

RTEA NEWSLETTER

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association
(Proud of its Union Origin)



RTEA.NET.AU

June 2023

Welcome to your June 2023 Newsletter

John Lane

Vale Dena Livingston.

I have to start my article with the sad news that Dena Livingston passed away suddenly on the 5th of June, 2023. The news came as a shock to all of us.

It seems I have known Dena for a very long time, although it has probably been just a relatively short time, between seven and eight years.

Of course, we met after her husband Terry joined the Retired Members Association, and he and Dena became actively involved, attending our socials. I remember the lunch at Davistown RSL, where Terry and Dena first met Bruce and Diana Noake. They clicked and became very close friends. The four loved our socials and mainly the annual trip away.

Joan and I and many others came close to them on these occasions.

From all the comments I heard, I have to say they centred around how friendly Dena was, and she was so easy to get along with. Her friendliness is how I will precisely remember this lovely person. I will always have a strong memory of how Dena and Diana befriended Joan, my wife. At every opportunity, they would sneak away to go shopping while the boys were at play.

They could not pass a Miller's store without making a purchase. Mind you; they were not alone in these ventures. I am so pleased that Dena and Diana attended our May General Meeting at Woy Woy. They took Joan to the local Millers, and low and behold, they all purchased something at Millers

To Terry and his daughters and the extended family, I feel your deep sorrow and send you all my thoughts of goodwill over this challenging time. I also extend these thoughts to Diana and Bruce, who have lost someone close to them. We all sadly miss her.

Merimbula Trip away

While our Sapphire Coast trip is not until October, I am already getting a great response. I would ask all of you who want to go on the trip away, please let me know and pay your one hundred dollars per person deposit. Please for now only pay the deposit; leave the trip's balance in your bank account, earning those high-interest rates.

Peggy Trompf Presentation

Peggy is the wife of Colin Cooper.

I am sure all members will remember Col as the long-term Secretary of our Union. Col has been very sick with dementia for a very long time.

When Peg offered to give a presentation on Col's dementia disease, we eagerly seized the opportunity. It has not been the first time there has been a presentation to the members on the subject. But this presentation comes from a very different perspective; we have someone in Peggy who is living with a loved one with dementia and who has studied the topic in-depth.

Peggy gave an overview of the disease and the support available. Peggy told us of the disease's impact and the effect it is having on Col, our friend and colleague. Since Peggy's presentation, I have received positive feedback.

It was the personal aspect that made the presentation different and informative. Peggy has written an excellent article for this edition of the newsletter,

Continued on Page 5



ARCHIE BURNS



The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to report the passing of Archie Burns. Earlier this year, Archie received a cancer diagnosis. He passed away on Sunday, 18th June 2023. A funeral service for Archie was held at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Kingscliff, on 28th June 2023.

Archie has been a member of our Association since 2010. He was a Technician in Training in the "Class of 1958", Section 16 at the Strathfield Training School and later appointed to Casino. Archie took up a position with Australia Post at the Redfern Mail Exchange.

Archie was a keen follower of horse racing. Archie owned the horse that won the Grafton Cup. Archie had many mates throughout his working life, including Barry O'Keefe, Warren Grant, Gary Alcorn and Len Lamont. Fiends of Archie describe him as an all-around good bloke, a person well-liked.

Archie was a regular attendee at the "Class of 58" reunions; he had intended to attend this year's reunion. The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its condolence to Archie's wife, Shirley and family, his many friends and workmates, particularly those who were "Class of 1958" trainees with Archie.

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RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

JULY 2023 GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY - 27TH JULY 2023

The July 2023 General Meeting will be held at the *Petersham RSL Club (301 Trafalgar Street, Petersham, an easy 150m walk from Petersham Station).*

While the General Meeting will have Zoom Video coverage, you are encouraged to join with us at the Petersham RSL, we get together over lunch after the meeting.

Note the new start time for the AGM is 11.05 am. The later start time allows additional time needed to setup the Zoom Video Conference.

For more information about the NRMA presentation, please see **page 8** in this month's newsletter.

GUEST SPEAKER FROM THE NRMA



The presentation by Kristine Luszczynski on behalf of the NRMA will take RTEA members on a journey across many aspects of road safety from driving tips to how health impacts on driving, how to staying safe as a pedestrian and how to prepare for your older driver assessment at age 85.



Members who have an email address, will receive email (early in the week of the meeting) with the necessary details to allow you to join the General meeting via Zoom Video Conference.



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

Lunch Woolwich Pier Hotel

2 GALE STREET, WOOLWICH

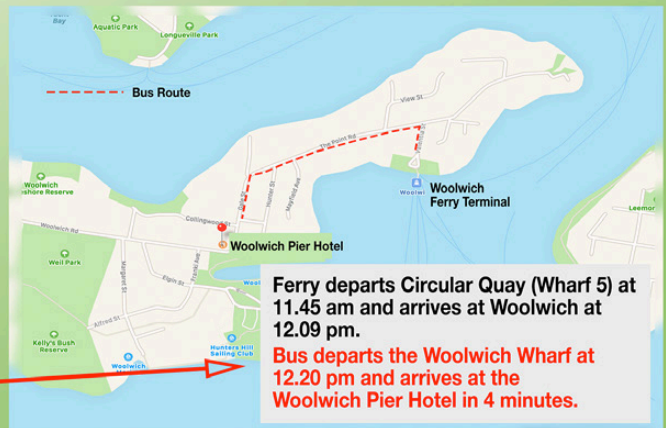
Note
The lunch is
being held on
a Wednesday



WEDNESDAY 19TH JULY 2023

Lunch commences about 12.30 pm

Map Insert has Ferry and Bus Times



Ferry departs Circular Quay (Wharf 5) at 11.45 am and arrives at Woolwich at 12.09 pm.

Bus departs the Woolwich Wharf at 12.20 pm and arrives at the Woolwich Pier Hotel in 4 minutes.

APPRENTICE TECHNICIAN,
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CLASSES
★★ OF ★★
1984
(ATT)

I am Greig Sheridan who is trying to contact the 72 ATTS (Apprentice Technicians, Telecommunications) who commenced at North Strathfield on the 31ST of January 1984 for a 40TH Year reunion in February 2024.

At the moment, we're still in the discovery phase. However, we have marked **Saturday, 3RD of February 2024**, as the most likely date for a catch-up to be held somewhere in Sydney.

We are using a Facebook group: (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/attjanuary1984/>) as our primary contact means, and I am also maintaining a separate e-mail list of those who don't use Facebook.

We are also looking for instructors who taught us across North Strathfield, Rhodes and North Sydney training schools.

For more information or if you would like to make contact, you can reach Greig Sheridan on 0402 033 044 or email gs@gisyd.com.



Welcome to your June 2023 Newsletter (cont'd)

which has ticked all the boxes from our point of view. We are appreciative that Peggy found the time to give us a presentation and more appreciative when we found it was her birthday. How good was that!

Peggy stayed for lunch with us, where we exchanged stories of the old days. There she showed me photos of the past. It brought back memories of when I was on the Branch Council of the Union and my time with my mate Col.

I remember Col, and I spent a lot of time together when I became a State Vice President and a Federal Councillor. Among the photos that Peggy shared was of young Col with a young Anthony Albanese

Thanks heaps, Peggy, for a good day all around.

More on Dementia

You may recall that before the COVID pandemic, we lost Tony Woodfield. Tony's long-term partner, Mary Kovacs, donated half a dozen bottles of scotch that Tony had been saving for cold winter nights.

Mary asked us to raffle off the Scotch bottles, with the proceeds to go to Dementia Australia. We started the raffles, and then came the COVID lockdown interruptions. We still have one more raffle to go. We hope to have this last raffle at our Emu Plains General Meeting in August. So if you are attending this meeting, bring your money.

We had the latest raffle at our Woy Woy General Meeting. Laurie Fenton won the raffle.

Our treasurer had accumulated three hundred dollars from the proceeds of the raffles. We have made three donations that have all come from the proceeds of the raffles. This donation is our latest donation to Dementia Australia from the proceeds of Mary's raffles in honour of Tony.

Wait, there is more! After our June General Meeting, we asked Peggy Trompf to nominate an organisation to donate an amount of one hundred dollars. Peggy selected Dementia Australia. Of course, the money will come from RTEA funds as laid down by our constitution. Thanks to all those who have got into the spirit of the raffles. Pardon the pun!

Upcoming Events

Finally, before I finish this article, I have a few reminders. **First, our social function for July is a Lunch at Woolwich Pier Hotel. The lunch is on Wednesday, 19th July 2023.** You will find all the details in the newsletter, including the ferry timetable from Circular Quay.

Then we have our July General Meeting at the Petersham RSL on Thursday, 27th July 2023. This month, we have a special guest speaker, **Kristine Luszczynski, from the NRMA.** Again, you find all details that Kristine's presentation will cover. The presentation's central theme is to give you information that will help you as drivers to keep driving as long as safe.

Finally, for our members in western Sydney and the Blue Mountains; yes, there will be a General Meeting at Emu Plains in August. All the details will be in the next newsletter.

Bye for now.
John



It's not all Alzheimer's

By Peggy Trompf Cooper

I am the carer for the wonderful man who is my husband of many years. “Does he still know you?” “Does he remember you?” say kind friends and strangers when you say he has dementia. I reply “Yes, it's not Alzheimer's, it's another type of neurodegenerative disease.” Why would I say that? Although Alzheimer's is the most common forms of dementia or neuro (cell) degenerative disease (ND), there are over a hundred different types of this devastating brain destroying illness.

Some of the others include vascular, Lewy body and frontotemporal degeneration (FTD) which is an early onset and less common form. Each has its own way of attacking brain cells or neurones and each displays different types of physical symptoms or behaviours. There can also be different subsets within the different types.

The types mentioned here occur because of different mechanisms affecting the brain. For example, with Alzheimer's, neurons or nerve cells are attacked by protein tangles; vascular dementia is mainly caused by strokes, small blood clots blocking small brain blood vessels; dementia with Lewy bodies caused by sphere like structures developing with nerve cells resulting in death and degeneration of these cells; frontotemporal dementia caused by various proteins in the brain progressively causing damage to the frontal and/or temporal part of the brain (area behind the forehead and over/around the ears).

But why make a big deal about calling these diseases dementia? Mainly because the word and the idea of 'dementia' still has a stigma attached to it , that plays out in various ways. It also hides the very complexities of the disease manifestation. The public remain uniformed.

Most people are aware of the classic Alzheimer's short term memory loss, but retention of long term memory is not so well known. Indeed, in general, dementia or ND is not well understood by most. It is only when we become directly affected, often as carers, do we begin to understand. Sometimes diagnosis takes quite a while. The affected person can be seen by a variety of specialists, each with a different take. Depending on their symptoms, people may be diagnosed with Parkinson's, hydrocephalus, depression, psychosis, before the correct disease or cluster of diseases is detected. This can take years frustrating the affected person, if they are aware, and those who love them. In our case, it took several

years before my husband's illness was identified and it only slowly dawned on me that I was not only his wife but his carer as well. It's strange feeling.

So then what? For us, there was no help offered. There is no medication for FTD itself and all the NDs are terminal, so we were left to our own devices. Bit by bit I found out where resources could be found, where to buy or rent equipment as it became needed, how to apply for home care help, how to advocate for my husband (he, whose entire working life had been dedicated to doing that for workers), how to fix various things around the house and most terrifying of all, how to use the multiple remote controls that littered the lounge room! The library at Dementia Australia (DA) had been very helpful pre-diagnosis as I sought to understand what was happening to C and through that I found other DA resources –free counselling, Fact Sheets and most helpful of all, a support group. In it, I found old hands who had so much carer experience and knowledge to share, to newcomers with their stories to tell. It is a place of friends, old and new, of laughter and sorrow, tea and bikkies, activism and help. Sharing stories can be very powerful, not only as a help to us and the one we love, but it can help someone to overcome some obstacle of their own. DA also has information sessions for persons with dementia as well as carers.

There is a lot of information on the web about dementia or neurodegenerative disease. If you need more information, want to know where to seek help if dementia is suspected or want to find out about available support services refer to:

[Dementia Australia - website](#)

[The Dementia Guide - by Dementia Australia](#)

[National Dementia Helpline : 1800 100 500 \(a free and confidential service to discuss dementia and memory loss concerns for yourself or others\).](#)



Dena Margaret Livingstone



The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to report the passing of Dena Livingstone, who suddenly passed away on Monday, 5th June 2023. Dena is the wife of Terry Livingstone, a member and is also on the Association's committee.

A funeral service for Dena was on Wednesday, 14th June 2023, at the Palmdale Lawn Cemetery and Memorial Park. Many RTEA members attended the services, a testimony to their high regard for Dena.

Dena was born in Singleton on 24th December 1948 and grew up in Waverley. As a teenager, Dena loved music and often attended concerts with her friends.

Before meeting and marrying Terry and for a while after, Dena worked for Customs. Dena had two daughters, Lisa and Joanne. She was a proud grandmother to Kyle, Chloe, Hayley, Tayla and Stephanie. More recently, Dena and Terry had their first great-grandchild. Dena and her mother were close with Dena caring for her mother, who lived for 100 years.

After raising their children Dena returned to the workforce, this time at a special needs school. Dena's love of children and caring personality made her well-suited to the position.

Dena and Terry enjoyed the Association's social functions and trips away. They were frequent attendees. RTEA members who met Dena, remember her as a loving and caring woman who, quietly and with little fuss, offered friendship, help, and support to others particularly the wives. Often Dena and the wives would take the opportunity to go shopping together, the most recent last May at Woy Woy, where the Association held its General Meeting.

Dena was a close friend to Diana, the wife of Bruce Noake. Terry, Dena, Bruce, and Diana only recently moved from Sydney to Lake Macquarie.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its condolences to Terry, her children, grandchildren and other family members and friends, particularly close friends Bruce and Diana Noake.



RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION



JULY GENERAL MEETING SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

Kristine Luszczynski
Online Learning and Development
Manager for the NRMA

The NRMA believes drivers should continue driving for as long as they are safe to do so. To support you, the presentation will broadly cover the following aspects:

Road rules refresher
Safer driving tips
Pedestrian safety
Health and driving

Older driver legislation
Staying mobile
Q&A





The Medicare Safety Net for Couples



First, I thank member Brian Kirkby for bringing this subject to our attention.

As part of an older age demographic, we probably require regular medical tests, and, as a result, despite Medicare rebates, we incur a significant amount of out-of-pocket expenses. The Medicare Safety Net is there to help you reduce your out-of-pocket medical costs for out-of-hospital services.

You may know that if you are part of a family or couple, you can combine your out-of-pocket expenses to benefit sooner from Medicare Safety Net. However, you may not know to combine your out-of-pocket expenses, you must register as a family each year. *Do not assume that the Medicare Safety Net will automatically combine your out-of-pocket simply because all individual family names appear on the same Medicare card.* **First, you must register each year; the sooner, is better, as there is no back-dating if you confirm your family status later.**

What is the Medicare Safety Net

Once you spend over a certain amount; the *Medicare Safety Net* in a calendar year (*from 1 January to 31 December*), Medicare will give you a higher amount back. It is important to note that a doctor's visit or test still costs the same.

Out-of-pocket costs can occur when you are:

- Seeing a doctor or specialist
- Having tests and scans, including blood tests and CT scans



When you make a claim, Medicare typically refunds you around 85% of the scheduled fee. Unless your medical provider bulk bills, you have to pay the balance of 15 per cent (*an out-of-pocket expense*) to the medical provider. The scheduled fee is the dollar amount the Australian Government sets for each medical service item.

At the time of this article, the safety net is \$770.30. As a couple, you are likely to surpass the safety net sooner. For example, as a couple, one may have paid \$600 in out-of-pocket expenses, and the other - your wife or partner paid \$200 before the end of the calendar year, a total of \$800, surpassing the Medicare Safety Net. However, as individuals, neither has surpassed the Medicare Safety Net.

You can learn more about the Medicare Safety Net by going to:

<https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/medicare-safety-nets>

and to register as a family online: <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/ms016>

Remember, you need to do this year.



Lunch with John (Jack) Bowen

Bob Speer



Front Row L to R: Alan Thompson, Jack Bowen, Robyn Thompson, Edna Kirkby.
Back Row L to R: Bob Speer, Ross Kirkby, Marion & Stuart Storey, Barry & Marion Jordan.

Some former PMG technical staff assembled at the Goulburn Workers Club on 1st June 2023 to share lunch with long-time friends and colleagues of Jack Bowen. Below is a brief history of Jack Bowen and his friends who attended the lunch.

Jack Bowen

Jack was born in Goulburn, the son of a Steam Engine Driver who worked out of the Goulburn NSWGR Round House on the Great Southern Line - joining the PMG as a Technician in Training in 1947. After completing his training in Sydney, Bob received an appointment as a Technician at the Moss Vale Telephone Exchange. After just four days at Moss Vale, Jack received a telephone call from Bill Cochran, the then Divisional Engineer Goulburn. Bill asked John if he knew anything about *Step x Step* exchanges; Jack replied that he had been trained on them and had worked on many while training in Sydney. Bill instructed Jack to report to the Goulburn Exchange the following Monday as there was a new *Step x Step* exchange installation, a recent extension to the existing Magneto Manual Exchange and required trained staff for maintenance.

Following his Technician in Training years in Sydney, Jack worked at the Goulburn Telephone Exchange for the whole of his career except for some short periods of relief in Canberra's Divisional Engineer's (DE) office and the District Telecommunications Managers (DTM) Office. Jack has seen it all, the transition from a totally Manual Exchange Analogue network working over open-wire lines to a totally Digital Network using Computer Controlled switches connected over Optical Fibre Cables and Digital Broad Band Radio.

Jack lives in Goulburn, where he is enjoying the social life of the retired. He has been a keen sportsman, playing tennis until he reached middle age when he took up golf. About last year, he had foregone his membership when golf buggies were banned from his golf course.

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Lunch with John (Jack) Bowen (cont'd)

Stewart Storey

Stewart joined the PMG in 1966 as a *Technician-in-Training* at the end of his first year, he was appointed to the Goulburn Telephone Exchange. During his training he was transferred to a Multi Function District at Crookwell. His birth date was drawn as part of the National Service Conscription in 1971. After completing his national service, Stewart transferred to the Regular Army, where he retired.

Bob Speer

Bob was born in Goulburn and started school at Middle Arm. Bob's parents had a sheep farm at Middle Arm and, afterwards, a Dairy Farm at Wandandian. Bob was a 1957 Technician in Training, completing his training at Bowral.

Bob followed the Sydney Melbourne Co-axial Cable from Bowral to Albury before the winter cold got to him, and he was promoted as the Internal Plant Manager at the Kempsey DTB in 1984. Bob became redundant when the Kempsey District was closed in 1993. He now lives in Bomaderry.

Barry Jordan

Barry was born in Crookwell; he joined the PMG as a Technician-in-Training in 1957; on the completion of training, Barry received a technician appointment at Crookwell. Barry spent all his working life at Crookwell except for some short periods of relief in the Goulburn District and at Bombala, where he learnt to drink.

Barry has witnessed the Telephone System transition from a fully Manual System using Magneto Telephones and Manual Exchanges, of which were 42 in the Crookwell Technicians District. Barry retired in 1997 as the Principal Telecommunications Technical Officer, the officer in Charge of the Crookwell Telephone Exchange.

Ross Kirkby

Ross Kirkby was born in Bowral and joined the PMG as a Technician in Training in 1954; after completing his training at Moss Vale, Ross transferred to Goulburn. Ross was part of the Switching Section in the Goulburn Multi-Function District.

Ross was a keen Tennis player and member of Goulburn service clubs in his younger days. He now enjoys life with his wife Edna, travelling to North Queensland in the cooler months and Victoria to visit his family. Ross and Edna have just completed an enjoyable '*Silo Art*' tour of Southern New South Wales and Northern Victoria.

Alan Thompson

Alan was born in Goulburn, where his parents operated a grocery shop on Auburn Street, just south of the South Goulburn School. Alan was a 1967 Technician-in-Training and, after his Goulburn appointment, first as a Trainee and then Technician.

Alan has worked in all parts of the Goulburn Multi-Functional District before being part of the District Project Team installing ARK exchanges, replacing the Magneto Manual Exchanges, ARK extensions and Carrier Systems. After the FMO (Future Mode of Operations) project, he transferred to Customer Operations.

Alan retired in 2008 after many years in the combined Work Force as a Radio Technical Specialist in the CAN (Customer Access Network). Alan and his wife, Robyn, now live at Shell Cove.





Welfare News

Peter Hack

I am sure, alongside myself; we were all saddened to learn of the passing of **Dena Livingstone**. Terry would be going through a difficult time, I have spoken with Terry, and he tells me he was enjoying lunch with Bruce Noake and friends.

Ron Milosh is having tests done on his knee. I have spoken with **Garry Masman**; he came home on Saturday, 24th June 2023. He will continue rehabilitation as an outpatient for the next couple of months. Garry is hopeful of attending the Emu Plains General Meeting in August.

Warren Croft, Neil Bowmaker, and friends had lunch recently with Tom Brown. Alan Bassman also visited with Tom.

Alan Gilks is enjoying the thirty-degree heat in Northern Queensland. **Alan Bassman has been busy accompanying Claire, his wife, for medical tests.**

Jim Spencer had a surprise visit from his daughter over the Kings Birthday weekend. Jim would appreciate a call; he does not get out often, and the best time is around mealtimes.

Barry Robinson reported that **Ray Beckhause** is not in a good way. I have spoken with Ray. He informs me that he fell and broke his leg in multiple places and his hip.

Ray worked on PABX and the training school before he moved to Queensland. Ray is in a nursing home, and he needs help when he walks. One leg is considerably shorter than the other. He reckons he would be a sniper's worst nightmare as his head bobs. Ray's phone number is 07 3809 1522



Reminder! you should consider having your Flu & COVID vaccinations, this winter

This month's reminder does not show a syringe. Instead, just a simple reminder that the flu season is now upon us and COVID still infects tens of thousands each week.

No need for two visits to the doctor. You can have both injections at the same time.

Any reservations! Discuss them with your doctor.





MERIMBULA TRIP AWAY OCTOBER 8TH TO 13TH

This year, our trip away is to Merimbula and the beautiful NSW Sapphire Coast . The trip away is for six days and five nights. **See the May 2023 Newsletter for full itinerary.**

Inclusions

Return transfers between Central Station and Merimbula

Accommodation at South Seas Motel, Merimbula

Whale-watching Cruise on Twofold Bay

Tour of the Killer Whale Museum.

Merimbula - Sight-seeing

Guided tour of historic Bombala

Visits to Tathra, Bermagui, and the historic towns of Tilba Tilba, Boydtown and Cobargo.

Visit to an Animal Sanctuary which includes lunch and a train ride

Poolside BBQ dinner on one evening at our motel

Visit to Historic Car Club

A visit to the Tilba Valley Winery and Ale House for lunch while we enjoy the magnificent views

Cost \$ 860

Single Room \$1,180

**Exclusions - Dinner on four nights
and lunch on two occasions**

We are now taking bookings - \$100 per person. At this stage, please pay the deposit only. Our payment preference is for a Bank Transfer (details below). If you want to pay by cheque, please make payable to the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association, and post to the Treasurer: Alan Bassman - 46 Lyle Street, Girraween NSW 2145

Bank Transfers (electronic payments)



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



For further information - Contact John Lane, email and phone information is on page 2 of the newsletter.