

The not-so-secret diary of **TREV GARDNER,** aged 60 and three-quarters!

“Born in Colac on February 4th 1953. The doctor missed the Colac Cup . . . to deliver me.

Educated at the old Stoneyford school, then off to Koallah school (No 4225) from grade 2 onwards. About four kilometres to school, walking, riding a horse or bike . . . except on wet days. About 26 students from prep to grade 6 – with only one teacher, Neville Alexander.

Did what we were told or suffered the strap. Had inter-school football, netball and, of course, the annual sports day with Pomborneit, Weerite, South Purrumbete, Stoneyford and Carpendeit schools – great days with all families present and lots of good competition. A close-knit community, even today we all still know each other.

From 26 students at Koallah to Camperdown High School’s 800-odd students - big shock to the system for a while. Thirty kilometre bus trip to school for six years. Lots of euchre and 500s on the bus!

Still have many mates from school days. Footy in winter and tennis and cricket in summer. Recall kicking the footy from end to end, “waxing” with your mates. Left school mid-form 6 after an eye operation. Missed two months so mum thought it was better if I found a job.

Thought school was over but, at age 32 in 1985, I completed a two-year graduate diploma in Business (Agribusiness) through Monash University - a great course for me, helped me no end during my working life.

FAMILY

Life revolved around Dad (Roy), Mum (Mazie), brothers Colin, Thomas and Peter and sister Evelyn. Still enjoy time together especially at Christmas and family functions. Helped out on the farm . . . enjoying the simple life. For pocket money we caught rabbits by ferreting, trapping or shooting. Holidays at the beach or a road trip for a few days - each one was special.

Dad and his brother Johnny worked the farm, all great until Johnny was hit by a car at the Pirron Yallock hotel. Part of the farm had to be sold to pay his medical expenses as there was no TAC in those days. This brought the farm down in size and it didn’t really survive. The 1967 drought was the final straw when the cows were shot at Camperdown and the dairy was no longer a goer. Dad started to do jobs for district farmers - could put his hand to anything from home and dairy renovations to building stonewalls along the Princes Highway. In summer, he was a fire spotter on Mt Pomdon. Kept the family going for years – we never missed out on anything. Dad and Mum always supported us, they retired into Colac and will be remembered for their love of life, enjoying time with family and friends.

CAREER

Started with the Commercial Banking Co of Sydney in Colac in 1970, first fortnightly pay was \$52. Spent 23 years with the CBC in Colac, Preston, Hamilton, Watchem and Adelaide when the NAB took it over. Off to Ballarat and my first management position was at Stanhope followed by Traralgon and Ouyen before finishing as the rural finance manager in Kerang. Banking in those days was mobile with a letter in the overnight bag saying you started next month in a new town. Good in some ways – you never knew where you were going next and it gave us the opportunity to meet people all over Victoria and SA. However, the kids found moving schools hard and that was the prime reason I left banking and moved into stockfeed.

Started with a family company in Cohuna in 1993 called Farmer Stockfeeds as office manager. After four years, the Weekly Times told me a mill was being built in Cobden. A chance to get home. Contacted Rice Growers and started working here in 1997. A greenfield site, all new, a modern state-of-the-art mill. Three years later, took over as site manager and stayed until a new general manager no longer wanted site managers. Retrenched in 2010 at age 58 left me feeling uncomfortable but, as they say, “one door shuts and another one opens” - how true? Fortunate to join Rabobank in Warrnambool – back to my banking days which lasted 18 months. A call from Ian Reid of Reid Stockfeeds: Would I like to work back in Cobden at his new feed mill? The door had just re-opened and it’s been great to be back in the stockfeed industry again in my home town working for the Reids.

SPORTING LIFE

Always a trier, never a champion, love all sport, love to participate. Played junior footy with the old South Purrumbete and tennis with Carpendeit. At different towns played footy, tennis, cricket, basketball, golf and running to try and keep fit. Really love my golf, currently down to my lowest-ever handicap of 16.

HIGHLIGHT

Have always enjoyed running, loved sprints at school but started to do the longer fun runs. First effort was the City to Bay run in Adelaide. Wife Annette and I ran a couple of Ballarat Couriers, then an early West Gate Bridge run when Annette was pregnant with Lisa. All up, have run six half marathons plus heaps of other fun runs. Whenever I finished a ‘half’, yearned to do a full marathon “I would like to do that one day.” After running the Melbourne half marathon in 2012, made up my mind to run the full 42 kilometres.



Trev triumphant after achieving his goal to complete the 42 km Gold Coast marathon.

So, February this year, turned 60 and asked Jan Green to help with a training plan – set myself for the Gold Coast Marathon in July. Long and tough, it was the training over the five months that got me over the line.



Annette and Trev on the edge of the Grand Canyon

OUR COMMUNITY

“Cobden is an oasis with everything that a town can offer. Fortunate to have a strong active community that makes things happen. A small town with strong roots in the dairy industry with the Fonterra factory and the two feed mills.

Good sporting facilities and club cultures that are the envy of many towns. Close to the ocean in the south and the Grampians to the north. Can catch a train and be in Melbourne in just over two hours.

The town is a town for all when you look at the facilities the recreation reserve, the golf course, the small trains, the airstrip, the go-karts, along with our schools and health services.

To cap it off, we can purchase what we need in the town but what we really need is for everyone to get involved and be part of Cobden, our Community.”

Annette would jump on her bike, loaded with water, energy jells and lollies and away we’d go during the week and each weekend. Started at one hour and built up to four hours. One Saturday we ran from Noorat to Cobden the long way around. With training I lost weight, became race-fit and looked forward to the run.

Race day was 20 degrees and warm. Been training with morning frost on the ground. Aimed to finish in under five hours but was pleased to finish in five hours 15 minutes. Took longer than expected to recover but now starting to get miles in the legs – just not real sure what’s next. Personally, feel proud that I set a challenge for myself – with the support of Annette and family, was able to achieve what I set out to do.

ANNETTE

We met in 1972, Annette was working in a bank at Colac. Married in 1974 at Coragulac. She has been my lover, partner, wife, mother of our children and mate ever since. We have had a huge number of experiences. We are looking forward to our next adventure whatever that may be.

CHILDREN

Four children, Paul married to Karen in Warrnambool, Joanne married to Mark Pickles from Camperdown now living in Shepparton with two children Baden 6 and Ruby 2 who are spoilt as all grandchildren should be, Andrew living in Melbourne, soon to marry Josianne Beauregard in Miami next April, and Lisa who has been with Matty Unwin for many years and still lives at home – until she and Matty move into their home two doors from us later this month. Fortunate that all our family is settled with good employment. Best part of our lives is getting together with them.

COBDEN

Part of my life ever since the farm at Stoneyford. Liked coming into town on a Saturday, going to the pool. At high school, best mates were Cobden lads – Vincent Hickey, Harold Frusher, Howard Evans, Russell McCann and Trevor Alexander. Good times, some mischief, nothing too serious. The wheel turns, ironical that we end up moving into town in 1997 for work. Annette always remembers Cobden from when she came across from Cororooke with her parents, Les and Marie Goonan, and her brothers, Laurie and Lennie, to play footy with Coragulac. The last place she thought she would end up. Now it’s home and we feel we are a part of the town after 15 years here.

INVOLVEMENT

Best way to become accepted in a town is to be involved. Loved our sport so our kids also became involved. A bank worker, I was always asked to be on committees. Can’t count the number of clubs I have been involved with in one way or another. On a professional basis, have been involved with different associations and organisation at state and federal levels. Also involved with Apex and Lions clubs in different towns. In Cobden, have been on the golf club committee for the last ten years and the footy netty club for the last two years. Also inaugural chairman of the Cobden and District Community Bank. Have enjoyed working with the people and the various committees – a real privilege.

PROFESSIONAL

Work positions have provided me opportunities to learn and progress, including the challenges of new technology. Reaching the level of NAB rural finance manager was great. To manage Cobden’s CopRice Mill and build the business from nothing to capacity in two years, winning the Telstra Business of the Year, was rewarding. To continue working in the stockfeed game with Reids and use all my business and life skills to help them grow their business is also satisfying.

PERSONAL GOALS

To continue running and to keep fit so that I can enjoy our family and grandchildren. To lower my golf handicap and break 80 again. Finally, to finish restoring my EH Holden and cruise in it “as it should be closed in” . . . and to win ‘lotto.

CLOSE SHAVES

We have really led a sheltered life. But recall talking CopRice into hiring a small aircraft to fly six staff from Cobden to Leeton (NSW) for an awards night. The general manager agreed but asked that we keep it quiet. After cruising to Leeton, our landing gear light indicated a malfunction. We circled the Narrandera airstrip for 45 minutes to use fuel and give the emergency services and the media time to gather. In our final low pass, the red light turned green and we landed safely. Very quiet on the plane and in our crash positions as we landed. As for keeping it quiet, we blew that out the window.

TRAVEL

A work in progress and the reason I keep doing what I do. Always loved travelling. Would camp at Easter with our friends, starting with A-frame tents from Woolworths in the car boot. This progressed from a 6x4 trailer, to a caravan, to a bigger and better caravan towed by a 4WD. Have travelled most of Australia except the Cape and the north-west road from Geraldton to Darwin. First overseas trip was to Asia. Then, with Joanne and Mark to England, Ireland and the Greek Islands to visit son Andrew followed by two trips to the US, one for study with friends and one for a nephew’s wedding. In 2012, toured with our friends Greg & Cheryl Gin again on a 60 day around-the-world trip taking in Italy, a Rhine cruise to England, then New York, New Orleans and to Chicago hiring a motor home and driving Route 66 to Los Angeles which was amazing. Fortunate to see so much and we’re looking forward to the next trip.”

COBDEN CALENDAR

Wednesday 13th November: 5.45pm Cobden Business Network meeting at Thompson’s Hotel.

Wednesday 20th November: 7.30pm Cobden Football Netball Club AGM. Sports Club

Sunday 24th November: 1.30pm Musical Afternoon at Cobden Senior Citizens’ Hall. \$5 entry includes afternoon tea. Phone: 5595 1693.

Tuesday 26th November: 6.30pm WEL Group “T @ Thommo’s”.

Friday 29th November: 6.30pm Community Bank/Rotary Club Business Excellence Awards, Civic Hall.

Monday 2nd December: 7.30pm Progressing Cobden meeting, Heytesbury Room.

Saturday 7th December: 11am-4pm Cobden CWA Christmas Tree Festival, Uniting Church Hall.

Sunday 8th December: 11am-3pm Christmas Tree Festival. Gold coin entry. Phone: 5595 1181.

Sunday 22nd December: 7.30pm Carols by Candlelight, Civic Hall.

Our last edition’s “Who Am I?”

was CBN member Annette Thorne

who enjoys gardening and canoeing as a means of relaxation.

Her favourite subject at school was maths and it may surprise you to know that she rides a motorbike!

Annette, and husband Vince have three daughters, who she lists as her proudest achievement so far.

