

## TRANSCRIPT OF EMAIL CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN JV and WAYNE ROBINSON

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June**

Greetings J.V. – Lovely to hear from you.

Or, as the late great Swinburne Piers Foenander Herft would say.... “ Hello Winco – Don’t miss out on Wernburn in the Williers, mate”. I guess you heard that Herfty died a couple of years ago? A real character if there ever was one. Remember our days in the Post Section with Piers, the boss-man, Jason Smith, his sidekick, Sid Lonergan, you & I &, for a while, Ken Parsons? And, of course, Jordan Darley Dowe (aka “Tim”) – winner of the 1938 Muttama Cup, Pat Smith the postman who spoke more Egyptian to us than English &, of course, the lovely young thing, Robyn Ward, the redhead – soon followed by the other Robyn (Brown) in the longest “engagement on record” to Bernie Carr.

My SDO memories go back to 7 December 1959 when a very nervous 16 year old was despatched from the Public Service Board to the old SDO (where we played endless table tennis world series matches in the crusty old basement) – 166 Phillip Street – with a letter from the Secretary of the Board, Alf Edwards, addressed to Mr F. Fuchs & I wasn’t game to attempt pronouncing his name. My initiation was indelibly imprinted on my mind & I still remember it as clear as a bell. My arrival at 166 coincided with close up time, 3pm & the ground floor where I was directed to make my appearance was securely locked & efficiently guarded by one “Rughead” Brian Martin who, with a durrie hanging out of his gob , informed me that the joint was closed for the day &, effectively, to piss off. Bearing my letter of introduction, I headed upstairs – the main door to its entry also ferme – so I started entry through the small side door to be greeted by a half pissed, Tom McInerny who sputtered....“What the F.....g Hell do you want”? Noticing the look of horror on my face , his sidekick, Phil Jones came to my rescue &, in his squeaky voice comforted me with the words....” Oh you want to see Fooksey, son &, with a questionable (I suspected at the time) arm around my shoulder, he guided me back downstairs, much relieved by his correct pronunciation of my new boss’s surname.

Be patient, JV, It ain’t over yet.

Rughead reluctantly opened his well guarded door just as Warren Schubert ( Gerald the Grasshopper) being chased by “Smoky” Trevethick ran straight into a large metal press which, on impact, proceeded to tumble, falling on the said “Gerald”. Upon hearing the massive din, Frank Fookes raced out of his Accountant’s office with six gun in one hand, the other belting himself on the forehead in his inimitable style, with a similar exclamation to that expressed by Old Tom....”What the bloody hell’s going on out here?”

The dust (literally ) duly settled & peace/quiet reigned for a short while. It was later revealed that poor old Gerald suffered a broken leg as a result of the fallen cupboard & he was hobbling around the office in a half plaster cast & on crutches for weeks.

I remember another character of the office, Alan Kelly (who always had a tip for the races which were emitted out of the corner of his mouth with a roll your own fag hanging out of the other).... “Son, you could write a bloody book about this joint “.

He wasn’t wrong & that was in the early 60s!!

Some more names for you....Alan (“Aussie”) Roper who, I guess, has gone to God; I know Kevin Whelan & Kevin Wyburn are no longer with us (Hollywood informed of Kevin Wyburn’s death a few years ago); Roy Donohue; his Newcastle mate, Danny ???? a mad punter & hopeless pisspot; nice guy, Bill Baker; Fred Heppel who loved his table tennis; of course, you’d know that Pokey Calderon & Charlie Nolan have departed; remember Terry Robinson, Ken ???? who often played either hooker or prop with us on the Dom – lived at Manly & later became a real estate agent/valuer at Balgowlah; the bearded Manly

Magistrate who smoked a Sherlock Holmes pipe – former buddy of Terry Enman (also deceased) & who could be found in the Leagues Club almost any night; Bobby Manns who played five-eighth behind Malcolm & who later had a successful coaching career at Souths getting their reserve grade side to two consecutive grand final wins; Gary Manou; Fred Delaney, I understand from Billy Belko who sees him at Lidcombe Catholic Club a bit, is still going but, not strongly, it would appear – Harro would know more about that. I'm surprised that Bomber has gone off the radar – must've retired & moved from Eastwood?

I've also heard from Billy Belko (who sees a fair bit of Ray Ryan @ their local TAB) that Chris Eyles died some years ago. Bill, himself is battling a rare form of cancer, in his cranium. He was first diagnosed in 2014 & has been undergoing continuous surgery ever since, poor bugger. A bit like Denis Sullivan, he's also very positive & not allowing the dread disease to interfere with his life. Likewise, my bride, Cath who was diagnosed with inoperable Ovarian cancer on 29May, 2016. Purely by chance, she was referred very quickly to a genius, Prof Andreas Obermair, an Austrian Surgeon who introduced a method of laparoscopic investigation which showed how far it had spread & to where & she was able to be treated. She underwent 3 months of Chemo, followed by surgery (she had 3,730 cancer markers on diagnosis) &, then another 3 months of Chemo. She's made a remarkable recovery & now appears at the Prof's seminars, introduced as "Caterin, my Supa Star". A very lucky girl.

As I think of other names from the past, I'll let you know &, again, old mate, many thanks for this opportunity to reminisce. I still remember, fondly, our afternoon sessions in the Leagues Club sauna with old Joe & Husky Moore after some hard games of footy on the Domain. Great days.... Oh, here's another one for you Frank Condon who was still playing cricket on Moore Park at, then, an advanced age & the other old guy from the Blue Mtns who worked in the printing room who was a classy wicket keeper. What's the latest on Peter Daffen? Last I heard (from Ken/Bugs Race – with whom I had lunch yesterday & forgot to ask him – Ken now lives up here & we see a fair bit of him & wife, Yvonne) he, Peter that is, was legally blind & not in a good way. Hollywood would know more about that...

Until your next missive, All the very Best to you & Yours. Like us, your kids will now all be grown up adults with kids of their own. I haven't seen Casey since my 60th birthday party at Andy's place (yes I HAVE – ONCE AT A SHOW @ Capitol Theatre in Sydney – he & Helen). Andrew & Alex took advantage of the ridiculous Sydney Real Estate market – sold at Forestville and scaled down in size to a great unit on the Dee Why headland. Their son, Bill is studying Journalism as well as playing in two bands & writing for a rock music magazine. He turns 20 on June 9 & Andy is 49 on the 4th. Pete turned 43 on May 16 & is now a single Dad with two lovely daughters aged 9 & 14. Emma has just turned 37 & has 3 kids aged 7,4 & 14months. Cath is busy babysitting on Tuesdays & is soccer Mum for Pete's girls each Wednesday in season. Son Dave, now 34, is still sort of at home, spending more time at his girl friend's joint (literally) than here with us. I'm in reasonable shape after having both knees replaced; one hip; a lower spinal reconstruct/ fusion laminectomy & 2 years ago, open heart (new Aortic valve & triple by-pass) – that wasn't fun – surgery. Ok now having recently lost 11kgs/ 35cms off the body mass & getting to the gym 4-5 times a week.

Getting old ain't fun as I guess You've learned already, yourself. Keep Well JV &, again, many thanks for your efforts in this great project.

Best Regards,  
Robbo.

The Danny I referred to was Danny Long.

## Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Aaah Robbo! – such memories.

I remember Frank Fuchs, of course, Warren Schubert, Alan Kelly and Lance Trevethick but I had long since forgotten the dapper Phil Jones and don't think I knew Brian Martin or Tom McInerney but then I started in '63.

Of the (many) other names you have mentioned I know some have passed but I wasn't sure about Charlie Nolan and I didn't know Chris Eyles had gone. I can't confirm Aussie Roper, Bill Baker, Fred Heppel, Terry Robinson, Garry Manou or Bobby Manns are still with us but I'll add all those names to the list – someone might know.

I did know Fred Delaney was unwell but I don't know where he is up to now and Harro hasn't responded yet and Peter Daffen died a couple of years ago.

Sorry to hear Billy Belko is struggling – give him my best wishes. Billy didn't work at Stamps but many of us knew him pretty well. Did Ray Ryan work at Stamps – I remember him but can't recall if he worked there or not.

On a more personal note, I'm as fit as a Mallee Bull. Fully retired with a few aches and pains (particularly in the morning) and still walking around the golf course 2-3 times a week and playing very shitty golf. No replacement parts as yet and I visit the gym and swim a couple of times a week as well. Nothing else to do in Picton - I built a granny flat on Jenny's property and live alone with my cat (I'm sure you knew Liz passed on 9 years ago) and I have no interest in backing up a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Have 6 g'kids now (3 here in Picton and my youngest, Steve, lives in Denmark, 40 minutes from Albany in WA and he has 3 too) but I doubt there will be any more. David isn't married and I think he is a confirmed bachelor.

I'm confident we'll get something off the ground with this idea as there is plenty of interest in catching-up, although I think it is more likely to result in some smaller soiree's rather than one great big one. Still hopeful of more responses, particularly with contact details so watch this space.

Do you ever get back down to NSW? I am hopeful you are still a 'Blue' at heart and will rejoice with us in an expected and overdue series victory commencing on Wednesday night (I'm assuming you are still in Eumundi but I don't know). I don't get to Qld very often but have been to Brissie and the Gold Coast a few times over the past 5 years or so.

Give my regards to Cath and you never know, maybe we haven't seen the last of each other after all.

JV

## Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June

Giddy Again JV.

My subconscious has been working "O/T" – that used to be a much hackneyed term in the old SDO – some people depended on it to satisfy cash flow needs, as you will recall.

Mate, the Ken I referred to who was once my front row partner in crime, along with Artie Fairall & Greg Douglas (there's another name for you) is Kenny Redfern (came to me about 3am one morning recently – could've rung you if I had your #).

Another of our fellow forwards who's not yet been listed is former Police Minister, Peter Anderson. I'll never forget the day we rolled the Coppers after Malcolm potted a penalty which resulted from a dust-up between a future International RL Referee whose name escapes me right now – but will come back, prob also at 3am one morning, the said Ando & moi. Peter slipped one into the Police five-eighth after the ref on the day had just issued a general warning about "any further nonsense" & the copper whacked me thinking I had delivered the blow. I went down like a bag of shit & the copper was marched. I recall recovering very quickly, jumping to my feet & clapping him off the field. That was a hard day at the office with you & I sitting in the Leagues Club Sauna totally spent after defending our

line with the coppers running uphill in the second half. We held 'em out & won the game 2 nil – without the 9 & a half points start we were given. Remember that day? When the future Police Minister belted a future successful detective & international ref who retaliated on the wrong guy.... That was also the day when “Gunner” Dick Orton (another yet unlisted name for you) tackled a runaway Johnny Greaves as he was loping down the sideline for what looked like being a certain try, hit him with an unbelievable tackle, taking the Test winger, about a metre over the sideline. What a magnificent victory.

Some more names for you.... the old wicket keeper I referred to in my last missive was Bert Newham; how about lovely little Dora Krallis; you mentioned Renata Webster nee Vitens but not her husband Peter Webster; Bruce Bricknell; Malcolm's former wife, Pam; Ruth who used to work with Lindsay Forrest; Malcolm Osbourne; John “Hoot” Gibson whom I saw at the 2007 Rugby World cup in Cardiff when Australia played & defeated Wales – he was seated right next to me, a very lucky survivor of the overturned yacht in the Sydney to Hobart race that fateful year when a number of crew members off the same yacht perished at sea; Bill Gillooly; Johnny Woodger; the late Paul Bentley who died tragically in a terrible motor accident in the early 80s; Johnny Butcher aka “Fang”; Bob Gordon; from the top down in order of seniority – Harry Lipscomb, Geoff May, Reg Werner, George Simpson, the late John Hadley who really hated a drink, Jack Kildea, Norm Hudson, Keith Nonnenmacher, Lloyd Thomas, Muir Hynde, Terry Kinsella, Alf Loton (dec), Ken Harrower (the Colonel), the late Bob (Spag) Walker, his rival in terms of how many kids they could produce, Pat O'Hehir, Ron Macklin, Doug McLoughlin, former Internal Auditor, Jack O'Neill & one of my former early bosses, Great guy Doug Rose, Graham Lindley another top bloke, top Squash player, Phil M'cGee, Terry (Therese) Casey who, like Ken Mowle, came from Smithtown & who married another early A/Cs branch staffer, Brian Ferguson, Gwen Collins, I think I mentioned Yvonne Porter last time but I worked with her in Death Duty Accounts when I was first “graded” in the early/mid 60s, &, I think that's about all I've got – at this point in time.

I couldn't quite remember when you came to the SDO, but I can remember playing table tennis against you in the dirty old cellar of 166 Phillip, probably when you were still at Public Trust cooz I also remember mad Gerry Bernhardt in the same vein – who later became Deputy PT after he finally completed Law. He was/still is a close buddy of Billy Belko. One of Gerard's daughters is a Channel Nine reporter on TV.

I'll give you a further update if I can muster up any more names for you.

Keep me in the loop with whatever reunion plans which might be later considered. Oh, by the way, Ray Ryan never worked at the Stamp Office. He was a school mate of Cec Newey & Ray Murray (dec). I caught up with Ryaney & Cec when I was working in London in 1971/72. We had some funny nights together at the London New Zealand Rugby Club as well as at their Kiwi mates' place in the north of the city. I was living in Mitcham, Surrey very near Streatham where Ray & Cec both worked in a pub.

Keep well,  
Best Regards, Robbo.

**Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June**

Sorry, JV, I forgot to respond to your queries....

Ray Ryan used to work a milk run with his old man & when that wound down, he joined the State Lotteries Office where he met Edna, now his wife & they've lived around the Abbotsford area where Billy Belko also lives.

Sorry to hear of Peter Daffen's death – in the early days, I was very close to Peter & his wife Anne, often driving them around looking at houses before old mate got a licence – did the same with Bruce & Carole. Anne's parents lived at Punchbowl & Carole's at Arncliffe – Peter in Bream Street, Coogee &

Donk, also in the Eastern suburbs. Remember his old man who used to come out to Moore Park on Saturdays to cricket?

Good to hear the news of your kids – I don't think I ever met Steven but I do remember Jennifer as a young child. I also remember the sad passing of your beloved Liz (nee Allen). I recall sending you a hand written note of sympathy at the time. Doesn't seem 9 years – but, to you of course, there would probably be reminders on a daily basis. Brian Davis who I followed to Hospital Commission & then, State Treasury lost his wife, Chris in 2004 & he still hasn't recovered from the loss. Like for him, you have my greatest admiration for getting on with your life after suffering such an enormous loss in your life....which must, of course, go on.

We don't get down to Sydney all that much anymore. We were in town last June (Andy's birthday was on Monday 4th & young Bill's is the 9th) to see them & to witness the fabulous Vivid Light Festival from an apartment we rented at McMahons Point & that's the last time. The kids come up here a couple of times a year so we still get to see our Sydney connection reasonably frequently. All the other kids live up here on the Sunshine Coast. Cath made a rule that, when they left home, they had to be at least a half hours drive away – so, they are – almost to the second! Pete's at Maroochydoore & Emma at Wurtulla Beach, just south of Maroochy.

Good luck tonight. We really don't care who win so long as it's a good, hard game. While the kids & grandkids constantly remind us that "it is of origin", we have developed a preference for the Maroons over the almost 32 years we've lived here. Cath was always a Balmain fan & I loved the old Magpies so, it was a natural progression for us to become supporters of Wests/Tigers – especially since that little master Benji rejoined the Club. We'll be rooting for Qld tonight, despite our family's preference. Yep, we are still at Eumundi & don't see ourselves shifting. We have sold off part of our acreage from 20 down to 7 &, now, get people in to do some of the hard yakka that's become more of a challenge for us. Youngest son Dave is very good – he keeps all of the lawns & gardens around the house in order & gets up on the roof to constantly clean out gutters, etc which is an enormous help. 137-153 Eumundi Range Road is still our residential address (PO Box 130, Eumundi, 4532 still our postal address & 0754428650 still our home phone #/mob 0427090344).

We'd love to see you if you ever happen to be up this way on any of your famous golf tours. Are you still doing those??

All the best old mate & keep well.

Best Regards & with many happy memories,  
Robbo.

#### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June**

Mate – your memory is far superior to mine although I can recall most of them once I see the name.

Great to be reminded of those wonderful days of our youth on the domain when we played 'real' football. Apparently they played touch for years but I'm not sure they play anything down there these days – I think it all came to a grinding halt when they realised we really didn't do much work in those days – what little we did we saved up for O/T as you said – and we hardly ever went back to work after the games except to sign off the old attendance book at 5pm (although I think I signed off next morning a few times).

I do recall you sledging the guy as he walked off the field and I thought he was going to come back on to get you and I was sure he would be waiting for you after the game and it would be on but he didn't. I can't remember who he was but I'm pretty sure the up and coming referee on that day was Jim Mitchell, who in later years, I refereed with in the St George Association along with Keith Page and John Gocher (John Gocher and I started

refereeing together and his and my first association meeting and our appointments in junior league was on the same weekend – but he was much better than me as his career ultimately showed). I also remember 2 other games on the domain in particular – not sure if you played in them but the first is a memory of not touching the ball once in the whole game against Housing when Carrots played in the centres and they beat us 54 or 56-2 and I recall being on the ground a number of times looking up to see Carrots racing off downhill for yet another try (I'll bet he can remember it – he scored about 6). The second is a painful memory of trying to stop Johnny Peard close to the line and finishing up in Sydney Hospital with broken ribs. I still have a lump on the bottom of my rib cage where his head hit as he went straight through me. Didn't get to the sauna that day!

Greg Douglas (what a super guy) passed away a few years ago and so did Peter 'Webby' Webster. Doug Rose passed only last month (6<sup>th</sup> May) but I can't recall the Pam or Ruth you've mentioned

It's becoming clear that not too many of us have kept in touch over the intervening 40-50 years. The SDO Golf Days that Lyall and Trevor organised for a few years finished 3-4 years back and that was, for some of us, an opportunity to catch up but since then..... Liz was always keen to organise a catch-up but we didn't have the time in those days – she was busy and I was working long hours and we just never got around to it.

I've added the names you mentioned to the list and I guess it's likely some are no longer with us but I just don't know in most cases. Someone else mentioned Brian Murtagh but we've no idea where he is up to. Maybe someone will and some other names are missing because we left them off when we did know they have gone.

There is now over 200 names on the list so I think a big re-union is unlikely because of the sheer logistics, the lack of contact details and not to mention trying to find a date that suits everybody. What is almost certain is a few smaller get-togethers in the Sydney area and if that happens, I'll let everyone know about those I hear about so that maybe an opportunity to catch up with those we knew best will present itself. Personally having re-established contact with Ray Robey, Col Froud, Geoff Pymble, Cec Newey, Phil Bennet, Andy Bennet, Bob Williamson, Geoff Williams, Chris Edlund, Denis Sullivan, Mal Blakeley, Graeame Learmonth and a few others I'm keen to meet up again if only for a schooner or two for old times sake. And now I know where Huxley Eades and Johnny Reynolds and a few others are, maybe I can catch up with them as well. Then again maybe I'll just finish up being the central data base for contacts if anyone wants those details.

Meanwhile I hope one day we can share a schooner again too. I have just about exhausted what funds I retired with so my trips these days are usually limited to an occasional golf trip somewhere reasonably local and a tag-along with Jenny and her family on their camping or holiday trips so a trip that far north is unlikely unless I can win Lotto so it might have to wait for you to travel south.

Because David lives in Oatley and I see him regularly and often turn right at the lights on the corner of King George's Road and Stoney Creek Road in Beverly Hills after we've been to the Big Bash or a Swan's game, it brings back memories looking at the building of your flat and the many card nights we enjoyed there with Billy Belko and it's funny, but right now I can't even remember where I was living in those days (might have been Sans Souci) but I don't think owned a car.

Finally you might be interested to know that David and I are going to the Antarctic in January – flying into Santiago, then on to Puerto Natales in Chile and touring by car into Patagonia, before flying to King George Island and boarding a former Russian ice-breaker converted to a cruise ship with only 92 passengers, cruising the Antarctic for 12 days and returning via Falkland Islands to Argentina for the flight home from Santiago. All up it is 25 days and we'll be doing a bit of hiking and visiting a few wineries en route before and after the cruise. He wanted to go and says it is the only continent in the world he hasn't visited so he asked me if I'd like to go with him and he's paying. I guess I have done something right in my life having been blessed with a very close family (and a son who is very generous with his poor old dad). I'm very excited about it so if you've been to South America and have some pointers I'd be grateful for the heads-up.

Meanwhile old mate – stay healthy, happy and look after Cath. We've got a while to go yet you know and watch this space for updates.

PS – bit surprised I haven't heard anything from Harro. I don't have a 'phone number and I don't know where he lives these days – I do know he sold up at Epping a few years ago – I only have email so I hope all is well there.

JV

**Thursday, 7th June**

**From Trevor Porter to Robbo**

*Ah Robbo – you are a classic*

*Really look forward to catching up if it happens.*

*It is amazing to remember most of those names and even put a face to them (pretty sure they don't look like that anymore though)*

*There were some pretty good players who played on the Domain and it sure used to draw a crowd I know this because I played soccer on the adjacent field and pretty much no one watched us!!!!!! And even less watched the girls who played netball down there – although I think there might have been a bit of interest in the bodies on show.*

*RIP Paul Bentley (attended our wedding with Helen Richter) – great bloke and terrible tragedy. Clearly remember the day he “played” soccer for us due to a team shortage – unfortunately didn't last long on the field due to forgetting which game he was playing and tackled an opponent with one of the best shoulder charges seen in rugby league – Referee didn't have much hesitation in pointing to the sheds – team shortage maintained.*

*I recall the table tennis being very competitive in the new building on the lunch room floor One of the good players was ???????? Fitzgerald*

*Doug McLaughlin finished up managing the old Riverwood Legion Club many years ago when it was on struggle street and subsequently went into administration. now Club Rivers*

*Stay healthy guys*

*Cheers,*

**Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June**

Bugger Me, Trev.

I used to frequent the old Riverwood Services Club with my partner in crime, Billy Belko when I lived at Roselands (our house was built on the ninth green of where the old Roselands Golf Course once stood prior to the construction of Roselands Shopping Centre). Isn't it amazing that “Garbage” Doug McLaughlin ended up managing a Club as did Ron Macklin, both of them having been asked to resign from the State Public Service for getting their money mixed up with other people's – it is alleged....

JV mentioned our “unit” which was actually a house but we did play a lot of cards there in those days – he was correct on that one – & I also remember one very pissy night ( a very late one!) when I took Ray Robey & Greg Douglas home with me, my wife at the time, finding our intertwined bodies asleep together on the lounge room floor the next morning, not terribly impressed. Then again, JV might be recalling a unit in Croydon Park we were renting for six months before heading off to the UK in 1971 after selling the Karne St house. I was working in the Budget Branch of the Treasury at that time – JV was in Premiers & we did play a bit of cards at the unit as well. I do remember John (& his wife at the time, Robyn) as well as Bill & his wife, Lesley - to whom he is still very happily married, being at the International Terminal at Sydney Cove waving us off on the old P&O Liner, Himalaya. JV had the

strongest arm out of the entire group &, with an orange as weight, he chucked a long line of ladies' bras, all tied together onto the top deck of the ship & it was the very last "streamer" to snap.

Bill & I, on one particular occasion that I sort of remember ( Bro Bill reminds me of it often) when we drove home from the Riverwood Club in a similar state to the one above described only probably worse. The car was a little Datsun 1000 & I was gone, unable to steer, with Bill taking the wheel, my head on his lap, guiding him as to when he should apply the clutch because my job was changing gears (a manual floor change which he was "unfamiliar" with). Actually, neither of us was probably "familiar" with anything much at all on the day. We encountered a cop car on our journey & for some strange reason, allegedly, they gave chase. We, again allegedly, were zooming around corners on two wheels & must've totally confused them coz they never caught us.

I think that's pretty much Bill's story. I believe everything he tells me, & it's probably true!! In fact, I know it is!

I remember you playing soccer on the Dom with G Learmonth, Slasher Mackay, Calvin White, Shoulders & co. I used to go down & watch you guys when we didn't have a game on the same day, on the adjoining field. I also remember those bloody cold showers in the sheds which both sports had to share. Occasionally, there was a stream of warmer water – generally very generously supplied by Greg Douglas, Ray Robey or Chris Eyles, indicating that your time in the shower was up....

Yeah, Paul Bentley was a character. Fortunately we had him reasonably well insured as did Mick Dunn (he couldn't say "no" to old mates!) which, certainly lessened the financial pressure caused by his unexpected & tragic passing. Both Mick & I were at his funeral as was Norm Oakes, my former boss at the Treasury – by then, the Undersecretary.

The "Fitzgerald" was/ hopefully still is, Jimmy Fitz. He was also a top tennis player – lived with his folks in the street beside the Bennelong Hotel which JV referred to. He also played # one in the SDO Squash (seconds) team. I played at # two & the other three alternating members of our Final winning team of 1968 in the City Houses Squash Comp were JV, Denis Sullivan & Cec Newy. We knocked over the Stamps #ONE team in the Semi – they thought they were unbeatable – made up of Barry Davis, Mick Dunn, Les Keady & Terry (the Cue-Ball) Enman. Jim won his match against Barry; # 3 & 4 lost (I think Denis & Cec) & I had to beat Mick Dunn who had me down 2 sets to love until I had to revert to the school of dirty tricks, dropping the shoulder a few times & putting a couple of balls up his arse, finally scraping home in five sets. It was so close at the final tally, giving us the win by a slender points margin. Fabulous victory – I still remember it well.

Well, mate, I now know who/what the Barrington Group is & good to see that you are still involved in the broader Club industry, albeit now in a more specialised service providing adjunct to it . The Club game was always your perfect fit, suiting you down to the ground perfectly. I remember visiting you at Mascot RSL; an old former haunt of mine ( & Bill Belko's) in the mid sixties, St George Rugby Club; Kogarah Golf Club, of course where you & Pam were a great team as well as at Leonay. I missed your stint at Mollymook but maintained contact during that trying time. I hope you've allowed Pam to retire before you – it would only be proper so to do. Please pass on my good wishes to her.

No doubt, there will be more reminiscing to come before just what style of reunion(S) is/are decided upon.

For JV's interest, Eric Kime would probably be the best point of contact for particulars of the older old farts who might be still on the planet. Hollywood sent me a photo of the group at the last (I think) of the Hackers Golf days & Eric is pictured in it next to Barry Davis. Eric would have to be in his mid eighties, coz I seem to recall him being about 9/10 years my senior & I'm 75 next birthday (not quite as ancient



as Vinco). Eric was at the Budget Branch of Treasury when I moved there in 1969 – along with Brian Davis & Johnny Woodger. Eric was the senior member of that group – just before he became CEO of the City Markets Authority. J Woodger had a move to a senior financial post in Education & Brian Davis joined John Oliver (former head of Treasury, moved by Askin to run the Rural Bank) as his understudy. Unfortunately, that move didn't end well – Bank culture was much the same then as it seems to be today – Ken Race (also ex SDO) invited Brian to join him at Cullen Egan Dell where Ken was Human Resources Manager. That business was taken over by Noble Lowndes after which both boys were back in the jobs market. Ken ultimately moved into Academia & Brian bought an Accountancy practice at The Entrance, later expanding with a merger into another practice in Gosford, running two offices for a time. He's still operating in practice with a smaller client base, trading as Lakeside Accounting & Tax Services on Lake Macquarie. He's been up to visit us a couple of times over the last 7-8 years & I went down for his 70th birthday celebrations in 2011. He was the first guy I met at the 1959 SDO Christmas Party, introducing me to the demon drink & Craven A cork tips. He's got a lot to answer for but, despite all that, we've remained solid friends for all these years.

I've copied the three of them in on this email for their own versions of stories just in case I've romanticised a bit too much.

Keep fit & well, all of you.  
Until the next missive,  
Best Regards, Robbo.

**Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June**  
Giddy again Old Mate.

I've just copied you in on my response to TP with copies also to Billy Belko, Ken Race & Brian Davis.

The name of the later prominent Consorting Squad Detective & International Rugby League Ref was Kevin Roberts. I used to see a bit of him in the Members Bar at SCG &, on one occasion (he must've had a great memory for faces which, I suppose they're trained to do) he recognised my dial & confronted me with a threatening.... "I remember you, ya big c..t" to which I promptly replied... "That's very unkind &, at any rate, I've never ever really been all that big".... which seemed to break the ice a bit & we had a few laughs after that initial uncomfortable exchange (for me at any rate). He was a bit of a lair, I have to say. Remember him?

I'd forgotten that you had become a ticketed ref but seem to recall your mentioning it when we both had a brief stint in Freemasonry (or, at least, mine was brief). I can tell you all about that when we get together for those lovely schooners you mentioned. I remember that your late brother, Robert, was in the Craft long before us. Lawrie Pincott was in the same Lodge as Dad & I.

That game against the Coppers, the Ref was quite a biggish guy with gingery hair & I got him another time in a "friendly" for Treasury against the Audit Office.. I think it was 1973 after I'd returned from the UK. It was towards the end of that year that I joined the Tait Prudential Agency where John Edwards/"Sword" (ex Treasury & State Super Board) & Doug McLachlan/"Knackers" (also ex Treasury) were both agents. You might remember "Knackers" who played in the second row for Housing on the Dom - "Sword" played for Agriculture. We were all re-united in the Treasury teams for social games against Auditor Generals & Premiers. Anyway, if it was your mate who reffed our game against the Coppers, when I next met him in that "friendly", he sent me off for a stiff-arm tackle (which missed!).

The "Pam" I mentioned was married to Mal Blakely but, not for long! Wasn't he a talented footballer?

I remember Tiny Murtagh the former Balmain Strapper who brought Paul Broughton the Tigers coach at the time down to our final training session before the big game against the Coppers to give us a motivational boost & Ozzie Roper also came down to give us some scrummaging tips ( which were invaluable against a much bigger & heavier pack) despite his close working relationship with the ARU. Mate, they were great days , great times & great people.

The game against Housing you cited when Carrots scored all those tries, I could've been involved in. It was a common occurrence for him , scoring lots of tries, in that Housing side for which Fred Delaney was a recruiting agent when they couldn't get a team together from within their own ranks. He and I often pulled on a Housing or Education jumper when they were short – before Stamps started fielding a side of its own. Daffen used to have a run as well. You must've been playing for Public Trust or someone else at that stage, against Big Bobby. I used to love having him running off me at dummy half – he was very hard to stop at pace.

I'll get back to you re your Antarctic adventure & extension in Sth America. We took a cruise to the Antarctic in 2002 just after I retired, out of Stanley in the Falklands following, in reverse, the amazing journey of Sir Ernest Shackleton in 1917 after his ship the "Endurance" became stuck & later disintegrated & sank in pack-ice. He's buried on the island of South Georgia which I hope you'll be visiting – amazing wildlife – at a place called Grytviken. We finished up in the Patagonia National Park & then travelled through Sth America for another few weeks. We had a later trip to Sth America to visit those countries we missed the first time around, notably Ecuador & the incredible Galapagos Islands.

I do have Harro's new address & will forward it on to you. He & Marg have also visited us in Eumundi, Centre of the Universe, 4562 & we keep in touch, these days, with exchanges of Xmas cards & newsletters mainly about our kids & grandchildren.

All the Best until our next exchange,  
Robbo.

#### **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June**

Robbo – I remember the squash final well and how upset the 'stars' were when they got rolled, but I'm vague on who actually played as Cec, Denis and I shared the 3 & 4 spots all comp.

I'm beginning to wonder if I should meet up with you again – I'm not sure I want to be reminded about some of our activities in case my family discover what their conservative old father/grandpa was like in his youth. You might destroy the upstanding and wise image I've carefully created for them over the past few years.

Seriously though if nothing ever comes of the re-union idea, it has been worth the effort so far just for me just for the names and memories the emails have evoked. I'm sure it has had a similar effect on Lyall and Trevor and it would be a pity if somehow we can't generate a similar feeling of reminisce in some others.

Eric Kime was on the original list but he hasn't responded yet. Some others who haven't responded yet have surprised me a bit – such as Harro, Bruce Buchanan, Gerald Simpson, Knose Collins in particular but I expect we will hear from them soon.

JV

#### **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June**

Mate, They're probably all long retired – I know Donk is, down in the Southern Highlands, somewhere & Harro certainly is. His new address is .... xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. I'm sure Hollywood would know of Bruce's location.

For a lot of retirees, every day's a Saturday or a Tuesday, if you prefer- you can choose whatever day you want it to be – so a number of those you've contacted could be away travelling or doing other things.

We're about to head off to Clifton Beach, between Cairns & Port Douglas for the rest of June after watching the Wallabies V Ireland in the first test at Suncorp in BrisVegas this weekend. Too bloody cold for us now in the Noosa Hinterland in our "fierce" winters.... ( nothing like Goulburn or Gundagai though! )

I promise I won't reveal any embarrassing moments to your kids in the event that we manage a get-together (& we really should commit to doing so in one form or another) – provided that you give the same undertaking to me. I don't know who would have the more shit on the other – perhaps if we both remained quiet or, at least with very selective memories should we ultimately have exposure to each other's children/grandkids, eh??

Me likewise with the excitement of reminiscing over great times long past when we still celebrated Cracker night & all those wonderful things. As Trevor has suggested ( with tongue in cheek, perhaps? ), there's nearly enough material so far disclosed that publishing rights might well be an option down the track for Wobbo One & Two. Dennis Priestly who used to play for Water Board & is now a drinking buddy of son, Andrew @ the Collaroy Beach Club & Manly Leagues, last year sent me some ancient copies of the Weekly mag to which both you & I ( & sometimes Denis S ) contributed unbiased pars over the years. It was fun reading them but I chucked 'em out when I'd finished. He didn't want them back.

Good luck with your future searching & if you want a hand, at all, I'd be happy to become more involved. I think a reunion(s) is a great idea.

Cheers until the next missive. I can hear Trevor sighing at that statement...

Cheers for now,

WayneR (Robbo/Wobbo/ Windy). That last moniker, by the way was conferred by Fred Delaney – short for Lord Windesmeare – the very same man who christened Bruce "Donk". Billy Belko recently saw Anne, Fred's wife & a couple of their very grown up kids who revealed that poor old Fred is not in a good way, health wise, at all.

#### **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June**

Kevin Roberts – I certainly do remember him and a lair was an appropriate description.

My stint with Freemasonry didn't last much longer than yours – only about 4 or 5 years I think. My involvement with Liz wasn't approved and I had lost interest in it a bit anyway so I gave it away.

Now that I think about it that game against Housing might have been before Stamps when I was playing for Education (for quite a few years actually) when Bob Gray was coaching them and Angelo Sirrio was my 2<sup>nd</sup> row partner. I still see Tony Kelly from those days pretty regularly as he moved to Picton 20 years ago and plays golf at the same club I do.

'Pam' was Pam Duggan and she is on the list – not sure Mal would want to catch up there but you never know.  
JV

#### **Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> June**

Yeah – I remember Bob Gray – almost a Fred Delaney lookalike. When they were short on numbers, Fred used to ask Arthur Robert Carrington & James Wayne Robinson to fill in on occasions which we did. That was before you Joined us in Phillip Street.

I also remember Angelo Sirio. I'd much prefer to be playing with him than against him. Apart from Kevin Ryan, he had the biggest pair of thighs I can remember ever trying to get my arms around. Don't recall Tony Kelly. What position did he play? I do remember the big prop also from Norths where Angelo played – one of the McKinnon brothers, I think Doug? The few games I played with Edja was on the other side of the front row to him – they had a regular Hooker who seemed to turn up almost every game – dark headed bloke -can't remember his name either but I'd remember his face if I saw it again.

I'm pretty sure you're right about Mal & a possible reunion with Pam but, who knows? She was a lovely Blonde girl from my recollection. I assume that they must've had at least a reasonable working arrangement after their separation coz Mal used to see a lot of his son with whom I played in a foursome on my last appearance with the Hackers at Carnarvon with Harro & Bro Bill Belkovskis. That would've been 2007 or 2008, the last game of golf I played after my lower spinal surgery in 2006. Two knee replacements followed & no more golf since. I did play in a charity day once thereafter & an old mate from Townsville was MC at the function afterwards giving smart arse awards to all of the attendees. When he came to my turn, he placed his hands on my shoulders with the comment.... "Robbo, I've found a way for you to make some money out of this game of golf – Sell your clubs, mate, sell your clubs". I've still got 'em but haven't played since!

All the Best.  
Keep in touch,

**Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June**

Sorry JV, Trevor & Hollywood.

We're currently enjoying constant Summer weather @ Clifton Beach, north of Cairns. Too bloody cold in them hinterland hills of Eumundi in Winter, so we head north.

Won't be able to join you on 31/07. Hope you get a decent roll- up of Sydney &/or nearby residents & look forward to hearing of the outcome of further discussion.

I'd certainly like to be involved in whatever type/ format of reunion might be decided upon.

Cheers for now,  
Robbo.

**Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> June**

Wobbo – how soft have you become?

The boy from breezy Goulburn feeling the cold in Eumundi? 'Storky' (in the Penrith area) and me (in Picton) find it hard to believe you even know what 'cold' is.

Anyway enjoy your winter retreat and watch the emails for developments.

Regards old mate .....

BTW – before I forget; apparently Harro and Marg are doing it tough. Harro hasn't replied to any of the emails but Geoff Williams told us that Marg is unwell with Super Nuclear Parkinsons and is subject to falling down which she did recently and broke her shoulder. Harro is on full-time care duty and needs to be with Marg pretty much 24/7. I guess that us why he hasn't been in touch yet.

JV

## **Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July**

That really is so sad to hear about poor Marg & Harro who now appears to be fully occupied.

I'll send them a card as soon as we get home.

Mate, I might've gone soft after 32 years living on the Sunshine Coast but I'll never forget how bloody cold Goulburn is – especially riding the pushbike to school on those Winter mornings when all the puddles are iced over.

I'll keep in touch.

Cheers,  
WR

## **Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> July**

Wow... what a great turnout for your 'tester' on 31 July. Say giddyay to those I know/knew & pass on special regards to Shoulders; little David Greig; Denis, of course (he told me that he & Anna had sold their house at Glebe & were hitting the road – we're still waiting for their visit); Ernie; Pymble; another 'of course' – Casey (last saw him at a show at the Capitol Theatre with Helen a few years ago); Floody & Phil Bennett. Tell Robey that his old mate, Greg Rogers is now living up here & his younger daughter, Lana (a member of Noosa Surf Club) has recently been crowned Open Iron Woman at the Australian championships, followed up by a win for the Australian Women's Lifesaving team (of which she is a member) at the Sanyo International meet in Japan. Following in her old man's footsteps. Greg was a client of ours in Sydney & we still maintain contact. I still remember one day when Ray & I went to a mid week RL game at the SCG (both full of ink) & he chopped my legs off with a perfectly executed tackle as we struggled our way to the ground from the Bat & Ball. Another occasion when he, myself & Greg Douglas (again full of ink) were found asleep huddled together on the lounge room floor at the old house you'll remember well at Roselands by my wife at the time, Shirley.... No wonder the marriage ended in disaster!! I ended up with the better end of the deal, however – she got the house (by then, at Lane Cove) & I got the boys. You'll remember Andy at my surprise 60th at his place at Forestville at which Pete was also present together with Cath's two we've had together since. We racked up 40 years this year & she's still putting up with me.

All the best for a great re-connection on the 31st to you, Hollywood & Trevor – all of you doing a top job on this cause. Fabulous!

The news of this planned reunion has spread far & wide (as has the 150th anniversary of Bourke Street Public School where I was School Captain & Prime Minister of the School Parliament in 1955). I will be attending that one, despite the cold, but alone!

I had a call from an old mate (who used to work with Billy Belko many years ago) who now lives on the golf course at Mollymook (move there, I think after Trevor's engagement there) Ken Thorne who played rugby for St George & squash with Bill & I at Ken Kearney & Ken Charlton's courts on Canterbury Road (Frank Simonsen made quite a few appearances there as well – have you heard any news of him, at all?)

A wee bit rambling, I know, but the memories just keep flooding back.

I'll definitely be at the major event whenever time & place has been determined – unless, of course, we're away travelling somewhere.

All fit & well here – hope the same goes for you guys & yours.  
Cheers, Robbo.

## Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> July

Aah Robbo your ramblings are a highlight and nobody else has come even close to dredging such minutia – you manage to remind me of the many little things I've long since shoved so deep into the memory bank that they would probably never have resurfaced without your emails but please keep them coming. No doubt we will recall many more such wasted times when we eventually get together.

Sorry to have to tell you that Franky Simonsen is no longer with us – don't know when that happened but we're reliably informed it is so. Unfortunately my sharpest memory of Frankie isn't such a pleasant one – we went through a whole cricket season unbeaten one year to win the Minor Premiership by about 10 points and were unbackable for the final against Housing (I think) only to drop 11 catches of which the usually very safe hands of Frankie dropped two sitters in short mid-off. I remember it so well because we racked up a really good total and virtually gave them 2 innings to catch us. We were totally devastated and so was Frank although it clearly wasn't entirely his fault. Funnily enough I can't remember who else dropped catches that day but, for the record, I'll say I didn't drop any!!!

We're flying totally blind in this exercise (both for Tuesday) and the larger event and any suggestions you can offer would be appreciated. It seems memorabilia is pretty scarce and, except for a couple of old photo's and the seniority list Dick Wilson produced, we have very little in the way of physical mementos from that period, but your emails would be of interest to many I'm sure so, with your permission, I'll take copy of them with me on Tuesday if only to generate some discussion. OK by you?

And of course I remember your 60<sup>th</sup> – pretty sure that was the last time I saw you and Cath despite unsuccessfully trying to find you in Eumundi in 2009 just after Liz died. I think I'm about 18 months older than you aren't I? I'll be 77 in September.

I'm quite excited about Tuesday and catching up with old mates from 45/50 years ago and hoping not to embarrass myself by not recognising them. Then again they probably won't recognise this totally white haired, clean shaven old bloke – looks nothing like the thin, curly black hair and moustachioed guy from those days.

Sure hope you can make it for the bigger day. Regards to Cath!

JV

## Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> July

Hey Winco (remember who used to call you that? The inimitable Swinburne Piers Foenander Herft) – tomorrow's the big day. Hope it all goes well.

Mate, I have no problem with your using any of my ramblings – I hope they won't put too many to sleep.

I've remembered another couple of names, in case they've not been mentioned by others previously – Graeme Postlethwaite & Jeff Falconer &, do you remember the little chubby bloke who was also a St John's Ambo who worked in the office & used to run up & down the sideline on the Dom? I think his name was Kevin Ballard or something similar.

Cheers & have a great day tomorrow.

Robbo.

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