PETER TINLEY
A VISIT TO THE MID-MURRAY
DR MARY ANNE WHITING
FROM SHELL SHOCK TO PTSD
PLANES, TRAINS + AUTOMOBILES
GEOFF ROWE
MATTHEW REILLY
AMI WILLIAMSON
THE UNKNOWN VETERAN MARCH



ISSUE 39

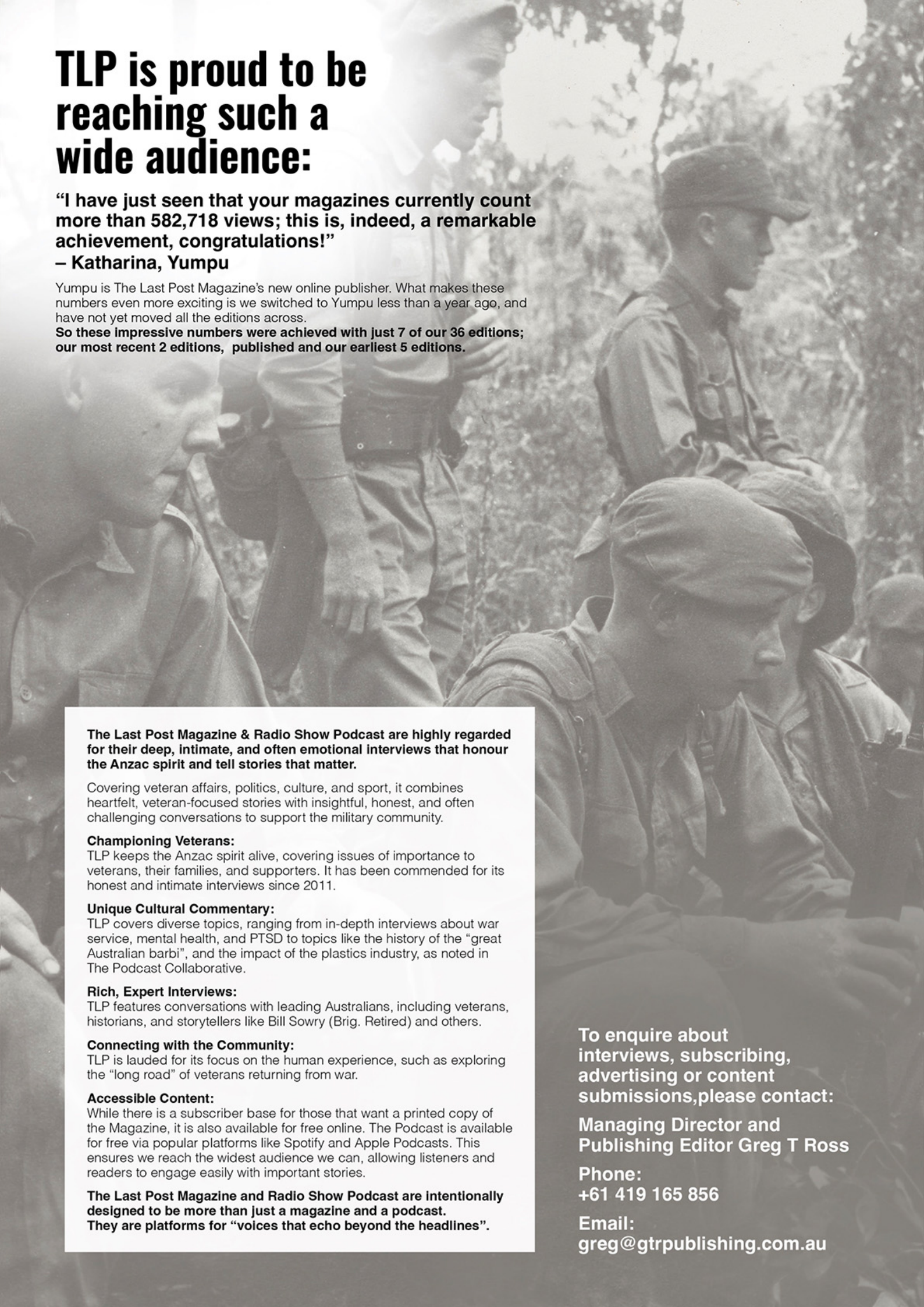
THE LAST POST

KEEPING THE ANZAC SPIRIT ALIVE FOR AUSTRALIA'S VETERANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

TLP is proud to be reaching such a wide audience:

"I have just seen that your magazines currently count more than 582,718 views; this is, indeed, a remarkable achievement, congratulations!"
– Katharina, Yumpu

Yumpu is The Last Post Magazine's new online publisher. What makes these numbers even more exciting is we switched to Yumpu less than a year ago, and have not yet moved all the editions across.
So these impressive numbers were achieved with just 7 of our 36 editions; our most recent 2 editions, published and our earliest 5 editions.



The Last Post Magazine & Radio Show Podcast are highly regarded for their deep, intimate, and often emotional interviews that honour the Anzac spirit and tell stories that matter.

Covering veteran affairs, politics, culture, and sport, it combines heartfelt, veteran-focused stories with insightful, honest, and often challenging conversations to support the military community.

Championing Veterans:
TLP keeps the Anzac spirit alive, covering issues of importance to veterans, their families, and supporters. It has been commended for its honest and intimate interviews since 2011.

Unique Cultural Commentary:
TLP covers diverse topics, ranging from in-depth interviews about war service, mental health, and PTSD to topics like the history of the "great Australian barbi", and the impact of the plastics industry, as noted in The Podcast Collaborative.

Rich, Expert Interviews:
TLP features conversations with leading Australians, including veterans, historians, and storytellers like Bill Sowry (Brig. Retired) and others.

Connecting with the Community:
TLP is lauded for its focus on the human experience, such as exploring the "long road" of veterans returning from war.

Accessible Content:
While there is a subscriber base for those that want a printed copy of the Magazine, it is also available for free online. The Podcast is available for free via popular platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts. This ensures we reach the widest audience we can, allowing listeners and readers to engage easily with important stories.

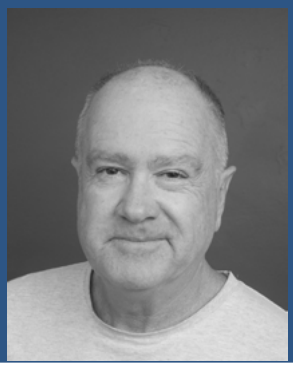
The Last Post Magazine and Radio Show Podcast are intentionally designed to be more than just a magazine and a podcast. They are platforms for "voices that echo beyond the headlines".

To enquire about interviews, subscribing, advertising or content submissions,please contact:

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GREG T ROSS
Diary of an independent publisher

There are many memories with determinations to having stories being told, when we pause at 11am on November 11 each year.

And, ever since we debuted as a magazine in 2011, here we are still bringing education and respect of the legacy through stories because being told in this the 39th edition of The Last Post magazine.

In this 2026 Remembrance Day edition we remember to remember with a look at Australia, today. We visit the Mid Murray and we join Moira Partridge on her rail

Journey across Australia. We join Monique March too, in her popular travel series, this time to the Red Centre.

We interview Geoff Rowe from ADA and singer songwriter Ami Williamson and look at Mat McLachlan's Battlefield Tours. Stories too, from Richard Lawson and poetry from Jeremy Roberts and others.

Latest updates on veterans issues and RSL Australia and from Peter Tinley too.

All this and a whole lot more and thanks for being with us on this 15 year journey.

#thelastpostmagazine
#diaryofanindependentpublisher

Greg T Ross

FRONT COVER

The Mid Murray Council is the proud operator of three of the Murray River's Historic Paddleboats

The PS Marion is their largest vessel, including accommodation for weekend escapes.

She is a steam powered vessel and the oldest commercially operating, turning 130yo in 2027.

She also operates out of Mannum, running a limited number of public cruises and available for private charter.





foreword

Peter Tinley AM

National President
RSL Australia

At 11 o'clock on the morning of 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent on the Western Front. More than a century later, Australians will once again stop what they are doing at 11am and stand together in a minute silence. It is one of the simplest ways we pay our respects as a nation, and one of the most profound.

That minute asks little of us: stillness and a willingness to remember. Yet within it we hold the memory of more than 103,000 Australians whose names are recorded on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial. Behind every name is a son or daughter, a partner, a parent, a mate. Together, they represent a debt this nation can never fully repay.

On Remembrance Day in 1993, the Unknown Australian Soldier was brought home from a war cemetery in France and laid to rest in the Memorial's Hall of Memory. We do not know his name, his rank or where he came from, and that is why he matters so deeply. He stands for every Australian who gave their life in service, and for our promise that none of them will be forgotten.

Our remembrance also embraces the living. Each year at 11am, I think of those I served alongside, and I am reminded that service leaves its mark long after it ends. This year marks 25 years since Australians first deployed to Afghanistan, and a new generation of veterans now lives among us. Some came home carrying wounds the eye can see, and others carry wounds it cannot. Many more serve today, at home and abroad. All of them have given, and continue to give, to our country.

Then there are the families, who so often serve in silence. They wear no uniform and receive no medals, yet they carry so much of the weight. Partners hold households together through long deployments and sleepless nights. Children grow up with an empty chair at the dinner table and learn to say goodbye far too young. Parents farewell sons and daughters, and some never see them come home. Others go on caring, for years, for loved ones living with the lasting effects of service. Their sacrifice is rarely spoken of, but it is no less real.

Australians with no personal connection to the Defence Force may sometimes wonder whether this day is theirs to mark. Let me say: It is. The peace and freedoms we share were secured, and are still protected, by people from every corner of this country, on behalf of every Australian.

Paying your respects need not be grand. Stand in silence at 11am this Remembrance Day, wherever you happen to be. Join your community at a local service, or wear a red poppy. Stop at a war memorial, read the names and learn the story behind one of them. Thank a veteran, or check in on a defence family you know. Each small act says something that matters: your service has not been forgotten.

For 110 years, the RSL has proudly led the nation in remembrance and stood beside those who served and their families. But remembrance has never belonged to any one organisation. It lives in school assemblies, country towns and quiet moments of reflection, kept alive by Australians who choose to remember.

So at 11am on Wednesday 11 November, wherever you are and whatever your story, I invite you to pause. Think of those who have served, those who serve still, and the families who stand quietly beside them. That minute is how a grateful nation keeps its promise to remember.

Lest We Forget.

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The Last Post Story

Through bloodlines, The Last Post magazine started at Gallipoli. Its acorn then fought with the 2/10th in Milne Bay, Buna and Balikpapan and trekked the Kokoda in WW2. By the late-sixties, The Last Post magazine was ready to be born.

Raymond Thorsby Ross, who had fought in PNG and the son of Joseph Thorsby Ross, who had fought at Gallipoli, leased a small office in George Street, Sydney. Raymond had decided that a small magazine, designed to help RSLs and their members, should be introduced in New South Wales. To do this he would need advertising to help pay printing and distribution costs. Daily, Raymond would take the train from suburban Chatswood to the city and phone local businesses and sporting clubs, asking for their support. This ex-digger and RSL member worked long hours to get each edition out and was effectively the magazine's editor, graphic designer and distributor.

In 1974, Raymond and his partner moved to Scarborough in suburban Perth and continued The Last Post in Western Australia until his death in 1983.

Twenty-eight years later, Raymond's son and Joseph's grandson, Gregory Thorsby Ross brought his father's magazine back to life. Greg had lived with his father as a 15-year old, when he started working as a copy-boy and cadet journalist at The Sydney Morning Herald. The teenager became a first-hand observer of the early days of the ex-servicemen and women's publication. By 2011 he had put everything in place to re-introduce The Last Post to a public in desperate need of a modern, quality magazine to assist the veteran community. Only this time it would be a national. And this time, it would be for all Australians.

With this humble background, and from a history steeped in the Anzac tradition, the new national TLP was born and is now respected and read by not only Australian veterans but the wider global community.

Featuring profiles on contemporary and historical veteran issues as well as honourable Australians, organisations, institutions and companies, TLP has matured to be Australia's most recognised independent online and print veteran magazine.

Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

The reason?

It speaks to all Australians as a reminder that the legacy of the Anzac Spirit is relevant to us all.

With editor Greg T Ross' up-close interviews with famous Australians, stunning layout and production and input from great writers covering relevant topics in history, music, arts, entertainment, sport, travel, gardening, this magazine is so well received by a wide audience that reaches far beyond the veteran community.

Pte Raymond Thorsby Ross, founder of the original The Last Post, left, during his time with the 2/10th in Papua New Guinea during WW2.

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The Last Post Magazine has been praised nationally and internationally since it was launched in 2011 and is designed by Kirstie Wyatt from Wyatt Creative. Kirstie is a freelance graphic and web designer and can enhance your marketing to get the results you want in your business.

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Why Remembrance Day Belongs to All of Us

When Australia pauses at 11am on Wednesday 11 November, Jennifer Ward will be thinking of her son. Benjamin Ranaudo was killed by an improvised explosive device while serving in Afghanistan in 2009, and Jennifer has spent the years since making sure his story is told.

Kat Rae, an Army veteran of 20 years, will be thinking of the people she served alongside in Afghanistan.

Their stories are different yet share a common thread. Remembrance Day is not only about history. It is about people, and the lasting impact of service on those who serve and those who love them.

A day for everyone touched by service

Remembrance Day marks the anniversary of Armistice, which ended fighting on the Western Front at 11am on 11 November 1918. Every year since 1919, Australians have paused at that hour to honour the service personnel who died in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

More than a century on, the minute's silence remains a powerful act of gratitude. It honours those who never came home. It is also a moment to reflect on everyone who has been shaped by service: those serving today, the veterans who returned, and the families who share in the sacrifice.

That impact takes many forms. Service can bring purpose, skills and lifelong friendships. It can also leave lasting physical and mental impacts, making the transition to civilian life challenging for everyone involved. Remembrance Day is a time to recognise both the contribution and the cost.

Service that carries on

While serving with the Australian Army in Afghanistan, Kat Rae worked closely with local women to support gender equality. That commitment didn't end when she came home. Even after Kabul fell in 2021, Kat kept supporting Afghan women through a number of projects.

Kat's story shows another side of the legacy of service. Her experiences highlight the pride, and purpose service can bring, the weight it can leave, and the way so many veterans keep giving to others long after their service ends.

This Remembrance Day, she will be thinking of the people she served with in Afghanistan, and the women left behind.



Buy a poppy to remember our veterans

Your donation helps provide practical support, connection, dignity and stability for veterans and their families.

Show your support today.
poppyappeal.com.au

Poppy Appeal

RSL

Two meaningful ways to show your support

Attend a Remembrance Day service.
Services hosted by RSL Sub-Branches are free and open to everyone. Standing together at 11am is a powerful way to honour those who died, and to show veterans and their families that their service is valued. Wear a poppy and bring your family. If you can't attend in person, pause wherever you are. Find a service near you at **remembertoremember.com.au**.

Donate to the Poppy Appeal.
Every poppy and every donation helps the RSL provide practical support, including advocacy, health and wellbeing services, emergency financial assistance, and social activities that keep veterans connected to their communities. Donations support veterans and families in your own state or territory. Buy a poppy from an RSL volunteer or donate online at **poppyappeal.com.au**, where you can also read Jennifer's and Kat's stories in full.

However you take part, your support matters. Remembrance Day belongs to all of us, and so does the responsibility to remember: to honour those we have lost, and to stand beside those who served, and their families, every day of the year.

Lest we forget.

Families serve too

Jennifer knows the broader impact of service better than most. She never wore a uniform, but the war in Afghanistan reached into the heart of her family. Nowadays, Jennifer shares Benjamin's story openly, wanting people to feel free to speak his name and think of him without having to "walk on eggshells."

Her approach is a reminder of what remembrance can be. It is not only a moment of sorrow, but a way of keeping someone present. When we say the names of those who died and share their stories, we make sure their service, and their lives, are never forgotten.

RSL: standing beside those who served

For 110 years, the RSL has stood beside people like Jennifer and Kat. Founded by returned servicemen, the RSL carries two enduring responsibilities: to lead the nation in remembrance, and to care for those who served and their families.

On Remembrance Day, those responsibilities come together. RSL Sub-Branches lead commemorative services in cities and towns across Australia, bringing communities together to remember. Through the Poppy Appeal, the RSL raises vital funds to support all veterans and their families throughout the year.





Mid Murray Council & the Historic Paddleboat Fleet

The Mid Murray Council is the proud custodian and operator of three of the Murray River's most significant historic paddleboats, preserving an important chapter of Australia's river heritage for future generations.



These vessels are more than just tourist attractions. They are living reminders of a time when paddle steamers were the lifeblood of inland communities, transporting passengers, freight, livestock and supplies along the mighty Murray River. Through ongoing investment and support, the Council ensures these vessels continue to tell the stories of the river pioneers who shaped the region.

Each vessel within the fleet has its own unique history, character and role in showcasing river life. Together, they provide visitors with a rare opportunity to experience authentic paddleboat travel while gaining an appreciation for the engineering, craftsmanship and determination that helped build inland Australia. Whether powered by steam or diesel, these vessels maintain a direct connection to the traditions and technologies of a bygone era.

The Council's commitment to preserving and operating these historic boats has made the Mid Murray region one of the premier heritage tourism destinations along the Murray River. Visitors can step aboard lovingly restored vessels, explore their fascinating histories and enjoy unforgettable journeys through some of South Australia's most picturesque river landscapes.

PW Mayflower

The PW Mayflower is a diesel-powered paddle wheeler based in Mannum, one of the Murray River's most historic river ports. Combining traditional paddleboat charm with reliable modern operation, the Mayflower offers visitors an enjoyable and accessible way to experience the beauty of the river. Her distinctive paddle wheel and classic appearance capture the romance of river travel while providing a comfortable cruising experience for passengers of all ages.

Operating several times each week, the PW Mayflower takes guests on relaxing 90-minute cruises along the Murray River. During the journey, passengers can enjoy ever-changing river scenery, including towering river red gums, abundant birdlife and spectacular riverbank landscapes. The cruise provides an ideal introduction to the region's natural beauty and history, making it a popular choice for visitors, families and tour groups.

The Mayflower plays an important role in introducing people to the Murray River's unique heritage. Her regular schedule allows visitors to experience life on the river while learning about the communities, industries and traditions that developed along its banks. Whether enjoying a leisurely afternoon cruise or celebrating a special occasion, passengers leave with a deeper appreciation of the river's enduring significance.

PS Marion

The PS Marion is the flagship of the Mid Murray Council fleet and one of the most celebrated heritage vessels operating in Australia today. As a fully restored steam-powered paddle steamer, she offers visitors the rare opportunity to travel aboard a working vessel that reflects the golden age of Murray River transport. Her impressive size, authentic steam machinery and beautifully preserved timber interiors create a truly immersive historic experience.

Unlike many heritage vessels, the PS Marion offers overnight accommodation, allowing guests to enjoy unique weekend escapes on the river. Passengers can experience the sights, sounds and atmosphere of traditional paddle steamer travel while cruising through the tranquil landscapes of the Murray. The vessel's accommodation, dining facilities and historic




MARION
MAYFLOWER
MARION
MAYFLOWER

character combine to create a memorable journey unlike any other in Australia.

Operating from Mannum, the PS Marion conducts a select number of public cruises each year and is also available for private charters and special events. As the oldest commercially operating paddle steamer of her type, she will celebrate her 130th anniversary in 2027. This remarkable milestone reflects not only the longevity of the vessel itself, but also the dedication of countless volunteers, engineers and heritage enthusiasts who have worked to preserve her for future generations.

PS Canally

The PS Canally is the newest addition to the Mid Murray Council's historic paddleboat fleet, bringing new energy and excitement to the preservation of river heritage. Following an extensive restoration effort, she was officially relaunched at the Living River Festival in Morgan in May 2026. Her return to the water marked the culmination of years of hard work by volunteers and supporters who were determined to see this important vessel restored to operational condition.

Powered by steam and based at the Port of Morgan, the PS Canally represents a significant piece of the Murray River's maritime history. Every detail of the restoration reflects a commitment to preserving traditional engineering practices and maintaining the vessel's historic authenticity. Visitors who step aboard can experience the sights, sounds and atmosphere of a working steam vessel, providing a tangible connection to the river's rich past.

The year 2027 will be particularly special for the PS Canally as she celebrates her 120th anniversary. During the same year, she will join with the PS Marion to commemorate a remarkable combined 250 years of steam-powered river heritage. This milestone celebration will highlight the enduring importance of steam navigation on the Murray River and honour the generations of river workers, boat builders and volunteers who have helped preserve this unique legacy.

Mannum and Morgan Museums

The historic towns of Mannum and Morgan each offer outstanding museum experiences that complement the paddleboat fleet and provide deeper insight into the region's fascinating past. Together, these museums help tell the story of how the Murray River shaped the development of inland Australia, supporting thriving communities and connecting remote settlements through trade and transport.

The Mannum Dock Museum is dedicated to preserving the area's rich steam and riverboat heritage. Located in Australia's birthplace of inland paddle steamers, the museum features engaging displays, photographs, machinery and artefacts that showcase the engineering achievements and daily life of the river era. Visitors can learn about local boatbuilding traditions, river commerce and the important role that paddle steamers played in Australia's economic development.

In Morgan, the Landseer Museum explores the town's historical significance as both a major river port and railway hub. Through an extensive collection of exhibits, visitors can discover how Morgan became a critical transport interchange where goods and passengers transferred between riverboats and rail services. Together, the Mannum Dock Museum and the Landseer Museum provide a comprehensive and engaging journey through the history that helped shape the Murray River region and South Australia as a whole.




MARION
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— INTERVIEW —

Ami Williamson

thelastpostmagazine.com/the-last-post-radio-show-podcast

Greg T Ross: It is my great pleasure to welcome Australian singer songwriter Ami Williamson to The Last Post. Hello, Ami. Welcome. How are you?

Ami Williamson: Good morning, Greg. I'm well. How are you?

GTR: Well, doing all right. All the better for speaking with you. It's an exciting time for you wi th a new album and tour coming up. It's been, I think this is the first album in seven years or something, and it's Sing You Out of Me, which was recently released, of course. You are hitting the road very shortly with some great shows around the country, dates and venues coming up soon, details on that. What's special about this album and why are you looking forward to getting out and singing these songs, Ami?

AW: Well, I have road tested quite a few of the songs before I picked what album, which ones would go on the album. So I have a pretty strict regime of trying songs. If I give it one or two shots and if they don't work, they go straight to the bin. So these ones I know that people want to hear on the album. So I had people always listen when people come up after the show and say, "Oh, can I buy, is this song on the album,? So if it's not, then I know that's the one to record.

GTR: Yes, that's right too. It's an incredible thing. Co-produced with Matt Fell, of course. Brilliant. With the first, do you do your songs when you're writing them? Is it like a first draft as with writing itself? Do you do a first, a second, a third draft, or is it

all supposed to come out in one great flush of creativity?

AW: Well, it's an annoying answer, but all of the above. Sometimes they come out and there's not a lot of editing that needs to be done, but sometimes it can b e a painful process of writing and rewriting over many years. So yeah, sometimes you just get lucky, I guess, and something comes out that doesn't need a lot of editing, but then other things, you're just endlessly not happy. I mean, some songs I'm still not happy with, but I simply can't get them better.

GTR: Well, we've had even comments from John Lennon, bless his memory, about certain Beatles songs, which we all think are fantastic, but it's all down to the artist in the eye of the beholder, of course. Look, I think the first thing that struck me about this album, Ami, was... Well, I mean, there's many brilliant songs on it, but one of the things too is, of course, your cover of the Angels song, Am I Ever Go To See Your Face Again? You've turned it into a thoughtful, tender, love song. It's quite beautiful. And you say, of course, the lyrics, "I get no answers and questions still remain," but these words take on extra meaning with your treatment of them. How do you feel about the way you've done this? I think it's beautiful.

AW: Oh, I'm so glad you like it. Well, just ever since learning that the song was really about a loss of a friend of Doc's losing their girlfriend in a car accident, once I learned that that was the inspiration for the song and what the song was about, I just was so shocked because I thought it was because of the call response and the whole fun of the live and the energy of the way they do it. I presume that it was a sort of a "get stuffed" song. Yeah, but when I found out what it was really about, and when I reread the lyrics, I just realized how beautiful his lyric writing is, and I'm hoping that this arrangement highlights that, and I guess the true meaning of the song, I guess. But yeah, I mean, Angels fans and myself, there's only ever one original, of course, but I just wanted to highlight how gorgeous his lyric writing was and maybe just because it's a really sad thing to think that when you're overseas and that you might see the person that's died because you're in a different sort of circumstance, that kind of thing. Yeah, I just really, really like his lyric writing.

GTR: Well, geez, I tell you what, these are the two that come to mind aside from your song. The Zoot's treatment of Eleanor Rigby and John Farnham's treatment of Help, to me, were on an equal almost... Well, yeah, I think they were on equal. They're totally different from the originals, but they're the only two songs that I can think of that were covers or maybe a couple more, but this song to me is, it turns it into almost another song. I had visions of someone walking the streets alone in the rain contemplating while listening to this song. So it certainly brings to mind visions. You've been able to extract so much from the lyrics, so congratulations on that. Doc, now tell us about your meeting with Doc, because of course this goes back to what, East Timor and Iraq and everything else too, Amy.

AW: Yeah, I was lucky enough to entertain the troops on three different deployments, I guess you'd call them. Yeah, so I went and entertained the troops in three different places, Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, and Solomon Islands as well. And that's how I met Doc, because he did that work as well. And yeah, we got on really well. He was really charming and I guess a front man of a legendary Australian rock man band, you'd expect them to be charming. Yeah, I just regret that I never got to see him in his... In the '70s, I wasn't able to go to... I was born late '70s.

GTR: A tad too young.

AW: Tad too young, yeah. So I wish I'd seen him as a young man at the top of that band's game. I mean, they still put on a great... The Brewster Brothers put on a great show, but yeah, he was just very charming and very kind of English, very well-read and elegant type of event.

GTR: Yeah. Well, actually good words to describe Doc Neeson too, well read, elegant. Yeah, I know that in person that's ...

AW: That's how he comes across, right?

GTR: Yeah, that's right. Until he gets onto the stage, it's quite incredible too. So what were those experiences like for you in East Timor and Afghanistan and Solomon, et cetera?

AW: Well, it was amazing. I traveled in Hercules. I was traveling in tanks. I had to wear burn gear. I had to carry around flak jackets and helmets. My dressing room were most often rubble or male bathrooms. We performed on the back of trucks, big rigs and it was unlike any other gig as you can imagine. And the only people we performed to were soldiers, so that's very unique crowd in and of itself. But I was really impressed with how respectful and organized the ADF were. Everybody that I encountered, everybody that I encountered in the ADF were just amazingly organized, amazingly respectful. I responded really well to working with them because that's how I like to work. I really hate being late. I hate being disorganized. So I was like, "Wow, maybe I should have joined the army. Maybe I should have been in the music van or I don't know, done that kind of work because I just really loved how thorough and organized and I just love being that type of way and everybody that I encountered -

GTR: Everything was done for you, isn't it?

AW: Well, it's not that it's done for me. It's just that they were just really respectful. Anything I could have wanted or prepared for was just organized. Yeah, I just found it to be a very organized institution.

GTR: Well, I'll tell you what, if you had have joined the Army, there would've been less wars around the world because your singing and songs would've appeased people globally. I tell you what too. We're here with Ami Williamson speaking about her amazing new album, Sing You Out of Me, and also the tour that's following, they're coming up very soon. We'll have dates a bit later on in the conversation. You've had total creative control over this album, Ami. I mean, it's a mixture really, isn't it? I was listening to the tracks blown away. There's a bit of folk, a bit of jazz, a whole lot of things. What did it mean to have that control and to be able to go in that direction or directions?

AW: That's a great question. Well, for the very first time I recorded myself alone in my home studio, I guess. Let's call it a home studio, but it's really - It's like my office. A room with some gear in it. Yeah, sort of the cheapest bare minimum. But I was unsure of my ability, my technical skills with the program that I was using and my knowledge of the gear that I had. And so I was unsure if the gear was good enough and I was unsure if I was able to do it properly as far as the technical stuff, because I comped my vocals, I comped the guitar, I comped the piano like I did, and comping for those people that don't know is choosing which takes and any editing and things like that.

So I basically gave Matt my finished chosen takes, whereas in the past I've done takes and then I've sat down with him and he sort of said, oh, this is good. And I've gone, okay. So yeah, it was my choice what vocal I went with and what instruments went on it. And so Matt and I have always worked in a very collaborative way, but I've done all the recording in his studio in the past. So I was unsure whether or not I could hack it with the big boys and have the technical chops to deliver an adequate audio, but Matt was happy with it, so I just went... Well, I kept asking him, I said, "Are you sure this is good enough? Are you sure this is clear and are you sure?" He goes, "It's great. It's great. It's great." So I went, "Okay, Matt."

GTR: Well, I tell you, Matt's a good choice and a good judge, I would imagine too. So you've come up with some great stuff. I mean, you sing about private reflection, you got some social commentary on there too. Sing about family, it's beautiful, love obviously, and motherhood, even sexual liberation and the women who've paved the way for you. Who are those women?

AW: Well, the first people that come to mind are my grandma and my mum. My great aunties were wonderful women. They did things like were the first people to establish aged care in Port Macquarie, and there's a street named after them, the Manery.

GTR: Oh, wow. Yeah.

AW: Manery Drive. They have a street named after them called Manery Drive. Manery was their surname. So my grandma's maiden name was Manery Yeah, so I'm really proud of that. They worked as nurses and matrons, and my grandma brought up six kids in the middle of nowhere on barely anything. So yeah, but then people that I don't know as well in history, like the suffragettes, the women that have marched for -

GTR: That's right. You've got Emily Dawson, the song on the album, Sing You Out of Me, which is, of course, Emily was the British suffragette and a teacher too. She's a good role model to have, really.

AW: Yeah. I guess women of my age have a lot to be thankful for, for all these women in their 60s, 70s, 80s. We have a lot to thank them for the way they've conducted themselves in the workplace, the changes that they've made in social acceptance of women doing mothering and working. And men need to be grateful for those forerunners as well because it's meant that it's allowed them to be more open to the idea of being more of a hands-on father combining with work. I think that's far more accepted now and encouraged with right leadership in companies.

So there's more of a mixture of home care for children and workplace, which just has really been long coming. And it's those people that have made it possible for people to share parenting and share the workload. I mean, I'm sure there are men out there that don't want the whole responsibility for bringing in all the money, and I'm sure there are women that don't want to exclusively look after children and they do want to further their careers. And so I'm sure ideally whatever combination works for that particular couple, which is all about choice and not any social...

GTR: Restraints, if you like. Yeah. No, actually well said too. And of course that is the actual truth too. Not all men want to be the sole breadwinner and not all women want to even have children or not all women want to dedicate their entire life to family or bringing up kids. So totally correct. What would you say to Emily if you met her or would you just sing her your song?

AW: Oh dear. Well, I guess it's in the song what I felt like I wanted to say to her, meaning I said things like I wish you... I mean, how amazing would it be if you could show her what women are doing today compared to what she saw? I mean, she lived a very hard life. She got honors at, I think it was Oxford, but was never given them simply because they didn't graduate women. So she got honors, but she never got the certificate. Little things like that.

GTR: Yeah, incredible. She'd be knocked out. Yeah.

AW: Well, I think so. It would just be amazing to say, look at this, look at these numbers, look how many women are going to uni. Look how many are holding positions in executive circles. What do you think? And also thank you, people like you that's made all this happen.

GTR: Beautiful, beautiful. And probably take her by the hand and lead her down the street and say, "But Emily, we still have work to do." It's incredible. Another song on the album too is brilliant, of course, on the album, Sing You Out of Me with Ami Williamson. Joy McLean. Now, here's a lady, of course, that would fit into the category of being a bit of a mentor too, wouldn't she?

AW: Absolutely. I was going to mention Joy. Yeah. I mean, what a trailblazer and incredible, incredible woman. And I did get to know her a little bit, and I'm all the richer for knowing somebody like Joy because you don't come across a lot of Joy McLean. I found her very unique and unbelievably strong type of person. She seemed to be a housemate of bricks as opposed to anybody that you could blow over. She's very, very just full of just a great deal of substance, and I imagine she'd be the most resilient person, one of the most resilient persons, people you come across. And so bright, razor sharp, intellect and...

GTR: Funny and...

AW: Yeah, I want to be more like Joy.

GTR: Isn't that incredible too? I was thinking Joy McLean is probably one of the most, well, I won't say underrated Australians in history, but certainly I feel personally that she should be right up there. And the songs that she wrote really to me were the best songs. They were just amazing.

AW: Well, I would agree with that, which is why I wrote the song. Why isn't she as well known as -

GTR: Yeah, that's right.

AW: ...say, Lawson and people like that because she should be. Those songs, I mean, the biggest disappointment. It stopped me in my tracks the first time I heard that. I literally just paused. I went, "What is this and who wrote it?" And as soon as I found out who wrote it, I went, "Okay, who is this?" And then I just had to find out everything about her. And I was lucky enough to meet her and have a drink for a couple of different occasions with her and long chats. I was just so lucky to have met her before and had that time with her before she passed on.

GTR: Yeah. It's a great album, and I'll tell you what too, Sing you out of Me. Look, we are talking about the different, I suppose, subjects that you've covered in this album, which is always an amazing thing. It's so entertaining to find someone that's willing to tackle this broad base of subjects in the one album and Darling Boy, which is... I suppose that's a snapshot really of parenthood. Tell us about that.

AW: Well, Darling Boy, I'm very, very pleased that that song came about because it's about my son. I have an 11-year-old son, and sometimes I watch him and I adore him to the point that I can't even express how much I adore him. So it was basically a song sort of saying along the lines of, "You have no idea how I feel when you do this and this and this." Yeah, you don't really have words to describe how you feel about your kids when they do beautiful things that are just so touching and innocent.

Yeah, so I was just so pleased that that song came about because I've written another song about Don't Grow Up So Fast, which is one of my more popular songs about my daughter. So I was really pleased because if I were a child and my singer songwriter mother wrote a song about my sibling, but not about me, so I would feel pretty bad. But I had no intention of evening that legend getting the balance there, but I'm just so pleased that it has because that's how it should be.

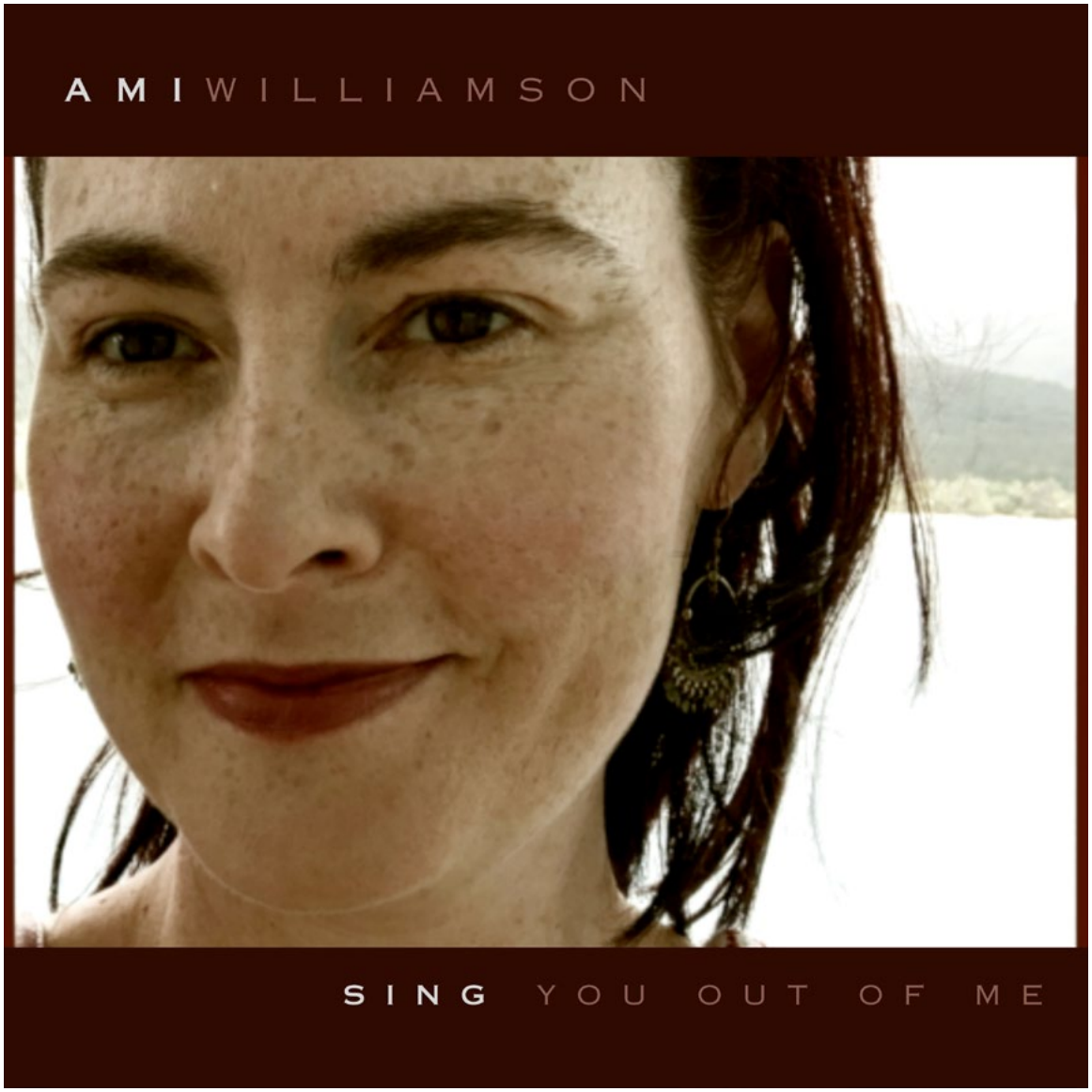
GTR: Indeed, indeed, indeed too. Ami Williamson. What is it about singing? I mean, your father obviously has been doing it for a long time and expressing the brilliance of storytelling, which you also do too. What is it about singing? I mean, did you say it's like crying?

AW: Yeah, I just think the act of singing is so unbelievably therapeutic. So I think that's why people join choirs. I think that's why they sing along when they listen to... You hear people in the shower in their cars, they're going for it. And I think that's because it feels so good. And I think some people say crying is therapeutic as well. I think singing is a release, and I think crying is a release as well.

GTR: It's brilliant. That's brilliant. I mean, I've thought for many years, well, I suppose since I was a little tacker, about the brilliance and therapeutic value of singing and also of crying because you can cry happy, cry sad, but I've never thought of singing like crying, so I'm so glad that you put it like that.

AW: Yeah, and because you have to let the breath out while you're singing, you can't be so uptight and sing because it's a releasing of breath, of energy, of sentiment or whatever it is. So you can't be too tense and sing at the same time or sing well in any way.

GTR: I was just thinking so many things there as you're talking about that too. Yes. I mean, actually, we'll go back to the album for just a moment because it's such a brilliant album, and I'd recommend people to have a look at this. Ami Williamson, her first album in seven years, Sing You Out of Me, it's recently released this month actually, and very shortly, very shortly,



Amy will be hitting the road to tour to various states around Australia, and we'll go over that in just a moment. But there's a song on this, and see, this is about tackling different subjects. It's about sexuality, I guess, with Go South. Tell us what that's about, Amy.

AW: Well, Go South is basically a knee-jerk reaction to having had just one too many girlfriends complain about an inequality in the bedroom, I guess you say. Inequality or maybe a lack of knowledge maybe. I don't know. And I'm not in any way -

GTR: I think about care maybe, but...

AW: Yeah, I just think if you were to do a poll on... If it were possible to do a poll of everybody on the planet, which is unrealistic, but if you did, how many people enjoyed certain things in the bedroom, I think the results would be staggering. I think some people are stuck in the 50s, and I think pornography has a lot to do with that.

I think the facts are 95% of pornography are made by men for men. So I think anybody. A lot of people look at it, women look at it as well, and I think that's impacting the way women are in the bedroom, which is not a great thing. I think what's really worrying is that young people are looking for it as you would, because young people are inexperienced comparatively to older people, and they're looking for perhaps what's done or how to do it. And I think a lot of it borders on abuse, sexual abuse that's under another name of, I don't know, masochism domination.

GTR: Yeah. I'm glad it wasn't around when I was a youngster. I probably was, but I don't know.

AW: Yeah. Well, your uncle's dirty mags in the bathroom, that'd be about it. Whereas now, teenagers have it on their phone, and year seven kids have phones in their pockets, and you can try to put parental restrictions until you go blue in the face, and I've been And they inevitably get around it and it's really horrifying what they can access. So I would love for it to not be able to be something that especially young people can access.

GTR: It's so easily available.

AW: Yeah. And look, I think it impacts on older people as well because everybody wants to... You're not privy to other people's bedroom experiences. So the one way that you can do that is look up pornography and what you get there is so not ideal.

GTR: Yeah. A lot of it would be seen to be BS. I mean, intimacy surely comes through sharing and mutual satisfaction. There could be no intimacy without that.

AW: Yeah, absolutely. And I'm not in any way blaming men for this. Some people say that it's women that needs to speak up more, as in have the confidence to say what they want more, how they want it, things like that. So it's not all in the male lap. It's just, I think more pornography needs to be made by women, for women.

And I think the companies need to have a look at the material that is just straight out abuse and that it's not sexual, it's abuse. And there are young men looking at that and thinking that that's what good sex is. And then they go and do it to as young as a 14-year-old. That how it's done. I mean, it's chilling.

GTR: It pans out into real life and then that shapes the relationships that person surely you would imagine would have in the future. So it's ongoing. I mean, geez.

AW: Yeah, absolutely. Look -

GTR: And then it goes back to that feeling in the bedroom then would go back to domestic life also. So it almost, as you say, it's a flashback to the 50s or something.

AW: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think it's worse than the 50s because at least the 50s, I'm guessing that the pornography thing wasn't anywhere near as big as it is now.

GTR: But I was meaning that treatment then goes beyond the bedroom, Ami.

AW: Of course, of course. Yeah. And I mean, it's a big part of any relationship, that intimacy.

GTR: Ridiculous. Yeah. No, thanks very much for bringing up that topic through that song Go South on the album, Sing You Out of Me. And I'll tell you what too, Ami, look, one of the things, there's a couple of big names I'm going to chuck around here and it's not name dropping because I've never met them and they don't talk this way about me. But Joan Baez, for instance, likes your work a lot. She says you're fearless on stage and the beautiful great Judy Collins says you are one of a kind.

AW: Yeah, I was lucky enough to meet Judy Collins and I was able to tell her what her voice did to me when I was a toddler because I remember seeing her on the Muppet Show singing, there was an old lady who swallowed a fly. I don't know why she swallowed a fly. And honestly, I was absolutely blown away. I thought that is the most beautiful sound I've ever heard. I'm sure that it turned me then and there because I was just absolutely blown away how beautiful her voice was.

GTR: What an angelic voice.

AW: Oh, and she was playing guitar and just all her early recordings are so beautifully in tune.

GTR: You probably as a little tacker though, that's what I want to be.

AW: I reckon I did. I just didn't want to say it because I didn't want to sound like a tosser. But yeah, it really impacted me at the time. So I was able to tell her that. So yeah, that's when she -

GTR: Geez, that must have been a great experience.

AW: It was. It was so great. And I sang with her on stage at Port Fairy Folk Festival and I was hanging with the backstage, just her and I backstage. And so I had to try and keep cool. It was difficult.

GTR: Wow. Yeah. I met Susan Vega on the stairs of a pub in St. Kilda once. Oh, that's pretty cool. She was unreal. She was so beautiful. She put 15 minutes into a lot by just talking to me. Anyhow, but Judy was... See, this is my first... I mean, I know that she was the girlfriend of Stephen Stills for a while, but then she was always out there by herself doing so well. And a song like Send in the Clowns, which really wouldn't appeal to me if I had never heard Judy Collins singing it, that's an angelic version.

AW: Oh yeah. Beautiful, beautiful. And really, I consider Judy Collins an astounding musician because she could play as well as she could sing. So her chops on the guitar, folk style finger picking, and she was holding her own. And especially at that time, she's a beautiful interpreter of songs. So I think at that time, if somebody like Dylan was writing these incredible songs, there were people at that time, older people at that time that couldn't come at his voice. But when Judy Collins and Joan Baez did his songs, it was just so stunning to listen to.

GTR: That's right.

AW: It always - I love his voice, but -

GTR: Me too.

AW: I do know that I think he's obviously studying the obvious, incredibly musical and I adore his obviously writing and songs and things, but there is a type of person that likes a really sweet, pure sound. And I think when Joan Baez and Judy Collins do his music, I think then they get the best of both worlds. They get the finest songs ever written, plus really beautiful voices.

GTR: Yeah. There's a place in the world for both, isn't there too? Absolutely. I love Joan Baez's music and Judy Collins, but it always amuses me when people bring up Bob Dylan's voice because to me, that's part of the story.

AW: Oh, absolutely. And so damn musical. And they bring up his voice as though it's a lesser voice and if they knew how musical you have to be to write at that level.

GTR: Oh, geez. I would continue to be knocked out by his amazing brilliance. Totally, totally. Now, what was it like growing up in the Williamson family? Because of course you've got a famous dad.

AW: Yes. Well, I didn't really notice that... It's not like in America where you've got paparazzi following you around and that kind of thing. So I didn't really notice it.

GTR: Did you ask him what he did for a living?

AW: Well, I knew what he did, but I didn't think it was anything different from anybody else as in, okay, your dad's a plumber or your dad's a doctor. It's just what our moms and dads do. So I didn't think it was particularly... I think different in America and maybe different if you're the prime minister's kid or something. But yeah, I didn't really notice the fame aspect, to be honest. And I think that's probably mum and dad's good job. They didn't obsess or focus on that side of things. Yeah, it was a creative environment. Our discussions were always about art and creativity as opposed to celebrity and fame.

GTR: Yeah. No, he's a good chap, John. I interviewed him, I don't know, maybe it was too long ago. Time's flying fast. I'll tell you what, about eight years ago or something, but it's good stuff too. Now you are hitting the road soon. Are you excited about that?

AW: Of course. I absolutely love performing live. That's my jam. That's my favorite thing to do. Yeah, I just love -

GTR: Hold me back. That's right.

AW: Yeah. I mean, if you get a great crowd and a great night, it's really special. You can't beat live stuff, and that's something AI will never be able to do.

GTR: That's right. No, that's right. Actually, I was speaking to another musician who said the same thing. You can tell AI music as soon as you walk in the supermarket, but the thing is, no, it will never be because it doesn't have the emotional intelligence to reflect on experience.

AW: Yeah. And people need to remember that AI sources everything from humans, so it's kind of like a mixed mash of stuff that they've collected from the human race. So look, I'm sure there are great songs being written by AI right now, played well by AI, but originally all of that comes from humans. So it's not like AI is inventing something completely unique. It's just basically ripping off humans.

GTR: That's right. That's an incredible story. For more information on the Ami Williamson tour to promote her brilliant album, Sing You Out of Me, go to amywilliamson.com or there's various ways. Just type in Amy Williamson tour dates 2026 and it'll come up. That's what I did. There's so many avenues there to check out where she's going. Ami starts at the Shack at Warriewood, New South Wales, September five and is going to Canberra, Victoria, Queensland. Any thoughts of extending the tour?

AW: Well, I would love to. I just did a gig in Adelaide, not that long ago, but yeah, I've been to Fairbridge Folk Festival a couple of times and absolutely love it. So yes, I would just very happily go to WA again. I love it over there. Isn't that brilliant? I actually, I want to do that.

GTR: Isn't that brilliant? Isn't that brilliant? And I can just see you singing up in the Flinders Ranges too in South Australia. That'll be a beautiful thing too,

I'll tell you what. Amy Williamson, you're on the Last Post Radio Show and we thank you so much for being on the Last Post Radio Show because you're an integral part of Australia's current or contemporary and future singer-songwriter stories. You've got so many brilliant stories on this album and thank you so much for being here. All the best with the tour.

AW: Thank you so much, Greg. A real pleasure talking to you.

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Sucker Punch

There was an amnesty for a while
after verbal bloodletting and bellicosity,
there was bon vivant and calumet
Between you and me.
But then you went and blew it
with a taunting return to form,
You built yourself a fortress
before unleashing the storm of storms.
And oh how I suffered in silence
through nights and days of indignity,
You slip-slopped a billboard presentation to the world
about things between you and me.
And your audience was anyone who would listen
and there I can name quite a few,
That were suckered by the veneer and the masquerade
and not know as I know you.
For a while there was an armistice and a truce
I mistook for an olive branch,
Then you burnt everything around you
and pulled me in for the sucker punch.

GREG T ROSS







Walking Through The Maelstrom

She practiced a puritanism through denial
A refrainment from honesty,
She was so far away from being true to herself
And further from being true to me.
If I was to take this from ego
I might suffer love fatigue,
But I landed in a place so luculent and clear
I felt nothing but intrigue.
I felt that I'd been dead to the world
And somehow not awake,
When I woke to the realisation
That things weren't going so great.
Oh, you got me, there ain't no dispute about that,
The only thing I felt empowered by was not engaging
In the your acrobatic chit-chat.
So now I'm walking through the maelstrom
Unshackled and free to roam,
With no idea of where I'm going to
Or how far I am from home.

GREG T ROSS

"Three Roos"

"Blood earth, relentless sun, three Roos, farmers gun."
Wheat lists west, dusty track, akubra sweat, dry horse back.
Chords on barb, posts have rotten, 'keep out tin', weeds forgotten.
Magpie sings his wire fed tune, tractor chugs by dusk and moon.
'Burra gives her joke a play, neck frills turn the other way.
Gum yawns crack at koala curl, dust storm dances a quick dry whirl.
Galahs shrieking twice by two, golden crests four cockatoo.
Dams thirst drink as throats are dry, bluey bark hides possums cry.
Seeping tank, drips quenching rust, melting dirt in red bull dust.
Dip for grey sheep, one lamb born, blunt sheers bleed as all are shorn.
Cartridge flight, two barrels fire, hare or rabbit a stew desire.
Sweat creased brow, true story told, characters change both young and old.
Ale soaks bar, dry lips now wet, another ned wins two bob bet.
One slouch recalls his khaki dream, trench is dug with quiet scream.
Green holden ute, 'FJ' by name, best in the land, 'FX' the same.
Blue healer keen, seeks woolly test, herds ewes or ram by dusk his quest.
Coloured stone forms creek to wine, Coober stakes claim undermine.
Sunshine reaps, gold fields submit, blackened stumps by fire pit.
Farmer rests with wombat mate, echidna seeks out black ants fate.
Rust and galv, in graveyard dump, broken axle, upturned sump.
Copper cattle chew cud, grass leaf, truckie grinds his jerkey beef.
Outback maze between those fields, highway tarmac never healed.
Early sunrise, tin roof hot, emu gloats, three Roos got shot.
Wife ties apron, sets down book, Roo tale stirs in pot to cook!

ROLF DE JAGER





Turn on the lights

1. In the slow-pan of morning,
coffee is a godsend.
Before you know it,
the cat is no longer speaking German,
your tendons and ligaments are ready to jerk and kick
at the world,
and you can almost bear dialogue with yourself.
When the audio-visual torrent begins –
that oddball blend of fact & fiction,
all you do is wait for the FAQ's
to roll out:
What was that thing I had to do?
Where did I put the keys?

2. The faded sound and colour
of memory. But I was there!
Building an era –
consuming oxygen,
sweating salt.
Nothing like this faulty piece of videotape
playing on the back wall
of my mind.

One hell of a trick.

JEREMY ROBERTS



Photo: Alexander Possingham

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MATTHEW REILLY

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Greg T Ross: Today, it's my great pleasure to introduce Matthew Reilly. Matthew's an internationally bestselling author of the Scarecrow series, the Jack West series, and numerous standalone novels. His books are published in over 20 languages with worldwide sales of over eight million copies. He directed the number one Netflix film Interceptor, which he co-wrote with Stuart Beatty. Welcome to The Last Post Matthew, how are you?

Matthew Reilly: Hey Greg, thanks for having me. I'm beaming in from Los Angeles.

GTR: Yes, it's a wonderful thing. And of course, the coincidental or perhaps not of today being the 29th of September, and signifying also the release of your latest novel, King's Ransom, your 21st novel, I believe.

MR: Yes, yes. It's been a long time. A self-published contest, God, back in 1996 and Ice Station came out in 1998, so still kicking around and still enjoying it immensely.

GTR: Well, I remember it well, as do many, many Australians, your story of rising to success and appreciation of your writing thrillers. And this latest one, boy, oh boy, Sam's back, Sam Speedman's back, and he's not your average detective, is he?

MR: This one is a whole lot of fun. I introduced Sam Speedman in my previous book, The Detective, very clear title to introduce him. And he's a very special detective. He's short, he's skinny, he's got glasses, and he's on the autism spectrum. And he has lunch every day at 12 noon at the local Hooters because the food's reliable and the waitresses are nice to him. And in Detective, he went on a pretty hair raising case and I just enjoyed writing him so much that I though I had to up the ante and bring him back. And so Sam Speedman returns in King's Ransom, and this time I send him to some of the towers of New York City.

GTR: It's a story and a half, and we are glad Sam's back to deal with this because I don't know anyone else that could have done it successfully. I'll tell you what, you've got five innocent hostages, you've got five private detectives, you've got a fiendish ransom game. And the question that everyone was asking before reading this book is, has Detective Sam Speedman met his match? It's described as a fast and deadly Matthew Reilly thriller. What's different about this? I mean, it's a unique setting. I mean, there you are in New York and the skyscrapers, you've got helicopters, you've got jets, you've got Sam Speedman, but you've got this kidnapping. What happens?

MR: It's ramping up the stakes. And so yeah, we start the book with Sam being whizzed on the FBI director's jet from his home in Houston to New York City, the richest man in the world, and some of his kids have been kidnapped. What I wanted to do was I wanted to bring in elements of competition. And so the kidnapper has asked the five best detectives in America to come to this billionaire's penthouse apartment in one of those huge tall pencil towers in New York City. They're called Super Talls on a street that's become known as Billionaire's Row. So I wanted to put Sam up against these other detectives. There are death traps and riddles waiting for them. And somebody is doing a bit of a fiendish test of these detectives. There's a reason for it. This is not just some kidnapper trying to be tricky. There's something behind it. And we've all seen those stories before of a trickster kidnapper. There's something more behind this one. And Sam's a guy who loves the details. And so where other detectives are going to miss the details, he's going to catch something. This one, it's bigger, faster. The action is just bonkers. People hanging from the undersides of elevators, 94 stories up.

GTR: Yes, I read that.

MR: People attached to the outside of windows, 70 stories up. Part of the fun of Sam, which I had in the detective, because he's so forthright, because he's so genuine, to put him next to these super wealthy people in New York City, people of status, it creates a fabulous conflict and tension, which I really love. I enjoyed writing it.

GTR: Yes. Well, you've captured so much in this book too, Matthew. You've combined so much. When I was reading about the two people, I think it was the bodyguard or the kid, was it hanging on at the elevator there? And my thoughts were about seeing this portrayed in a movie. It's very much a movie type novel because it is full of action. I mean, the investigators themselves, they're really challenged, aren't they, because they've got these... Well, they're high concept riddles really, aren't they? And they're

forced to compete to use their skills to decode these clues. I mean, what happens in this is that I guess this is hopefully will lead them to the captive family, Matthew.

MR: Well, that's the test and the test actually becomes who is behind these riddles. And it's actually on the first page of the book. And for those of you watching the video of this interview, I'm wearing my Sam Speedman detective hat, but one of my fans made this wonderful t-shirts for a company called Modern Al Chemical Solutions Incorporated. And on the very first page of the book, it shows Sam's detective logo and the logo for Modern Al Chemical Solutions. And then it says, "Some businesses should never meet." So maybe the people at Modern Al Chemical Solutions are behind all these goings on in the tower hanging people from the bottom of underside of elevators. The question is who might be employing this finger? Honestly, it's over the 21 books I've written. Some books take months to conceive. King's Ransom is one of about three where the idea came to me pretty much fully formed. This whole 480-page book came in one blinding flash, and the story kind of wrote itself. The other book that comes to mind that this happened with was The Tournament, the Book of Mine where I do a chess tournament in the 1500s. The whole story came to me in one feverish day, and that's what happened with King's Ransom.

GTR: Yeah. Well, it's a blessing when that takes place, and then you get involved in the intricacies of the story and you expand on that as you go through obviously. And it really intensifies, doesn't it? I mean, the narrative shifts in the really... Well, it's classic Matthew Riley territory, really, the way you've done this. People will be very familiar with your writing, but it takes it up an ante, I think, with really the deceptiveness of this and the terrifying consequences, the body counts go up and everything else. So it's a page turner in every sense, Matthew. I mean, it's just something that you can't put down.

MR: As you said, I've been doing this for a long time now, and I have one simple rule with each book. It has to be in some way better than the book that came before it. That's a challenge to me, and I think it's an expectation of my readers. With this one, I wanted it to start like a bullet out of a gun and just not stop. And as you mentioned, it's very twisty. No word is wasted. And with a story like King's Ransom, it's a lot of action. It's a lot of twisty, scary scenarios like people hanging from elevators or helicopters falling off the tops of buildings.

But in the end, I think the key and the key that made the detective so wildly popular was Sam Speedman. It's this very gentle, ingenuous, sweet detective. He's not the biggest guy in the room, but he's the hardest worker. And it's so funny, I think readers, and readers told me, they really responded to Sam, and part of the pace of this novel is that it's all told from his point of view. And Sam, being on the autism spectrum, he is impervious to status. He doesn't care how much money you have. He doesn't care if you're the head of the FBI. He's got a case to solve and he's going to solve it. The problem is, as you alluded to, he may be coming up against a villain in this book who is smarter than he is, and Sam's pretty smart, so the villain may be really, really terrifying.

GTR: That's what leaves the reader in a state of suspensions throughout the book too. Of course, the question is that are some villains best left completely alone. Matthew Riley, is there a bit of Sam Speedman in you?

MR: Oh my gosh, yes. My wife would tell you that there's a lot of him in me. Actually, a few of my brother and my good friend, the screenwriter, Stuart Beattie, who co-wrote Interceptor with me, they both said when they first read about Sam Speedman in the first book, the detective, they said, "There's a lot of you in Sam Speedman." I am very obsessive. I have great attention to detail. If you write books like I write, you are singularly focused on creating just the fastest narrative engine you can. And I am devoted to that in the same way that Sam is just devoted to finding the truth of whatever case he's on. A lot of his observations of the world in both books in Detective and King's Ransom are pretty much my observations. People who don't park squarely in the parking space really annoy me and they annoy Sam. You find out in this book, the movie posters he has on the wall of his bedroom, and they're like Aliens and Searching with Bobby Fisher, which are my favorite movies too. So a lot of the books he likes, the movies he likes, and the things he says about the world are exactly how I see the world.

GTR: Yeah. Well, I mean, the tenacity and I guess the attention to detail and that spirit that of course... I mean, you were born in Sydney and... Well, I'm led to believe, Matthew, that you weren't always particularly interested in reading until you came across a couple of books. I think, was it To Kill a Mockingbird and Lord of the Flies, I think, wasn't it?

MR: Yes. I went to a high school where in year seven, they gave us these dry 200-year-old penguin classics to read. There was like Gulliver's Travels and Silas Manor. And if you want to turn off a 13-year-old boy from reading for life, give him Gullivers Travels or Silas Mana. These are classic books, don't get me wrong. But a 13-year-old boy, especially now, I mean, I was in school 30-odd years ago, a 13-year-old boy now, they've got video games, internet, social media. If you want to get them reading, you've got to grab their attention. So yes, reading to me when I was 13, I'd rather go and play soccer or cricket or go and see a movie. And it was those two books, Kill a Muckingbird: Lord of the Flies, which transported me, showed me that reading could make you forget the passage of time. And that's exactly the kind of feeling I want to give readers whenever they pick up any one of my books.

GTR: Well, you do. I think this is one of the beauty of your writing too, Matthew, is you are transported to another world and you're alongside Sam Speedman as he's trying to nut out what's going on in each of these in Detective as well as this book, the latest one released today, King's Ransom by Matthew Riley, about reading, transporting you to another world. And I guess the benefit of being a bestselling author like yourself too, Matthew, is that you are able to transport yourself to another world, not only by reading, but by picking up a pen.

MR: Oh, you're absolutely right. I live in Los Angeles these days, and I used to live in Sydney, and I've never written stories set in the city I live in. It is escape for me as well. Whether in the Jack West series, a series of seven books, I went to the pyramids, Stonehenge, Easter Island, and actually visited those places to research those books. And same with King's Ransom. I went to New York City to research the book. There are several places in the book from Billionaires Road to 60 Hudson Street to Coney Island. I went to all of them, but yeah, in my imagination, I get to go to these places as well when I sit in front of my computer and my keyboard. So yeah, I think one of my biggest advantages is I'm just like my readers. I read to escape and you're absolutely right. I actually get to escape when I write the books themselves.

GTR: Well, actually, it's again coincidental, but I was watching a program on the great painter Sydney Nolan last night, and it was said of Sydney that he not only created images and saw them in his head, but he also wrote. He was a writer too. Is it the same with you? Do you see these images? What comes first, the words or the images?

MR: No, that's a very good question. Gosh, I'm actually at my desk right now. I don't have anything here I could show you, but I draw many of the scenes before I write them. Whether it was the two people, the bodyguard and the boy hanging from their feet from the underside of the express elevator on the 94th floor, or there's a scene in the book of a helicopter slowly falling off the top of this hundred-story building.

I drew those scenes just with a pencil and paper so I could see the image myself. And then honestly, when you write the scene, you're just describing what you drew. So definitely, I create an image often before I write, and then it's clear as day for me. And even with the books, actually, even if you go back to the very first... Well, the first two books, Contest and Ice Station, both of them had basic diagrams of the layouts of the New York State Library or the Ice Station in Antarctica. We've all heard that a picture tells

a thousand words, but a thousand words in a book is three pages. So if you give people a diagram, they've instantly imagined what you want them to see, and boom, you're off to the races with fast-paced story.

GTR: Well, it's brilliant. And I was just wondering whether with the images and the words, of course, do you have to be in a state of total relaxation? I mean, are you lying down when you're seeing these images or is this something that happens to you when you're out shopping, or when does this come to you?

MR: No, there's a really good answer to that. It's first thing in the morning. When I sit up in bed, I have a little secret. I have a Nespresso coffee machine on the nightstand next to my bed. So when I wake up in the morning, I don't even get out of bed before I've had my first coffee, but I will not touch my phone for 25 minutes. So I will sit up in bed, make that coffee, look out at the sun rising. I wake quite early, about 6:00 AM, and I will just think for 25 minutes. And before I open my phone, and there may be emails which take your brain out of creative mode, I get so many good ideas in those first 25 minutes of the day. And if I'm on a roll, I've got my notebook next to the bed, I'll do it for 45 minutes or an hour before I get out of bed. So that's a little writing creative secret right there.

GTR: Thinking without distraction is increasingly hard in today's world, and it becomes an even greater challenge. I know that just on a personal level, I will put aside the phone too, and it's amazing the things that come to you when you're free of distraction, Matthew.

MR: These smartphones are just amazing devices, and honestly, they've become integral to our lives. But I go to the airport a lot, and I just see everybody sitting there with their heads down, looking at their phones, and I make it a point just to sit and look around with my head up, and I'm one of those people who's determined that I'm not going to let my phone rule me. It's my tool, I'm not its tool. I think it's very important that we make sure that our phones, they're there to be useful to us, but we can't let them rule us, and this is something I actively try to do.

GTR: Just a quick instance too, of course, taking a train ride was always an enjoyable experience for me. I would peer out the window, and I still try to do that when I'm taking a train ride. But more increasingly more now, of course, you see people with their heads down looking at their phones while on the train, and I think they're missing out on some beautiful scenery as we pass through the countryside. It's incredible, so totally understand. With the thing, with, I guess, the release of King's Ransom Today, which is a wonderful, wonderful book, but this goes back... I mean, you wrote your first novel at 19, I believe, and while you were at uni studying law, how did you combine those two things to do both successfully?

MR: I've always been a very good time manager. That was contest, and that's a guy fighting aliens in a building in New York City. It was just a fun romp to write. And honestly, I would do my university studies from Monday to Friday, and on the weekend, my reward was getting to sit down for a few hours to write my book. On the university holidays or vacations, I'd get three days in a row to write my book, and it was an enjoyable hobby. I tell people who say to me they want to write books, I tell them, "Don't quit your job and tell all your friends you're going to take a year off and write a book. That puts too much pressure on you. Do it as a hobby, do it for fun, and if it becomes a career, then it's the single greatest career in your life because you're getting paid to do what you love." So I balanced the law school during the week, and I'd write on the weekends. It's funny, I self-published contest and McMillan found it and signed me up to a deal for two books, and I still had a year to go on my law degree. So I actually wrote Ice Station during the final year of my law studies.

GTR: That's right, I heard that.

MR: I mean, I was working in a bar and I had a part-time job at a law firm, and so I'm writing iStation on the weekends, but hey, let's be honest, youth is wasted on the young. At that point, I was, what, 23? When you're 23, you can burn the candle at both ends. I'm 52 now, I can't do that anymore. But yeah, when I was 23, I had a lot of energy.

GTR: It's the spirit that carries you through in such, I guess, enterprises with your writing too. And you would be someone, I guess, you mentioned earlier that this was only the second book really that you could remember of yours, that you had the story encapsulated to a large degree before you sat down to give it backbone and story, et cetera, detail. What do you prefer? Do you prefer having that story known to you before you sit down to write it, or do you prefer the discovery of not knowing what's going to happen?

MR: No, I like to have the book mapped out, and with this one in tournament, it was a very quick process to map it out. Others have taken longer, but no, I've met... Over the last 28 years of being a writer, you go to writers' festivals, I've met a lot of other authors, and put simply, there are two kinds of authors in the world. There are happy ones and there are miserable ones. The happy ones plan out the ending, the miserable ones. They sit in front of the computer and they look at a blank screen and they go, "Oh my gosh, what am I going to do?" No, overwhelmingly, the planners are the ones who enjoy what they do. And also, again, my stuff is very plot oriented, very twisty, so I need to know who's going to be revealed as a bad guy later on. How is the hero like Sam Speedman going to figure out something? So you can't just see where the wind takes you with that kind of book. So planning definitely suits my kind of book. If you were an author, to be fair, writing something which was a bit more existential or more about the human condition, I understand maybe you just sit down and see where the wind takes you, but it's a hard way to write a book.

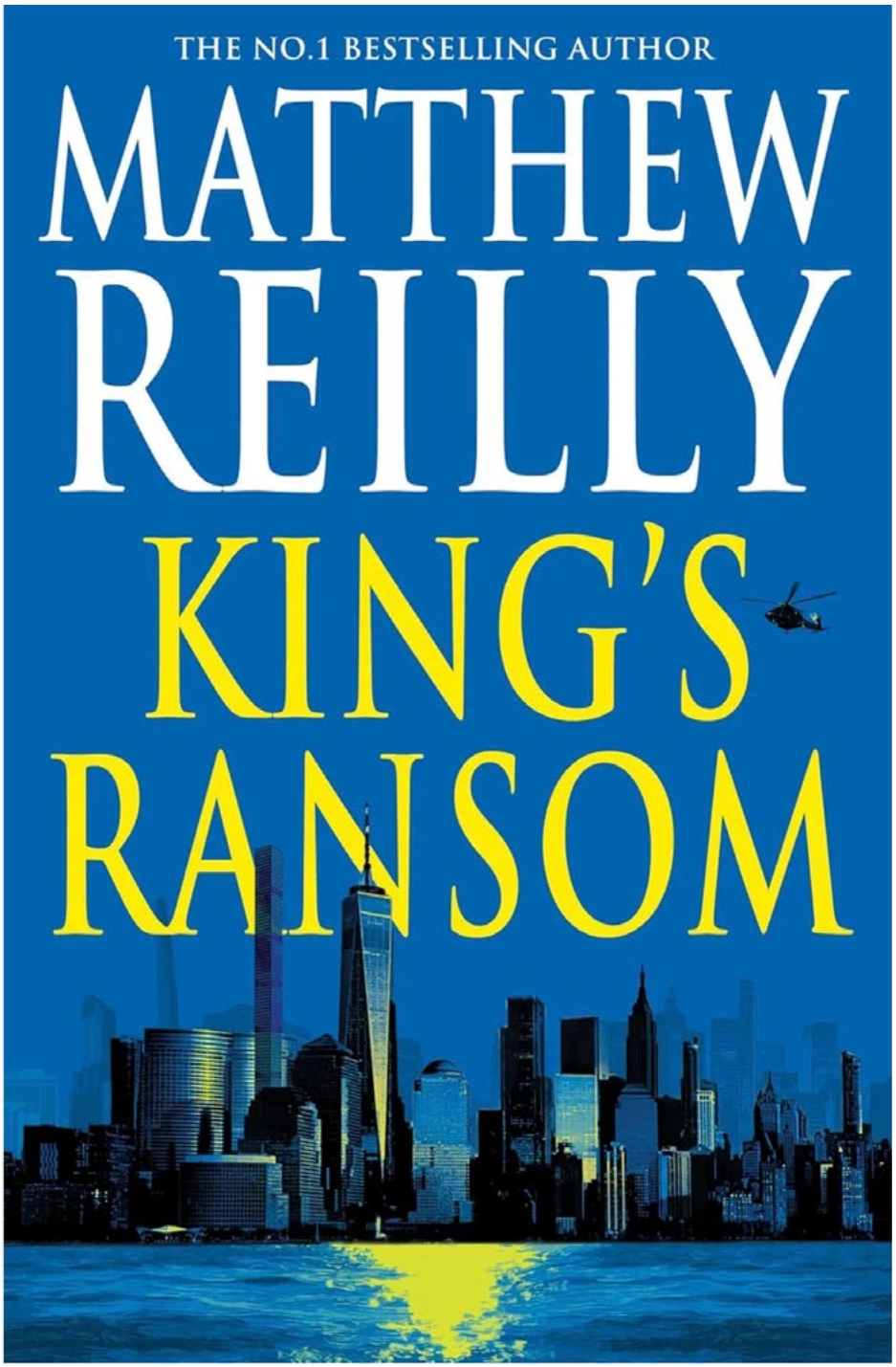
GTR: Actually, I was going to say the same thing about there being two different types of writers, and you hear the story of some writers tearing themselves apart. They're up at 2:00 AM, 3:00 AM, they don't know what... They've got, as you said, looking at a blank page. And then of course, there's the Matthew Riley who has it plotted out preferably, and it must make for a much easier transition to the reality of your story, I guess, too. Yeah.

MR: Absolutely. And that's what keeps the pace up. My books are known for their pace, and because I know where I'm going, it's just boom, boom, boom. Let's get to the next path.

GTR: I had to have many breaks during reading this book because of the pace of it. It's an amazing thing, and it transports you right into the action itself. We're speaking about Han Solo too, because I believe you've got Han Solo in your office there too, Matthew.

MR: I do. I do. Again, for those watching this interview, I'm in my office here. Han Solo, he's just off screen there, all seven feet of him. He's literally life-size, like having Harrison Board in your office. I mean, you can see here, I've got a Django Fet Star Wars helmet. I've got a Millennium Falcon, and I've got this... My office has got the little diehard building from Diehard. I've even got the Hail Mary, the spaceship from the movie, Project Hail Mary. My office is designed to inspire me. I sit here every day and work away, and seeing Han Solo up on the wall or seeing the Millennium Falcon sparks my imagination. I think about the imagination that created not only Han Solo, but that put him in Carbonite on the wall of Jebba the Hut's Palace back in Return of the Jedi, and that inspires me. I mean, even just, I can see here, I've got Indiana Jones on his horse riding alongside the truck from Raiders of the Lost Ark, just one of the greatest action scenes ever. So I have some figures here that some fans made. One of them is the heroine of my own movie, Interceptor, and she's all batted up, and she's holding a gun, and she's got this duct tape where she's taped up a bullet wound. Yeah, you've got to surround yourself with inspiration, and I'm fortunate to be able to fill my office with hand solos and movie memorabilia.

GTR: Yeah, your office looks so inviting, Matthew. It would be a joy to enter the, I won't say confines, because the imagination will take you anywhere, but to enter the office each



day to write and to some beautiful things there that you've just pointed out in your office. We're talking about work, and writing, it's work, but it's not work, I guess, in many ways too. What do you do to get away from that, to, I don't know, relax, or what do you do to get away from that?

MR: I'm a big golfer. I enjoy golf, and I learned early on that golf is a good thing for an author because it's something I can do by myself at 2:30 in the afternoon when my wife is at work. So if I played tennis, I'd need someone to play with. But golf, as anyone who's played golf, knows it's entirely absorbing and you could never master it, so you can always get better, but it's also something that makes me not think about stories and characters and plots and fast moving twists, so it takes my mind away from that. I'm also a big traveler. I enjoy traveling and I enjoy living here in the United States now. I've bounced all over the United States, and I'm actually hoping to go down to Texas in the future to go and do a bit of research for a future book to a little corner of Texas right down near the border. Sometimes you just got to go see it, so I'm going to fly into Texas and rent a car and drive on down to the border.

GTR: How wonderful that would be too. And then seeing the potential of this upcoming book that you're in the process of planning now, Matthew, to see the surrounds and the environment which will help shape your words and imagination.

MR: One of the big questions I get from people who want to write novels, they say, "Do you have to go to a place to write about it?" And my answer is always consistent. You don't have to, but it helps. When I wrote Ice Station, I was at university. I couldn't go to Antarctica. I still haven't been to Antarctica, but Ice Station is still one of my most successful books. You can research it. I researched Ice Station at my local public library in Northern Sydney in Willoughby Library. I've never been to Peru, but Temple was set entirely in the Inca civilization in Peru. But with the recent books with Detective, I went to Texas and Louisiana where most of the story is set and a little bit of Florida. With King's Ransom, it's New York, and you could take yourself on a tour of New York City with King's Ransom. And if I've learned anything in the last few years too, and we talked about smartphones before, I assume people reading my books now have their smartphone next to them as they're reading. So if I mention the Towers of Billionaires Row, I assume a reader can look it up straight away. Or there's a building in the book called 60 Hudson Street, which is the center of the internet on the east coast of the United States. This is true. I actually got chased out of the lobby of that building when I went to research it, but don't tell anybody. Sometimes you do have to go to a place to... It sparks a little more out of your brain. So you don't have to go to a place, but it helps.

GTR: It reminds me of speaking with Di Morrissey, the Australian writer too. She does exactly the same thing and travels to these parts of Australia and the world before writing books just to soak it all up, I guess, which is an amazing thing. You like traveling. What are you going to do to promote the book King's Ransom, your 21st novel? Are you going to go around America? What are you doing?

MR: No, there's no plan to do a tour for this one. I did a tour with the detective last year, and actually I delivered King's Ransom a year earlier than it was supposed to be delivered. So my publisher was like, "Woohoo, we can release another book this year." So no, there's no tour for this one. I'm talking to you. I'm doing a television interview in a couple of days, and I'll just keep in touch with my fans through social media, which is actually kind of helpful for this sort of thing. So no, for this one, we just put the book out and hopefully people just enjoy it.

GTR: Well, as previously, it's a magnificent book and it will sell itself in many ways because it's something that you have to read to believe and with a good old Sam Speedman back and everyone's glad about that too and doing his normal stuff and a bit more too in this one too. It's an amazing book. Matthew Reilly, it's been an absolute pleasure to have you here, speaking about King's Ransom and your life and I suppose Sam and Han Solo and golf and everything else. So yeah, thank you very much and all the best with the book and all coming books for you.

MR: Mate, thank you so much for having me. It's been great to talk to you.



David Wiffen 1942–2026

"He had a voice that could part Lake Ontario."
declared Blackie & The Rodeo Kings' Tom Wilson when talking up Canada's deep voiced troubadour David Wiffen.

Kudos had also come from Gordon Lightfoot who once said, "David could sing the tits off a bull". Between 1965 and 2015, Wiffen, who died on 5 April 2026 at age 84, released only five studio albums but, nonetheless, leaves behind a solid body of work much revered by both fans and fellow songwriters. In his lifetime, Wiffen had his songs covered by contemporaries in Tom Rush, Roger McGuinn, Eric Andersen, Jerry Jeff Walker, Anne Murray, David Bromberg and Ray Wylie Hubbard. From the 1990s onward, Wiffen began to attract a new breed of admirers - Cowboy Junkies, Blackie & The Rodeo Kings, Rumer, The Black Crowes and Hiss Golden Messenger have all raided the Wiffen songbook. Although primarily pigeonholed as a Folk singer, Wiffen was much more than that – he incorporated elements of Blues, Country Rock and Jazz into his songs and filled them with a storyteller's lyricism. Above all, he always sounded exactly like himself.

A regular performer around Toronto's Folk circles in the first half of the 1960s, Wiffen then travelled across Canada before settling in Vancouver where he recorded what would become his first solo album. David Wiffen at the Bunkhouse Coffeehouse, Vancouver BC was originally intended to be a sampler LP of various Folk performers but when the other musicians were unable to attend due to heavy snow falls, Wiffen was left to record an album's worth of songs in a three-hour session at a small Vancouver studio.

Released on the New York based International label in 1965, the album is a product of its time. Wiffen covers songs from then current Folk auteurs Bob Dylan, Ian Tyson, Bob Gibson and George Remaily and mixes it up with traditional warhorses from Jimmie Rodgers and Leadbelly. Three other tracks lift Wiffen way above the standard coffeehouse Folkie – he goes all Irish on the good-humoured Courtin' In The Kitchen and the sole original, Slice Of Life, comes across as a Bluesy romp all about living hard and doing it tough. The real keeper is Wiffen's soulful take on Lenny Welch's



R&B torch song Since I Fell For You, so right for his honeyed baritone and jazzy crooning.

Only 100 copies of Bunkhouse were pressed making the album a desired rarity among collectors, some paying upwards of $3500 for a copy. Following Bunkhouse's release, Wiffen fronted The Pacers, a British Columbia beat combo who released one single on RCA Victor. In Ottawa, Wiffen joined The Children, a quirky outfit made up of songwriters Bruce Cockburn, William Hawkins, Sandy Crawley, Peter Hodgson (aka Sneezy Waters) and Neville Wells who all dabbled in Blues, Garage Rock, Folk and Jug Band music. Wiffen, who was beginning to write his own songs, was drawn to The Children's manifesto of original material. After the band's breakup in 1967, Wiffen was brought into 3's A Crowd, a Folk-Pop combo built around the vocals of Donna Warner. Signed to ABC Dunhill, 3's A Crowd released their sole LP Christopher's Movie Matinee co-produced by Steve Barri and Mama Cass. Falling somewhere between the sounds of California's We Five and The Mamas & Papas, Christopher's Movie Matinee features songs from Hawkins, Cockburn and Canadian newcomer Murray McLauchlan plus Wiffen's own I Don't Want To Drive You Away, later covered by Anne Murray.

Wiffen returned to solo performances after 3's A Crowd disbanded and caught the eyes and ears of a Fantasy Records executive. Signed to the Berkeley, California based label in 1970, Wiffen brought a batch of original songs to the Oakland studio and in April the following year a self-titled album was released. Produced by San Francisco's Ed Bogas, who brought in guitarists Jerry Corbitt, from The Youngbloods, and future Doobie Brother John McFee to the sessions, David Wiffen fits into to the upper echelon of the 70s singer/songwriter orbit. As a lyricist, Wiffen liked to chronicle the trials of an introspective loner who was either going somewhere or leaving somewhere and or maybe caught in the middle. In between the Wiffen originals there was a fine revisitation of Since I Fell For You, once again a perfect vehicle for Wiffen's Fred Neil hued baritone.

Poorly promoted, David Wiffen sank and Fantasy dropped Wiffen from the label, however the album did establish him as a songwriter's songwriter. Tom Rush was first to cover Lost My Driving Wheel, a slow burner about isolation on the road, and Byrds founder Roger McGuinn included it on his debut solo album. Maverick Oklahoma singer songwriter Ray Wylie Hubbard recorded a craggy version of Driving Wheel for his 2005 album Delirium Tremolos. Ian & Sylvia, Jerry Jeff Walker and Eric Andersen covered the countrified More Often Than Not and Harry Belafonte found room for the wistful Mr Wiffen on his 1973 LP Play Me.

Two years later, United Artists released Wiffen's third album Coast To Coast Fever. Recorded in Toronto and produced by old friend Bruce Cockburn, Coast To Coast Fever remains one of the more underappreciated or overlooked singer/songwriter albums of the 1970s. Cockburn kept the sonics spare but expressive, favouring a small studio unit of electric guitar, bass, piano and drums. Wiffen accompanied himself on acoustic guitar and piano through a set of self-written songs described by Toronto writer and publicist Richard Flohil as "exquisite sadness". Mixing up Folk, Jazz and Blues, Wiffen's melancholy originals refuse to date and could well have been recorded last week. As an acknowledgement to his Canadian counterparts, Wiffen took on three non-originals - he shaped Murray McLauchlan's You Need A New Lover Now into a piano based barroom lament while Willie P. Bennett's timeless road song White Lines got a wonderful makeover from Wiffen's burnished baritone riding on top of Brian Ahern's lush arrangement. Cockburn's slide guitar driven rocker Up On The Hillside allowed Wiffen some Blues informed swagger into his vocals. Although reviewed positively and nominated for a Juno award, Coast To Coast Fever, like its predecessor, eventually fell out of print.

Without any support from a record label, Wiffen continued to tour deep into the 1970s. He also recorded tracks for a possible fourth album but disillusioned with the music business he came off the road as the decade began to fade. He married Joanne from British Columbia in 1982 and settled on a property close to picturesque farmland not that far from Ottawa's city limits. By then, he'd realised his musical muse had deserted him. Songwriting was overtaken by other artistic pursuits. "David was an accomplished painter and sculptor; he also wrote some poetry but not a lot." confirmed Joanne Wiffen. When he wanted to listen to music, he chose Jazz greats Dexter Gordon and Thelonius Monk. For a brief period, he found steady employment as a limousine driver and was content to live a life away from the mainstream.



In 1994 and after twenty years lost in the vinyl wilderness, Coast To Coast Fever was given a CD reissue by EMI Canada accompanied with an informative text from writer Richard Flohil where Wiffen elaborated on his absence from recording and writing. He also told Flohil of the embarrassment he felt when fans approached him via mail or telephone often asking about new product. "I find it hard to explain why I don't do this anymore." Nonetheless, one aficionado was determined to bring Wiffen back into a recording studio.

Phillip Victor Bova, an Ottawa bassist, recording engineer and producer, had entertained the thought of producing a Wiffen comeback album for some years. He first approached the singer-songwriter about new recordings in 1994 but Wiffen seemed somewhat reluctant. "So instead, I proposed dropping by his house every Wednesday afternoon to jam, thinking this might be a low-pressure way to get his creative juices going. Didn't take too long. The recording took place over four years at three different studios." Bova told me in 2010. Titled South Of Somewhere, the new offering was released on True North Records in early 1999. Apparently True North founder Bernie Finkelstein wept with joy when he first heard the album.

South Of Somewhere was the comeback album Wiffen fans had long dreamed of. A thirteen-song opus, the new album featured strong remakes of older material plus six new originals that proved Wiffen had lost none of his artistry. Bova provided Wiffen with a warm, organic soundscape that framed the songs with slide guitars, lap steels, mandolins and B3 organs. Of the newer material, Harlequin and Fugitive ruminated on the perils of fortune and fame while the title track and No Desire For Texas revisited themes of loss and longing. Although South Of Somewhere gathered excellent reviews and much radio airplay, Wiffen felt the pressure of promoting the album too much and he pulled back. "Sadly, David stayed inactive since that time." Bova said ruefully.

However, a new generation began to discover Wiffen's oeuvre. Toronto's alt-country quartet Cowboy Junkies covered Lost My Driving Wheel in 1992 and Ontario's roots rock/alt country trio Blackie & The Rodeo Kings included a faithful version of Skybound Station on their 1999 double album Kings Of Love. Then the David Wiffen renaissance, albeit overdue, started to sprout around 2013 when Canadian musician and archivist Ian McLeish assembled a compilation CD of demos and live recordings from The Children. Wiffen features on only six tracks sourced from a 1997 reunion gig at the Ottawa Folk Festival but his sturdy lead vocal on the folk rocker I Don't Want To Drive You Away, a song he wrote in the 1960s, makes it one of the album's standout tracks.

The following year, Californian reissue label Water gave Wiffen's Fantasy album a CD release with four bonus tracks that included a rollicking take on Randy Newman's Lover's Prayer and a haunting original Cry In The Morning Rain. In 2015, True North Records released Songs From The Lost And Found, a 17-song collection of unreleased material Wiffen had recorded during the 1970s and early 1980s. A labour of love project from Ian McLeish, Songs From The Lost And Found is a revelation. None of the songs are weak or half-baked, it's Wiffen at his experimental best. There are excursions into Country Rock, Dylanesque imagery, sea shanties, Rock & Roll, Reggae and Pop. Of the two non-originals is a languid Country Blues reading of Jagger & Richards' No Expectations.

"We thought the recordings that made up Songs From The Lost And Found had been destroyed in a fire but they were later recovered," added Joanne. "For some reason they were in the possession of Ian McLeish who offered to produce the CD before it was distributed by True North. In my opinion some of David's best work ever is contained in Songs From The Lost And Found. He was a balladeer extraordinaire and a true wordsmith."

Six years later, Spain's Mapache Records re-issued David Wiffen At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse on vinyl and, months later, McLeish gave the album a CD run on his Mousehole Music imprint. For the many who missed it the first time around, Bunkhouse is more than a charming time capsule as it exposes a 23-year-old performer already well versed in Folk and Blues idioms. The reissue was seemed to close the book on Wiffen's recording output but in 2024, Italy's New Shot Records issued Timeless Songs, eleven tracks culled from three separate live performances taped in 1974 and 1993. Well recorded and featuring some of his best-known songs in acoustic and electric settings, Timeless Songs is a worthwhile addition to the Wiffen catalogue.

David Wiffen died in an Ottawa hospice on 5 April with wife Joanne at his side. Tributes came from friends, family, journalists, fans and fellow artists. "The people who talked about David's music were folks I respected so I knew he was special." offered Toronto singer/songwriter Joanne Mackell who'd been captured by More Often Than Not upon first listen. Meanwhile, Blackie & The Rodeo Kings' Tom Wilson has promised to record an entire album of Wiffen songs.

"David took me to my first concert (The Kingston Trio) and shared his musical enthusiasms from Lonnie Donegan to Bob Dylan, B.B King, Fred Neil, Miles Davis and Bill Evans," reflected Wiffen's younger brother Graham. "David's career was relatively short; he was not a prolific songwriter but that voice was unsurpassed and I'm grateful that his recordings exist so that future generations will be able to experience that amazing baritone."

MICHAEL MACDONALD

Special thanks: Graham Wiffen, Joanne Wiffen, Phillip Victor Bova and Joanne Mackell.

LEST WE FORGET



POPPIES OF REMEMBRANCE

COMMEMORATIVE SILVER SET

The poppy has long served as a potent emblem of remembrance in honour of all those who have served and sacrificed in war. Its various colours - most notably red, white, purple, and black - embody different narratives, philosophies, and social critiques related to war and peace, as well as unrecognised and unwritten histories. Understanding the origins and evolving meanings of each different coloured poppy used for remembrance provides an important insight into how modern society pays tribute or commemorates human conflict - including the perspective and collective memory of those history has chosen to leave out.

As the eleventh of the eleventh draws near for another year, The Bradford Mint is especially proud to honour the four recognised poppy colours - red, white, purple and black – as they embody a spectrum of remembrance philosophies, which include all those who have served, suffered or sacrificed. The first poppy coin in the series honours the red poppy, which emphasises sacrifice and patriotism. The others in various weights, denominations and colours honour animals used in warfare, advocates for peace and non-violence, and marginalised racial histories and contributions. As societies continue to reflect on their histories, the poppy, in all its variations, remains a potent talisman- constantly reinterpreted by new generations seeking to honour the dead, and respect the service of survivors.

SPECIFICATIONS				
WEIGHT	1/4oz	1/2oz	1oz	2oz
DIAMETER	22mm	32mm	38.6mm	50mm
MINTAGE LIMIT	1,918 worldwide			
ALLOY	.999 Silver			
ISSUING AUTHORITY	Ascension Island, approved by Buckingham Palace			
OBVERSE	Finely etched, raised-relief poppies in vibrant red, white, purple and black enamel symbolise remembrance, sacrifice, peace, wartime service and Indigenous contributions, The inscriptions "LEST WE FORGET" and "11th HOUR, 11th DAY, 11th MONTH" and poignant lines from The Ode of Remembrance honour all who served.			
REVERSE	Features a finely etched, raised-relief portrait of His Majesty King Charles III, accompanied by the year of issue, 2026.			

To secure this exclusive Poppies of Remembrance Silver Set, call one of our Senior Executives on 02 9841 3324 between 9am - 5pm today!

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The Curious Connection between Captain Cook, Quebec, and Australia

It would make a great movie.

Only James Cook, a rising young officer in the Royal Navy, already known for his spectacular navigation skills, can get the ships' boats secretly up the river at night.

On the northern bank, the French are complacent, confident that the steep cliffs above Canada's St Lawrence river will continue to provide a barrier.

On the southern bank, the British are restless. Their ships command the river, but they have been unable to establish a beachhead, despite months of attempted landings and gunnery attacks. But tonight, brilliant young General Wolfe will task Colonel William Howe with leading a small force of infantry up an obscure path in secret. If all goes well a surprise attack on the French rear will eventuate.

If the attempt fails then the French may end up dominating all of what is now Canada and the USA. The American Revolution may never happen. If Cook had been wounded enough not to command a ship then Australia's east coast may never have been charted. The landing where he claimed the new country for Britain may never have happened. Indeed, the world would largely be speaking French now.

Can all this come down to what happened on a small plain on the morning of 13 September 1759?

Visiting Quebec recently, this was what dominated my mind as we looked over the peaceful Canadian river.

250 years ago, it was all about who was going to possess the New World. Columbus's four voyages of 1492 to 1504 had opened up the Americas to Europe. The Italian explorer and navigator had been commissioned by Spain, but they largely began to dominate below the equator. To the north both the French and the British began landings and then settlements. There was much at stake, with the fur trade offering immense riches.

Both countries pushed inland. The local Indian tribes attacked some of the settlements; were eventually beaten back by superior firearm technology, and then some made allegiances as best they could. Indians were to be present on both sides in the combat actions of the future.

Before Quebec's decisive battle, it became obvious that the rivers and the lakes would be a significant part of the military movement. If your side could control an important ford, then the other side could not get across to attack you. If your side could use the water to move heavy guns, then they could be landed to aid your firepower.

Before the battle at Quebec, there had been many a fight. A significant local identity was beginning to emerge, those who we might label even then "Americans", and they favoured taking advantage of camouflage; ambushes, and blending in with the massive forests rather than the open-plain brightly uniformed traditional tactics of the British.

Even then there were some grumblings about how far-off Britain did not understand the needs and desires of those who lived in the New World, but that was to begin in Boston years later. For now the struggle was between the French and the British, although in what was becoming known as the Seven Years War there were plenty of other countries joining in for hopeful spoils: Prussia siding with Britain, and Austria joining France. And Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Russia and several small states were in there too, hoping for good returns.

France did very well, as a glance at the map shows. But by 1759 the British had realised that taking the isolated forts at key points was working. In mid-1759, they took Fort Niagara and Fort Carillon, cutting off French forts further west. Quebec was going to be the big key. If Britain could turn it to their advantage, then they could deny the French.

Once Colonel Howe had his initial force up the tortuous 50m cliff path, he cautiously formed it into a line while remaining quiet. More and more men followed, along with two small artillery pieces. Meanwhile, a feint attack was going on from the river: the artillery pieces of Royal Navy warships belched flame and smoke as a landing was simulated to draw off the defenders.

The French, under the brave and resourceful Marquis de Montcalm, were some two kilometres to the east of Wolfe's men behind some defences. As the news reached him of a surprise attack, Montcalm decided to wait no longer for more enemy soldiers to ascend the heights but to fight.

It was an infantry versus infantry slugging match. Montcalm had around the same number of troops, and he advanced while the British lines waited. Some accounts say the first volley they fired from their Brown Bess muskets was from only 40 metres range. The British control of their fire was more devastating, and soon the French retreated; the British resolutely following. Both generals, leading with immense courage, were both were fatally wounded, Wolfe dying that night, and Montcalm the next day.

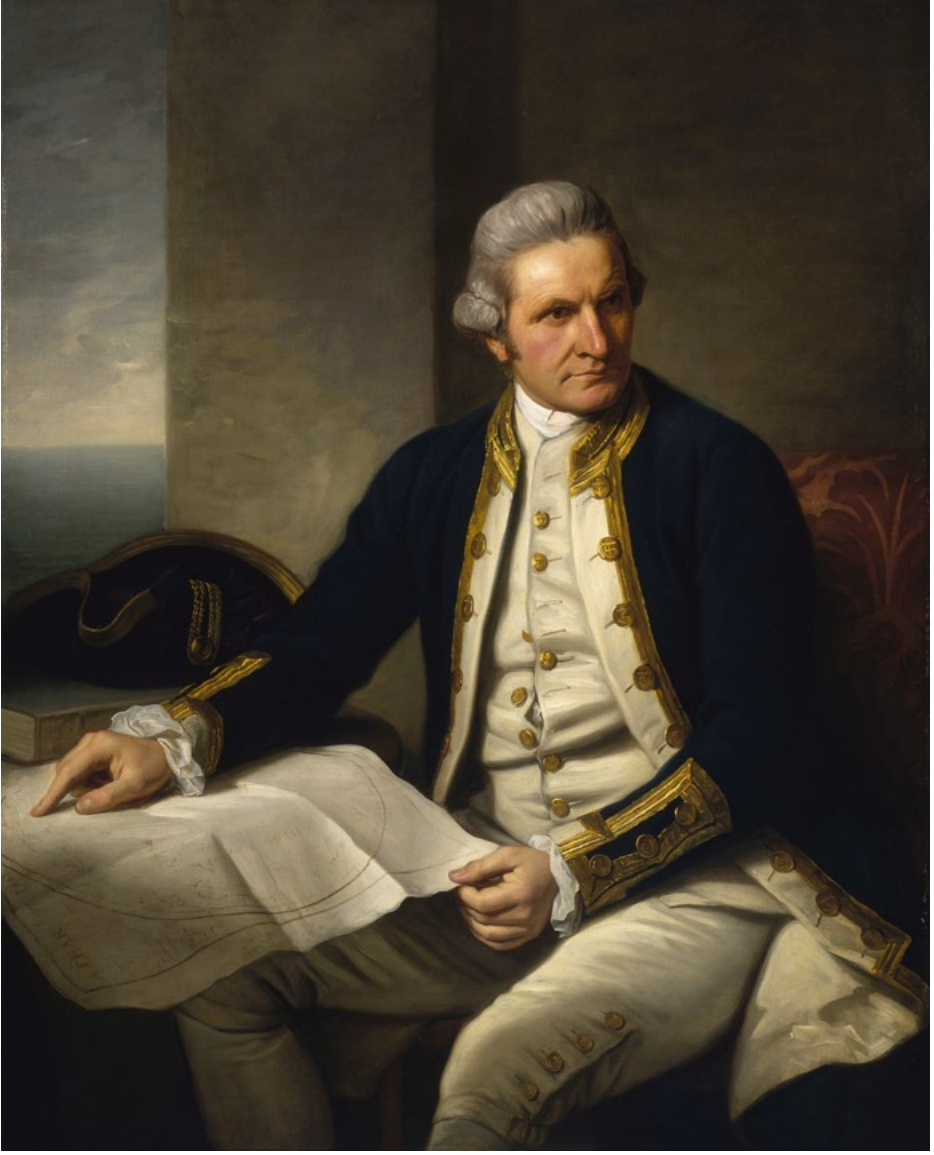
The French forces retreated west to Montreal in the summer of 1760, but after a two-month campaign by overwhelming British forces, they surrendered on 8 September, essentially ending the French Empire in North America.

The battlefield of the Plains of Abraham – named after a local farmer – are worth visiting. Although much of the area was resumed as farmland, and later part of it used an airstrip, it has today been preserved as parklands and sports grounds. Driving along the lower part of the cliffs is possible, and the courage of the men who climbed up those heights is brought into your mind as you glance up at the cliffs.

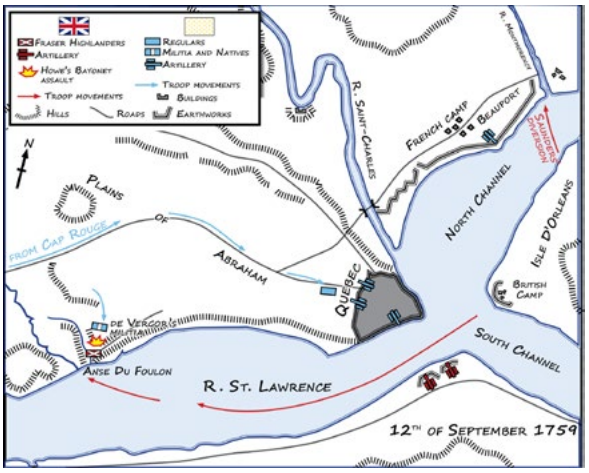
James Cook was only at the start of his great career. After Quebec he was sent to chart the coastline of Newfoundland. His skills brought him to the attention of the Royal Society, and in 1768 as commander of HMS Endeavour he began the first of his three voyages. For which we may well be thankful.

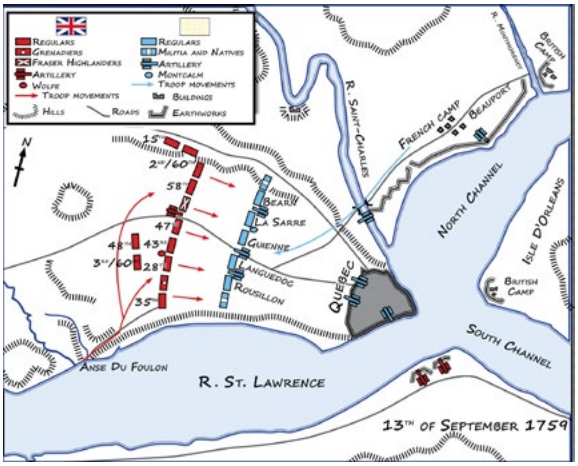
TOM LEWIS

Dr Tom Lewis OAM is a military historian. His latest book is The Battle of the Coral Sea – Explained – "how America saved Australia", published by Avonmore

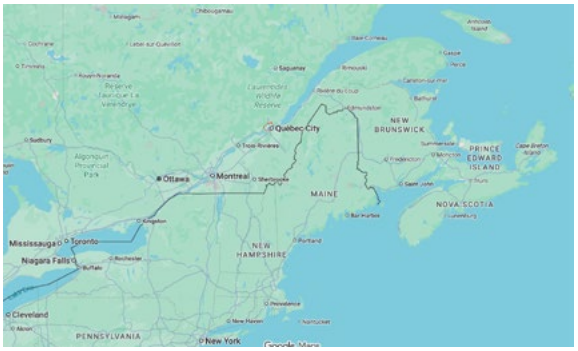












CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:

An official portrait of James Cook in 1775.
(Royal Museums Greenwich, now public domain)

How history changes in a morning, and prevents what might have been today. North America in 1750, before what was to become known by the Americans as the French and Indian War, by Britain and France the Seven Years War. (Courtesy Pinpin)

The landing phase on 12 September 1759 preceding the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. (Hoodinski)

Battle is joined; some reports say it only lasted 40 minutes before the French broke and retreated. (Hoodinski)

It's all about where you are allowed to cross the river. Quebec today, with the wide St Lawrence River separating what was then the British to the south from the French north. (Google Maps)

A monument to Generals Wolfe and Montcalm - the French leader's name is on the other side. (Author photo)







OPPOSITE PAGE:

TOP:
The Death of General Wolfe (1771), on the Plains of Abraham, near Quebec. James Wolfe was only 32. Painting by Benjamin West, 1770. (Public domain)

BOTTOM:
Engraving based on a sketch by Wolfe's aide-de-camp, Hervey Smythe, depicting the climb by Wolfe's soldiers. (Public domain)

THIS PAGE:

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:

A mortally wounded Montcalm being taken to the close-by town of Quebec after being wounded in the battle. (By Eugène Guénin; public domain)

At the base of the 50m cliffs which were thought to provide enough protection to prevent a British attack. (Author photo)

Part of the battlefield of the Plains of Abraham today. (Author photo)

Part of the battlefield of the Plains of Abraham today – there are some 50m square of this sort of terrain, but the rest is flat. (Author photo)







A powerful tribute to the unseen service of veteran families

In 2015, during a theatre performance, a simple yet powerful moment of a wife supporting her returned veteran moved a solider attending the show so completely that he left the show at intermission, rushing home to embrace his own wife.

This profound recognition sparked a mission to acknowledge the thousands of families who share a similar journey, honouring the quiet, often unseen sacrifice of standing beside someone in service.

The families of our veterans serve too

The Recognising Families Sculpture embodies the enduring strength of families, parents, partners and children who serve without salute, standing resolutely beside their loved one in service.

When their veteran steps up, so too do their families – in the love they show, the support they give, the hope they hold, and the quiet sacrifices that keep home life steady.

At the Australian War Memorial, this sculpture will give form to that resolve and love, recognising the often-unseen sacrifices of veteran families.

Whether you're a current-serving member or veteran who wants to say thank you to their loved ones for standing by them, or if you're an Australian simply wishing to thank those who hold up those who defend our country, please consider making a donation today towards this important tribute.

The Carmody family

From their early days together at Robertson Barracks, to the uncertainty of deployment, both Kate and Joel have experienced the highs and lows of life in service: postings, injury, isolation and the great unknown – will they ever come home?

When Joel deployed to Iraq, Kate said she learned to "trust that no news is good news" and counted down the sleeps until he walked through the door. During this time, they relied on the support of family and friends to stay afloat.

"Military service is rarely an individual achievement. I think that's something Defence families understand better than anyone – the person in uniform serves, but their family serves alongside them," Kate said.

"We are incredibly proud of our service, but even more grateful for the family, friends and mates who carried part of that load with us. We may have worn the uniform, but we certainly never served alone."

Today, Kate and Joel remain deeply grateful for the family, friends and mates who not only shaped their service career but held them on their toughest day.

Help support this important tribute

The Recognising Families Sculpture Committee is seeking to raise $500,000 to commission, create and install the sculpture outside Poppy's Café at the Australian War Memorial.

Through your valuable contribution to the Recognising Families Sculpture, you're recognising the strength, sacrifice and hope of those who serve without being seen or saluted.

To learn more or to donate to the Recognising Families Sculpture, visit **www.recognisingfamilies.org.au**

The Recognising Families Sculpture is proudly supported by the Australian War Memorial and RSL Queensland.



The families of our veterans serve too.

Help us to recognise the unseen service of the families of Australian service personnel and veterans through the commissioning of a Recognising Families Sculpture at the Australian War Memorial.

If you can, please donate.

Recognising Families Sculpture

Proudly supported by

Australian War Memorial

RSL Queensland



Image: Australian War Memorial | AWM25.PR.126.033A4841

Scan to donate

www.recognisingfamiles.org.au

Hill 60: The Underground War



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL E01919











CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:

Miners of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company excavating dugouts for Battle Headquarters at Hooge Crater in the Ypres Sector. Courtesy Australian War Memorial.

Hill 60 Ypres Belgium 1st Australian Tunnelling Company Memorial.

Mat McLachlan at Hill 60.

Hill 60 with its still cratered landscape from WWI constant bombardment on the Ypres Salient.

Ypres with the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing, Belgium.

Mat McLachlan at German pillbox at Hill 60 on Ypres Salient.

On 25 April 1917, two years to the day after the landing at Gallipoli, an explosion tore through Australian tunnels beneath Hill 60, a rough hump of earth and rock a few kilometres from Ypres. Three officers were killed instantly in their dugout. Seven men resting in the tunnels were trapped. None of the ten survived.

The Australians had been under that hill since November 1916, 110 years ago this month, when the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company had relieved Canadian tunnellers in the cramped shafts and carried on the gruelling work of undermining the toughest German positions in the Ypres Salient. The men came from all over Australia. Gold miners from Ballarat and Bendigo, coal miners from around Newcastle, and plenty who'd come off the line of lode at Broken Hill. They named the galleries they worked in after home: Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Newcastle, Hobart. The tunnels ran right under the German front line. At the end of them sat two enormous mines, packed with explosives and waiting patiently to do their ghastly work.

For seven months the Australians' job was to keep those tunnels sound and to keep them secret. The Germans were digging too, and in places only a few metres of blue clay separated the two sides. The work was done in silence. Men sat for hours in listening posts at the end of the galleries, with stethoscopes pressed against the clay, trying to pick the scrape of a German shovel out over the sound of their own breathing. They knew the Germans were listening too. Every tunneller's waking nightmare was an encounter with the enemy while trapped underground.

At 3.10am on 7 June 1917, the world erupted as 19 mines detonated in sequence and obliterated the German line on Messines Ridge. Men who saw it would never forget it. War correspondent Philip Gibbs called it the most 'diabolical splendour' he had seen in war. 'Where some of us stood watching,' he said, 'aghast and spellbound by this burning horror, the ground trembled and surged violently to and fro.' It was the biggest man-made explosion in history up to that point. The craters can still be seen today.

The Australians who died in April 1917 never saw any of this, of course. We don't even know what killed them. Some accounts blame a German shell. Captain Oliver Woodward, who arrived with the relief party that night, thought that a faulty detonator had caused the blast. Woodward was there and had no reason to invent it, so he's probably right. Regardless of the cause, the results were devastating and ten men lost their lives.

They were a cross-section of the mining towns that sent them. Captain Wilfred Avery was from Mackay. Lieutenant Arthur Tandy had worked the mines at Ballarat before surveying railways in north Queensland. Second Lieutenant Glyndwr Evans was Welsh-born, a graduate of the Ballarat School of Mines who had moved from gold to coal at Wonthaggi.

Eight of the dead men lie at Railway Dugouts Burial Ground near Zillebeke, within sight of the hill. Avery and Tandy are at Poperinghe New Military Cemetery. In one sense these men were the lucky ones. They were found. Other Australian tunnellers died under Hill 60 in other accidents and other fights, and their bodies were never recovered. Nor were those of the British, Canadians, French and Germans who had fought for the hill above and below ground since 1914. Hundreds of men still lie beneath it. The war ended and the world carried on, but the men beneath Hill 60 will lie there forever.

110 years on, the landscape at Hill 60 is still scarred from bombardment and by the mines fired beneath it, but the area is peaceful now – the craters grassed over, the trees grown back, and there are birds, a few sheep, and rolling farmyard surrounding it. Visitors can walk the wooden boardwalks that follow the WWI trench lines and see where the front lines of the Commonwealth troops and Germans were just metres apart. You can explore a German pillbox and see the huge Caterpillar crater. A memorial to the Australian Tunnellers stands at the site, "In memoriam of officers and men of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Coy who gave their lives in the mining and defensive operations of Hill 60 1915–1918"

Just a few kilometres away lies Ypres, a lovely Flemish town where the medieval-style Cloth Hall, almost entirely destroyed during WWI and then rebuilt, rises above a main square lined with cafes, restaurants and chocolate shops. Walk the old ramparts, then pay your respects at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing, which bears the names of 54,000 Commonwealth soldiers who have no known grave. Every evening at 8pm the Last Post is sounded beneath its triumphal arch, a ceremony that is one of the most moving experiences in Europe, or anywhere.

BY MAT McLACHLAN



LEFT:
Mat McLachlan at the Menin Gate 2026.

Mat McLachlan is a historian, author and TV presenter.

His tour company, Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours, takes thousands of Australians to battlefields around the world every year, including Hill 60.

In 2027 his new series of escorted river cruises visits some of the world's most important battlefields including the Ypres Salient, Waterloo, Normandy and the Mekong Delta.

Full details at **battlefields.com.au**.

To plan your journey in the footsteps of the Anzacs, visit
www.battlefields.com.au

MAT McLACHLAN
BATTLEFIELD
TOURS

The National Songbook



The first 10 songs inducted into The National Songbook have been announced.

Meet the songwriters, discover the stories behind the music, and explore the collection items that reveal how these songs became part of Australia's cultural DNA.

In partnership with APRA AMCOS and NFSA, The National Songbook is an annual collection to honour songs that profoundly shape Australia's culture, identity and collective memory, and recognise the songwriters and composers whose creative vision brought them to life.

For its inaugural year, a panel of 11 judges selected 10 songs for induction in 2026. New songs will join The National Songbook each year, building a collection that celebrates the music Australians have made, shared and made their own.

Why these songs matter

A great song can capture a moment. The rare ones can capture a country.

Richard Kingsmill, who helped shape the sound of Australian radio for decades, explores The National Songbook and the music that has reflected, challenged and shaped Australia.

Some music speaks to us long after it's finished playing. It can evoke memories, express values and capture something of the culture around it. Songs can also become markers of particular moments in Australian history.

The National Songbook is an initiative to recognise compositions that have taken on this kind of importance. How a song reaches that point varies, and the reasons aren't always easy to explain.

I was born well after Slim Dusty's first hit songs, including his now-classic version of Gordon Parsons' 'A Pub With No Beer'. Yet, as a young child, I remember hearing his music. My family owned none of his hundred-plus albums, but his story, achievements and legacy were often spoken about. He became a household name, as recognisable as Vegemite.

To this day, I don't own a Slim Dusty recording, but I'll live the rest of my years appreciating how much his songs, and those written by his wife Joy McKean, have contributed to Australian music.

Sometimes an unforgettable event gives a familiar song new meaning, strengthening our relationship to it. Growing up, I loved the melody of 'Waltzing Matilda'.

Banjo Paterson's poem, set to music by Christina Macpherson, has a rousing chorus that is simple and joyous.

Singing it at school was one thing. Hearing John Williamson rally an entire stadium to join him was entirely different. Our most famous bush ballad, sung that loudly by tens of thousands, brought out the independent spirit I'd always heard in the song.

At the closing ceremony for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the independent Australian spirit was on display again – before a global audience estimated at more than a billion people. With the word 'sorry' emblazoned across their stage outfits, the band performed 'Beds Are Burning', their 1987 song addressing our country's uncomfortable history. 'The time has come to say fair's fair' also reminded the world that 'a fair go' was one of our key cultural values.

In writing 'Beds Are Burning', Midnight Oil had discovered firsthand the extraordinary power our land exerts over us. Their travels into outback Australia opened their eyes and ears to an ancient world. After their Blackfella/Whitefella tour in 1986, they played differently, slowing down their rhythms to suit the landscape. In contact with remote Aboriginal communities for the first time, they witnessed a disparity in their living conditions. The band's songwriters – Rob Hirst, Jim Moginie and Peter Garrett – decided to write an Aboriginal land rights song.

'Beds Are Burning' became a huge hit worldwide, giving some deeper perspective to the Mick Dundee view of our outback.

The 1980s was a coming of age for Australia. Grasping the true impacts of colonialisation, historical awareness grew, as did the recognition for our First Nations peoples. Understanding their ties to the land was only strengthened by our music.

The heartfelt emotion of Warumpi Band's 'My Island Home' spoke to everyone. Written about Elcho Island, the beloved home of bandmate George Rrurrambu Burarrwanga, Neil Murray wanted to honour that special connection through song. Christine Anu, a Torres Strait Islander, connected with the sentiment, recording her celebrated version a decade later. For many, Australia itself has become the subject of 'My Island Home'.

Archie Roach was 34 years old when we first heard his sweet vocal tones. His acclaimed debut album Charcoal Lane, containing the single 'Took the Children Away', detailed his harrowing experiences as a member of the Stolen Generations. A period of our history many only had a cursory knowledge of, Archie personalised the intergenerational trauma that came from the forced separation of First Nations children from their families.

Learn more: **https://www.nfsa.gov.au/stories/deep-dives/national-songbook**

Seven years later, the release of the Bringing Them Home report in 1997 documented the history and lasting impacts of the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

Another prominent song on Charcoal Lane was the incredibly moving 'Down City Streets'. Written by Ruby Hunter, the Ngarrindjeri, Kokatha and Pitjantjatjara woman was also one of the Stolen Generations. At the age of 16, Ruby met Archie when both were living on the streets of Adelaide. The couple's struggles with homelessness and hardship were recalled in 'Down City Streets'.

Like Archie, her arrival on the music scene was heralded. The first Aboriginal woman signed to a major label, Ruby recorded her version of 'Down City Streets' in 2006. 'There was nothing that I owned/Used my fingers as a comb', she painfully remembers. The concluding lyrics show her remarkable compassion still intact: 'I look around and understand/How street kids feel when they're put down.'

Alongside this growing awareness, calls for reconciliation were also gathering momentum. In 1991, Yothu Yindi put pressure on Prime Minister Bob Hawke over his unfulfilled promise of a treaty. At the 1988 Barunga Festival, Hawke had committed to working towards a treaty with Aboriginal people before the end of that Parliament's term. By 1991, it had not materialised, and the band's frontman, Dr M Yunupingu, channelled his frustration into 'Treaty'.

'Well I heard it on the radio/I saw it on the television', are his now iconic opening lines. Singing that we had become two separate rivers after 1788, 'Treaty' ultimately hopes for a country where the waters will be one.

Today, the song remains a vehicle for First Nations protest. In 2023, Australians voted in a referendum on whether to change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing a body called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. The proposed change did not pass. Following the result, triple j's Blak Out program played 'Treaty' continuously for an hour.

The continuing debates over equality and First Nations rights have kept songs like 'Treaty' resonating across generations. Recognising them within The National Songbook places them in conversation withlater commentaries like A.B. Original's 'January 26' and Birdz's 'Bagi-la-m Bargan'.

Across our lives, the tyranny of distance has been one of Australia's toughest hurdles. Musically, international success has been especially hard-fought. However, our isolation has also been a prime influence on our songwriters.

Two disparate examples are The Easybeats and The Necks. Forming in 1964 around the Villawood Migrant Hostel in Sydney's west, The Easybeats was one of our earliest international success stories. Starting out on the other side of the globe to The Beatles and The Stones, Australian acts back then needed a drive and determination far beyond the norm.

With most Australian acts resigned to performing and recording covers, it's all the more remarkable that The Easybeats' 1966 single 'Friday On My Mind' cracked the UK Top 10, as well as the Top 20 in the US and across Europe. Later covered by the likes of David Bowie and Bruce Springsteen, the song's lyrics spoke about the exhilaration of letting go following our weekly 9-to-5 grinds. With an infectious edge and energy, lines like 'I'll lose my head' tonight captured our nation's 'work hard, play hard' outlook.

The Easybeats' Harry Vanda & George Young were one of our best ever songwriting combinations. Understanding the importance of craft, context and relatability, they also showed their versatility a decade later at the height of disco. Writing the euphoric 'Love Is in the Air' for John Paul Young, they again reached the top of the charts worldwide.

The Necks have also achieved international recognition and success, with The New York Times once hailing them 'the Greatest Trio on Earth'. Forming out of Sydney's mid-1980s jazz scene, The Necks' geographic isolation instilled them with a sense of freedom. Away from the major jazz hubs of London and New York, The Necks could explore long improvised pieces. Refusing to abide by any genre rules, critics often struggle to describe the group's sound.

A decade into their recording career, Chris Abrahams (piano), Lloyd Swanton (bass) and Tony Buck (drums) accepted the offer to do a soundtrack. Their score for the Australian drama The Boys showed The Necks' remarkable ability at actualising the film's tense sinisterness. A recording that has succeeded on its own merits, it also pays more than a passing nod to the menacing sense of space within the Australian Gothic tradition.

Sometimes, to overcome our isolation, our songwriters have also needed to relocate. The Melbourne-born Helen Reddy was 30 years old when she released 'I Am Woman' in 1972. By then, she had lived a lot of years.

On and off the stage since the age of four, in and out of a marriage, Reddy ended her twenties a single mother, with a second child on its way. Having arrived in the States in 1966 expecting a recording deal promised as part of a talent-show prize, Reddy quickly discovered the opportunity would not materialise. She decided to stay, and across the next six years fought her way to stardom, which 'I Am Woman' finally cemented.

As the women's liberation movement gathered momentum in the early '70s, Reddy penned a set of lyrics that wrapped the politics of the day into powerful poetry. After one of the great opening lines – 'I am woman, hear me roar' – the song punched into the chorus with the equally memorable 'Oh yes, I am wise, but it's wisdom born of pain.'

This was clearly no ordinary pop song.

Composed with Australian songwriter Ray Burton, 'I Am Woman' slowly built momentum, gaining proper attention once the song was lengthened and re-recorded. A Grammy Award winning and U.S. #1 hit, used by movie makers and female politicians alike, the song charted here once again in 2020.

Following Reddy's death that year, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard introduced some of our best-known female singers to perform 'I Am Woman' at the ARIAs. As Courtney Barnett had just addressed in her song 'Nameless, Faceless', society's rising misogyny showed the timeless poignancy of Reddy's anthem.

With the changing face of Australian society since the 1970s, migration has also been an issue of debate that our songwriters have not shied away from. It took a dance duo, raised on the songs of Midnight Oil, to express a view towards our treatment of asylum seekers.

The National Songbook recognises and celebrates the importance of this music in shaping who we are. They highlight our growth, our uniqueness and what we've shared together.

Masking 'My People' as a massive party anthem, The Presets' rallying call to scream if you're with me was a show of support for people held in immigration detention in Australia. Initially fearful radio programmers would shy away from the song, 'My People' eventually sold 5x Platinum and spent 76 continuous weeks on the ARIA singles chart. Taking harder underground club sounds and putting them into the mainstream, Julian Hamilton and Kim Moyes also created a major turning point for dance music generally.

The National Songbook recognises and celebrates the importance of this music in shaping who we are. These works are not just a soundtrack of our times. They highlight our growth, our uniqueness and what we've shared together. For future generations, as we continue to induct the defining music of our songwriters, this collection will act as a guide to who we become.

RICHARD KINGSMILL

Richard Kingsmill has worked in the Australian music industry for 40 years. Starting as a music journalist and a presenter on public radio, he went on to have a 35-year career at the ABC. Working his way up to become triple j's Group Music Director, he eventually oversaw the sound of six terrestrial and digital stations. Today, he consults, hosts and continues to champion new music.


The Slim Dusty 100
Celebrating A Legend
Vote here: live.umusic.com/slimdusty100

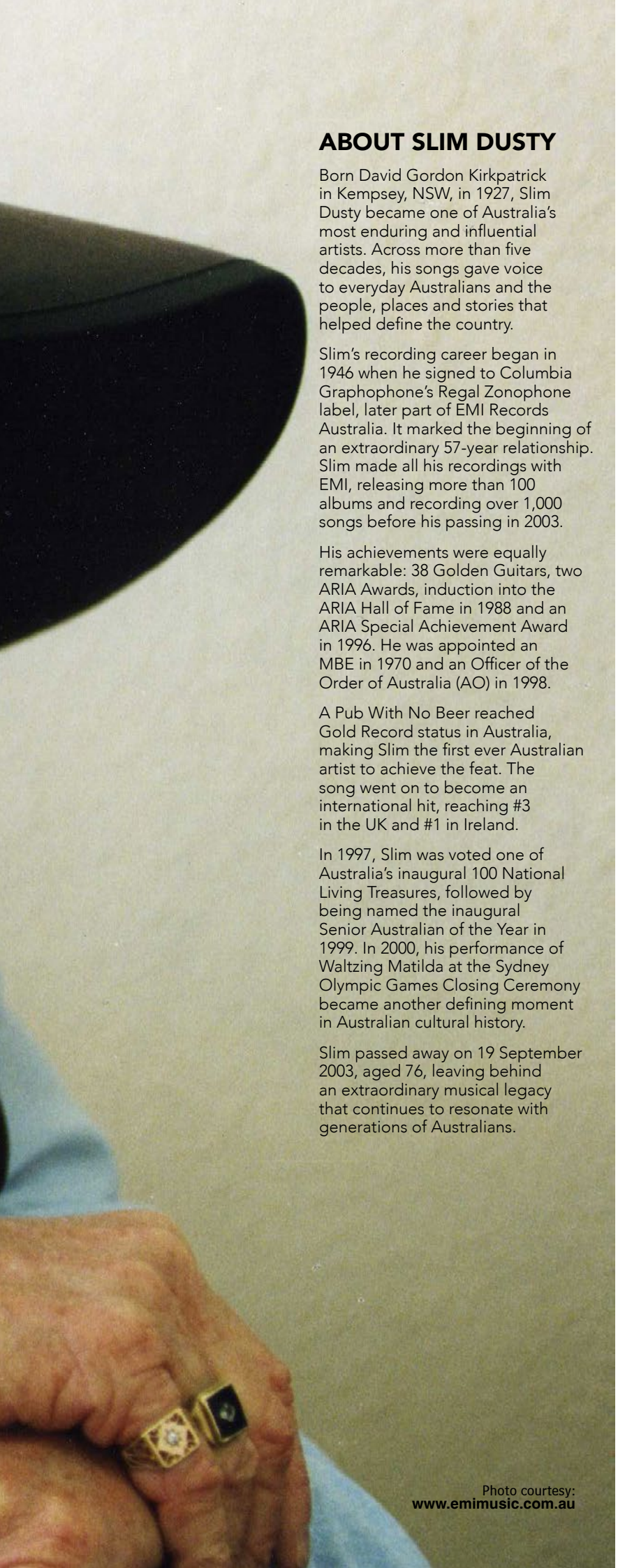


Photo courtesy:
www.emimusic.com.au

ABOUT SLIM DUSTY

Born David Gordon Kirkpatrick in Kempsey, NSW, in 1927, Slim Dusty became one of Australia's most enduring and influential artists. Across more than five decades, his songs gave voice to everyday Australians and the people, places and stories that helped define the country.

Slim's recording career began in 1946 when he signed to Columbia Graphophone's Regal Zonophone label, later part of EMI Records Australia. It marked the beginning of an extraordinary 57-year relationship. Slim made all his recordings with EMI, releasing more than 100 albums and recording over 1,000 songs before his passing in 2003.

His achievements were equally remarkable: 38 Golden Guitars, two ARIA Awards, induction into the ARIA Hall of Fame in 1988 and an ARIA Special Achievement Award in 1996. He was appointed an MBE in 1970 and an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1998.

A Pub With No Beer reached Gold Record status in Australia, making Slim the first ever Australian artist to achieve the feat. The song went on to become an international hit, reaching #3 in the UK and #1 in Ireland.

In 1997, Slim was voted one of Australia's inaugural 100 National Living Treasures, followed by being named the inaugural Senior Australian of the Year in 1999. In 2000, his performance of Waltzing Matilda at the Sydney Olympic Games Closing Ceremony became another defining moment in Australian cultural history.

Slim passed away on 19 September 2003, aged 76, leaving behind an extraordinary musical legacy that continues to resonate with generations of Australians.

On 13 June 2027, Slim Dusty would have celebrated his 100th birthday—a remarkable milestone and an opportunity to celebrate the enduring legacy of one of Australia's most iconic artists.

Slim's contribution to Australian music and culture is immeasurable. Through his songs and storytelling, he captured the spirit of Australia—its people, places, humour, hardships and way of life. In doing so, he helped tell our story and shape our sense of who we are.

A century after his birth, those stories continue to resonate, connecting generations of Australians and ensuring Slim's music remains as meaningful today as ever.

And who better to help celebrate that legacy than the people who have kept his music alive for generations—his fans.

Ahead of Slim's 100th birthday, EMI / Universal Music Australia and the Slim Dusty Estate are inviting fans across Australia and beyond to have their say.

Introducing the Slim Dusty 100 — A Fan-Led Celebration of Slim Dusty's Legacy.

At the heart of Slim Dusty 100 will be a nationwide fan vote inviting people to choose their 10 favourite Slim Dusty songs. With over 1000 songs recorded, fans have the opportunity to have their say on the songs that have resonated the most. From the much-loved classics to hidden gems and personal favourites, every vote will help tell the story of the songs that have meant the most to Slim's audience.

The 100 most-voted songs will ultimately become Slim Dusty 100 - a collection released across multi-vinyl, CD and digital offerings. The final countdown will be revealed on 13 June 2027, marking Slim's 100th birthday and providing a fitting centrepiece to the centenary celebrations. Will 'A Pub With No Beer' be #1 or will the song his wife Joy McKean penned (and awarded the first ever Golden Guitar) 'Lights On The Hill' take the top spot?

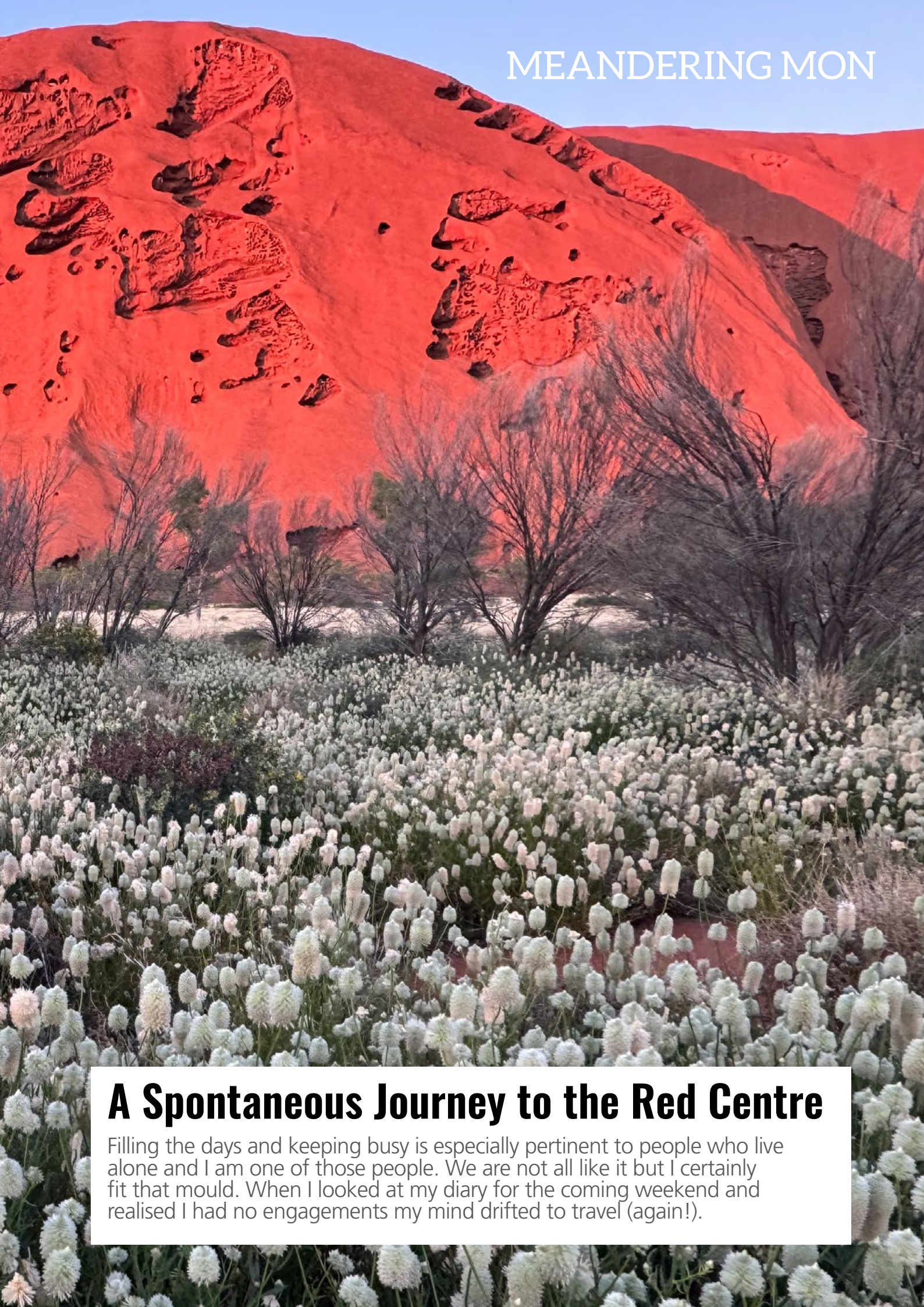
But Slim Dusty 100 is about more than determining Australia's favourite Slim Dusty songs. The voting period itself presents an opportunity for fans to celebrate and rediscover Slim's extraordinary catalogue and for a new generation of listeners, it's an invitation to discover Slim, his stories and his Australia for the first time.

To vote in the Slim Dusty 100, fans can head here to explore Slim's extraordinary catalogue and vote for their Top 10 favourite songs. Voting opens Wednesday 14 October and closes Monday 16th November 2026.

So, fans are encouraged to dig deep, rediscover old favourites and get voting. From much-loved classics like 'Duncan', 'G'Day, G'Day' and 'The Biggest Disappointment', to deeper cuts such as Slim's own 'Gumtrees by the Roadway' and the song that started it all for Bill Chambers 'Things Are Not the Same on the Land', the breadth of Slim's catalogue is extraordinary—a treasure trove of songs, stories and hidden gems waiting to be discovered by old fans and new.

With more than five decades of recordings to explore, the question is simple: what will make your Top 10?





A Spontaneous Journey to the Red Centre

Filling the days and keeping busy is especially pertinent to people who live alone and I am one of those people. We are not all like it but I certainly fit that mould. When I looked at my diary for the coming weekend and realised I had no engagements my mind drifted to travel (again!).

I'd never been to Uluru and always wanted to go. For decades friends had recommended it. I was told I'd love the spirituality and that as a photographer, I'd especially love the light. From dawn to dusk and every time in between Uluru casts a very different spell, with hues so varied from every angle.

At short notice accommodation wasn't available anywhere near Uluru so I booked a 3 day tour to sleep in a swag. I'd never done this before and hadn't even camped since I was a teenager. A challenge, I thought! When I told friends most thought I was mad as they know I love my creature comforts. I was the butt of jokes at a dinner the evening before I left. It turned out the last laugh was on them as I loved it.

I was picked up at Uluru airport by the Tour Guide, then we went straight on to Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) for a small hike. Such a wonderful way to start the journey. Being overwhelmed by two towering domes gave me a feeling of insignificance. Already I was in awe of the red centre. The red earth reminded me of a wonderful trip I did in WA. It's quintessentially Australian.

We then travelled onto Uluru. As the sun was setting the full moon was rising simultaneously. I couldn't have picked a more idyllic time & season, late August was just perfect. Uluru is truly magnificent and no amount of recommendations prepared me for its breathtaking beauty. Some first nations women selling paintings had positioned themselves nearby and I enjoyed viewing them all. I fell in love with one so of course I bought it, now I just need to find some wall space!

It was also an ideal time to be sleeping under the star studded night with a full moon shining. A swag is so snug inside with only my face feeling the more chilly elements of the drop in night temperatures. I'd happily book that accommodation again in a heartbeat.

The next day we were up when it was still dark and saw Uluru at sunrise, walking the 10km around it. Very special indeed, a bucket list moment. Taking in all the flora, fauna, rock art & the forever changing shades. I was so glad I was finally experiencing this incredible opportunity. One of the most popular tourist destinations in Australia. Here I was, an Australian in my 60's, having travelled the world but only experiencing it for the first time. It is a significant aboriginal site where Archaeological findings indicate they were here more than 10,000 years ago.

After one of the best walks of my life we were then on the road again. This time to Kings Canyon where some of Priscilla Queen of the Desert was filmed! A much shorter walk than around Uluru but a tougher one as it is not a flat walk. We hiked around the rim, taking in the spectacular light once again and that great red earth. I asked myself why did it take me so long to get here? Our country sure is one of a kind & this tour satisfied my lust for it. The warmth & diversity of travellers on this tour certainly added to its appeal. They were all very friendly from all corners of the world.

After 3 days of being chuffed for booking this last minute trip I headed to Alice. The tour company offered being dropped off at Alice Springs, around 6 hours in the minibus. I thought 'Why just fly in and out when I had a few more days up my sleeve!'.

With a population of approximately 32,000, it's a relaxed and laid back town with a high indigenous population of around 20%. There are restaurants and cafes of all cuisines. It consists of all low rise buildings, the tallest being an apartment block on the outskirts, just 5 storeys high. Wonderful galleries flooded with aboriginal art are numerous and an absolute art lover's dream. The Araluen Arts Centre houses an excellent permanent collection as well as new exhibitions regularly.

Also nearby are The Botanic Gardens, a mere 2km from the town centre. There is a hill top teaming with ring tailed rock wallabies. Alice is an ideal spot for treks & cycling, surrounded by the great Australian bush as far as the eyes can see. The Todd River is perfect for long walks or cycles to reap in the 'true blue Aussie landscape'. The Todd River (Lhere Mparntwe) is known as an ephemeral river, with water in it only 5% of the year. Perhaps I was lucky, in this our Lucky Country, once again as there were parts with water in it.

What an unforgettable taste of Central Australia I'd experienced in such a short time. I can't wait to explore more.

MONIQUE MARCH

















GALLIPOLI, THEME PARK.

There are few battlefields in the World where you can walk through a topography unchanged since the original, eponymous battle was fought and be virtually alone, your thoughts disturbed only by the whispers of the long dead. Suvla Bay, Gallipoli was one of them.

To my great disappointment, Suvla is joining the rest of this most sacred peninsular, its sanctity disturbed by the proliferation of new monuments, its old dirt tracks replaced by newly metalled roads readied for a modern invasion of tourist coaches.

The Gallipoli battlefields are fast becoming unrecognisable to anyone who visited them in pre-Covid times. It is evolving into a politically-motivated theme park. And the speed of change has been nothing short of phenomenal.

I made my first pilgrimage in the mid-1980s. It was an adventure getting there, especially in one of Top Deck Travel's old London double-deckers. Large areas were out of bounds because of contemporary military use, others simply impossible to get to, other than on foot, despite the establishment of the area as a national park. But we were content with Anzac Bay and Helles's 'V Beach' back then, scavenging for a few easily found battlefield souvenirs between consuming large quantities of cheap local beer and skinny-dipping, just as the troops had done. Truthfully, not everyone was as respectful as the place deserved and I shudder at the memory of one young traveller sneaking a skull back to London.

But one visit is never enough to the Dardanelles. It haunts you. It's more than examining the events of 1915-16 or honouring those who died. The battlefields cover unforgettably beautiful terrain, three distinct topographies, and the thrill of crossing the 'narrows' never diminishes, or the crystal waters of the Aegean lose their sparkle. There are too many legendary locations calling to you, their familiar names magnetic; Lone Pine, the Nek, Gully Ridge, the Vineyard, W Beach, Achi Baba, Green Hills, Lala Baba, Hill 60, Monash Valley. Too many Commonwealth Graveyards to visit and poppies to lay.

At least that's how it has been for me; over the next forty years I must have returned to the peninsular at least twenty times, over the past fifteen of them as a battlefield guide. Every visit leaving me with more questions than answers about this enigmatic war within a war. While the road to Chunuk Bair was always well-travelled and the Helles Martyrs' Memorial a popular site for visiting Turks, the rest of the peninsular was your own other than for perhaps a few hours on Anzac Day.

Unlike the Somme where memorials grow like mushrooms, Gallipoli boasted few. Apart from the CWGC



locations, many in hard-to-find locations, the only memorials were the comparatively few the Turks themselves erected, most like that at Buyukananafarta, or 'Big Aana Farta' as most English-speakers dub the village, rather modest. Little was added to the peninsular between the original building of the Martyrs' memorial in the 1950s and the 57th Regiment monument on Anzac ridge in 1992. Time stood still as far as physical commemoration and preservation were concerned.

And, frankly, that was a major part of the battlefield's appeal. The excitement lay in discovering eroded trench lines, hidden gun placements and surviving dug-outs with ne'er a soul to be seen on 90% of the battlefield.

The first big changes occurred towards the end of the old millennium. With much fanfare, the myth-building Mehmetcik statue on Pine Ridge (a Turkish soldier carrying a wounded Anzac in off no-man's land) was erected and a similar 'reconciliation'-themed panel added to the Martyrs's memorial. A short time later the North Beach Anzac Commemorative site was developed to cope with the growing number of Australian and New Zealand visitors. A cynic might ascribe these to a growing commercialisation of the battlefield and the targeting of Anzac tourists. Certainly, a more blatant example of this was the building of replica trenches in Ecearbat port, impressive though they undoubtedly are.

What went under the radar of most British and Anzac visitors was the corresponding development of sites commemorating the Ottoman army. Each more grandiose than the last.

A magnificent cemetery monument appeared around 2000 at Akbas Bay, just north of Ecearbat, dedicated to soldiers who died in a field hospital there. On each of my subsequent annual visits I'd be surprised by another new commemorative cemetery; several appeared in the valleys below the approach to Chunuk Bair, one in the valley south of Kilitbahir on the road to Helles, another near Kocadere near Ataturk's HQ at Bigali, which was itself refurbished. While laid out as cemeteries and sometimes based near or on top of possible burial sites, none of the recorded names on Ottoman helmet-shaped 'tomb stones' would have corresponding remains beneath. These were 'indicative' cemeteries, nevertheless important reminders of the cost of the Ottoman jihad.

Vast sums were also spent renovating the old forts at Kilitbahir, Sedd el Bahr, and at Canakkele itself. Statues of heroic Ottomans appeared, none more ubiquitous that that of the shell-lifting Corporal Seyid and naturally, Ataturk.

Meanwhile, the Erdogan government increasingly emphasised the importance of the battle of Canakkale, subsidising coach trips for schoolchildren and seniors alike.

The most profound changes came while the world slept through Covid. The biggest statement was the opening of the 2023-metre '1915 Çanakkale Bridge' spanning the Dardenelles thirty kilometres north of the battlefields, effectively limiting the old ferries to local traffic and cutting an hour off the journey from Istanbul. Symbolically, its world beating length commemorates the centenary of the birth of Turkey, and its opening in 2022 on March 18th commemorates the date the Turks defeated the invaders' mighty fleet sent to force the Dardanelles. Perhaps understandably, the April 25th landings and following battle dates so important to 'our' side get little or no acknowledgment.

In fairness to the local authorities, this redevelopment also included cleaning up large tracts of the ridges on the ANZAC sector, exposing old trench systems, and cutting some knee-testing stairs to allow the intrepid to follow the footsteps of the invading soldiers from Shrapnel Valley to

the Nek or Lone Pine. Recent bush fires have uncovered other once inaccessible walks.

In the Helles sector, a new, and it has to be said, impressive state of the art medical museum opened in Alecepe (Krithia to the 1915 troops), complete with lifelike dioramas and the sites, smells and sounds of battle. Yet more Ataturk statues appeared between 2023 and 2024, including one in what used to be a delightful square in Sedd el Bahr, where a year before a plate of meat balls could be had for a dollar. It's a coach park now. Though more alarming is the new beach resort below on V Beach. Semi-naked sun bathers now lie where the lads of the Royal Dubliner Fusiliers and Hampshire Regiment were massacred as they poured out of the beached troopship, the River Clyde, on the morning of April 25th.

And so, back to Suvla. Five or so years ago, the dirt roads traversing the bay made visits to Hill 60, Hill 10, Azmak CWGC and the Kirectepe Gendarmerie Martyrs Cemetery impossible after rain. Metalled roads now take you (and potentially coachloads) to the only Newfoundland Caribou memorial outside the Somme (yes, they were here, even if only briefly, and left some dead behind). And you can easily get to no less than three new Ottoman 'cemeteries' that have appeared almost overnight amidst the Kiretch Kepe rocks, with another at 'Little Ana Farta' to be completed later this year.

Going, I fear, are the days where the almost mystical silence of Suvla was broken only by the tinkle of the goat herd bells. Soon the tinkle will be coins being passed over at myriad souvenir shacks flogging their tacky 'Canakkale 1915' gewgaws.

If you've yet to make the Gallipoli pilgrimage, do it soon while it is still possible to find a few lesser-known sites not yet over-run with day-trippers or changed beyond recognition by the addition of modern memorials. Here, away from the madding crowd, you can silently contemplate the sacrifices made during that futile and doomed battle, and the debt we owe to those who made them.

BRUCE CHERRY




LA
FRANCE
A
ENFANTS
AVE GALLIA IMMORTALIS


JOHN SIMPSON
KIRKPATRICK SERVED AS
202 PRIVATE
J. SIMPSON
AUST. ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
19 MAY 1915
AGE 22
HE GAVE HIS LIFE
THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE


AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY
21ST BATTALION
PRIVATE
MAHON L. E.
MARTIN J.
22ND BATTALION
MAJOR
DERRICK C. R.
LANCE CPL.
MCCLURE A. B.
PRIVATE
BELLESINI H.
BRAIN E. G.
BROUGHTON T. G.
23RD BATTALION
LIEUTENANT
DWYER A. V.
CORPORAL
WISEWOULD J.
PRIVATE
ROLFE H.
WOODIN E. F.
PRIVATE
CARMICHAEL A.
DURRANCE E. A. J.
GRANT H.
HANLEY M.
MARSH R. W. S.
RHODES J. H. W.
SCOTT J. K.
SUMMERSFORD H. R.
PRIVATE
ANDREWARTHA F.
BEDFORD C. L.
BRERETON W. R.
BURDON J.
DAVIS T. J.
FRY R. J.
AUSTRALIA
23RD B
PRIVATE
HALL A. L.
HANSEN F. N.
HENDERSON H. E.
HILL F. E.
KIDD N.
24TH BA
SECOND LIEUT.
TIPPET H. F.
SERJEANT
ROSS H. C.
CORPORAL
REDPATH J. T.
LANCE CPL.
DUNCAN G. C.
PRIVATE
ARMSTRONG A. M.
ATKINSON T. H.
BEASTON R. G.
64
65


Galaxy A34 5G











OPPOSITE PAGE:
6.30pm on a Dublin evening the tourists are hiding at the oldest Library in the land.

BELOW LEFT:
When A Lime Spider Walks into an Irish Post Office.

BELOW RIGHT:
You can take a drummer out of the garden but you can't take the garden out of the drummer even in London.



Planes, Trains & Automobiles

London was slowly unravelling. A heatwave of biblical proportions had created a 'heat dome' that had been in place for weeks. It was only mid-June and summer had barely begun.

Europe was baking beneath a relentless scorcher that seemed determined to sabotage every system of transport. It had gone on like this for weeks. Modern modes of travel lay in ruin across Europe. Paris reached 41 degrees day after day as Madrid climbed to 42. But even at 41 degrees, Berlin and Leipzig were hot enough for tar to bubble up out of the tram tracks and bring essential services to a standstill.

But the show, as Leo Sayer once famously said, must go on, and we did the best we could to struggle on with a long European summer of poetica musica gigs. It's never something I expected to be doing. My last tour of Europe was as the drummer for the Lime Spiders, on the same bill as INXS and the Hot House Flowers.

Over the European summer, there were performances planned in multiple cities, and our new Poetica Musica format had already proved itself during the Sydney concerts. Though I am a punk rock drummer, for some reason my pivot to writing for string quartet in a collaboration with my partner, the poet, was working beautifully. That is, except for the heat.

Travel warnings were issued daily. Trains were cancelled with depressing regularity. The Underground lurched from one delay to another as the ageing network struggled to cope.

Then there was the M25. A single accident on London's orbital motorway triggered a traffic jam that stretched for almost ten hours. Ambulances weaved through stationary traffic while people abandoned their cars to search for water and shade. A dozen motorists were treated for heatstroke.

As Australians, thirty-five degrees is unremarkable. In Britain it felt like civilisation was melting. Our train from London to Leeds was already under a travel warning. 'Avoid travel unless absolutely essential.'

It was barely seven kilometres from Nunhead to St Pancras, yet the traffic was almost apocalyptic. Trains were being cancelled by the hour, and connections could not be guaranteed. We booked another Uber as cars crawled forward while the minutes disappeared from the clock. I was stressed off my head, but the poet, so far, was remarkably calm—despite every journey demanding an earlier departure than the last.

'At this rate', I joked, to the poet, 'we'll have to camp overnight at the station just to guarantee catching a train'.

An hour and a half later we finally arrived, hauled our oversized suitcases through the entrance and stepped into what could only be described as commuter purgatory.

Thousands of passengers stood beneath the giant departure boards, staring upwards in various stages of disbelief as destinations flickered from 'delayed' to 'cancelled'. Every few seconds another service disappeared from the board, replaced by yet another apology, until our train vanished too.

Fortunately, a temporary information hub had been set up in the middle of the station where patient staff in fluorescent orange vests handed

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:
Avoid the crowds - visit an Irish castle during a heatwave.
All ticketed up and nowhere to go. Nunhead station after trains cancelled.
A long way from home on the Connemara.

OPPOSITE PAGE
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Poetica musica London crew.
The highest pub in Ireland.
The coolest place to stay alive in London was a decaying cemetary.
Traditional meets new Irish cuisine at the Pigs Ear in Dublin.
9.30pm on a London common during a heatwave.







out bottled water with travel advice. Everyone was glued to their phones.

“Get on any train heading north,” the staffer in orange reflective behind the pop-up stand said. “You’ll have to change somewhere along the way.”

The heatwave had pushed the railway to breaking point. Steel rails were in danger of buckling beneath the relentless sun, while overhead power lines sagged in the heat, bringing sections of the network to a standstill. Before leaving Sydney, I suspected this might happen, but reading about it from the other side of the world and standing in the middle of it were two different things, especially when the poet had quietly begun to cry.

“York train,” another frantic attendant shouted, as he continued handing out bottles of water. “Change there for Leeds. It leaves in three minutes. “

Cue another frantic dash after the sprints though so many airports, only this time we were swept along by what felt like half of England trying to escape London. The aisle was blocked with transcontinental commuters and tourists and their luggage. With what seemed like a reluctant shudder, the train eased out of St Pancras and began threading its way through the suburbs of London. Only then did I finally relax.

The recent travel chaos had left its mark. We had become so conditioned to expecting disruptions on flights and trains and rides, that before leaving our next city, we took ourselves out to Leeds Bradford Airport a day early simply to rehearse the journey. A dry run, just to reassure ourselves that we knew where to go and how long everything might take. Though our friends in Leeds thought we were mad to head to the airport many hours before our short flight, we were determined not to take any chances.

Fortunately, the flight from Leeds to Dublin proved to be the one journey that almost went as planned, being only an hour or two late. But soon we were crossing the Irish Sea, leaving behind England’s sweltering heat as we descended into a noticeably cooler Dublin, where it barely reached thirty degrees.

There was a hire car waiting for us at the airport, our companion for the next week of exploring Ireland. Before long we were settling into the south side of the Liffey. There was music and mist, and fairy walks as we crossed the country to touch the waters of the Atlantic. Too soon though, it was time to leave.

The journey home turned out to be the most difficult of all. I was standing beneath the departures board at Dublin Airport with what felt like every stranded traveller in Europe. We were finally on our way home and I was over the whole trip.

“It’s an hour late,” I said to the poet.

“That’s okay,” she replied, cool as always. “We’ll still be fine.”

Ten minutes later I looked up again.

“Now it’s two hours late.”

“Well,” she sighed, “there goes our connection to Hong Kong.” Then I thought for the second time, she was about to cry.

We spent the next hour camped at the Aer Lingus service desk, clutching boarding passes that suddenly









were worthless. All we wanted was some reassurance that somebody, somewhere, would honour the tickets we'd paid for.

The problem was Heathrow. Our itinerary allowed ninety minutes to get from the Aer Lingus flight, change terminals, clear security and board the Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong. On paper it was possible. With a two-hour delay, it was fantasy. For the fourth, or perhaps fifth time on this trip, our carefully constructed plans dissolved into stress and chaos.

"It isn't our fault," the staff explained. "The aircraft was delayed in Barcelona because of the heat." We had heard that now with depressing regularity. I can only imagine what the toll of daily disruptions must be like for people living in this part of the world.

Aer Lingus had repeatedly assured us everything would be sorted once we reached Heathrow, but somewhere over the Irish Sea the reality finally sank in. We were flying towards one of the busiest airports in the world with no clear idea of how we would get home.

For a while, it was the most helpless I had felt during the entire trip. We missed our connection from London to Hong Kong and Sydney. Eventually, with the assistance of British Airways, everything fell into place. Somehow, we found ourselves on a flight that took us via Singapore instead, and, mercifully, all the way to Sydney.

When the aircraft doors finally opened and the cool Sydney air drifted into the terminal, I could have kissed the ground. Never had I been so grateful to be home.

Wildfires are now burning across huge swathes of the continent, including England and Scotland; places where such fires once seemed unimaginable. Drought has been declared in landscapes known for rain, for mist and green fields, while Europe endures the most severe heatwave in recorded history.

Two weeks after returning home, the heat continues. It is impossible not to wonder what lies ahead, with a foreboding sense of what the coming summer will be like in Australia.

RICHARD LAWSON





The Indian Pacific – a Rail journey across Australia.

All my life I have loved trains. As a child growing up in the midlands of Tasmania I would hear and see the Tasman Ltd and goods trains weave their way around the hills beyond our farm each day and I would dream of being on board, of going to new and exciting places beyond the horizon.





Those trains and the farm have long gone now, but my romantic notion of trains and new horizons has never left me. My dream finally came true when we booked a trip on the iconic Indian Pacific from Perth to Sydney, all the way across our vast Australian continent from west to east.

On the appointed day we caught our plane from Hobart to Perth and I felt a great mounting excitement for the adventure to come. To begin the odyssey we spent a week in Fremantle, soaking up the cafe culture and markets, staying at the lovely old National Hotel near the Esplanade. I hadn't been to "Freo" since I watched Australia 2 win the America's Cup Race final from aboard the "Eye of the Wind" in the late 1980's. What a party town it was at that time!

Those memories for me flooded in as we explored the waterfront, parks, cafes and pubs and watched the never-ending night culture from our second floor balcony into the wee hours each night. The National boasted live music nightly and a delightful restaurant and cafe and although we had hired a car for the week from the airport it was hardly used at all. There was simply so much to see and do within easy walking distance and the week flew by in a relaxed and happy haze.

As part of our package we then headed for Perth and a weekend at the luxurious modern 5 star Duxton Hotel, which was simply magnificent. We caught up with a dear friend for dinner at their Michelin star restaurant, walked around the picturesque city and prepared for our big journey. My excitement was palpable as we were delivered to the Perth train station early that Monday morning and prepared to board the Indian Pacific. Finally, my childhood dream was coming true!

We were shown to our beautifully appointed cabin which had a bunk bed and exquisite little bathroom, with a table and chairs under the window - a bit squishy but otherwise perfect. (It was a train after all.) After demolishing our complimentary bottle of bubbles we set off eagerly to explore the dining carriage and lounge areas where we met other guests and soaked up the luxury and ambience of these sections of the train. It was absolutely beautiful, olde world and very classy with velvet lounges and brass fittings and superb decor throughout.

From the first moment it was clear that every member of the staff was hand-picked and perfectly trained. Our welcome was warm and genuine as we got acquainted with our cabin staff who remained discreetly at the ready to help us, day or night, with anything! Staff in the lounge bars and restaurant were amazing and we loved their crisp uniforms, positive attitudes and proficiency. We could find no fault with anyone or anything on this train throughout our whole journey across the country that week.

It took a day or two to become used to the motion in the narrow hallways between carriages but it was a great way to meet other guests as we bumped into them (literally!) on the way past - this was a constant source of amusement for everyone.

As all meals were included we were curious about the foods we would eat on board. Every single meal was perfect - it was like visiting the best restaurant in town three times a day! Choices were plentiful, dietary requirements catered for and the quality of food truly superb. We were given times for our meals according to our carriage numbers which ensured we all felt like special guests. People dressed for dinner which I embraced as I thought it was lovely. (Shades of the Orient express with waiters in tuxedos and lots of white linen.) Drinks were also part of the package and available until the wee hours, fine wines, cognacs, the best coffee, teas



and juices, chocolates and to spoil us further, morning and afternoon teas served in the lounge - which consisted of fresh fruits, hot scones, dips, soups and sandwiches. Excuse the terrible pun but this was definitely NOT a weight loss journey!

Many hours each day were completely and deliciously lost to me as I lounged by our carriage window, fascinated and totally absorbed by the views flowing past. I have travelled a lot within Australia, even going from Melbourne to Perth in a greyhound bus but never have I appreciated the absolute vastness of this land as I did from my window on the Indian Pacific. To be ensconced in this "bubble" of luxury travelling through the desert and across the Nullarbor Plain allowed for very deep reflection on a level I have not experienced in any other mode of travel, ever.

The knowledge that my only daily challenge was bumping my way to the dining carriage or climbing to the top bunk 'later' for a snooze, allowed my brain to wander to new and deep places and at times to become very





still, akin to the deepest meditation. The combination of the low rumble of the train, the rhythmic clatter of the tracks and the gentle shudder of the carriage was the epitome of my journey and will remain an incredibly special, forever memory.

There was entertainment available on board during our trip, including singalongs with a solo guitarist who performed daily and a special drag show reminiscent of “Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.” The lounge bars were equipped with chess, scrabble, backgammon and other board games, cards, puzzles and a small library. Each cabin had a radio for music and reminders. Oh - and a clock. There were no televisions or computers for guests to use on the train and for most of the journey no phone signal at all. For us this was bliss, but if you are a screen addict be forewarned…!

There were several stops made as we traversed the country, for the train to stock up on water and these stops were a great opportunity to feel the heat of the desert and to savour its isolation. My favourite stop was a completely deserted “town”called Forrest, where all that remained visible was a rusty hospital sign and a grave or two.

No trees in Forrest, just desert scrub, red dirt and a forever sky. Kalgoorlie was another stop where we were taken to visit the “Super Pit” open cut gold mining site and view the monstrous mining equipment above ground. I had passed through years before and have to admit it left me cold this time too. Horses for courses I guess, but it was nice to stretch our legs and see the blanket of stars in the night sky, backs turned to the mine.

Adelaide was a longer stop for the train to refuel and we visited the Adelaide cricket ground where a delicious breakfast was served and we learned about the life and achievements of Sir Donald Bradman, then explored the vast facility at leisure. The Blue Mountains stop was truly lovely, the area at its picturesque best on a beautiful sunny day, which made me reminisce about my stays at the iconic Hydro Majestic, many years earlier. Standing on the lookout photographing the incredible scenery I was again overwhelmed by the vastness of our amazing country.

Personally, although the stops were refreshing and a good form of exercise (especially when we wandered too far and heard the train whistle blowing in the distance, signifying time to board!) it was being on the train itself that was most special experience of all for me. The constant sound and movement was almost embryonic to my psyche and observing the changes in soil, vegetation and colour was a constant delight.

Before the journey we wondered if we would get bored, it was the opposite! I fought sleep during those first days, scared to miss anything I might see under moonlight out my window but when sleep did come it was the deepest, most refreshing sleep of my life. It didn’t take long to slip into the rythmn of the days aboard however and to feel truly rested and relaxed and mellow.

By the time we reached the Blue Mountains the Nullarbor was far behind us and I had that sinking feeling already that our journey was changing and almost done. My personal fascination was with the thousands of kilometres of desert we had covered, the sparse vegetation, the vastness of the plains and the hugeness of the sky. I guess I just didn’t want that to end.

By the time we approached Lithgow headed for Sydney the frantic modern world had enveloped us once again with its tall buildings, local trains and busy highways. It had been an almost other worldly experience travelling across Australia for a week on the beautiful Indian Pacific train.

Of course the experience had to come to an end - all good experiences do (as do the bad) but if asked if I would be tempted to book another journey on the Indian Pacific my reply would be “Oh definitely yes, in a heartbeat!”

It was the journey of a lifetime.

MOIRA PARTRIDGE






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PACIFIC
WATER




NATIONAL HOTEL


INDIAN PACIFIC
Sparkling Wine
CROSER NV SPARKLING
Adelaide Hills, South Australia
GRANT BURGE PETITE NV SPARKLING
Barossa Valley, South Australia
White Wine
SERAFINO GOOSE ISLAND SAUVIGNON BLANC
McLaren Vale, South Australia
STELLA BELLA SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC
Margaret River, Western Australia
PEWSEY VALE PRIMA RIESLING
Eden Valley, South Australia
CORIOLE CHENIN BLANC
McLaren Vale, South Australia
NOVA VITA FIREBIRD PINOT GRIS
Adelaide Hills, South Australia
TYRRELL'S HUNTER SEMILLON
Hunter Valley, New South Wales
VASSE FELIX FILIUS CHARDONNAY
Margaret River, Western Australia
Rosé Wine
ELDREDGE KITTY SANGIOVESE ROSÉ
Clare Valley, South Australia
BARRISTERS BLOCK PINOT NOIR
Adelaide Hills, South Australia
LECONFIELD MERLOT
Coonawarra, South Australia
JEANNERET SHIRAZ, GRENACHE, MATARO
Clare Valley, South Australia
HENTLEY FARM VILLAIN AND VIXEN SHIRAZ
Barossa Valley, South Australia
VASSE FELIX FILIUS CABERNET SAUVIGNON
Margaret River, Western Australia
WILLUNGA CREEK BLACK DUCK CABERNET SAUVIGNON
McLaren Vale, South Australia
INDIAN PACIFIC
Spirits
Jack Daniel's
Jim Beam Bourbon
Bacardi Rum
Bundaberg Rum
Beefeater London Gin
Lost Phoenix Australian Dry Gin
Lost Phoenix Pot Distilled Vodka
Stolichnaya Vodka
Bulleit
Kahlua
Chivas Regal 12 yo
El Jimador Tequila
Pimm's No 1
Aperol
St Agnes Brandy
Fortified Wines
Bathany Late Harvest Riesling
Seppeltsfield Para 10 Year Old Tawny
Brown Brothers Orange Muscat & Flora
Beer
Coopers Premium Light
Peroni Nastro Azzurro 3.5%
Furphy Refreshing Ale
Heineken
James Squire 'One Fifty Lashes' Pale
Coopers Pale Ale
Adelaide Hills Apple Cider
Non-alcoholic
Heineken 0.0
Maggie Beer Sparkling Chardonnay
McGuigan Rosé, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz
Soft drinks and juices available – please
ask your Hospitality Attendant



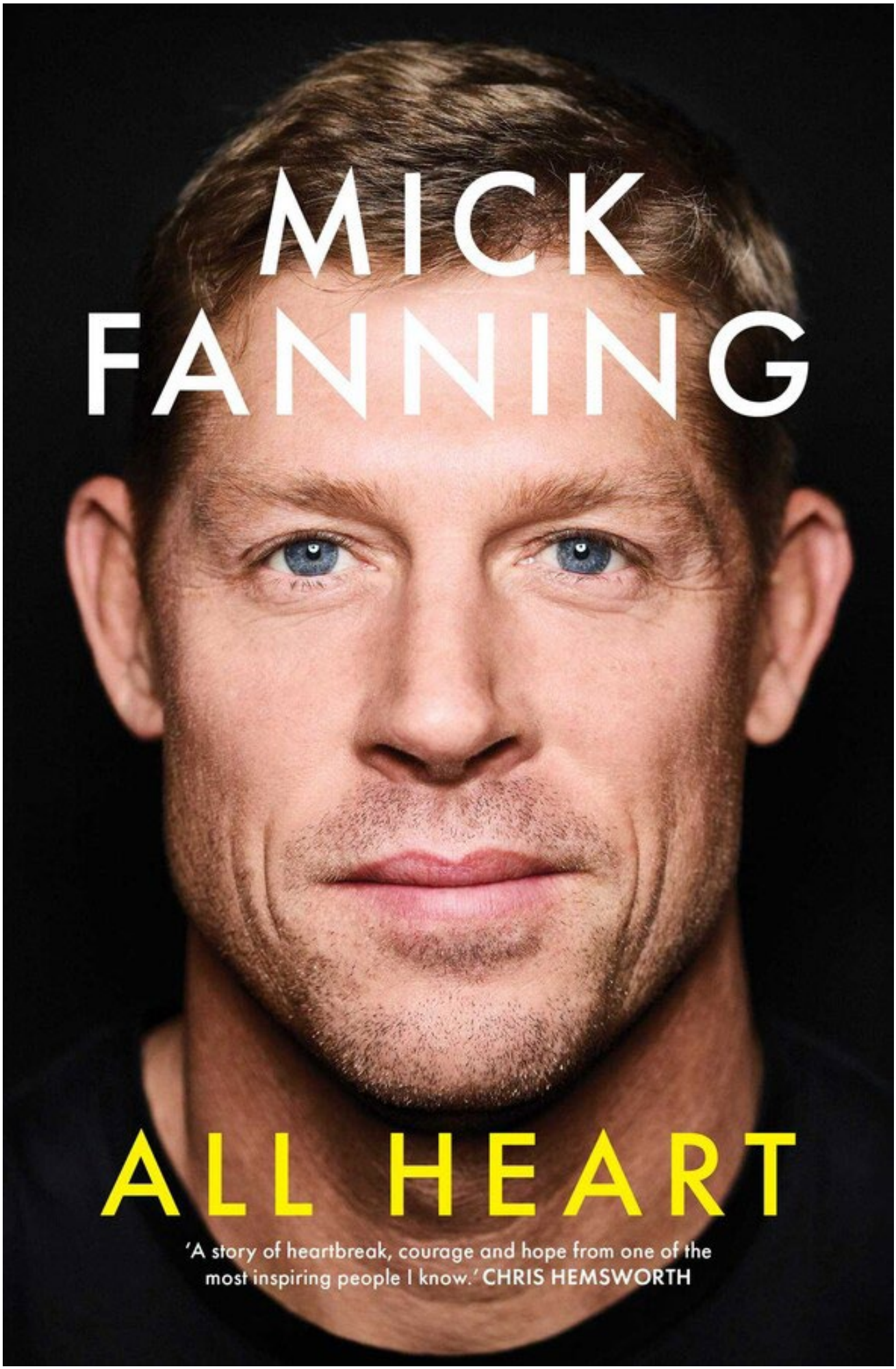
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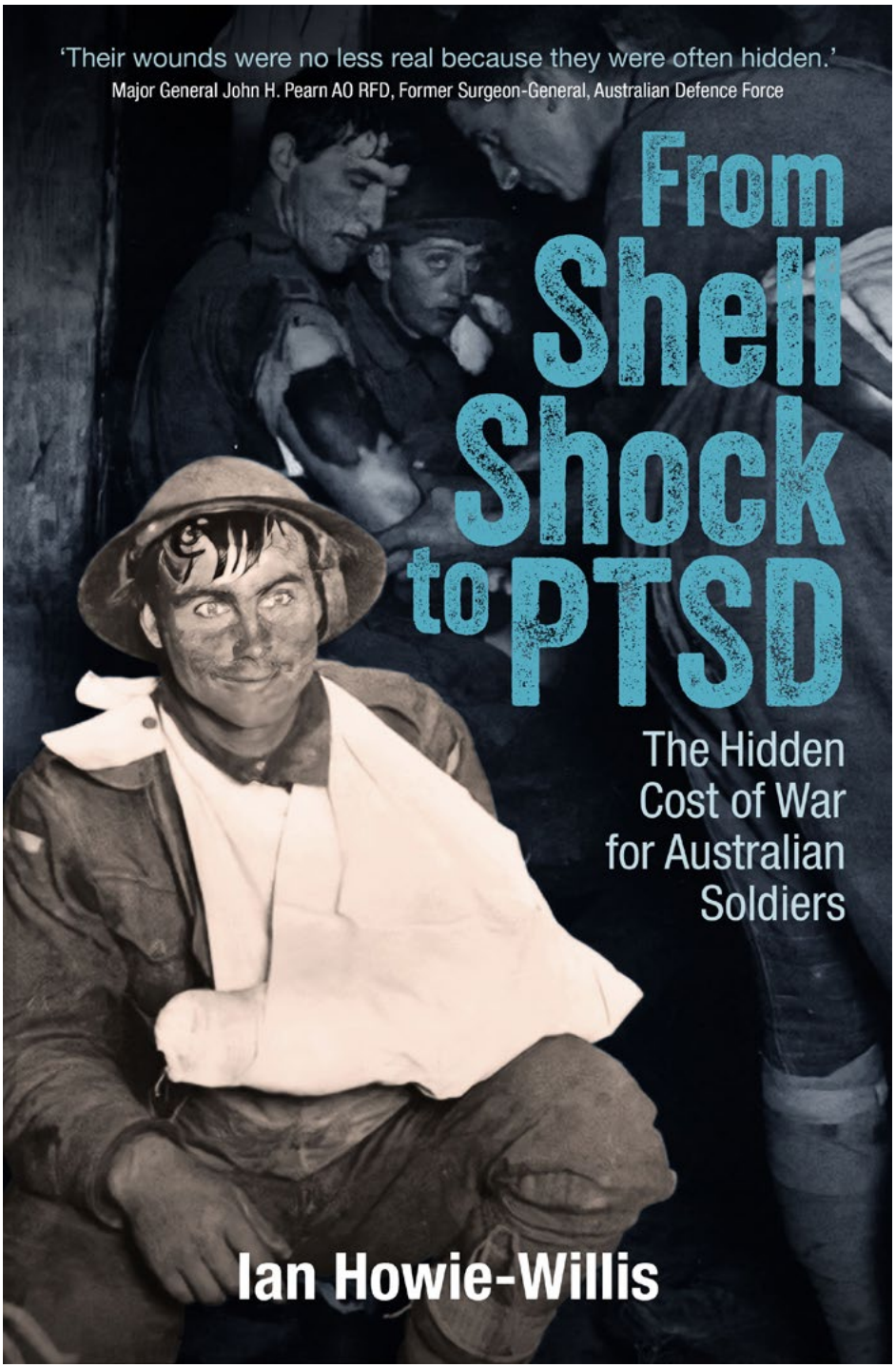


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MICK
FANNING
ALL HEART
'A story of heartbreak, courage and hope from one of the most inspiring people I know.' CHRIS HEMSWORTH



In From Shell-Shock to PTSD, eminent military–medical historian Ian Howie-Willis draws on decades of research, extensive military and medical records, and a wide body of official inquiries to trace 125 years of psychological injury across the Australian Army. He reveals how trauma has been recognised, misunderstood, redefined and managed over time, often slowly, and sometimes at great human cost.

Greg T Ross: Today, it is my great pleasure to introduce Ian Howie Willis, an independent professional historian based in Canberra. He is the author of, well, I think it's 24 books. Pull me up if I'm wrong, Ian, welcome to The Last Post.

Ian Howie Willis: Thank you, Greg.

GTR: Ian, we're here today to talk about this... Well, I don't know if the word magnificent, but it's a wonderful insight into what we've become known as post-traumatic stress disorder. The book is available through Big Sky Publishing from Shell Shock to PTSD, The Hidden Cost of War for Australian Soldiers. A well-written and researched book, Ian, and thank you for bringing this to the Australian public.

IHW: Thanks, Greg.

GTR: Post-traumatic stress disorder, well, it's a well-worn discussion, isn't it, Ian? It's a worthy, but obviously well-worn discussion. How does this book contribute to the discussion?

IHW: Well, what it does is it looks at the Australian Army's experience of disabling mental health, much of which has probably been PTSD right across the 125 years of the army's history.

GTR: Yes, I think the word comprehensive is an apt and appropriate word to use in such a book. The coverage is incredible. You've got a forward by Major General John H. Pearn, who is a Major and an acting psychiatrist in the Australian Field Hospital in Vung Tao, Vietnam in 1967. He makes the point, Ian, that mental health problems obviously don't leave when the military personnel leave the military and it has a ripple effect throughout the wider community. Is this book just as important to the general population, Ian, as it is to veterans and associates?

IHW: I would argue that it is, Greg, and that's because at any one time, about 11% of the Australian population will be suffering from PTSD. Some occupational groups experience it more frequently than others. As you might expect, the emergency services, police, ambulance, fire brigade, state emergency services, these people see some pretty horrendous sites and undergo harrowing experiences that are not all that different from what military personnel experience. So they're in a high risk group as well. So yes, it doesn't only apply to military personnel. It applies to various other occupational groups as well.

GTR: And in you book From Shell Shock to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, The Hidden Cost of War for Australian Soldiers, you do go through and we'll talk about this in just a moment, the high risk groups or the groups most vulnerable, and of course harrowing experiences go across the vein, don't they? Alongside war, there's first responders, et cetera. But this book in great detail describes our deployments in the 125 years since Federation. Have things changed, symptoms, anything changed since the classic cases of shell shocked experienced by World War I diggers, Ian?

IHW: I'll preface my comment here by saying that PTSD isn't just one condition. It's a suite of overlapping and similar conditions producing similar symptoms and the experiences in one era may not be those experienced by military persons in a later period. In World War I, typically the shell shock victim was probably somebody on the Western front fighting in the trenches where at any time he might be expected to be



Ian Howie-Wills

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buried, a shell would explode near him, collapse the trench around him, his buddies would then dig him out frantically, and if he survived that, he would be very traumatized. That kind of experience didn't happen in say Vietnam where the stressors, the traumatic events were of a different kind. In Vietnam, for example, the soldier would walk into a village not knowing who was friend or who was foe. The seemingly innocent child running around the village, for example, could earlier on have placed an improvised explosive device somewhere where a patrolling soldier was going to tread on it. Now that kind of experience, very stressmaking, was of a different type to what the soldiers in the trenches in World War I experience. So depending on the deployment, depending on the time and depending on the place, the experiences will differ. What they all have in common is that they're deeply traumatic and that they have an after effect. They don't leave you when you retire from the military services. They go with you into your civilian life. And of course, they have an effect on family and friends as well. And that's why Professor John Bearn refers to the ripple effect.

GTR: Indeed, indeed. And I suppose it's something we've been discussing for a number of years here at The Last Post and being aware of that experience then spreading itself to the general community. And I suppose the almost and indeed sometimes buried alive experiences of World War I, the anxiety of Vietnam, Ian, and the modern war in Afghanistan, of course, too, of the IEDs, et cetera there, which you obviously include in the book too. So historically in contemporary, it remains something that we need to discuss. Mental health problems used to be regarded, Ian, by the army as an aberration, didn't they? I mean, it was once considered a nuisance really, wasn't it?

IHW: Yes. In decades past, the Army medical fraternity didn't really understand mental health issues very well. And we've got to remember here that at the time of World War I and even into World War II, both psychiatry and psychology were in their infancy. Sigmund Freud, for example, was still developing his theories about mental ill health and the effects of trauma on the human mind. He was still doing that during the 1920s and into the 1930s. So the effects of trauma were not well understood. The symptoms were recognized, but the causes weren't always readily accepted. They were often attributed, for example, to faults in character. The army doctors used to use pejorative terms to refer to the poor quality of the character of the particular sufferer. Presumably somebody who came from a good family wouldn't get shell shock or another term they used to use was neurothenia. Whereas somebody from a poor family background, a lower class, disturbed upbringing, you would expect them to succumb. And so the army tended to regard it as relating to particular experiences in particular deployments. My argument throughout the book is rather different. It is that PTSD and PTSD related mental health conditions are an occupational hazard for military personnel, and they always have been. If you join the army, you can expect to be shot at. If you're on active service, you can expect to be shelled. You can expect to be attacked by an enemy soldier wielding obeying it. All these are occupational hazards for the serving soldier in a war zone, but mental ill health is also an occupational hazard for the serving soldier.

GTR: Yes, indeed. And we'll speak about the unique nature of military service shortly, Ian, but you're right. I suppose, I know Australia was pressured to follow suit on this, but soldiers were once executed under excuses like coward desertion or disobedience and I think casting away arms and even sleeping on the job and stuff. They were executed and that was post-traumatic stress really, wasn't it Ian?

IHW: Well, I would argue that it is the people who've looked at these World War I executions generally conclude that the 17-year-old soldier who had put his age up to join the army, and then he found himself in the trenches during the war on the Western Front, being continually shelled, seeing friends around him blow into bits. At the age of 17, he would crack and he would desert. Now, he just wasn't necessarily a coward. He was a young chap, disabled by his experiences, mentally disabled, and he ran away and he tried to hide. Of course, if he was found, he faced the possibility

of being shot at dawn. And well over 300 British soldiers were executed during World War I for the reasons you have just stated, cowardice casting down a weapon, falling asleep on duty, deserting. All of these didn't just happen. The trigger was probably disabling mental illness. And I'll point out here that to its great credit, the Australian Army, among all the allied armies, was the one military service that did not execute people convicted of cowardice desertion and so on. Some of them were actually given death sentences during courts martial, but these had to be ratified by the Australian government. And Australian governments of all complexions refused to give permission for their soldiers to be executed. And to me, we Australians can be very proud of our government for not succumbing to pressures from allies to execute deserters that people convicted of cowardice, which were all probably PTSD related.

GTR: Well, that's right, Ian. And of course, as you make note in your book From Shell Shock to PTSD: The Hidden Cost of War for Australian Soldiers by Ian Howie Willis, who we're speaking with today, historian author of 24 books. There's not many that know more about it than you. I tell you what, it goes back a long way too, Ian, doesn't it? I mean, you make note in the book about William Shakespeare writing about it in Henry IV part one.

IHW: Yeah, that's true, Greg. To me, I'm one of Shakespeare's greatest fans because Shakespeare understood the human condition extraordinarily well. And the condition that he describes the behavior of his character, Harry Hotspur, as classic PTSD. Shakespeare, of course, didn't know that term and he probably didn't have a term for it, but he was describing symptoms that were well known among serving soldiers and former soldiers. Shakespeare must have spoken to people who had seen active military service and learned from them how they'd been affected because in the speech of Harry Hotspur's wife, he encapsulates all the classic signs of PTSD as we understand them today.

GTR: Well, I was going to say too, Ian, that William Shakespeare, because really I was going to ask you, how did he get into the head of Harry Hot Spur and his wife? As you say, he must have spoken to veterans or people that have been through.

IHW: Well, my only answer to that is we are seeing at work perhaps the greatest literary talent that has ever lived somebody, as I said, with an understanding of the human condition of human psychology, who could express all that in a few very apt lines that ring true centuries after he wrote it. This is one reason why Shakespeare is so the greatest writer in the English language anyway that has ever existed because he could encapsulate so many aspects of the human condition in just a few very appropriate lines.

GTR: Well, I'll tell you what too, Ian, in total agreeance, and I think maybe you and I will have to have a separate episode to talk about Shakespeare. That might be a good thing for us both. But we talked now briefly about war poets, and of course you list a great number of war poets from the First World War, but four centuries later after Shakespeare had first written about Harry and his wife, Australian Vietnam veteran Stephen Butch Daly himself wrote a poem about his experience with PTSD.

IHW: Yes. Butch Daly, who I think was a South Australian Vietnam veteran, he wrote a poem describing his experience of PTSD, and he called the poem There's Nothing Wrong With Me. And that poem, which describes his experience of PTSD, was included in an anthology of works by Vietnam veterans. And Butch Daly's poem was such a good one. It described the delayed impact of PTSD so very well that they chose the title of his poem as the title of the anthology, There's Nothing Wrong with Me. And that is what Butch's friend said to him when he came back from Vietnam, "There's nothing wrong with you." And he would agree with them and say, "Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me," until he heard the postman's whistle go. And then that would remind him of things that he had experienced in Vietnam. He would have a flashback and he would relive the moment and to get rid of it, he would go and overindulge in tobacco and alcohol. And he writes about that in the poem as well as one of his responses. He speaks about waking up in a sweat in a nightmare and he realizes he's just beaten his wife. These are the real effects that John Pearn described in the foreword and Butch Daily in his poem, he recalls all of them. So yes, the war poets weren't just World War I. I guess every major conflict produces its crop of poets. And I'm sure there are other poems that came out of Vietnam, but Butch Daly's was a particularly touching one.

GTR: It's a brilliant poem. And actually you mentioned that book, There's Nothing Wrong With Me. I have had the pleasure of... Well, I actually have that book too, Ian. I have it somewhere in the library. I haven't gone through it for a number of years, but I befriended a Vietnam veteran who had treated his post-traumatic stress disorder with poetry. And he gave me a copy of the book. He noted that simple things like waiting in a queue at the supermarket could aggravate. And that poem, I think by Stephen Butch Daly, do you mind now? I'm going to read this, Ian, because I think it's a brilliant poem. Do you mind if I read this?

IHW: Of course not.

GTR: Thank you. There's Nothing Wrong with Me by Stephen Butch Daly, a Vietnam veteran, about his experience with post-traumatic stress disorder, which is included in this magnificent book by Ian Howie Willis from Shell Shock to PTSD. "The boys came round to welcome me home, as good mates often do. All of them said, We're glad that you're home and there's nothing wrong with you. Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me. I walk down the road on my way to the shop and feel at ease at last, but I stopped dead in my tracks too scared to move as the postman's whistle blast. Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me. I lay down at night craving for sleep, but fearful that sleep may come because the demons and ghosts march through the night to the beating of a gun. And I toss and turn and scream out loud in fear of losing my life. Then I wake in a sweat and can't believe the beating I've given my wife. Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me. As a car backfires, my breath becomes rasp. My skin turns a deathly pale, and my two best friends are nicotine and a cardon of amber ale. Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me". Isn't that brilliant?

IHW: It certainly is. Butch Daly obviously isn't William Shakespeare, but he's written a very moving poem and for anybody who's ever experienced PTSD, either as a sufferer or just as important as a member of a sufferer's family will be familiar with the condition that Butch So eloquently describes.

GTR: When was PTSD first authoritatively defined, Ian? It seems to have been on the radar for a long time, but when was it actually defined?

IHW: It's fairly recent terms, probably the late 1970s, and it was a term devised in the United States where the veterans, Vietnam vets, medical services there started noticing a cluster of symptoms among the people who had fought in Vietnam. And they were all much of a muchness similar to the symptoms that Steve Daley was describing, flashbacks, cues like the postman's whistle, the backfiring of the car that trigger a reliving of an event. And so to put all of these together, there was commonality between them. The US Army psychiatrist devised this term, post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, which is a term that fairly quickly gained acceptance and internationally as well as in America. And of course it has passed into the medical literature and has been accepted far and wide by all the nations of the world. It will last as long as it's useful. Perhaps somebody later on will come up with a better descriptor. World War I, they called PTSD-like symptoms shell shock. They pejoratively, some doctors referred to these mental conditions, trauma related mental conditions as lack of moral fiber was a term that was bandied around. That was still used in World War II. By the time of World War II, they've got round to calling this suite of service induced disabling mental illnesses. They started calling it war neurosis. Then there was the other grab bag term, neurosthenia. All of these terms are appropriate for their day and age. There are limitations to them all. For example, shell shock suffered by the chaps in the trenches in World War I was qualitatively different to what Butch





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Daly experienced in Vietnam. That's why I say there's a suite of conditions and they overlap each other, but there's commonality between them.

GTR: And Ian, just as there are many names and terms for PTSD, there are many types too, aren't they? What's the Stockholm Syndrome?

IHW: The Stockholm Syndrome describes a situation where, from memory, there was a bank robbery in Stockholm. The people who robbed the bank were armed. They captured some hostages. Bank staff and customers held them captive over a number of days, pointing guns at them, a very traumatic experience, all the time preaching at their captives, explaining why they were robbing this particular bank. And the effect of it was in the end that the captives started agreeing with their captors and sympathized with them and became hostile to the police who were trying to release them and to the bank employers. The classic case of Stockholm Syndrome is the American heiress, who was captured and ended up joining the terrorists who had captured a group calling themselves the Symbionese Liberation Army.

GTR: That's right.

IHW: She joined them in a raid on a bank. Patty Hurst was the classic example of that particular syndrome.

GTR: Incredible. And we remember that well too, Ian, of course, with Patty Hurst. Oh geez. I mean, he couldn't have written a better story about someone succumbing to the Stockholm Syndrome. What about Ian in such a comprehensive book, what about Peacekeepers Acute Stress Syndrome? What's that all about?

IHW: Peacekeepers Stress Syndrome, and I'll preface my comments here by Saying you don't have to be in an active combat zone being shot at to get PTSD. You can be on a peacekeeping or peacemaking deployment and you can be subject to some very harrowing traumatic experiences. The peacekeeper stress syndrome describes a situation in which army personnel, other military personnel are on a peacekeeping deployment when their own lives are threatened. They go in, if you're with the UN, for example, you go in under strict rules of engagement, which generally specify that you were there to protect, for example, the medical team you're accompanying. You cannot use your weapons in the conflict where peace is trying to be restored. The classic case here as massacres that took place in Rwanda in the late 20th century, trained soldiers who were trained to save lives by using their weapons and military force find it very hard under their rules of engagement to stand by and watch a crowd of rebels, massacre civilians, particularly if the civilians are pregnant women and little children, their instinct and their training tells them to intervene to save the lives of these innocent people being killed. But if you're under UN rules of engagement, you may not. You can use your weapons to protect the Australian Army Medical Corps personnel that you're there to support, but you may not intervene in the conflicts that you see before you. Now that's deeply, deeply distressing for a trained soldier. And after it's all over, the trained soldier will begin thinking, "Look, I should have intervened. It was against rules of engagement. I could have saved that child I saw but I didn't, but I should have." And so they start feeling guilty about it, guilty about the lives they saw taken, guilty about not having intervened. And at the same time, remembering if they



had intervened, perhaps the guns would've been turned on them and their medical team disastrously. Such a situation as extremely traumatic for the serving soldier and produces often a high level of post-service PTSD.

GTR: Oh geez. It's something that we hope, a situation we would never be put through. And finally in the syndrome section of things too, in survivor guilt syndrome, I mean that sort of self-explains, but if you could go into that in a bit of detail.

IHW: Well, survivor guilt syndrome is another variation of these various forms of overlapping PTSD. This describes a situation, excuse me, where a serving soldier has been in a situation that these comrades have been killed. They've been blown up by an improvised explosive device. Maybe it's been one of these green on blue attacks where your so-called allies turn their gums on you and kill your best friends and comrades. And then at the end of it all, you are left alive and you start asking yourself, "Why was I spared? My best mate got killed. He's a much better chap than me. Why was he killed and why was I spared?" Now that kind of thought, if you mull that over continually in the months and years after your own service, perhaps the memory of it will tip you over the edge into PTSD. And so survivor guilt is both in the civilian community and also in the military context is a very real form of PTSD.

GTR: Yeah. It leaves me breathless just hearing you explain it because the book itself goes into great detail. And I mean, every chapter in this book, every section is worth a book in itself because there's so much to discuss here and you go through it so comprehensively, Ian. Self-help for PTSD sufferers, is that encouraged?

IHW: I'm a social military historian. I am not trained as a psychologist, much less a psychiatrist. However, what I can do as an historian is bring together experience of disabling mental illness from various campaigns, various deployments over a long period and see the common threads and recognize that, for example, the people, the ex-service personnel who might currently be receiving pensions because of PTSD suffered in Rwanda, they're not really all that much different from the chaps who receive pensions after World War I from what they'd experienced at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. There are commonalities there. What I've done in this book has drawn them together.

GTR: You've done so well, Ian Howie Willis, a historian and author, an amazing book. Finally, Ian, I guess you mentioned in this book and we discussed it briefly before, you touched on the subject of risk factors. Are there more vulnerable groups? And if so, who are they and why would that be?

IHW: Well, the shorter answer is yes, they are. The long answer is that this has not been a field of research greatly explored by Australian mental health professionals. In the US, they've done much more on this. And they



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find that, for example, ethnic minorities who were discriminated against, for example, in the US, that would mean the indigenous people and the Afro-American community. They're at higher risk than people in the mainstream community. It's not too hard in the Australian context to suspect that say the First Nations people, the Indigenous groups and the refugee community, particularly those who vary from the mainstream white European population, that these people are at greater risk because as they go about their daily lives, they experience all sorts of demeaning and humiliating experiences that they and me won't. And so it's easy to understand how that American experience perhaps applies in Australia as well.

GTR: Look, Ian, this is a magnificent book, as I've said a couple of times too, and you cover so much more than we're able to discuss on this podcast. But I would recommend all people who have a play in this would go out and get this book and it should be at libraries and schools nationwide too. You go through many other things in this book too, obviously, including the cost of PTSD, the cost of war, I suppose. Has PTSD become more common? The various treatments that are available, the common and successful and perhaps not so successful ones. And obviously you touch on the Royal Commission too with the unique nature of military service too. But we've come to an end of our discussion for today at least and we must keep in touch because it's been a great episode of the last host radio show. Ian, we thank you very much for sitting down and chatting with us today about your amazing book From Shell Shop to PTSD.

IHW: Thank you, Greg. It's been a great pleasure. My best wishes to all your listeners, particularly those of them who might have experienced PTSD themselves or among friends and family.



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GEOFF ROWE

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Greg T Ross: One of the people that's been connected with The Last Post the magazine and now the podcast series for a long time is Geoff Rowe. Geoff has been CEO of ADA Australia, that's Aged Disability Advocacy Australia, since September 2014. I think Geoff will pull me up if I'm wrong. Geoff, welcome to The Last Post, again. How are you?

Geoff Rowe: I'm well, thanks, Greg. Thanks for having me.

GTR: 2014, that's notching up a few years, Geoff. What has changed? Has much has changed in the area of aged and disability advocacy?

GR: Look, certainly both in the aged care space and the disability space, there has been significant change over the past 10 plus years. And I guess some of those changes came out of, I suppose, feedback to government that both systems were broken and they weren't meeting the needs of be it older people or people with the disability. And we've seen in the aged care space an aged care royal commission that handed down its findings four or five years ago now, and a disability royal commission, which handed down its findings only two to three years ago. So those royal commissions between them made more than 200 recommendations about how systems could be improved. Aged care got out of the blocks obviously earlier than disability, and I think there's been a bit more of an appetite to try and fix the aged care system than there has been thus far in relation to disability.

GTR: Indeed. I guess one of the things that seems relevant to talk about at the moment too, Geoff Rowe is the Commonwealth Ombudsman Iain Anderson has issued a damning report on the aged care algorithm. And I guess this covers a lot too, but obviously what we're saying here is that, or what Ian's saying is that the use of automation in Australia's aged care system lacks safeguards. What's your feeling on all of this?

GR: Look, the major changes to the aged care system came in place on the 1st of November 2025. And so they've been in place really for just over 12 months. And what we've seen in a number of areas is, I guess on a polite day, we'll call them unintended consequences. One of the recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission was that we get a consistent assessment process in place so that an older person's needs could be assessed consistently, whether they were in Coolangatta, Cunnamulla or wherever across the country. But somehow or other government seems to have thrown the baby out with the bath water. That idea of being consistent, really they've introduced an algorithm and those of us in the sector who have been trying to deal with it for the last 12 months plus have really started to describe this as robo debt two. If we though government didn't learn something from robo debt one, the integrated assessment tool or the IT is an absolute example of how do you stuff up an assessment system when you rely on automation.

GTR: Well, yeah, we have seen examples of that across many genres and social platforms more recently of course, and we'll say that while it seems to be increasing, there will be a leveling out of this to deal with it, to make these problems less profound. But it has led to unfair outcomes, hasn't it? And I guess the ombudsman obviously released his findings after an investigation into the Department of Health, Disability and Aging's classification algorithm calling it unreasonable. And are they going to learn from this, Geoff, what's your feeling? How confident are you that something good will come out of this?

GR: Look, I think something good has to come out of this, Greg, because that current algorithm isn't working for older people. We're seeing people who are going in for a reassessment who have a declining functions and we're seeing them lose support hours. We're seeing people who are really in critical situations who have been assessed as medium or low priority. And I guess it's hard to look at those people to speak with those people and not just shake your head and say the system really is broken. And look, one of the key parts of the new system is that historically people had their needs assessed by an assessor, by a human being. I guess that's open to people's views and opinions and inconsistencies. But when you're dealing with an algorithm that doesn't allow any human intervention or human feedback, even though some of the questions that are asked about people's needs aren't included in determining the final result, you've got to say this is just not working. And there's been, I suppose, an appeal mechanism put in place. And when it was first announced, people had 28 days to lodge an appeal, but it could only be lodged via a written letter to a postal address in Adelaide. For many older people, I suppose there's multiple reasons why they wouldn't appeal. I mean, people often are reluctant to appeal, but for many, English is a second language. People have lost eyesight, have lost function. Initially, even advocates couldn't advocate on someone's part on their

behalf. And I guess what we've seen over some of that early feedback has government's taken a step back and said, okay, well the appeal system isn't working as well as it could and we'll make some changes. And even more recently, just since the ombudsman's reports come down, they've accepted some of the recommendations, noted some and potentially have ignored a couple of the others. So government is listening and we're not talking about small numbers of people at the moment. There's about 200,000 older Australians who are on the wait list for an aged care service. Last year we saw, I think it was about five and a half thousand people died on the waiting list waiting to access a service. And we're primarily talking here about services to support people to live at home longer.

We're seeing some of the byproducts at the moment of state and territory health ministers coming out and saying there are all these old people who are taking up beds in hospitals who don't really need a bed in hospital. They need an aged care place. And often aged care place is interpreted as a nursing home bed or a nursing home residential care placement. For most people we talk to, they want to go home. They've been in hospital because they've been sick, they've had an injury, but they've got better to the point that they're able to be released. But because the supported home system is not nimble, they can't go home. I mean, they may get assessed and the assessment says it's going to be nine months, 10 months before you get a home care package. So sometimes the hospital in the attempt to get the person out of the bed, and we're talking about 6,000 older people across Australia at the moment who are stuck in hospitals, but it means that some of those people are fast tracked into nursing homes into residential care places. Not a good outcome for the older person because that's not where they want to be and not a good outcome for you and I as taxpayers because the cost of a residential care bed while a fraction of the cost of a hospital bed is still a multiple of a supported home package. So what am I saying? The aged care system's still a bit of a mess. Advocacy is still really important. For people who are trying to access that system, it's really important that they speak out and to say, "The system's not meeting our needs. Government, you need to listen. Government, you need to change things."

GTR: Yes. Well, indeed. And I mean, one would think, although I'm not in the area as a full-time job, although of course interaction with people like yourselves gives me an insight. But you would imagine that I guess the dehumanizing of this too, through automation, which is actually decision making on behalf of humans. In such an important area, shouldn't automation be the last thing that you employ?

GR: Look, I think we're moving down the road of AI and there's lots of, I suppose, conversation at the moment about is it a good thing or a bad thing? AI that doesn't get feedback on what it produces is a problem. And I think this is a really good example of where government has chosen to use artificial intelligence, but is taking no feedback, making no adjustments to the algorithm and just continuing to produce that same results. And there is a saying, which now I'm not going to remember, but something about doing the same thing time and time again and expecting a different result. It does feel like that. It feels a bit like Groundhog Day. We can do better.

GTR: This was promoted by the government as being a once in a generation reform, but in the end it seems to have been done, according to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, without any meaningful risk assessment. And indeed there seems to more than a fivefold increase too, on appeals in the previous year. So this is actually wasting money too, isn't it?

GR: Well, it's certainly not saving money, and I don't think it's giving the efficiencies or even that comparability. When you look at some of the algorithms, I don't know what you call them, I suppose the points where it prioritizes you, some of them are quite odd. You get a higher priority if you are in a rural and remote community, and I sort of get that, but you get a high priority if you're in critical need,



absolutely. There are a number of the half dozen factors that gives priority, which I shake my head and don't quite know where those decisions have been made.

GTR: Indeed. And I guess with that fivefold increase, it leads, well, the ombudsman himself said that a reasonable person would, in my view, lack confidence that the system is in fact fair and consistent. And I guess that comes down to it too with the aged and disability advocacy arena too, Geoff Rowe, is that people need to feel that confidence, don't they?

GR: Oh, absolutely, Greg. And I think as an advocacy organization, we are hearing some older people saying, "This is all too hard. We're never going to be able to access the system. We're not even going to try." And that really is quite wrong. I do recall my dad talking now a few decades ago about how in the early 1950s that there were some changes to the tax system, and that was to make sure that when people aged, that they got access to aged care services and they got access to a pension. But 50, 70 years down the road, we've forgotten about that, that people have contributed towards the cost of their care when they're no longer able to work. But it's basic human decency, but it's also cost effectiveness. I mean, I think when you have a system that should be designed and should be focused on helping people to maintain their independence to live at home for as long as possible, we should be really working hard to making sure that that works, that it's nimble, that it's quick, that the impact on the taxpayer dollar is as low as it can be while providing a quality service. And as I said earlier in our conversation, I mean, what we are seeing is in the absence of a supported home program that is nimble, that reflects people's needs, people are ending up stuck in the health system, stuck in a residential care system, which are both far more expensive systems than that basic care at home, which is what people are looking for.

GTR: Yes. And well, I mean, it was a bit of a sad response from the Department saying that it did not accept the characterization, that it didn't test the algorithm or validate it. But of course, the tests were conducted on an original version of the algorithm created by a consultancy which has since been modified. So there's a lot of things. I mean, I think six out of the 10 recommendations have been accepted by the government, a total of 10 recommendations with six being accepted by the government. The first two recommendations that the legislation be introduced to allow override by human and amending the aged care rules have not been accepted by the department. How worrying is that?

GR: It's hard to know what's behind the department's reluctance, I suppose, to embrace the report, embrace the findings. And I think if I was an older person in the aged care system, I'd be thinking, "I don't know that these guys are actually listening to what I'm saying." Interestingly, one of the first couple of recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission was about bringing in a new Aged Care Act where rights of older people use front row and center. So the previous Aged Care Act, which has been in since not the late 1980s, was an act that was a funding instrument. It didn't talk about older people particularly. It didn't talk about people having rights or being consulted or being listened to. The new legislation requires aged care providers to talk to older people, to listen to older people. But it seems that while government has drafted legislation, indeed enacted legislation that is about giving older people rights within the aged care system, government itself doesn't appear to be listening to what the older person is saying. And I'm not quite sure how you describe that, but it certainly is a contradiction. You think government would be the ones who were championing and leading by example.

GTR: Yes. Well, that's the first thing that came to my mind when reading this. And as has been noted, it's like the government, the department didn't fully understand the legal frameworks around this and what was meant to create. But what's your role now? Just keeping an eye on this and tell us what you'll be doing there and just...

GR: What's my role? That's a great question, Greg. Look, I think as advocates, one of our key roles is to, well, support people to access the aged care system, the commonwealth funded aged care system, and help them resolve the issues and the problems that they have. So absolutely our advocates on the ground every day of the week talking to older people, trying to support them on this journey. We also have a systems responsibility. And so when we see a system is not working as advocacy organizations, we have a responsibility to take that issue up with government because government aren't on the ground and I don't expect them to understand all that is going on. But advocates are in a unique position where they can feedback to government what it is that older people are saying, what older people are telling us about that experience. And I suppose how do we get that? By talking to older people. And I'd be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to really promote our national contact center number. So we're part of the Older Person's Advocacy Network or APAN. We have an aged care advocacy line and it really has the simplest 1-800 number in the country. It's 1-800-700-600. So if you're an older person that's having trouble with this system or you're a family member of someone that's trying to negotiate the system that needs assistance, give us a call, talk to our intake team, potentially talk to our advocates. I mean, our primary focus is on the older person because we wanted to make sure there's their wants and their voice is heard. But people can ring, have a chat, we're happy to provide information. And if it's about working one-on-one with the older person, then we will make contact, get their permission, and try and help them navigate what's still a fairly complex system.

GTR: You've been doing a great job since 2014 with the ADA, Geoff and you're doing a great job before that in other roles too, but of course you've been in this area now for a while. And we do thank you for your ongoing efforts. And for keeping listeners up to date, remember 1800, 700, 600 ADA Australia as part of the OPAN network. And of course we've been speaking today with Geoff Rowe, CEO of ADA Australia, about the use of automation in Australia's aged care system and the response from the Commonwealth Ombudsman. There was one thing I meant to speak with you, Geoff. Recently, my partner and I were in WA, Western Australia, and we found it unusually difficult to get a seniors discount for anything. And I just wonder, do governments have to provide seniors discounts? Because we went to a lot of places where they just didn't offer it.

GR: I guess seniors discounts, from what I understand of them, they are generally a state-based or a state and territory-based scheme. I know that there are some national schemes which will go right across the country, but it does vary from state to state. And I guess I'm not quite sure what to say, but in each of the states and territories, they do tend to have a lead seniors organization. So again, calling our hotline is probably not going to help you, but if you're in WA, I'd be saying talk to Advocare over there because they're funded by the WA government to be a peak body for seniors. And so they'll be able to either point you in the right direction or give you information about what schemes exist. The other option obviously is the state and territory government websites, type in seniors and they'll generally outline what's there. But for a lot of the senior schemes, they'll have seniors cards, but whether or not individual businesses honor those, I guess potentially it's up to those individual businesses.

GTR: And go to Advocare WA if you're in WA. And well, we're no longer... we're away from WA. We've come back. But I tell you, we went to the Busselton Jetty, the longest jetty in the world, and we walked to the end of it and back just proving how fit we were, but we still didn't even get a discount for that! Hah.

GR: There you go. You have to come to Queensland next time, Greg. Not that I'm biased. Bring your seniors card and have a good time.

GTR: It's always a pleasure to speak with you, Geoff. Geoff Rowe, Aged Disability Advocacy Australia CEO. Thanks so much for joining us.

GR: Thanks, Greg.

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National Breast Cancer Foundation

THOUGHTS ON TASG YEAR 11 LEADERSHIP RETREAT



"Sometimes the most powerful lessons aren't the ones we teach others. They're the ones we discover when we take the time to listen."

I had the privilege of spending 90 minutes with a wonderful group of Year 11 students from The Anglican School Googong, as part of their leadership retreat.

I was invited to share my journey through military service, injury, adversity, mental health challenges, rehabilitation and, ultimately, finding renewed purpose through adaptive sport and representing Australia.

But this wasn't simply about telling my story. It was about exploring what leadership, resilience, courage and character actually look like when life doesn't go according to plan.

My presentation was built around a simple statement that has become increasingly important to me:"True character is revealed when things don't go to plan."

We spoke about the importance of mateship, asking for help, accepting that setbacks are part of life, and understanding that resilience doesn't mean being strong every single day.

And we shared a few laughs along the way. Because sometimes humour is just as important as determination when you're navigating life's challenges!

What struck me most was the engagement from the students.Their questions were thoughtful, insightful and, at times, surprisingly profound.

One student asked me:"What does a bad day look like for you?" It was such a simple question, but one that really made me think.I explained that when I'm struggling, I draw on two words I've developed through working with my psychologist:RELIEF & UNCONQUERED.

They're personal reminders that help me stop for a moment, clear my head, regain perspective and work out how to move forward.

Because resilience isn't about never having a bad day.

It's about recognising when you're having one, knowing what helps you, and understanding that asking for support is a strength, not a weakness. But perhaps the most unexpected part of the experience was how much I learned from the students themselves.

As a father, with my son Austin preparing to navigate many of the same challenges as he moves into Year 12, listening to these young people gave me a valuable insight into the pressures, uncertainties, expectations and aspirations that come with this stage of life.

It's easy for us as adults to look back and think we understand what young people are experiencing.

But the world they're growing up in is different from the one we knew And sometimes, rather than offering advice, the most valuable thing we can do is simply listen.

I came away from the session with a greater appreciation of what Austin and his peers are navigating – and perhaps a better understanding of how I can support him through it.

That's why I believe opportunities like this matter so much. When we bring different generations together to share experiences, challenge perspectives and have honest conversations, everyone benefits.

Young people can learn from the experiences of those who've travelled a little further down life's road.

And those of us who've travelled that road can learn an enormous amount from the perspectives, curiosity and honesty of the next generation. I arrived hoping that sharing my experiences might make a difference to these students.I left knowing that they'd made a difference to me.

A sincere thank you to the students and staff at The Anglican School Googong for welcoming me, listening so thoughtfully and being willing to engage in some genuinely meaningful conversations.

And to those students preparing for Year 12 and everything that comes afterwards: You don't need to have your entire future figured out. You don't need to face every challenge alone. And when life doesn't go to plan, remember that the next chapter of your story is still yours to write.

LUKE McCALLUM

Luke McCallum

Royal Australian Navy Veteran | Australian Para-Athlete | Veterans Advocate | Public Speaker

Luke McCallum is a Royal Australian Navy veteran, bilateral below-knee amputee, Australian para-athlete and passionate advocate for veterans' wellbeing, mental health and the power of finding purpose through adversity.

Having served approximately 18 years in the Royal Australian Navy, Luke's life and career have been profoundly shaped by the physical and psychological consequences of military service. A serious fast-roping accident in 2002 and his experiences aboard HMAS Stuart during the 24 April 2004 terrorist attacks involving USS Firebolt left lasting impacts, including chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder and survivor's guilt.

Following his naval career, Luke built a successful career in senior government ICT leadership and management consulting. Behind those professional achievements, however, he continued to navigate significant physical and psychological challenges, eventually undergoing the amputation of both legs below the knee.

Through rehabilitation and adaptive sport, Luke discovered a renewed sense of identity, camaraderie and purpose. He represented Australia at the 2024 Warrior Games in the United States and the 2025 Invictus Games in Vancouver and Whistler, Canada.

Now retired from his professional career, Luke is pursuing elite para-sport, competing in para-rowing and developing as an Australian para-biathlon athlete in cross-country skiing and biathlon. With aspirations towards the 2030 Winter Paralympic Games, he continues to challenge his own expectations of what is possible.

Beyond sport, Luke has become an active voice in the veteran community, advocating for better mental health support, access to healthcare and the importance of adaptive sport in recovery and rehabilitation.

Increasingly, he is also finding purpose in sharing his experiences with others.

In October 2026, Luke spoke with Year 11 students from The Anglican School Googong about leadership, resilience, military service, mental health and overcoming adversity. What followed was an honest and deeply engaging conversation about life's unexpected challenges, the importance of asking for help and the reality that resilience doesn't mean being strong all the time.

For Luke, the experience reinforced something he has come to understand through his own journey: sharing our struggles can be just as powerful as celebrating our achievements.

A father of two boys, Luke is passionate about helping young people, veterans and the wider community understand that adversity doesn't have to define who we are, and that even when life changes beyond recognition, it is possible to discover new purpose and meaning.



'Donor support makes this vital research possible.'
– Professor Tracy Putoczki

Changing the odds: new hope for deadly cancer

For decades, survival rates for pancreatic cancer have barely improved. Today, it remains one of Australia's deadliest cancers, and cases are rising, particularly in people under 50.

"We're seeing a tsunami of pancreatic cancer patients coming through," says Dr Belinda Lee, oncologist and clinician-scientist at WEHI.

Pancreatic tumours surround themselves with dense tissue, creating a 'fortress' that makes it difficult for treatments and the body's own immune system to reach them.

The disease is difficult to detect and often diagnosed too late for surgery. Even if treatment works, pancreatic cancer quickly adapts and becomes resistant. Many patients don't have time to try multiple treatments because the disease progresses so rapidly.

At WEHI, Professor Tracy Putoczki and her team are working to better understand pancreatic cancer and uncover new ways to treat it.

Cracking the code for better treatments

To outsmart pancreatic cancer, researchers first need to understand it.

Every pancreatic cancer is different. Understanding what drives the disease and why treatments stop working is one of the greatest challenges facing researchers.

"Pancreatic cancer is like the bully in the playground. It pushes other cells around and creates an environment that helps it survive," says Professor Putoczki."We're trying to understand its 'master conversation' so we can shut it down."

Professor Putoczki's team are studying how pancreatic cancer communicates with surrounding cells, manipulates its environment and adapts to become resistant to treatment. By uncovering these signals and 'conversations', the team hope to find new ways to disrupt the disease and develop better therapies for future patients.

Tiny tools. Better outcomes.

No bigger than a grain of sand, organoids are miniature 3D cancer models grown in the laboratory from a patient's tumour cells.

By testing potential therapies on these miniature tumours, researchers can predict drug responses and identify the most promising treatments faster – before the patient begins treatment.

These tiny models are helping design smarter clinical trials. With more research, scientists hope to match patients with more effective treatments sooner to improve their chances of a better outcome.

Connecting discoveries with patient care

WEHI researchers are working closely with cancer specialists through PURPLE, Australia's leading pancreatic cancer research digital platform, created by WEHI and funded by generous donors.

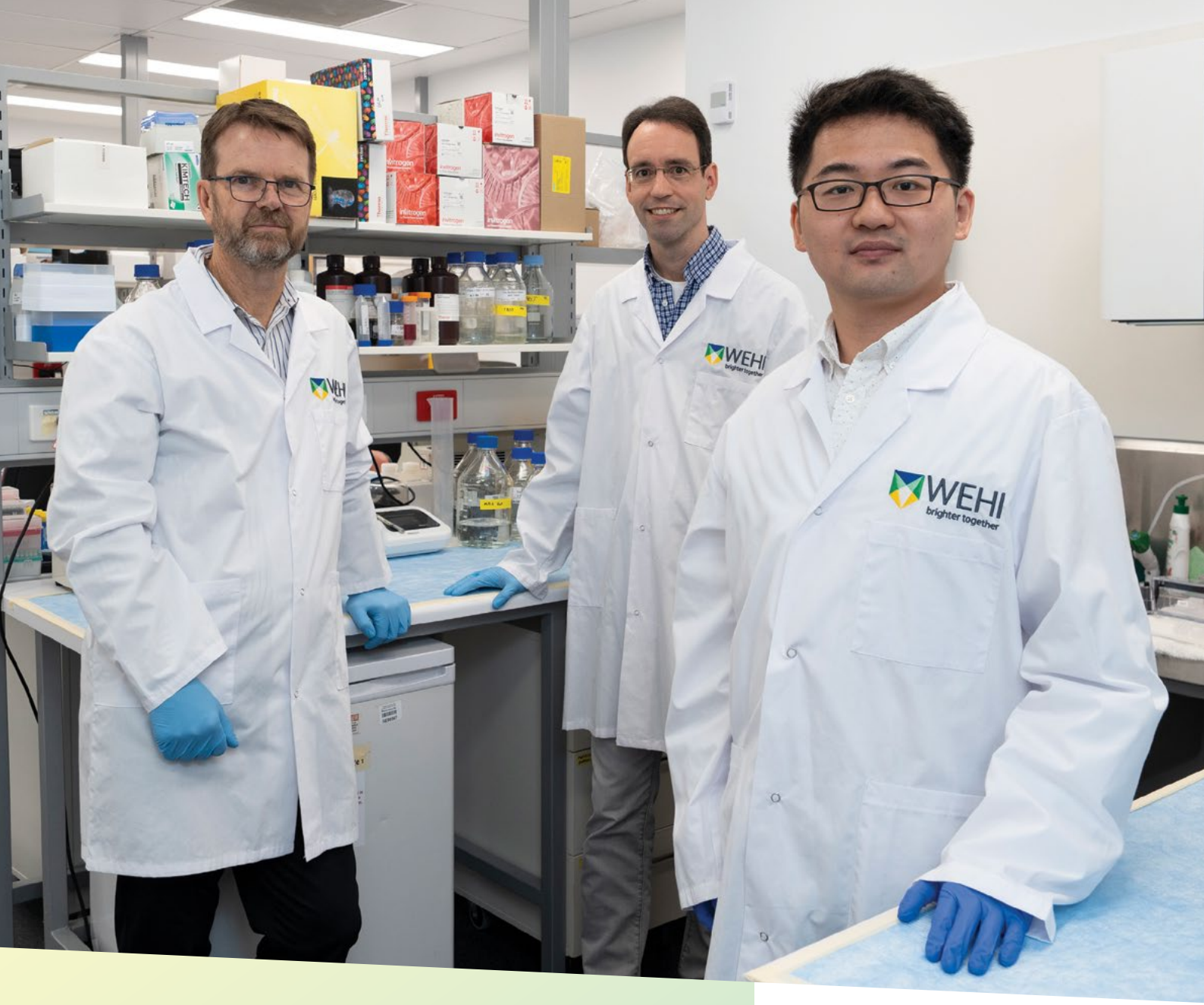
PURPLE connects patients, clinicians and researchers, helping move discoveries more quickly from the laboratory to the clinic and back again. By linking patient experiences with cutting-edge research, new insights can be turned into promising treatments faster.

Today the network has:

- 58 participating cancer centres worldwide
- more than 7,000 patient journeys tracked
- more than 300 patient-derived organoids created.

Together, WEHI researchers are helping ensure discoveries reach patients sooner, while patient experiences continue to shape future research.

Tomorrow's medical breakthroughs start with your support today.
To find out more about research at WEHI or to make a donation visit **www.wehi.edu.au**



Mastery of disease through discovery

Image L–R: Professor Peter Gibbs and Associate Professor Oliver Sieber with Dr Tao Tan. These scientists are leading cutting edge research into new ways to treat bowel cancer.

At WEHI, we believe that together, we can cure the most devasting diseases. By working collaboratively and with your support, we can solve health challenges faster than ever before.

WEHI is Australia's leading medical research institute, with more than 100 years of world-changing medical discoveries. Millions of people live healthy lives today because of our discoveries. Our research teams are globally recognised and continue to take on the world's major health challenges, finding solutions never thought possible.

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brighter together

Australian Red Cross

"I want my legacy to be compassion"

A heart changed by what she witnessed. A life spent responding to it. Will you?

Elisabeth has never forgotten what she saw at 19. Poverty in Haiti so confronting she couldn't eat, sleep or speak for three days. It changed her life, inspiring a lifetime of giving.

Elisabeth grew up the eldest of five children in a Dutch migrant family who came to Brisbane in 1951. Her father had been part of the Dutch resistance against Nazi occupation during World War II, risking his life to protect people hunted by the Gestapo. His stories taught her something she has carried with her ever since: people are responsible for one another. She recognised those same values in Australian Red Cross, inspiring her to leave a gift in her Will.

At 19, a trip to Haiti brought that conviction into sharp focus. She witnessed poverty so desperate and so confronting that she sat alone on the ship's deck for three days, unable to speak to anyone.

"Something very profound happened to me there," she says. "I thought, I never knew the world was like this."

She spent the decades that followed trying to respond – volunteering across the world, studying trauma, and today giving her time each week as an Australian Red Cross TeleCross volunteer, calling Australians who live alone just to make sure they're OK.

From there, leaving a gift to Australian Red Cross in her Will felt, she says, like the most natural thing in the world.

"There are people out there taking enormous risks to help others who might have lost hope," she says. "It is such a privilege to think that my few dollars is part of what helps that person to be out there doing that."

Will you consider leaving a legacy of compassion?

"You get a warm glow. Why wouldn't you? It's so easy."



Find out more about leaving a gift in your Will.

Scan the QR code to receive a free Wills guide



LIFE AFTER SERVICE

Keep connected after service

Why movement, routine and mates matter when you leave the Defence Force, with insights from inside Proactive Health clinics.

It's 7:30 on a weekday morning and the bikes are full. When the session wraps up, most of the group stays on to catch up. On Fridays, they walk or run together.

For the team at Proactive Health, staying connected matters as much as the exercise itself. Head of Clinical Nick Martin and Clinical Head of Social Work Angela Todd share what they hear from inside our clinics, and where to start.

A whole of life change

"Transition is a whole of life change, not just a job change," Angela says. "Many veterans transition well. For those who don't, it can mean losing structure, purpose, identity and a close community all at once."

Some gaps are practical. After a long career with health care through Defence, some veterans have never held their own Medicare card or found a GP. Others live with injuries no one can see, so they can be left to carry the load on their own.

> **Group sessions recreate some of that structure. A regular time, familiar faces and people who understand.**
>
> Nick Martin, Head of Clinical, Proactive Health

Where physio and EP fit

Physiotherapists assess and manage injuries and pain, restore movement and help people get back to the activities they value. Exercise physiologists prescribe exercise to build capacity, manage chronic conditions and support mental health. Both work alongside the veteran's GP.

"Our practitioners most often see back, neck, knee and shoulder issues, linked to years of load carriage, running and repetitive training," Nick says. "But it varies by role and by person. There's no single veteran experience."

Why the group matters

"Our practitioners hear from veterans that losing their mates, routine and shared purpose is one of the hardest parts of leaving service," Nick says. Group sessions bring some of that back: a regular time, familiar faces and people who understand.

Clinical evidence supports exercise as part of mental health care. A 2023 overview of systematic reviews found physical activity can reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety and distress compared with usual care.[1]

"Movement, routine and belonging are protective," Angela says. "Doing it alongside others rebuilds the sense of team many veterans miss."

Families too

Partners and families often notice changes first and carry much of the day to day load. They need support in their own right, and can get it, including through Open Arms.

"Start with one conversation. You don't need to have it all worked out, or be in crisis, to ask for help."

Angela Todd, Clinical Head of Social Work

IN THEIR WORDS

> *It's a team event ... It's been a great program.*
>
> Ray, veteran

> *They take you as an individual ... rather than just someone grabbing you in the gym. It's a more relaxed atmosphere.*
>
> Jeff, veteran

> *She [my exercise physiologist] explains why we're doing something. She explains what she's trying to do.*
>
> Robert, veteran

YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT

1. A referral from your GP or specialist
2. A full history, including your service and what matters to you
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4. Something practical to start on straight away

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1. Singh B, Olds T, Curtis R, et al. Effectiveness of physical activity interventions for improving depression, anxiety and distress: an overview of systematic reviews. Br J Sports Med. 2023;57(18):1203-1209. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2022-106195

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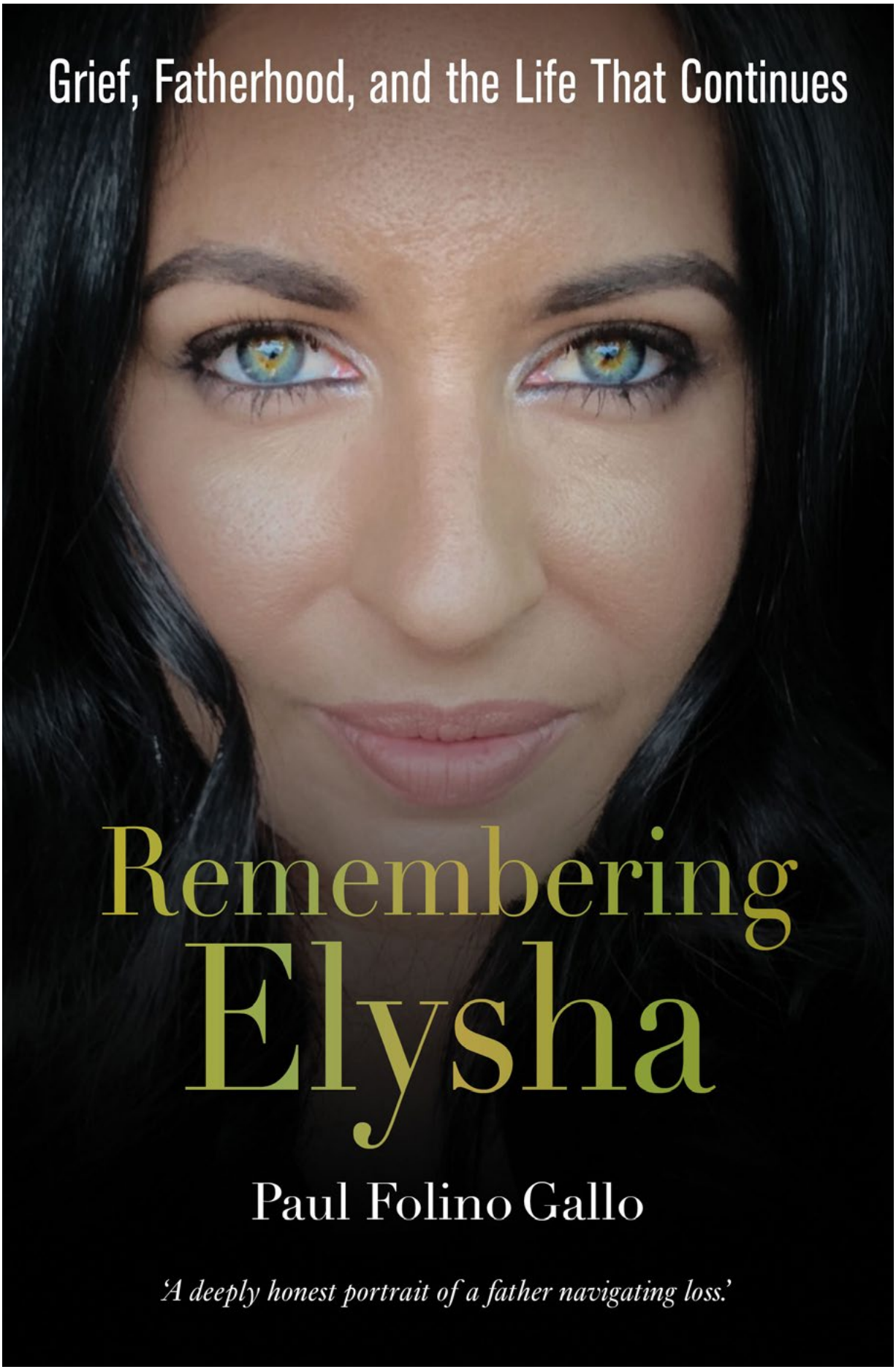
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Let’s blow this popsicle stand

On the Boral Gas explosion and the need to leave Sydney.

The first thump was subtle, almost furtive. I thought something had shifted upstairs. The second made Sharon and me look at each other instantly.

“Did you feel that?”

“Maybe an earth tremor,” I said, though I thought I’d also heard dull booms somewhere outside.

For a minute or so, nothing happened.

Then the night exploded into light. A blinding flash filled the windows as though daylight had been switched on for a heartbeat. We’d been sprawled lazily in front of the television watching the Sunday night “Blockbuster,” as Sharon called them — she on the couch, me stretched out on the floor. The shockwave travelled physically through my body, a deep jolt that seemed to come up through the house itself.

My first thought was absurd: aliens. To this day I don’t know why, but for one wild instant I thought something had landed. Then came the sound — a huge, rolling explosion — and we bolted upstairs to see what was happening.

We reached the balcony of our terrace house in Erskineville just in time to see a massive fireball climbing into the sky near the airport, less than two kilometres to the south.

“Oh my God,” I said to Sharon. “A plane’s crashed.”

Confusion took hold as we stood there watching the inferno rage against the night sky. Smaller explosions still cracked in the distance, flashes flickering within the blaze. I found myself unable to look away, horrified yet mesmerised. Somewhere in that fire, I imagined, were the passengers of the doomed aircraft, trapped and burning.

We had no idea what to do. No sense of emergency procedure, no plan. So we simply stayed there on the balcony, rooted to the spot, staring.

Then came the sirens.

Police cars and emergency vehicles tore through the surrounding streets, circling toward the explosion. One or two screamed straight up Erskineville Road, and then a helicopter began hovering somewhere nearby, its rotating lights washing across the terraces and shopfronts at the corner.

I went downstairs to see what was happening. The moment I opened the front door I heard it: running footsteps, frightened voices, children crying.

A family hurried up the street in obvious panic, clutching bags and each other.

I still had no idea what the hell was going on until an SES vehicle rounded the corner. As I approached, someone finally shouted the news: an LPG gas explosion at St Peters, less than a kilometre away. There were fears of further, even larger explosions, and residents were being told to evacuate immediately.

By now Lambert Street was alive with confusion and light, lit up like Christmas by emergency vehicles and headlights. More and more people poured from their houses. As word spread, everyone rushed back inside to gather belongings. Engines started. Car doors slammed. The frightened family kept moving, not even bothering to return for their car.

Inside, I grabbed the phone and called my brother Ed, who lived in the relative safety of Marrickville, about four kilometres away. He’d already heard reports on the radio after the first explosions and had been trying to contact us. We quickly agreed that retreating to his place was the smartest option.

We threw a few essentials together, put Silver in a cage, and headed for the car.

No one knew how serious the situation was or whether the worst was still to come. Driving toward King Street felt like moving through a war zone. Roads were deserted except for police, SES crews, and roadblocks. King Street itself had been sealed off, forcing us to detour toward Marrickville.



WALLY LEWIS ON GOUGING CHARGE Page 56

The Sydney Morning Herald

Late Edition 50 cents* 70 Pages No 47,602 First Published 1831 Editorial 282 2822; General 282 2833; Classifieds 282 1122 Monday, April 2, 1990

INFERNO: Fuel tanks explode

Thousands told to leave homes

By STAFF REPORTERS

Thousands of people were being evacuated from inner-western suburbs early today after LPG tanks exploded last night, sending a fireball 500 metres into the sky.

One tank, which contained 40,000 litres of gas, blew up at the Boral site in Burrows Road, Sydenham, just before 10 o’clock.

Police said no-one had been killed or injured.

There are another four major tanks at the site, each containing 40,000 litres of gas, and early this morning one was burning with its relief valve open and there was fire in the piping system of the other three.

A Fire Brigade officer said that four major tanks at the site had been ruptured.

The station officer in charge of control, Mr Paul Rafferty, said one road tanker was also burning from its relief valves.

Five other tankers in the area were being protected by a curtain of water and were in no danger.

Mr Rafferty said a number of buildings had been destroyed by the fire and explosions, but there had been no damage to Fire Brigade trucks or equipment.

At a 4 am media briefing, Chief Superintendent Dennis Colligan said of the remaining tanks: “They are burning upwards, and they should be okay but if the valves stick or the fires increase, there could be another explosion.”

He said Fire Brigade and Boral experts had inspected the site from the air and were confident that the gas would burn out by 5 am or 6 am.

He said it was expected that Sydney Airport — which had been evacuated at the height of the fire — and morning peak-hour traffic to operate normally.

Mr Colligan said there had been some confusion but it was now believed that the plant had not been attended when the fire started.

Underground pipelines to and from the plant had been closed off and about 100 firemen and 200 police were at the scene.

The site, owned by Boral Gas NSW Pty Ltd, has many old wooden warehouses and wood-yards in the area.

Pieces of the exploding gas tank flew into the lagoon of the neighbouring Simmental plant.

A nearby bitumen processing plant also caught fire.

Bitumen plant explodes

Boral Gas plant Explosion here

ST PETERS

Airport Drive

Airport evacuated

People in Mascot, Erskineville, St Peters and Sydenham were being asked to leave their homes.

An officer said the gas clouds were not toxic and residents had no need to fear the fumes.

A fire control officer, Mr Don Knowles, said the main explosion was like a mini atom bomb.

“It rolled down like a huge tidal wave flying multiple balls of flame in the air,” he said. “It went up easily five or six hundred feet with flying debris.”

He said 14 fire engines were still at the fire.

Mr Noel Wilson, 59, the owner of a nearby Canal Road scrapyard, said he thought the explosion was an “aircraft going in”.

He said a fireball flew into the air, arching over his premises some two kilometres from the site. It also blew in countless windows in his scrapyard.

“All round here was like daylight,” he said. The birds were flying around thinking it was day. In 20 minutes it must have gone up 10 degrees, I was sweating.”

Mr Greg Blackburn, 34, of Enmore, watched the flames from the Princes Highway.

He said he saw the flash of the explosion from his kitchen and that it had a smell like burning kerosene.

The main explosion followed hundreds of smaller blasts and shook surrounding suburbs as well as sending a shudder through Sydney Airport, less than two kilometres away.

Hundreds of people were evacuated from the International Terminal to the Airport Hilton hotel,

Continued Page 2

COLUMN 8

YESTERDAY, Linda Smith married Paul Beaver. They met on April 1 last year. The reception was held at Taronga Zoo’s function centre, so Paul had a few problems convincing the limousine service to pick up a “Mr and Mrs Beaver from Taronga Zoo” on April 1.

AND if you’re at the zoo, an art exhibition called Brushmen of the Bush opens tonight, with proceeds going to the Forest Home Appeal for the orang-outangs.

A GLEBE reader who is temporarily living in Boston shows these names he found in his local newspaper: Victor Mewer, who died unexpectedly; and a judge named Lawrence Felony.

TWO TEXANS have discovered a different kind of oil which is making them rich — emu oil. According to a US newspaper clipping sent to us by a Torrey Hills reader, Mark Solomon and Dusty Driskell bought a pair of emus for $1,000 last year. They now own 31 birds and a pair can fetch around $12,000. Emu oil is used in the relief of arthritis and in the production of wrinkle-retarding emollient. “They are an ugly bird, but when they sell for $12,000 they look pretty good,” Dusty said.

SIGN SEEN in a cake shop at Wee Waa: “Wanted: woman to cook, clean fish, dig for worms and make love. Must have own boat and outboard motor. Send photo of boat and motor.”

AN ABC television crew was sent to cover the story on PCBs in light fittings in schools at Windsor last week. A helicopter flew the crew to the Windsor waterskiing club, about 15 minutes drive from the school. A taxi was booked to take them to the school at the time the helicopter left. The first taxi company didn’t have any cars in this area so the job was passed on to another company, but it didn’t have any available either. Another company informed the ABC of this. The crew waited 45 minutes before re-booking a taxi. Finally, they hitched a ride with a woman. The job took 1½ hours and a taxi was booked to take them back to the helipad. After waiting 20 minutes, with no sign of it, the crew again hitched a ride, this time with a truck driver. As he got to the helipad, you guessed it, the first taxi, booked 3½ hours earlier, was just arriving.

A NEUTRAL BAY reader rang the Social Security office to ask to a person who was on the dole and working at the same time. She had his name, address and place of work but the office told her they couldn’t do anything without his birth date.

DURING a discussion on the difference between the sexes, 11-year-old Angela, from Castle Hill, said to her father: “At least we’ve got women’s lib. All you’ve

A ball of flame lights the night sky as the fuel tanks at Sydenham go up like a nuclear explosion last night.

Picture by STEVE CHRISTO

Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 2 April 1990 (courtesy of newspapers.com)

For the first few kilometres I drove with my nerves stretched tight, half-expecting another explosion at any moment.

When we finally reached my brother’s house, we collapsed into the uneasy relief of temporary safety and fortified ourselves with a stiff drink — or ten.

Hours later, the radio finally reported that the fires were under control, though residents would not be allowed home until morning.

It was 1990, and for me it was the first real sign that living in the city was no longer such a good idea. At the time, though, we had no idea there were even bigger reasons waiting just around the corner.

RICHARD LAWSON

CSC | VETS HUB

Your front door to financial wellbeing

Sign up to the Vets Hub mailing list for regular financial wellbeing information specific to veterans and their families. Vets Hub Community Registration

csc.gov.au/vets-hub



CSC Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation



UNDERNEATH THE RADAR

Each year the No 3 Squadron RAAF Association holds its annual No 3 Squadron Family Day at RAAF Base Williamtown in New south Wales to thank aviators, friends and families for their vital support. Family support is integral to the success of squadron operations, and days like these are the opportunity to thank them.

This year Wing Commander (Retd) Dr Mary Anne Whiting was invited by the Commanding Officer No 3 Squadron, Wing Commander Mark Biele, to attend the Family Day on Friday, 18 October 2026, and talk to members of the squadron for the listeners of Last Post Radio Station.

Established in 1916 at Point Cook as part of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), the squadron was the first AFC squadron to arrive on the Western Front in the First World War, operating from airfields in France and Belgium between August 1917 and the armistice on 11 November 1918. After the war, the squadron returned to Australia and was disestablished. On 01 July 1925, No 3 Squadron was re-formed at RAAF Base Richmond with a mix of aircraft. The squadron served with distinction in the Second World War serving in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. In 1948, the squadron was re-formed at RAAF Fairbairn and in 1956 was re-equipped with the Australian built Sabre CA-27 jet. The squadron was based in Butterworth in Malaya (later Malaysia) from 1958 to 1967 before re-locating to Williamtown and being equipped with the Australian built Mirage fighters, and later the F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. Fast forward to 2018 when the squadron took delivery of Australia's first two 5th generation Lockheed-Martin F35A Lightening II. In 2021, No 3 Squadron officially became fully operational with the F35A.

To learn more about the history of the squadron and to hear interviews with squadron personnel, including with No 3 Squadron Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Mark Biele and Warrant Engineer, Warrant Officer Paul Richards, tune into Last Post Radio Station.

MARY ANNE WHITING









OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:
The magnificent 5th generation Lockheed-Martin F35A Lightening II.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:
Avionic Technicians - Leading Aircraftwoman Abigail Carlos, Aircraftwoman Mackenzie Mitchell and Aircraftman Jake McKay.

THIS PAGE,
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Avionic Technician, Corporal Jarod Dilger.

Structural Technician, No 2 Operational Conversion Squadron, Corporal Aimee Gill, her husband Avionic Technician, Corporal Josh Gill and their children Indi and Hamish.

Leading Aircraftman Hayden Youngs from No 77 Squadron and his mother, Lins.



Blake and the Unknown Veteran on the road to Canberra, 2026.

Who is the Unknown Veteran?

THE UNKNOWN VETERAN MARCH

Advocates Online is asking Australians to walk for the ones who can't.

On 11 November 1993, an Australian soldier killed on the Western Front was brought home from France and laid to rest in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial. His name is not known. He stands for every Australian who served and was never fully known.

There is another unknown veteran, and they are still with us. They served, they came home, and too many face what comes after on their own.

In April 2026, one veteran shouldered a pack and set out from Holsworthy Barracks to walk 300 kilometres to the Memorial for them.

He didn't stay alone for long. RSL sub-branches and the Diggers Motorcycle Club escorted every kilometre. At Tarago, a 17-year-old named Blake stepped into line and walked every remaining step to Canberra.

Kindergarten children in high-vis met the march with handmade cards. On Anzac Eve, a wreath was laid at the Last Post Ceremony.

Built by community alone, with $60,000 raised and committed for veterans. In 2027, Eyes Front is inviting partners to help it grow.

Next April, Advocates Online and Eyes Front walk again.

2026 IMPACT / A NATION LISTENED

27.7m
cumulative media reach*

275
media mentions
109 TV • 150 radio • 16 online

$60,000
raised and committed

*Media monitoring, 1-30 April 2026. Before newspaper coverage.

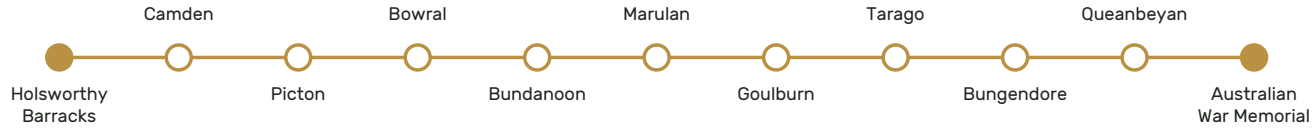


UNKNOWN VETERAN MARCH 2027 / 14-24 APRIL

300km. 10 days. One Unknown Veteran.

Holsworthy Barracks to the Australian War Memorial, arriving on Anzac Eve, 24 April. Australians are invited to walk the Final Kilometre into the Memorial.

THE ROAD TO ANZAC EVE



Who do you carry?

Walk with us, follow us, or help us build the movement.

"Every marcher carries someone. A mate who didn't come home, or one who came home and is still fighting. In April, we're asking Australia to carry them with us."

Kelliegh Jackson, CEO and Founder, Advocates Online



REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Scan for updates and ways to join in: walk a day, walk the Final Kilometre, or join the Virtual Relay from home.

Donate at eyesfront.com.au

PARTNER WITH US

Businesses, clubs and RSL sub-branches:
Marion Lawrence · 0439 582 415
hello@advocatesonline.com.au

Two years on, Parliament has tackled the easy parts first

Two years after the Royal Commission, Parliament has been hard at work. Some progress is underway, while other areas are still waiting.

Flinders University | Institute for Mental Health & Wellbeing

Open Door Initiative

Improving the wellbeing of veterans and public safety personnel and their families

A different approach

Our unique, holistic approach integrates the physical, psychological and social elements of wellbeing to ensure that those who serve are supported to succeed, thrive and flourish.

Our research

From helping to understand and navigate the transition to civilian life and supporting families through challenging times to getting at the root causes of veteran suicide, Open Door is recognised nationally and internationally for tackling real-world problems and delivering evidence to drive impact across the life course.



We work in partnership with current and former military service and public safety personnel and their families to design and deliver world-leading health and wellbeing research, education and programs.

Our work focuses on:

1. Social, mental and physical health and wellbeing
2. Service, transition and life after service
3. Systems and culture
4. Legislation, policy and service provision

Learn about our research

The Government now says it has accepted, or accepted in principle, 113 of the 122 recommendations. The one the Commissioners highlighted as most vital – an independent body to keep an eye on the whole system – is now in place. The Defence and Veterans' Service Commission has its own Act and has just started checking whether the Government is keeping its promises. It's already reporting on how things are moving forward.

Then there are the two implementation Acts passed in September. The first updates parts of the Defence Force Discipline Act (DFDA): commanders can suspend a member during a civilian investigation; harassment is now a service offence; a mental health tribunal has been suggested; and the old convictions for homosexual service are finally cleared. The second adjusts the Defence Act so that anyone jailed for a sexual offence can't join, and anyone sentenced while serving must leave. Much of this is long overdue.

Each of these steps comes after the damage is done. They tidy up what happens once someone has been assaulted and has bravely chosen to report it. None of them tackles the conditions that lead to assault, or the loyalty, hierarchy and sense of exceptionalism that can penalise those who speak out. I've spent forty years watching Defence respond to inquiries with processes. Procedure is how an organisation absorbs criticism without really changing – it is camouflage.

That's why Jacqui Lambie's SAPIRC bill is so important. It would bring prevention, reporting, forensic work, investigations and support for survivors into an independent commission, away from the chain of command. I shared my thoughts with the Senate committee in September. Their October report didn't recommend the bill but passed the evidence to Defence and the DVSC's own inquiry into military sexual violence. On 14 October, the Coalition supported the bill, the Government outlined its procedural changes and asked for patience, and Lambie paused the vote so she could bring back amendments next year.

Meanwhile, the push for veterans' health showed what Parliament can achieve when it chooses to act. The Budget tried to limit allied health services for veterans. Within weeks, the Senate passed Lambie's bill banning caps, and the Minister dropped the plan.

The potential is there. The question for 2027 is whether sexual violence in the ADF gets the same urgency as a physio cap, or whether we settle, once again, for process.

PROFESSOR BEN WADHAM
Open Door

VERSATILE GROUP

On Remembrance Day, we pause.
We remember the courage, the sacrifice,
and the stories of those who served.

For generations, The Last Post has helped preserve the stories, values and spirit that have shaped Australia.

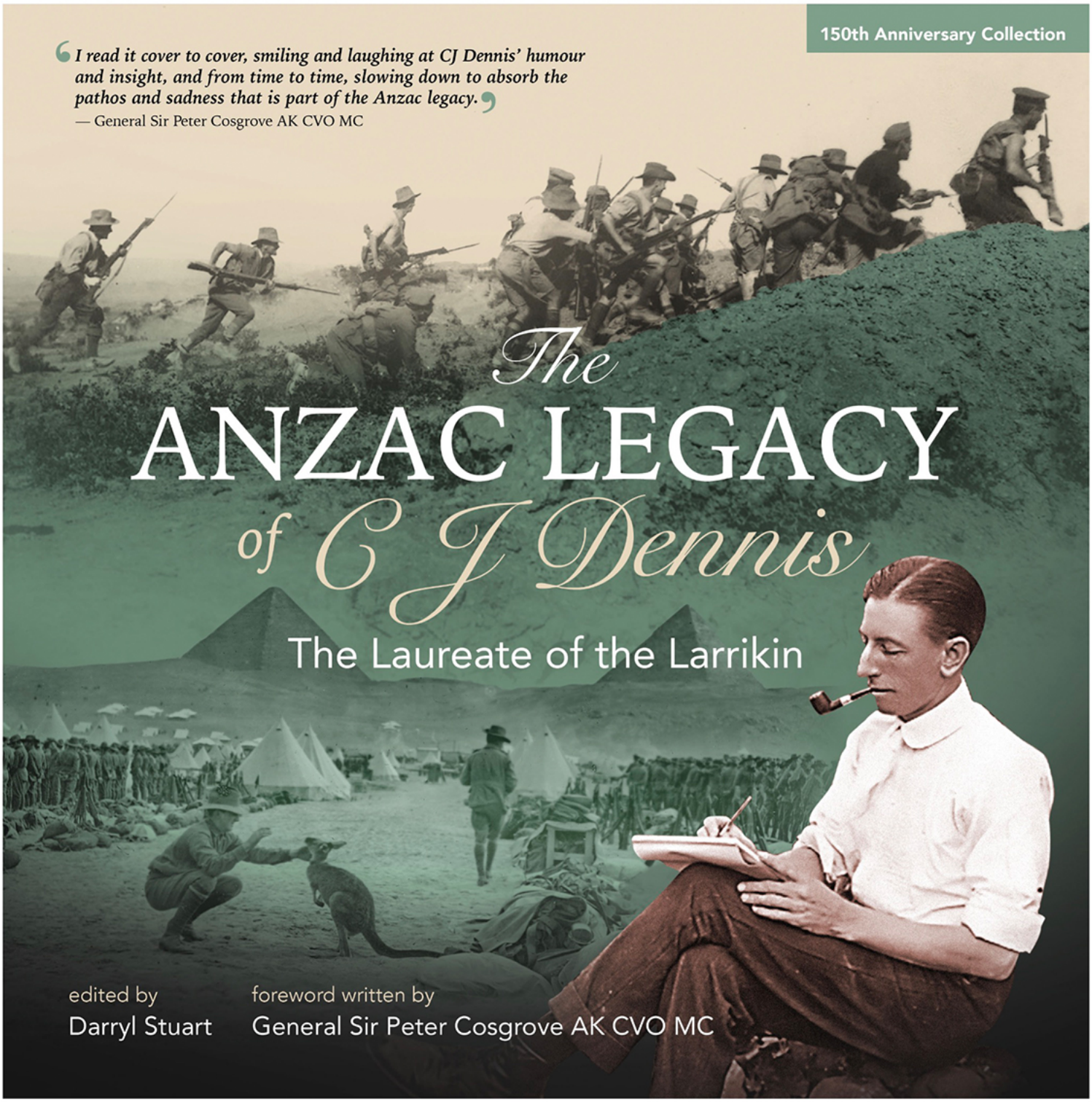
At Versatile Group, we share a deep respect for legacy, resilience and community, while continuing to create places that will serve generations to come.

Proudly supporting The Last Post and our veteran community this Remembrance Day.



150th Anniversary Collection

I read it cover to cover, smiling and laughing at CJ Dennis' humour and insight, and from time to time, slowing down to absorb the pathos and sadness that is part of the Anzac legacy.
— General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC



The ANZAC LEGACY of C J Dennis

The Laureate of the Larrikin

edited by
Darryl Stuart

foreword written by
General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC

Listen to the interview:
thelastpostmagazine.com/the-last-post-radio-show-podcast