

DAYS GONE BY

INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

 *MercyCare*



JOHN XXIII
COLLEGE
SEEK JUSTICE

DAYS GONE BY

CONTENTS



Mercy Village Wembley

Stories from MercyCare Residents	Page
Val Carter	3
Marjorie Coleman	5
Lorraine Dibden	7
Marilena Green	9
Ken Metcalf	11
Roseanne Moylan	13
Jeanne Powell	15
Barbara Quinn	17

DAYS GONE BY

INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

This Intergenerational Project was coordinated by Daisy Farley (Magis Gifted and Talented Coordinator at John XXIII College) and Michelle Smith (Mercy Village Manager, Aged Care Services).

Students from John XXIII College's Magis Gifted and Talented Program interviewed residents from Mercy Village Wembley. This book, titled Days Gone By, features articles written by students. These students range from Years 7 to 9. The interviews were conducted at Mercy Village Wembley in November 2022. Students and residents conversed over tea and scones – sharing memories, telling stories, and connecting on a personal level.

This Intergenerational Project has afforded both students and residents the opportunity to connect and share in conversation. Students have also been able to develop written and oral skills, but particularly grow in maturity and understanding of life experiences.

"One should never underestimate the power of story", said Project Coordinator, Daisy Farley. "It has been an enriching and rewarding experience for all involved...The students are very grateful for the friendship and openness of the residents...These stories have provided an incredible insight into the past – and should be cherished".

We hope you enjoy this memories book.

Acknowledgements

MercyCare: Michelle Smith and Oscar Devereaux

John XXIII College: Daisy Farley, Brianna Gray, and Lisa Martella

MercyCare Residents	Interviewed and written by John XXIII College Students
Val Carter	Aditi Nguyen
Marjorie Coleman	Grace Nicol
Lorraine Dibden	Noa Mintz
Marilena Green	Charlotte Foot & Rosabelle Taylor
Ken Metcalf	Catherine Gazia
Roseanne Moylan	Charlie Pronk
Jeanne Powell	Isabelle Greenwood Hayes
Barbara Quinn	Imogen Thompson

DAYS GONE BY

VAL CARTER

When I talked to Val, I was very intrigued to learn that she lived on a farm and was a farmer her whole life. As someone who has stayed in a semi-rural area but now lives in suburbia, I wanted to know what life on a farm was like...

Val told me that she lived with her three brothers Merv, Max and Ken, along with her parents in a place in Western Australia called Meckering. After I got home that night, I got a map out to look see where Meckering was located. Val said that her family farmed in Badgingarra. That she spent her days riding horses and carriages, sitting on tractors and helping out with daily farm jobs, such as making sheaves of hay into shocks so they would dry better. As someone who has been to private schools her whole life, I was interested to hear about Val's school experience. Val explained that at this time it was thought that farm girls wouldn't need much of an education because they would marry another farmer, so I'm glad things have changed in that department!

At her first school, in North Meckering, there were only 14 children in the whole school. I was shocked when Val told me this. There were 18 children in my Year 6 class, and I thought that was small! When her school closed down when she was 10, she had a chance to go to a bigger school, before going to boarding school at St Joseph's College, Fremantle in 1948. I have heard many myths and stereotypes about boarding schools so I was happy to hear that she enjoyed this experience and made many friends there, some she still treasures to this day.

In 1955, Val moved to Four Corners, a 3600 acre farm in the Shire of Dandaragan. She and her childhood friend, Ron, transformed the property from acres of bush to a farm and a cosy homestead where they could live together. A year later, on the 4th of February 1956, she and Ron were married at St Patrick's Church.

A topic I really enjoyed talking with Val about was music. She learnt to folk-dance and ballroom-dance at a young age from Ron's Aunt, Miss Carter, who was their teacher. Miss Carter also taught her and her brother Merv to play the piano. Her other brother Max learned the violin, whilst her brother Ken learned the cornet and the saxophone. Val said that she and her siblings would spend many evenings practicing and learning new songs to play together. They would purchase sheet music that they liked from the local newsagency. Similarly, I play the piano, and my brother plays a lot of instruments. We regularly download sheet music off the internet. I thought it was interesting how our childhoods were similar in this respect. We both agreed that music is a beautiful thing, and I'm glad we had a common interest we could talk about.

Val gave me a copy of her biographical novel, *A Piece Of Good Land*, and signed it for me so I could keep it - which I thought was incredibly kind of her. The title comes from the farm Four Corners, where she transformed the land with her husband. It was lovely to read and look over the pictures and a few passages together. I have continued to read her book, a couple of pages each night. I have enjoyed learning about the significant people in Val's life, her adventures and what eventually led her to move to Perth. **Aditi Nguyen (Year 9)**



DAYS GONE BY

VAL CARTER



DAYS GONE BY

MAJORIE COLEMAN

With a keen eye and a sharp mind, one would never think that Marjorie Coleman would be turning 95 in January. Energetic, humorous, with a zest for life - Marjorie spoke with passion about her life experiences, and how, despite being on this Earth for so long, there was still so much she wants to do.

Her creative talent shines through in the work that she shows me. Marjorie is a renowned textile artist. She has published three books and completed hundreds of art pieces, and her work is displayed in many venues.

Born in 1928, just outside of Albany, Marjorie was a shy girl growing up. She spent most of her life as an only child. Her first years of education were completed by correspondence, with help from her mother. Her mother, who was of English descent, pressed the importance of good manners and that children should be seen and not heard. Marjorie talked about her regrets when it came to the relationship she had with her mother - they were not close, and she felt like she never fully appreciated just how hard things were for mother. Her father wasn't around much. He was a gunman surveyor who had fought at Gallipoli.

When she her family moved to Perth, Marjorie attended a local state school, before completing her studies at Perth Ladies College. She studied at University, which was rare for women to do at that time, and received a Degree in Psychology, Arts, Philosophy, and French, before doing a separate Honors Degree. Marjorie went on to become a government psychologist, at a time when it was less common to be so. She would go to schools, supporting students who were struggling – often receiving stares and comments from people, who would question the purpose of her being there. It's interesting when she tells me this, as psychologists are the norm in schools today. Whilst she was good at her job, she felt like it never quite suited her.

After marrying her husband Patrick, Marjorie happily quit her job and moved to Queensland – where her husband worked as a geologist. They spent a few years in Queensland, before moving to America - where they lived in places including New York, Louisiana, Hawaii, and Texas.

One of her most prominent memories from her time in America was the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. She recalls vividly that she and her children were watching the news, when suddenly it was announced that President Kennedy had been shot...then a couple of minutes later, that he had been taken to hospital. *"I'll never forget when they finally announced it...President Kennedy has died".*

After spending eight or so years in America, Marjorie moved back to Australia. They continued to travel, before finally settling in Perth with her husband and five children. Marjorie sent her children to Saint Louis all-boys school, and the female counterpart, Loreto School for Girls – both schools would later form John XXIII College – the school I attend.

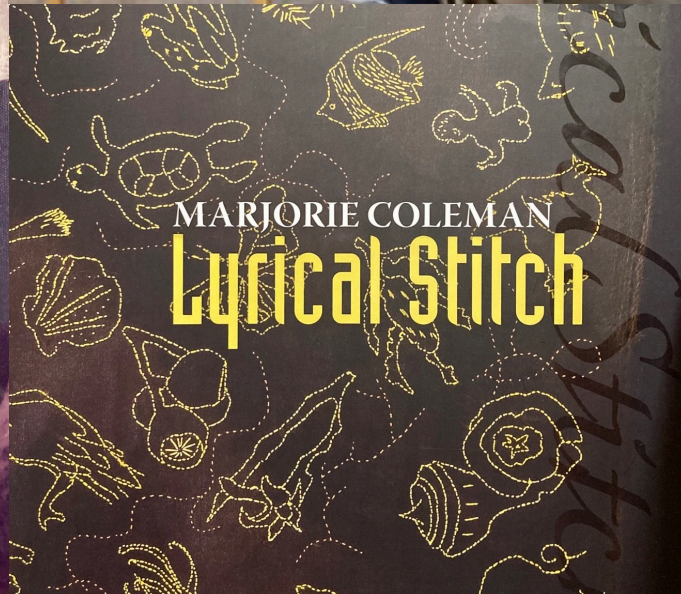
Marjorie tells me about the time she met Max Dupain – who was Australia's most respected and influential black and white photographer of the 20th century. Dupain asked her husband for a favor if he could check the ground around his property as to whether it was suitable to build a swimming pool. Once the work was complete, Patrick refused to take any money for it, so instead, Max took a picture of their children for them! After my meeting with Marjorie, I looked up Dupain's work – and the images are iconic.

I feel that I learnt so much talking with Marjorie – and I am so grateful to have been able to meet such an extraordinary person.

Grace Nicol (Year 8)

DAYS GONE BY

MAJORIE COLEMAN



DAYS GONE BY

LORRAINE DIBDEN

As soon as we entered Mercy Care Community Centre, I was delighted to find that I was, once again, talking to Lorraine Dibden, who I had interviewed the previous year. It allowed us the opportunity to get to know each other a little better.

Something that we didn't discuss the last we met, was that Lorraine moved into Mercy Care Village when it was only 10 months old and much of it was still being built. Our school is currently undergoing many renovations – so we laughed and shared stories about living on a building site. We discovered that we had both lived in Wembley Downs. And whilst we both enjoy/enjoyed school – we excel/excelled in different subjects. According to Lorraine, she is very much a math brain, while I prefer English and the Arts.

Lorraine said that she had initially wanted to be a physiotherapist when she grew up, but the nuns at her school wouldn't allow her to study the required subjects. Even though she had a scholarship for Science to UWA. I asked her if she regretted this, but she replied, *"Things change."* This is something I really admire about Lorraine – how she accepts when things are not meant to be and moves on. She ended up becoming a flight attendant and then later, a nurse. Lorraine had to quit nursing after a few years because of an injury. She told me that in her day, you didn't go to university for a degree in nursing, rather you did a course within the hospital. She enjoyed her time as a flight attendant, as it afforded her the opportunity to travel and see the world.

We giggled over our tea and scones talking about boys. Lorraine told me that, as a teenager, she would go with her girlfriends to Cottesloe beach on a Sunday and chat up the boys from Hale School. *"The only way the female students could talk to the boys, was to hang over the fence while the nuns were at Chapel...or to go to places where boys would typically hang out"*. She remembers her first boyfriend fondly: *"He was from Hale School"* she says with a smile *"and I was sixteen"*.

Lorraine showed me a lovely picture of her in the old school uniform. A grey dress with a blazer in the winter and stiff hats. Lorraine told me that the nuns were very particular about making sure the students wore their hat, as well as their grey gloves.

Lorraine updated me on what her family are up to. She said that her son visits her regularly for a meal and a chat. Lorraine pressed upon the importance of family - having a relationship with your children. *"I am very lucky to have such lovely children,"* she said. And whilst family is important *"don't be afraid to love your job too... you've gotta find something that you like and you're good at...otherwise life is a slog"*. We laugh – and she finishes the conversation by saying *"Life has a funny way of working itself out – just go with it"*. I'm instantly moved by her wise words.

I truly admire Lorraine and loved listening to her stories. Before we left, we took a group photo, and Lorraine got down on her hands and knees, to crouch in the front row. Age is but a number.

Noa Mintz (Year 8)



DAYS GONE BY

LORRAINE DIBDEN



DAYS GONE BY

MARILENA GREEN

Charlotte and I had a wonderful time, sitting down and sharing conversation over scones and tea with Mercy Care resident Marilena, or Meg as she is affectionately called. *“Call me Meg because it is easier to spell and understand”*. Her stories were incredible - and we couldn't get over how much we had in common.

Meg was very fun to talk to and had some interesting stories. She told us about her childhood in Italy – growing up in a small village in the Alps. In Italy, she attended primary school between 8am and 1pm, and then went home for lunch. I can't imagine going home in the middle of the day! In winter, they would have snowball fights, and the boys would make especially hard snowballs and throw them at the girls they liked. At school Meg enjoyed the arts and she sang in the school choir. She said that she would have liked to have learnt the piano, but she never got around to it. Music though runs in the family, with Meg's dad having played trumpet in the town band. Many years later, in memory of her father, Meg's family sent his trumpet back to her old hometown in Italy so the town band could continue to use it. Which is such a lovely way to be remembered.

Meg finished primary school in Italy, and when she was 12, before she started high school, she and her family travelled to Australia. She travelled to Australia by boat, and it took 30 days! Meg said that she thoroughly enjoyed the boat trip and that it is one of her favourite memories from her childhood.

When she arrived in Perth, she didn't speak English, but she quickly learnt the new language. She told us that the transition from Italy to Australia wasn't that hard for her because *“you either sink or swim. As a child, most swim”*. In 1954, Meg's father built a house out of stone which was very out of the ordinary for Australia. The local authorities offered to have the house heritage listed, but the family kindly declined as they didn't want to be restricted to keeping the house exactly as it was.

As a child she said that she wanted to be an air hostess because she thought it was a glamorous job to have, but she ended up being a social worker.

As a teenager, Meg liked to play netball and loved fish and chips. In fact, she still loves fish and chips to this day.

Meg had a dog called Nero who she adored. He was named Nero as he was black, and Nero is 'black' in Italian. Nero would always tug at her sleeves whenever she got back from school.

Meg has travelled a lot, both around Australia and overseas; and lived in Europe for four years for work. She has travelled all around the north coast of Australia and is going on a cruise around the south coast next holidays.

Meg has two grown up children, Catherine and Peter, who now have children of their own. She said that when it came to naming her children she decided to go with traditional family names. Catherine was named after Meg's husband's grandmother, whilst Peter was named after her father – the trumpeter.

Today, Meg loves sewing, craft activities and talking to people in wheelchairs- which is wonderful.

As we were departing, Meg gave us some wise advice *“back”*. Thank you, Marilena.

Charlotte Foot & Rosabelle Taylor (Year 7)



DAYS GONE BY

MARILENA GREEN



DAYS GONE BY

KEN METCALF

Ken Metcalf is a man who has lived a life with a legacy of success, surrounded by the ever-growing family he loves. With five children, fourteen grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, his family certainly isn't small. But where did it all start?

Ken was born in 1941 in Perth, Western Australia, which is also where he spent most of his early years. Ken went to St Bridget's Primary School, where he did well in his studies, with his favourite subjects being English and Maths. As a child Ken liked to read, going through multiple books each week! When he wasn't reading, Ken could be found singing in St Mary's Cathedral Choir, which taught him discipline and time management skills he would use later on in life. However, once he got to high school at Christian Brothers College (CBC), Ken says he was *"misdirected to sports, and his grades slipped"* – he tells me this with a cheeky smile.

When I asked Ken what advice he would give to his younger self, he replied "to concentrate more on my studies of course!" He added that there are certain things you learn in school that you don't learn anywhere else and that doing well in school can open many more future opportunities.

Despite feeling like he may have missed out on some opportunities by not focusing enough on his studies, Ken has had no lack of success in his career. After leaving high school, Ken got a job at the Postmaster General's Department (PMG). *"It was 1956 and I was just starting out...it's known as Telstra today"*. In 1968, at 27 years old, he got accepted into a training program in Ballarat, where he took tech classes. When he moved to Ballarat with his wife, Val, he had one child. But by the time he moved back to Perth in 1977, to visit his wife's father, who was sick at the time, his family had grown to five children!

He later worked for AMP and retired at the age of fifty-five.

Not only did Ken have success in his career, but also in his family. I loved the story Ken told me about meeting his wife Val. They met on a Wednesday, on the steps of St Joseph's Church. They went out that night for the first time, and again on the Saturday. He proposed on their second date, and she said yes! When I asked Ken to describe her, he said: *"she's bubbly, bright, happy...she makes everyone feel welcome...she makes you feel at home"*. He said he always feels better when he is with her. Ken married Val in 1965, at the age of twenty-three. This year is their 58th wedding anniversary. Ken regards his family as his greatest achievement – and I'm instantly moved by his words.

I asked Ken what he thinks has changed the most about Perth today, compared to when he was growing up, and he replied that it no longer feels safe. He told me that when he was around eight years old, he would be able to catch the bus and a tram to school all by himself, with no issue whatsoever. He even said that his father would leave the car unlocked when he left it with no issues, which nowadays would be out of the question.

At eighty-one years old, Ken has lived a life full of success, both in the workplace and in his family. He has lived a life that anyone today can only aspire to, and I am tremendously grateful for the time I spent talking to him.

Catherine Gazia (Year 8)



DAYS GONE BY

KEN METCALF



DAYS GONE BY

ROSEANNE MOYLAN

Roseanne was born in Perth, in 1938 into a large family of five brothers and three sisters. Her mother was married twice, and had her first two children, a son and a daughter, before her first husband passed away. She then married William Broderick, Roseanne's father, and had six more children, including Roseanne. She was named Roseanne - Rose after her grandmother and Anne after her mother.

Roseanne grew up in Perth and attended St Brigid's day school in West Perth and then boarded at St Brigid's in Lesmurdie for a while but hated it, so her parents took her out. As a child, she was given the nickname Sally by one of her older cousins. I asked her why, and she said *"Because he thought that Roseanne was a funny name and that Sally was better"*. She paused and then added *"He used to tease me and say that Sally was a name for orphans!"* - she laughs as she says this.

Being the seventh of eight children, Roseanne said that she used to do everything her brothers did, like climbing trees. Once she fell out of a tree and broke her arm.

In her local Parish when she was growing up, they used to have what they called a May Procession, that was held in May and dedicated to Our Lady. Each year they would choose a Queen of the Procession, and when Roseanne was in Year 6, she was chosen to be the Queen. She said that she had to wear a tiara and a long dress with a train, and her younger brother, who was also in the procession, had to wear satin shorts, a shirt, and a cape with blue lining. They had a bank of flowers at the front of the church, and on the alter - and a statue of Our Lady. As the Queen, Roseanne had to climb a ladder behind all the flowers and put a crown on Mary whilst they played the song *'I crown you blessed Mary'*.

Roseanne learnt French and Latin at school - and she tells me that she still uses her Latin today to work out the meaning and roots of English words. She completed Year 12, but in stark contrast to today, there was only her and one other girl, who graduated. The rest of her class were boys. She tells me, *"In my day, many girls didn't go through to Year 12 - instead they left school to become hairdressers, secretaries, or florists...And if they did complete school, they would usually become a teacher or a nurse"*. Roseanne became a teacher and taught in infant teaching. She was sent to a two-teacher school in Forrestfield - she taught the students up to Year 3 and the only other teacher there, the Headmaster, taught from Year 4 to Year 7. It's hard to imagine a school where there are only two teachers - in contrast, I have a different teacher for each subject. Roseanne went on to do some more study and later became a School Councillor.

Roseanne met her husband in 1963. She was the President of a youth movement called the Youth Christian Workers (YCW) - which still exists today. When she was about twenty, they asked her to go to the national office where she was made the National President. As part of that job, she got to travel around Australia. Originally, the girls and boys were in one group, but as the boys used to dominate these sessions, they decided to separate into two groups. Roseanne was the President of the girls, and her husband was the Secretary of the boys.

Roseanne laughs when she tells me that didn't like her husband, Brian, when she first met him and swore that she would never marry any of the boys in her youth movement. About two years into her time in Melbourne, they were both invited to attend a party. At the time, she was living at her Aunt and Uncle. On the night of the party, the weather was dreadful, so her Aunt and Uncle didn't want her to go. She said told them that she'd only go for two hours and be home around ten. The party was held in an old flat in a place called Morvin and there was an undertaker's place on the bottom floor. The undertakers was new, so there were no bodies. but the man who owned it told Roseanne and the others at the party to go down and see the coffins. They all went down there but then there was a blackout, and all the lights went out. So they went back upstairs into the flat and waited until the lights came back on. When it was time to leave, Roseanne got a lift home with a young, engaged couple...and Brian was also in the car. When they got back to her Aunt and Uncle's house, which was a little place with the gate quite close to the building, Brian got out of the car to walk her in. In her hurry to get away from

DAYS GONE BY

ROSEANNE MOYLAN

him, Roseanne slammed his hand in the gate. *"He still talks about his broken fingers today"*, Roseanne says with a smile. It would be another three or four months before Brian finally asked her out.

They got married in 1966. For her wedding, she wore a suit – a jacket, skirt, and veil, and then going away she took her veil off and changed into a shorter skirt in the same material. She also wore a big hat with a wide brim, like a Panama hat, but it was orange with ruffles and little flowers on it. I thought this sounded very progressive for the time.

Roseanne said that they had initially decided to move to Adelaide, where Brian's family is from, for one year...but they ended up staying for thirty. Roseanne and Brian had two children, Daniel, who is now 55, and Naomi, who is 52. They both have two boys each, so she has four grandsons that she adores. She tells me that she initially wanted to call her son Simon, but her husband said that he would get teased and called Simple Simon, so they argued about it and then landed upon on the name Daniel. Similarly, she thought at first to call her daughter Mia, but thought the name sounded a bit silly with their last name, so that's why she decided on the name Naomi.

After her children had finished school, Roseanne went back to teaching and counselling at Mercedes School in Adelaide. Her husband was on a counsel that had to send a representative to the Vatican, and he was chosen to represent Australia. On one occasion, Roseanne met the Pope. Her family had been invited to a special mass at the Vatican. Roseanne and Naomi, who was only around thirteen at the time, were moved to the front of the Chapel because they were the shortest. And that is how she found herself kneeling next to Pope John XXIII. I'm amazed when she tells me this story, after all, my school is named after this Pope.

Roseanne has travelled extensively. Being first generation Australian, her family background is Irish, so she likes travelling to Ireland and then to England. She also loved travelling throughout Italy and France and has also visited Spain and Germany. She loves Italian food, it's her favourite, particularly pasta, gelato, and Italian cakes. She likes soccer and meeting new people, and prides herself on being talkative and friendly.

I asked her if she had any advice for me, she said: *"Believe in yourself...be sure to do what you want to do, not because others tell you to do so...Stand up for yourself, be kind to everyone, and don't let those boys push you around."* **Charlie Pronk (Year 8)**



DAYS GONE BY

JEANNE POWELL

Jeanne greets me with a kind smile...a smile that remains in place throughout our conversation – and it is a smile that perfectly summarises her personality: friendly, generous, kind – a real lady.

Jeanne starts our conversation by telling me about her childhood - growing up on a farm in rural England. She was born in the family home, and just after her birth, her brother was allowed into her mother's bedroom to meet the newest addition to the family. When he entered the room, he remarked how much she looked like his sister's doll Gina – and so Jeanne became affectionately known as Gina.

As a child, Jeanne enjoyed playing in the garden and picking wild raspberries near a beck (a small stream). Growing up on a farm, Jeanne was surrounded animals, but she knew never to get too attached to them like one would be to a pet, though she did enjoy playing with the working dogs.

Jeanne was a teenager when World War II broke out. At around 15 years of age, her family moved house. The new house was very large but run down – as it hadn't been inhabited for many years. There were twelve bedrooms, all of which were dirty and in desperate need of cleaning. Jeanne recalls scrubbing the walls by hand. For a time after the war, due to the large numbers of soldiers returning from service, housing became a significant issue in England. Jeanne's family offered lodging to returning soldiers, and the rooms were so sought after that as one room became vacant, it was filled by another soldier. "There were many people who passed through that large house", Jeanne remarked. *"At one time, there were eleven people living in that big old house"*. Jeanne's sister lived there for a time, with her husband and two children. Just after the birth of her sister's second child, a young couple began lodging at the house. They took the smallest room, which was downstairs, but was often the warmest room due to the large fireplace. At some point, two young men moved in. Jeanne would often converse with one of them as they passed each other in the hallway. But as often was the case, lodgers came and went. They're paths though crossed again, a few years later and that young man, who had at a time had lodged at Jeanne's family home, became her husband. It was such a lovely story – in a word: serendipity.

Jeanne and her husband made the long journey by ship – to begin their married life in Australia. They disembarked at Fremantle and took a taxi to Perth. Jeanne instructed the driver to take 'the scenic route'. This meant they drove through Alfred Cove, and Applecross. Jeanne remembers vividly seeing the beauty of the river as they drove past for the first time – and often remembers this first moment when she drives past this river.

Jeanne lived in Perth for a few years until her husband was offered a job, which saw the young family (3 children) move to Christmas Island. Christmas Island was mainly a mining island. There were around 3,000 inhabitants with many of the employees coming from China, India, and Europe. Jeanne and her family lived in a section of the Island which housed the officials. When I asked Jeanne what it was like living on Christmas Island, she pulled out a photo album and showed me pictures of island life. As I looked through, she would point out some of the images. One of the pages contained exquisite photographs of birds flying over the water. Other images showed the natural flora. Images of a beautiful life – people smiling; lying in the sun; a very happy family.

We talked for a little longer - she told me about her grandchildren and that she cooks a fantastic apple pie! Before I left, I asked her if she had any advice for younger generations. Jeanne paused for a few moments and then said: *"Treat others as you would like to be treated. That is the secret to a good life"*. I am so very grateful to have crossed paths with Jeanne.

Isabelle Greenwood Hayes (Year 8)

DAYS GONE BY

JEANNE POWELL



DAYS GONE BY

BARBARA QUINN

I will admit, I felt a little nervous when I first sat down with Barbara, but as soon as she started to tell her story, I felt nothing but kindness and warmth coming from her – and I was instantly at ease.

Barbara was born in Wagga Wagga in New South Wales but lived in Sydney for most of her childhood. She shows me a lovely photo of her young self with her sister, Margaret and her late brother David. She shows me a picture of her parents and tells me that her father was a bank manager, and her mother was a stay-at-home mum which was very typical for women of that era. Barbara then explains that, when she was three years old, she started school at Eastwood Primary. I exclaimed that three was a very young age to begin school, which she agreed with, saying that it was likely because it was war time and children were being pushed out the house so adults could assist with the war effort.

One of Barbara's earliest memories is of school. She remembers being asked by her teacher to come up to the blackboard and draw a specific thing, and instead of drawing what was requested, Barbara drew a picture of an apple tree, with a little house inside an apple. She remembers getting into a lot of trouble.

Barbara attended Hornsby Girls High School (an elite girl's school) for a time, before her parents moved to Aubrey, and so she changed to Aubrey Highschool, for her final years. She tells me that it was a mixed school and she simply hated it. She'd never had much to do with boys before then - having gone to an all-girls school for most of her life, and her brother having left school/home when she was eight to attend Duntroon, a military academy.

Barbara attended university and studied teaching. She recalls her graduation party with a wide smile and shows me a photo in her graduation dress - with long elbow length gloves. After teaching for a few years, Barbara took a year off and went with her friend on the 'Grand Tour' - a trip around the world. She went from Sydney to Melbourne to Port Moresby and then on to the Sewers Canal. She taught for a time in London and hitch-hiked across Europe. She shared some stories from her travels – and I was enthralled by her adventures. It's clear that Barbara loves travelling, seeing different cultures, meeting people, and learning new things.

Barbara said that after she returned to Australia, she felt a little lost. She didn't know where her life was leading. Both her parents had died, her family house had been sold and both her siblings were married with children of their own. One day, she spotted a notice in the Sydney Morning Herald advertising: 'English Teachers wanted in Japan'. She decided to seize this opportunity and moved to Japan where she lived and worked for *"two wonderful years"*. She met her husband there – and they travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway into Europe. Barbara's husband proposed in Copenhagen in the Tivoli Gardens – which sounded so romantic. They continued to travel together – down through Europe into Asia. At one point, they were forced to stay in Kathmandu for a while because of the war in India. They eventually made their way to Australia and were married.

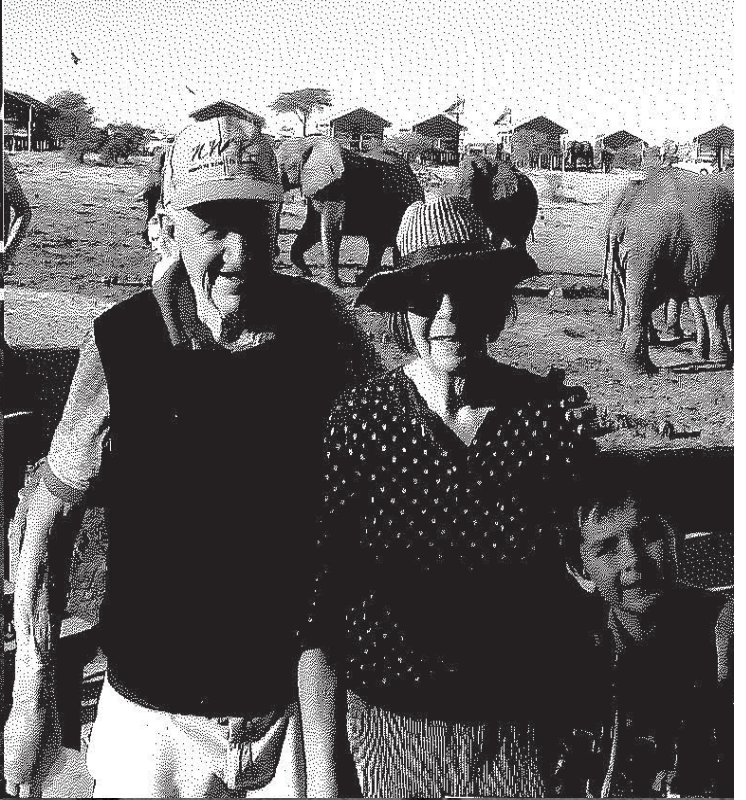
It is at this point, that Barbara shows me photos of her three children, Matthew, Jeffery, and Justin - who now all have children of their own. Barbara continued to travel. In 2011, when she was 70, she flew to Paris with her youngest son Justin – and just before Covid-19 hit, she went on a three-week camping trip in Botswana, with her middle son Jeffery.


Barbara lived in Floreat for many years. She tells me that as she got older her house became harder to maintain, especially after her husband was diagnosed with cancer - she felt quite overwhelmed. Barbara has been living at Mercy Care Village for 12 months and is enjoying this new chapter of life. I'm glad that someone as lovely as Barbara, is surrounded by a caring community, such as Mercy Care. I feel very lucky to have been able to hear these amazing stories about Barbara's life. She truly is the most well-travelled person I have met!

Imogen Thompson (Year 8)

DAYS GONE BY

BARBARA QUINN





Articles written by John XXIII College students: Charlotte Foot, Catherine Gazia, Isabelle Greenwood Hayes, Noa Mintz, Aditi Nguyen, Grace Nicol, Charlie Pronk, Rosabelle Taylor, Imogen Thompson

Edited by: Daisy Farley & Brianna Gray