drive out to "Pindari" each day (about 10kms) ..my computers and boat are still there, and I have the remnants of the breeding herd of Angus cattle still there. but I go "home" to Ruth's place each night to a meal cooked by my wife !! A big improvement on my bachelor like life of the past 8 years..

In the period at "Pindari" before Ruth bought her house in town there were just the 3 of us living there, Margaret, Ruth and myself. Ruth and I clashed quite often...I found it difficult to make sufficient allowances for the fact that Ruth had major mental health problems...Margaret trained as a nurse, and fortunately is made of sterner stuff than me..She handled the situation much better than I did..

So it was with some trepidation that I moved into town, and we 3 came to live together again after an 8 year break..Our original agreement was that we'd try it for a couple of weeks and see how it went...Well the couple of weeks has stretched out to about 7 now and it's working remarkably well..Ruth is now on much better medication..an anti-psychoctic called "Closeril" and an anti-depressant called "Effexor"...She still has days when she is excessively anxious, and also has trouble with "voices", but is usually cheerful and sensible..We get on with each other very well..Her home is quite large enough for the 3 of us...I have a nice big sunny bedroom with plenty of room for my computers and books..it has a large shed where I can "potter" about and plenty of room to park the boat.....So....

We have decided to sell all of "Pindari", either to a developer, (it is zoned 1c which means it can be cut up into 5 acre hobby farms ) or to someone who wants to live on it as we have been..Another alternative is to cut it up into several 100 acre blocks and I've got a surveyor doing a feasibility study into this at the present time..It could take quite a while to get a satisfactory sale..

If you are still with me after all that, you can see that there have been some major changes in my life with more to come...Nevertheless when the dust settles.."Pindari" is sold and all the paraphernalia of 44 years has been sorted out and disposed of, I can see myself as a town resident with 3 main interests.....punting, sailing, and The Australian Waugh Family Society !! with a new address as follows...

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Well that's the end of the story so far...The Society is in very good financial health with \$1700 odd in the account and with reasonable luck Newsletter 21 will be forthcoming before the end of this year...I won't be organising an October reunion in Armidale this year ...numbers have been declining and we only just made the catering minimum last time with 40 turning up...So I'll close now and hope to be in contact again later in the year with Newsletter 21...

With Love to All.....Ron Main.....

PS Doubtless some of you are wondering ( as I did ) "Why has it taken so long for this email to be on it's way ? " Well I think the reason is, that I was waiting to see if my new living arrangements were permanent, or just a flash in the pan...I now feel that they are permanent and the realignment of my internal thinking and feeling has been done...hence the email is now possible...

PPS...Merron should get the credit for me getting this away...She rang to-day and caught me at Pindari...I explained all the above to her and somehow I got the message that it would be a good idea to disseminate it a bit more widely !!

PPPS..Merron's well again now but did have some reoccurrence of the cancer that needed surgery in December 2002, and needed another course of chemotherapy...That's all finished now and she and Brian are planning a trip to Fiji in the near future.

PPPPS... While I think it quite likely that I'll be getting Newsletter No.21 away OK, when it comes to NLs 22, 23, 24, 25 etc it is quite obvious that if the Society is to survive then someone else younger than me will have to take over as Editor etc...So if any member wishes to volunteer please let me know and I'll do all I can to help with the transition..."