

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to your October 2021 Newsletter.

John Lane

WELCOME TO YOUR OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER. WELL, WE ARE NOW OUT OF LOCKDOWN AND NO DOUBT ENJOYING GETTING OUT OF THE HOUSE AND CATCHING UP WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS. UNFORTUNATELY, LIFTING THE LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS WAS TOO LATE FOR OUR ANNUAL TRIP AWAY TO THE MURRAY VALLEY. ONE REMAINING RESTRICTION IS TRAVEL FROM SYDNEY GREATER METROPOLITAN TO REGIONS UNTIL THE 1ST NOVEMBER 2021; ANOTHER REASON FOR THE TRIP AWAY NOT BEING POSSIBLE.

I will have more news about the trip away a little later in this article.

Since our last newsletter, the Retired Members Associations has lost Phil Orchard, Ross Keys, and Keith Macrae. This month's newsletter has tributes to all three members.

Phil Orchard

Phil Orchard was a member of our Association for close to twenty-two years. Phil was our social secretary and served on our committee for many years. He was a life member of our Association.

Phil, like many of our older past members, served our country in the Second World War. Sadly, the years have caught up with them, and we are the poorer; now we are without them. Phil was part of a contingent of eight former merchant marines invited to the UK for Battle of Atlantic celebrations in 2013.

Ross Keys

Ross was a special friend to me and many others. Since he joined our Association some 14 years ago, he regularly attended our social events and many of our general meetings. Ross particularly enjoyed our annual trips away. His first trip was to Dubbo; he soon insisted that his wife Christine attend with him.

Christine too soon became addicted to the trips away. They came away with us on our last two trips to Jindabyne and Crescent Heads despite his illness. I am so pleased they did.

We were fortunate to have Ross attend our September General Meeting shortly after being admitted to the hospital.

I have great memories of Ross; I must say I had just one problem. Until Ross came along, I considered myself as the resident funny man. However, Ross soon stole that mantle from me with his much better jokes and special delivery. Ross, you are a man that will be missed by many.

Ross Keys, RIP.

Keith MacRae

Keith MacRae passed away on Friday, 1st October 2021. Keith lived in Parkes and was a member of our Association for over seventeen years. Keith was 87. Members may recall from Peter Hack's welfare reports that Keith had been very ill over the past few months. Notwithstanding his health issues, Keith took the opportunity to attend some of our General Meetings via Zoom. Please read the tribute to Keith in this month's newsletter. There you will find about the interesting life that Keith lived.



Retired Members Association

Christmas Lunch

12 pm, Tuesday, 7TH December 2021

Petersham RSL, 7 Regent Street, Petersham

(Take the lift from Petersham Stn's platform then just a 200m walk to the club)

**The cost is \$55 per person.
Includes a three-course meal and
lucky door prizes.**



You can post a cheque to the Secretary, address shown on page 2 of the newsletter. Please make sure you make the cheque payable to the Retired Members Association

OR

Bank Transfers (electronic payments)
Great Southern Bank
BSB 814-282,
eSaver Account No: 10642769.
Please include your surname on the electronic payment reference.



Petersham Station now has lifts from the platform to street level



See page 5 for the menu details

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Committee

Alan Bassman, John McAuliffe, Trevor Anderson, John Bryce, Allan Fairbairn, Steve Flynn, Vince Haywood, Terry Livingstone, Arthur McCarroll, Paul Rewhorn, Ron Milosh, Garry Masman, Warren Morley.



Welcome to your October 2021 Newsletter (Cont'd)

Upcoming Trips Away

I have successfully rescheduled our annual trip away to Wentworth and the Murray River between the 9TH and 15TH October 2022. Many members who were planning to go on this trip away have re-booked for next year. I have already a booking list of 42 members. There is still room for more, and everyone is welcome.

While I was contacting members, a few suggested a shorter trip away in the new year. People are obviously in need of a holiday. Accordingly, I am well into the process of organising a tour of the Southern Highlands of NSW. I have travelled to the area frequently since my daughter moved there seven years ago. I have come to know the area quite well, putting me in the position to put together an exciting tour of the area.

As such, I will be able to put together a tour that will be somewhat different to what we are used to but one people will find very interesting. I should have finalised details (itinerary and costs) for the November newsletter. **The trip will probably begin on the 14TH March 2022** We will be away for four or five nights.

If you are interested in either the October 2022 trip away or the shorter trip in March, please get in touch, and I will be sure to book you in.

Christmas Lunch

Once the government announced we would come out of lockdown when vaccinations reached 70 percent, the committee considered it prudent to make arrangements for a Christmas lunch. In addition, the committee anticipated there would be much pent-up demand for venues to hold Christmas Parties after lockdown.

I am pleased to announce we are in a position to hold our annual Christmas Lunch at Petersham RSL. We have pushed the lunch date out to December when the club can further ease restrictions on numbers within the function rooms, allowing more members to attend and a more relaxed environment.

The lunch will comprise a three-course meal, and yes we are back to the good old days with Santa attending with all his lucky door prizes.

Lunch will be on Tuesday 7TH December. We will meet at the club at 11.30 am. The price is \$55.00 per head. I am already taking bookings. You can email me or contact me by phone (contact details are on page 2). You make your payment by either bank transfer or cheque. You will find notices giving our bank details and the lunch menu.

Name Change Survey

By now, you should have received your Name Change Survey. However, before considering a name change, the committee has decided that all members should have the opportunity to have their say. Therefore, I would ask you to read the document and take the opportunity to complete the survey. The survey is easy to complete.

The Frank Hyde Story

I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest in my Frank Hyde story in the September edition received. In addition, I have had feedback from several people who have filled in a little more of the Frank Hyde puzzle, which I thought I should share with you.

Frank was a great rugby league player who captained Newtown to the Grand Final win in 1937. He once told member John Davies that his pay from the Newtown Club for the whole of that year was 37 pounds (\$74)! Compare that with the million-dollar players of today. He also played for Balmain, North Sydney and NSW and captain coached North Sydney to a Grand Final. Sadly, the war prevented him from becoming a Kangaroo. Frank broadcast for 2SM for thirty-one seasons. He is an MBE and OAM recipient. Frank passed in 2007 at the age of 91.

Frank's job in the 1940s was as a PMG telephone mechanic in Newcastle. Then, in 1947, he was transferred to the Training Section in Annandale, ostensibly as a technical instructor, but really to coach the Training School's rugby league team!

Those were the good old days when the PMG looked after trainees in all aspects of their lives, including finding accommodation, holding sports days and staging balls in the State Theatre ballroom. Great days!

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Welcome to your October 2021 Newsletter (cont'd)

It also got reported that Frank had to choose between working for the PMG or 2SM. You had to have an excellent case and special permission if you wanted a second job in those days. So, Frank chose 2SM, which allowed many of us to enjoy his calls for years to come. Just as an aside, one of our members, Bob Hyde, was a nephew of Frank. Bob was a DTM of Sydney City District in the late eighties.

More sporting stuff

I reported in September how the ARL finals series always takes me back to the day I met Frank Hyde. Well, it's not far away to the Melbourne Cup. I go back to the seven years I spent in the City East telephone exchange with this memory. Being a main exchange with Step by Step equipment, it was always noisy. It was most noticeable when the Melbourne Cup was run that the whole exchange went quiet. I wonder if we had Step by Step telephone exchanges today if the whole exchange would go quiet when the various State Premiers gave their COVID19 reports each morning. It did appear to me that most of the population was waiting to get that report.

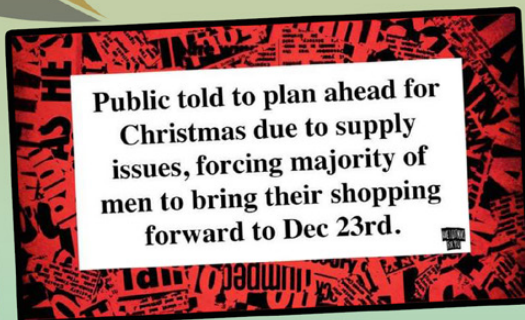
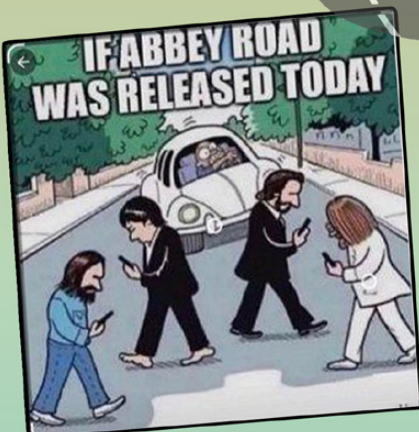
More stuff from the PMG Public Service days

I reported how you could not work for the Public Service back in the old days, including the PMG and have a second job. There was another rule in those days; a married woman could not work for the public service. I met my wife Joan at City East exchange, where she was a 3100 complaints operator. When we got married in 1965, she had to leave the job. We discovered that if you had worked for five years and had to leave under such circumstances, you were entitled to long service leave. This caused us to reschedule our wedding by a month so Joan could receive an extra 88 quid (\$176) in her pay packet. How things have changed. I think this particular Public Service rule went the following year in mid-1966. Some might say I have been paying for it ever since, but I think I got a bargain.

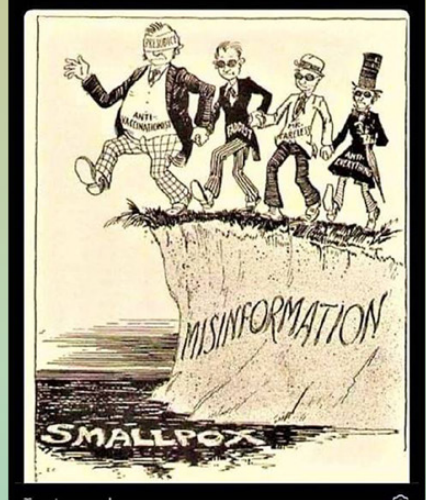
Goodbye for this month

Please remember the assignments I have given you. First complete the name change survey, please do it soon and you will have one your assignments out of the way. Then your final assignment, book your place at our Christmas party. The committee did a lot work to have the lift work completed at Petersham Station before the party. Col McQueen is still looking for his wheelbarrow and shovel.

MUIRHEAD CORNER



This comic was created around 1930s





Welfare News

Peter Hack

I would like to acknowledge the passing of **Ross Keys** and my personal condolences to his wife, **Christine**. Like many members, I watched the funeral service online.

Another sad loss for our Association was the passing of **Keith MacRae**. I travelled to Parkes to attend Keith's funeral service held at Parkes on the 7TH October 2021. **Eddie Parrot** also joined me at the funeral service. Keith's passing comes after a long period of ill-health. My personal condolences to Keith's wife Pam and his family.

Finally, we lost **Phil Orchard**, a long-time member who moved to Melbourne to be close to family and move into a nursing home accommodation. Phil was just shy of turning one hundred this month.

Cath Hickey cannot wait for the lockdown to lift. Then she can have two visitors a day, providing they are double vaccinated.

Diane Cutting moved back to her home on the 11th of October, now we are no longer a lockdown. She now gets to visit Ian once a week.

Tom Watson is still recovering from his fractures but is doing well.

I have spoken with **Tom Brown, Dick Javes, Jim Cheeseman, Mary Kovacs, Irene Clifford, Warren Croft, Peter Clarke, and Alan Gilks** during the past weeks. All were looking forward to the lifting of lockdown

Speaking of lockdown, on Sunday, I volunteered at the rural museum, and anyone from rural NSW could visit provided they used the OR code and had received a double dose of the vaccine.

Christmas Party Menu and Transport Details (Buses)



Buses from City to Petersham		
Route: 412		
11.29 am	11.35 am	12.00 pm
11.44 am	11.50 am	12.15 pm
Museum Stn (Castlereagh Street)	Central (George Street, Railway Square)	Petersham (Trafalgar Street)

The Trafalgar Street Bus stop is located close to both Petersham RSL and Station



Phil Orchard



The Retired Members Association is sad to report the passing of a member, Phil Orchard. Phil passed away on Thursday, 30TH September 2021. Phil would have turned 100 years of age on the 28TH October 2021.

Phil joined Retired Members Association on the 31ST December 1987. Phil was a Life Member of our Association. Phil was our Social Secretary and served on the committee for many years. About seven years ago, Phil moved to Victoria to be close to his family and enter age care.



Phil began with the Postmaster General Department (PMG) about ten years after the Second World War. Fellow member Noel Wright recalls Phil as an acting Senior Technician in the Switch Repair Section, part of the Postal Workshops in Melbourne. Phil remained with the workshops until around 1966, when he re-joined the Merchant Navy.

Noel remembers Phil as a keen photographer who took wedding photos for many friends from the Workshops. In addition, each year, there was a Post Office Ball, where Phil took pictures of people attending the ball. They provided Phil with additional income to help support his family with children still attending school. Phil was also a keen amateur radio operator.

Phil's early story goes back to when Phil joined the Merchant Marines in Melbourne in November 1941. He went to sea immediately as a fully qualified radio officer. He served, usually as the only Australian, onboard the *Ettrick Bank* in the Atlantic, Pacific and Mediterranean. Phil then served on the *SS Anhui*, a China coaster ship under charter to the US Army carrying ordinance and 1000 troops to New Guinea on each sail and in several small coastal vessels. Phil recalls they were fortunate to escape a Japanese torpedo bomber. During a raid, they were told to cast off the makeshift port of Buna, as they had a lot of ammunition which could have caused a great deal of damage to the area had a torpedo struck their vessel. However, several 'Lightning' aircraft chased the Japanese planes away from the area.

Phil gave members a special presentation on the *Battle of the Atlantic* to members in May 2013; he recalled sailing without escorts along the east coast of the United States. Before the Americans had introduced the convoy system.

They sailed with 25 ships, possibly with a minesweeper ahead of them, zigzagging their way up and down the coast from the Caribbean to the northern harbours such as New York. These were dangerous waters with many vessels sunk. **Later, he participated in three large trans-Atlantic convoys from Halifax to Liverpool.**

Phil's later service on the *SS Anhui* in New Guinea took him to Milne Bay, Oro Bay, Goodenough Island and Buna. He was discharged from the Merchant Marine in September 1945 but stayed at sea for ten more years.

Phil was party of eight from Australia invited to the UK in 2013 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of The Battle of the Atlantic.

The Retired Members Association is proud to have a distinguished person as Phil Orchard as a member of our Association for twenty-three years.

The Retired Members Association extends its condolences and sympathy to Phil's family and his many friends.

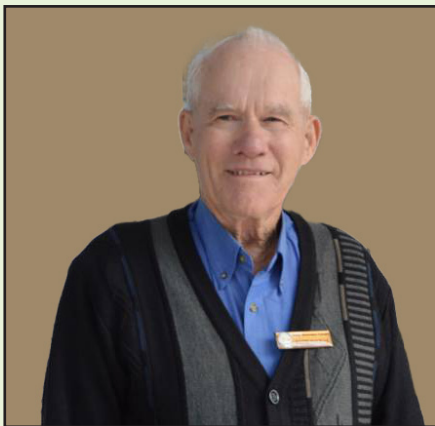
The Association would like to acknowledge member, Noel Wright who provided much of Phil's earlier history in Melbourne, shortly after Phil joined the PMG.



Keith Macrae



The Retired Members Association is sad to report that member Keith Macrae passed away on Friday, 1st October 2021. Keith was a member of the Retired Members Association for over seventeen years. There was a funeral service for Keith on Thursday, 7th October 2021. Retired Members Association members Peter Hack and Eddie Parrot attended the funeral service. The local bowling club held a bowls game in his honour on the 8th October 2021. The local television's news covered the event.



Keith has been ill for some time. He was 87, Keith worked in the PMG as a postal clerk and morse code operator in Country NSW. He progressed through the job working at Mt. Gambier, where he raised a family before he returned to Parkes. He was a manager in the Parkes district. Following his redundancy, Keith took up work as a rouse-about in woolsheds and eventually became a wool classer

Keith was a well-known identity in Parkes. For over fifty years, he was a keen sportsman, a long-time football referee, and a Knight of his church.

Keith's friends knew Keith as BASHER; his saying was, **"THE RIGHT WAY IS MY WAY."**

In his spare time, Keith gave morse code demonstrations for the Telstra Museum in Grafton, Tamworth, Orange, Mudgee, Gunnedah, Parkes, Sydney and Alice Springs, to name just a few. In addition, he gave morse demonstrations at the increasingly popular "Elvis Festival" held in Parkes each year.

Keith is survived by his wife Pam, children, 20 grandchildren and 20 around great-grandchildren; two more are on the way.

The Retired Members Association extends its condolences to Keith's wife Pam, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Association's condolences also go to Keith's many friends in Parkes and his former workmates.

The Association would like to acknowledge member, Peter Hack who provided much of the details of Keith's history mentioned in this tribute



Ross Oswald Charles Keys



The Retired Members Association is sad to report the passing of Ross Keys. Ross passed away peacefully on Thursday, 30TH September 2021. He had his wife Christine and daughter Nicole by his side. Ross's funeral service was on Monday, 11TH October 2021. Several Retired Members had the privilege of attending the service to honour Ross.

Ross was born on the 27TH October 1945 and was a member of the Retired Members Association for over fourteen years. Ross and his friend Warren were not former PMG/Telecom/Telstra employees. Instead, they had worked in the NSW Public Service.



Ross and Christine married four years ago; they had been together for 22 years. Ross had two children, Allen (deceased) and Nicole and three stepchildren Kylie, Mathew and Daniel.

Sport played a central part in the life of Ross. He enjoyed golf and, in his time, had run some marathons. Ross particularly enjoyed cricket but only test matches and Sheffield Shield. Ross shunned the shorter forms of the game.

Ross and Warren joined the Retired Members Association in 2007. Ross regularly attended the general meetings and came to social functions. Ross particularly enjoyed our trips away and encouraged Christine to come along as well. Despite illness, Ross joined us on trips in recent years, Jindabyne and last year Crescent Head.

Ross was a great teller of jokes; Ross would deliver a joke at the end of a general meeting and on the bus during our trips away. His jokes were always funny, and his delivery style was first class. I always will remember one time at a general meeting; Ross had listened to members tell stories of their long and difficult recovery after having had an operation. Ross rose to his feet to tell his story, he had an operation just days after his birth. The operation was a circumcision. Ross told us there had been complications, and as a result, he wasn't able to walk for twelve months.

While members warmly welcomed Ross and Warren, their lack of a technical background was a concern. Members decided that Ross and Warren needed to qualify as technicians and the revival of the 'Open Technician Exam' was the means. They were each given five technical questions and after much

prompting, they correctly answered the questions. They passed the exam and qualified as technicians much to the shock of former technical instructors. Despite their new found qualifications, they were strongly advised not to attempt to install phones or work on communications equipment connected to power.

Ross had bravely fought cancer; he underwent various therapies and tried some trial treatments. The treatments gave Ross additional time with us, for which we are all very grateful. Ross attended our last September general meeting via Zoom. Little did we know it would be for the last time.

The Retired Members Association extends its condolences and sympathy to wife Christine and daughter Nicole, other family members and his many friends. Ross, our friend, you are going to be sadly missed. Rest in Peace.



Open technician exam awards (L-R Ross Keys, John Lane, Warren Morley)

Ross commenced with the NSW Public Service soon after leaving school. Ross was to remain in the NSW Public Service for 43 years. Premier Bob Carr awarded Ross with NSW Service Medallion for 40 years of service.



ROSS KEYS - WARREN MORLEY'S REFLECTIONS

I met Ross at a 1974 Christmas Party for the office staff of the Government Printing Office, less than a month after I began employment there. Ross had started working at the "Government Printers" in 1961, immediately after leaving school.

That Christmas Party was held at Petersham RSL. Little did Ross or I know that it would become a regular meeting place and 'watering hole' for the RMA many years later. In recent years, the RMA has also had its Christmas Parties at Petersham RSL.

Although Ross left the Printing Office only two years after I started there, we had become close friends, and that friendship continued for another 45 years.

In recognition of his service to the NSW Government, Ross was awarded the NSW Service Medallion. He worked for over 40 years in various departments and agencies.

After Ross and I retired a month apart in 2005, we could spend more time together. We would simply go out for a day of sightseeing or spend long days watching the long form of cricket at the SCG. By "long-form", I mean Sheffield Shield and Test Matches. Ross absolutely detested any game of cricket that was scheduled to last less than four days.

I am sure that I can say on behalf of Ross that, in 2007, one of the best things to happen to him and me was to be offered membership of the friendliest organisation in the world – the RMA. Given that neither Ross nor I had ever worked for Telstra or its predecessors, we were affectionately known as the "phoney" and the "ring-in", which we considered to be highly honourable titles. I must add, however, that not one of our fellow RMA members ever treated us as outsiders.

Ross told us many brilliant jokes at our monthly RMA meetings, which he rarely missed attending. He also joined us on our social outings and our annual trips away, often with his wife, Christine.

In 2008, at one of the RMA's meetings, Vince Haywood invited Peter Jennings, Executive Officer for Union Aid Abroad, to be a guest speaker. Upon learning of the marvellous work done worldwide by Union Aid Abroad, Ross and I and other RMA members immediately commenced working there as volunteers. We continued to do so for several years.

One of Ross's many qualities was his great sense of duty and loyalty to his friends. If I was in a bind and called Ross for help, he would say 'I'm on my way' or "come on over, and we'll talk about it".

He would also give pleasure in unexpected ways. My then wife and I invited Ross to dinner at our place on election night in March of 1983. Knowing that we did not have a TV, Ross arrived with one. After dinner, we sat down and watched the Hawke Government being elected for the first time; a night of great elation!

It is with great pride that I say: "Ross Keys was my dear friend". I will miss him greatly.



John Lane presents Ross with his technician certificate