

Ian Melbourne—A311725—Engine Fitter

I left my family home in Northcote, Victoria in 1954 to join the RAAF intake of that year, arriving in Wagga Wagga with the rest of the guys in January 1954. After spending fifteen years with the RAAF, and achieving the rank of sergeant, I chose to leave in 1969. On leaving Wagga I was posted to 1AD, Laverton. Then I went to No 21 Squadron, City of Melbourne. I did a Bloodhound ground to air missile familiarisation course at Woomera. My next posting was to the Air Trials Unit, Evatt's Field (Woomera), where I remained for twelve months. My next posting was to the Air Trials Unit, Edinburgh, South Australia. While there I met my future wife Judy in mid-1961 (like so many did then) at a dance in Adelaide. We became engaged in 1962 and married in early March 1963, then resided at Elizabeth near the RAAF base. I was posted to No 1 Aircraft Depot, Laverton, (engine overhauls) in August 1965, where we lived initially at Altona and later in Werribee. Many RAAF people were based in Werribee at the time, so it was a pleasant place to live. We were astonished to find the Werribee home had a briquette stove, which also controlled the hot water system - so the stove had to be "fired up" all year round!

Our first daughter, Carolyn Anne was born in 1966 at the Werribee Hospital, Victoria. By late 1968 it was time to think about staying on with the RAAF or jumping into civilian life. I always wanted a nice home of my own, and I made the decision to "jump". I chose to be discharged in January 1969 in Adelaide, South Australia, as I had never really liked Melbourne (my home town). My wife is an Adelaide girl and my choice suited her just fine. My first "normal" job was with the Commonwealth Department of Works at Edinburgh airfield as a maintenance fitter. This was a good easement into civilian life. I stayed with this job for about four and a half months until June 1969 when we purchased the Rostrevor Newsagency in the pleasant eastern Adelaide suburb of the same name. Our second daughter, Michele Joy had been born in Adelaide in April 1969 at the Queen Victoria Hospital, Rose Park.

We operated our newsagency business for almost twenty-two years: a seven days per week commitment with few chances for holidays. This was a home-delivery agency with sub-agents (shops) who got their supplies through me. I used to start work at one am to prepare and deliver *The Advertiser* and returned home around seven-thirty am, seven days a week. I'd have a couple of hours sleep and then the afternoon newspaper *The News* had to be delivered. Much of the rest of my day and evening was spent on book work, accounts and preparing magazines for delivery to shops and homes.

During 1985 I was a member of the local Rotary Club, but the business commitments meant I really didn't have enough spare time. The last fourteen years in the newsagency meant I did not have any time off except for Christmas Days and Good Fridays.

Overall, I really loved being my own boss and would not have changed that situation for quids! We had bought a very comfortable home and really enjoyed bringing up our two girls. The newsagency was operated from our home with a very large garage for supplies. By 1990 we decided to look at our future and also decided it was time to think of selling the business, which we did in March 1991. We had always nurtured the idea of living by the sea so in anticipation of selling both the business and our Rostrevor home, we bought a lovely brand-new duplex at Brighton, one of Adelaide's lovely beaches. This new home is about seven homes back from the Esplanade.

Our two daughters had left home by this stage: both to live in the Adelaide Hills. After selling out, it was decided I should take a break from work after the long commitment without a decent break and as Judy was still working full-time with the University of South Australia, it made it possible for me to become a "house husband". But during my first few months I contacted the local Meals on Wheels branch at Brighton and before I knew it I was their secretary: a position I have held now for twelve-plus years! In addition I do regular

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weekly meal deliveries, am on call if they need an extra hand, do their outside garden tidy up and am a general handyman for their minor problems. So this initial casual contact has given me a lot of pleasure and the feeling of doing something worthwhile for the community. I always felt the community was what gave me my living for twenty-two years as a newsagent, so hopefully I am giving something back.

For the past twelve years I have been taking residents from a local retirement village out on two-hour weekly drives every Wednesday. Also during that time I have been a volunteer helper with the City of Holdfast Bay Council taking elderly residents shopping or to medical appointments, etc. I am also a member of the local Probus Club of Brighton.

Since 1994 Adelaide-based ex-RAAF Mangoes have had an annual reunion each February or March. In 1999 our younger daughter Michele married her long time boyfriend Graham. In 2001 Judy retired from the university after spending fifteen years there. We have taken advantage of our mutual retirement with many short holidays and sincerely hope that we can continue to do this. My elderly father, Jim, is still living in Melbourne and is now ninety-one years old. I have a sister, Nola, also in Melbourne, so we try to see them whenever we can.

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Judy Melbourne 2003



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