

KYNETON & DISTRICT OLD TIME DANCE CLUB INC.

'KEEPING IN TOUCH' (NO. 7) – JULY 2020

Greetings to all as we move further into restrictions and isolation. Best wishes to those of you who are on Stage 4 level, we are thinking of you all as you have to isolate more and have to reduce your activities and freedoms. We appreciate the efforts you are having to put in so that we can all hopefully bring this virus under more control and we can all be safe again to restart our lives. For all of us - keep safe, keep resilient and stay optimistic.

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Firstly, some sad news. Several people have let me know of the recent passing of Beverley Kingston, who was a member of K&DOTDC some years ago. I am sure that many of you will remember her from Kyneton and other dances. Our condolences and sympathies are extended to her family and her partner, Harold, who made the silhouettes of dancers we use on the stage at Kyneton dances.

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John Bennett has been working with Ray Sharrock to set up some Zoom dancing meetings for us all via your PC, tablet, I-pad or smart phone, so that those who would like to participate can do so. This will allow us to dance virtually, with John's music, see and chat to each other, and keep up dancing skills for that time in the future when we can actually get together again. John and Jill, Ray and Jan had a successful run through and are now ready to give it a go. I sent out an email yesterday on John's behalf explaining this, and will post a copy of John's email along with this newsletter to those of you who do not have the internet. You can join in also if you have one of the other electronic devices as above; John can assist and advise you with this. So contact John if you are interested. Many thanks to John and Ray for working out for the rest of us how this can be achieved.

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For those of you who have responded to me about your interest in the Zoom dancing, you need to contact John Bennett by either email (john_n_bennett44@bigpond.com) or phone (0400 908 401).

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Mary Thornely (Riddells Creek) has information about grants of \$5,000 to \$200,000 which the Victorian Government has announced to support innovative, community-based initiatives that build connection, reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation and that can be implemented quickly. (See Page 11 of Midland Express 28 July 2020. Mary asks if any of our members might have suggestions.

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I received a lovely letter from Nancy Winderlich (Bendigo). As she said, we almost got there and she could see us back dancing, but then 'someone ups and spoils it'. She saw some line dancing on TV, 10 people, 1.5m apart, and thought that looked good. Nancy is missing her regular activities, such as indoor bowls, following and barracking for her favourite footy team, and playing cards with her group of girls. She said she currently feels as though she is "living in a sterile world of doing nothing, going nowhere and seeing no-one". She passes these letters on to her friends, Margaret Hamley and Margaret Marshall, and reports the following messages from them.

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Margaret Marshall (Bendigo) sends greetings to all. She currently has a one-eyed slant on life until next week, when she is having the other eye 'repaired', which will help her to get back to getting enjoyment from the things she wants to do.

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Margaret Hamley (Bendigo) has been laid up after dislocating her hip, working too hard in her garden. This meant a hip replacement. After ten weeks, she is now back driving and able to get around again. She sends greetings and best wishes to everyone, with the hope that we can meet and dance again soon. *(These three ladies come down together to Kyneton dances - when health allows.)*

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Ina and Graeme Bertrand (Trentham) decided that, if they didn't practice sometimes, they would forget everything by the time dancing starts again. Their verandah is the only place with enough space, so they have been braving the cold, dancing outside in cold Trentham, dressed up in all their winter woollies, including alpaca socks and puffer jackets, thermal gloves and double thickness wool beanies pulled down over their ears. As Ina says, it just shows how stupid – and determined – dancers are. *(That would be fascinating to watch, Ina – a bit like Michelin Man doing ballet.)*

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Bill Darling (Kilmore) is finding the complete shutdown restrictions in place for Mitchell Shire quite distressing as he is not able to meet up with the other people from his village nor is he able to have visitors from outside. I do feel for these folks who are in complete lock down, particularly those who live alone, it must be very difficult to depend on telephone conversations for personal social contact.

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Louise Tranter (Riddells Creek) and Craig Pethybridge (Taradale) wish everybody to keep well and safe. They are missing dancing and the company of their lovely group.
(Great to hear from you both, Louise.)

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It was good to hear from our Secretary, Cherry Servis (Malmsbury) who enjoyed the video of the 'little angel'. *(I thought she was special, too.)* Jeanette Ford (Newstead) also enjoyed the video and felt the little girl's voice was outstanding.

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I had a long phone chat with Norma Proctor (Kyneton), who is struggling with a bad knee. She is not sure what has happened to it, but is on anti-biotics and basically staying at home, sitting in the chair with a rug over her knees. *(Not our normal Norma. Get better soon, we need your inspiration.)*

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(Scene 1) - Eileen and Kelvin Cardillo (Clarkefield) left home on the farm to go shopping, whilst driving along the road from their front gate they found that, the previous night, a vehicle must have left the road, knocking down their double farm gate and fence posts, etc. There was no sign of the vehicle and most of the aftermath of the incident had been removed, so no way to trace the vehicle and driver. Their shopping trip turned into buying new gates and whatever else was needed. Luckily, there were no stock in that paddock, but you can imagine how annoyed and frustrated they felt. One of their sons is a panel beater in Gisborne, and was able to make a probable link between a small piece of taillight glass at the scene to a Nissan 622 vehicle. However, they had little hope of finding the culprit.

(Scene 2) – A few days later, a car drove up their drive and a couple got out and introduced themselves – a man and his ex-wife. The woman asked if they owned the property up the road where a car had damaged the gates and fence. She then explained that her son's mate had just got his driving licence and she had allowed the boys to use her Nissan 620 vehicle. *(As you do!)* They then returned with a tandem trailer, cleaned up the debris and removed the car. Problem solved and insurance sorted. Eileen felt that this was a good news story and it had renewed her faith in people.

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NO NURSING HOME FOR ME!!!!!!!

No nursing home for me. I'll be checking into a Holiday Inn!

With the average cost for nursing home care being \$188.00 per day, there is a better way when we get old and too feeble.

I've already checked on reservations at The Holiday Inn.

For a combined long term stay discount and senior discount, it's \$59.23 per night.

Breakfast is included, and some have happy hours in the afternoon.

That leaves \$128.77 a day for lunch and dinner in any restaurant we want, or room service, laundry, gratuities and special TV movies.

Plus, they provide a spa, swimming pool, a workout room, a lounge and washer-dryer, etc.

Most have free toothpaste and razors, and all have free shampoo and soap.

\$5 worth of tips a day and you'll have the entire staff scrambling to help you.

They treat you like a customer, not a patient.

There's a local bus stop out the front and seniors ride free, the handicap bus will also pick you up (if you fake a decent limp).

To meet other nice people, call a church bus on Sundays.

For a change of scenery, take the airport shuttle bus and eat at one of the nice restaurants there.

While you are at the airport, fly somewhere.

Otherwise, the cash keeps building up.

It takes months to get into decent nursing homes. Holiday Inn will take your reservation today.

And you're not stuck in one place forever – you can move from Inn to Inn, or even from city to city.

Want to see Hawaii? They have Holiday Inn there too.

TV broken? Light bulbs need changing? Need a mattress replaced? No problem..

They fix everything and apologise for the inconvenience.

The Inn has a night security person and daily room service, the maid checks to see if you are ok.

If not, they'll call an ambulance.....or the undertaker.

If you fall and break a hip, Medicare will pay for the hip, and Holiday Inn will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

And no worries about visits from family. They will always be glad to visit you, and will probably check in for a few days mini-vacation. The grandkids can use the pool. What more could I ask for?

So, when I reach that golden age, I'll face it with a grin.

AIDS WARNING!!

Senior Citizens are the nation's leading carriers of AIDS -

Hearing AIDS, BandAIDS, Roll AIDS, Walking AIDS, Medical AIDS, Government AIDS and MOST OF ALL – Monetary AID to their kids.

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Virginia Love (Kyneton) watched the introduction Zoom online dance party, as suggested by Ray Sharrock. She said that there were six participants at the party, including Ray and Jan with two or three other people dancing and someone doing the sound. Virginia said it included an hour of dancing and then another hour or so time to talk before leaving the party. Virginia said that she was busy doing something so she couldn't be on screen for a lot of the time. I'm not sure if these are going to be held weekly or monthly but it may be an avenue to do some dancing, something nice to get involved with when you have more time to get organised.

(Thankyou, Ray, for picking this up and letting us know the details. I hope you and Jan enjoyed it.)

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I had a very nice phone call from Vera Richmond (Castlemaine). She and Colin are managing the restrictions quite well and send their regards to everyone. She also had a good news story – Col had gone for a walk in their neighbourhood, when he tripped over the edge of the pavement and fell quite hard. A woman, with a child in a pusher, was also out walking and came back to help him get up, then walked home with him. Vera said that the next morning she found two plastic containers of food on their front doorstep. This woman was someone they did not know and her caring made their day. They also had a visit from a neighbour, whom they did not know well, and he introduced himself, telling them that now they know him and where he lives to just ask if they want any help.

Vera also said that Don Winkleman, whom many of you will know from Bitz and Pieces band, which he organises and plays a mean piano with a group of other local musicians at events in the region, organised an afternoon session at his home in Bendigo with a group of musos including Ray and Dorothy Brown and a couple of others, which they all thoroughly enjoyed.

(Keep practising, Ray, we are going to need you to help us dance again at some time in the future.)



Love this one from Jeanette Ford. It says it all, gets the message across.

Yvonne Code (Kilmore) is suffering from carpal tunnel in both wrists, to a point of pain where she is finding it impossible to work around her home and, more worrying, to look after her beloved chooks to her normal standard. She had an appointment with the surgeon who operated on my Steve's wrist, but, as elective surgeries seem to have been cancelled for now, she is not able to have the operation to help her. I am really sorry for Yvonne, as she is usually such a busy person and I have seen how painful and debilitating this condition can be. She does, however, continue to stay positive and keep in touch with so many people. *(Good on you, Yvonne, stay strong.)*

I had a nice long talk with Kate Healey (Kyneton), who shares a unit with Billie in supported accommodation In Kyneton. Kate said that the support workers are supplying them with activities each day, this week they are doing art. Kate's friend, Dion Pethybridge, is still able to attend work, but at weekends they are able to use the activity room at the Centre. Kate and Dion are regular dancers at the Club's Tuesday night events and also attend the Kyneton monthly dance, and are very important members of K&DOTDC. *(It was very good to hear from you, Kate. It's great to know that you and Dion are coping so well with the restrictions. Stay strong and safe.)*

I heard from Enid Farmer (Kyneton) when she alerted me to the passing of Beverley Kingston. She and Dick Green (Campbell's Creek) are quite well. They are enjoying working together in each of their gardens, which are looking great and thriving on the attention they are getting.

Ray Sharrock (Bendigo) sent me a most interesting story of a very unique adventure from his earlier work life. *(It is quite long but so fascinating in authenticity and colour as Ray relives his time over 50 years ago that I am including it as he wrote it. Ray turned 80 this year, so he was a 27 year old when this took place. How exciting for a young fellow! Ray said he worked for the Weather Bureau, having previously been in the Air Force, and that he was sent to help set up the WF2 balloon tracking radar system in Antarctica. Thankyou for sharing this time with us, Ray.)*

It is entitled **“Highlights of Mawson ‘67”**

Ray writes – “We left Melbourne in late 1966 on board the Nella Dan bound for Mawson via Repstat. One day out, we encountered a serious storm as we were off the northwest coast of Tasmania, which necessitated heading into it for 4 days and nights. Sleep was impossible during that time, due to being tossed around so jerkily if you lay down. After the fourth night, we were just off Kangaroo Island and were able to recommence our voyage to Mawson.

A week of uninterrupted ocean passed, until we came out on deck from watching a movie late at night but in broad daylight to find ourselves in a panorama of icebergs in every direction. Many of them were close together and we were passing between them as close as 100 metres. The spectacle of shapes and colours was spectacular. That was when it became real that we were bound for the Antarctic.

A few days later we came into open pack ice that was reported to be 100 kms or more wide. Within an hour or so progress was slow, and we then became to and fro-ing to find leads and within another hour or so of riding up and breaking through the ice we came to a dead calm stop with not a sound. As the pack ice pressed ion, we experienced the Nella popping up like a cork out of a bottle, and there we were. The Captain announced we were beset and told us to stay calm and stay on board. Within a few hours, there were those who found the temptation too great to ignore, and went over the side and down onto the pack ice, until most were out on the pack ice and the Captain saw the adventure we were having. Very soon, someone produced a football and it was ‘game on’. It was good for all levels of fitness and skills as every few yards of running a leg would break through the pack ice and down you would go, up to your crutch and then the ball would be extracted from you. The pack ice was some 12 feet thick and heavily honey combed beneath the surface from the thawing by the sun. We were entertained by the presence of Adelie penguins in close contact as they refused to walk around us. If you were in their path, way, they stood their ground, flapped their flippers and squawked until you gave way. During the next four weeks, we each had a ride or two in the helicopters as they made reconnaissance flights looking for leads to maybe get out of the ice. Because neither chopper had pontoons they were restricted from flying over open water – if they found any. On one flight, the returning chopper slipped sideways on landing and was caught in a net extending out from the landing area of the Nella’s stern. It was retrieved uneventfully.

After around 4 weeks, the decision was made to accept help from the American ice-breaker, the ‘East Wind’. It arrived and, ironically, before it intervened, the pack ice opened up and we came out by ourselves. The ‘East Wind’ was an ice breaker of some 20,000 tons and flat bottomed, whilst the Nella was Vee shaped and only 2,000 tons.

Moving on to Mawson, with the personnel for Repstat construction still aboard because of the lost time, we threw ourselves into changeover, with much help from Repstat personnel. We were moved to and fro from the Nella to shore by the usual Army DUKW., which traditionally leaked like a sieve and must have been close to sinking at times. After 5 or 6 days of unloading/loading we changed over to sleeping on shore.

The first night ashore I was chosen as Night Watchman (Yes – ‘man’, as no females in those years.

That unfairness was rectified some years after '67). As my Night Watch approached, so did our first blizzard. Even though it was almost 24 hours of daylight, visibility was only one metre during that overnight blizzard. During these blizzards, there was navigation assistance around the Station with heavy ropes run strung from building to building to be held on to because of the darkness and also the way you could be blown into unknown space, or worse, into the sea. As careful as I was that night, I became unaware of where I was twice. It was only by taking a deep breath and very carefully thinking my steps backwards that I was able to get to a known building without being blown away. The wind was 150kph, it was way below zero degrees with no visibility.

Shortly after the Nella left, there was a field trip up onto the plateau and around the coast. After a few weeks with the vehicles banging in and out of coastal crevasses, they all broke down. They had to put a sled together and man-hauled back to Mawson. Later spares were taken out and the vehicles recovered.

During the months of frozen sea ice in Horse Shoe Harbour, one of our scientists, John Illingsworth, had constructed an ice yacht which was very fast on the sea ice. In fact, on many days the Catabatic wind was too high for reasonable safety using it, although John was very good on it. Also, I had a motor bike, which we used on the sea ice as well. This required rope threaded around the tyres to prevent constant slipping. Even so, it took some skill to keep it upright. This skill, we had in the Senior Diesel Mechanic, Bill Butler, who was a South Australian motor bike champion. Sometimes we pulled a dog sled and other times an upturned wooden table with up to four people on it. When we were really flying, we would let the rope go and fairly wizz across the Harbour.

Around 6am one morning, I was sitting by myself over at East Arm Bay after a balloon flight. It was dead still and dead quiet when, without any fuss or warning, one of the two icebergs in East Arm Bay rolled over the full 180 degrees about 50 yards in front of me then resettled, all in a few seconds. I sat there thinking how fortunate I was to see this, and I have, over the years, wondered how many others have seen such a thing happen. Equally as surprising to me, a few minutes later, it rolled back over again, 180 degrees to where it had been. Some weeks later, the huge tabular iceberg just outside Horseshoe Harbour, just up and went through the night. All that was left to show it had ever been there was a 500 metre wide trail of lumps of ice as far as the eye could see. Another time, 3 or 4 Expeditioners boated out three or four hundred metres out to an island. Whilst they were there, the Catabatic wind came up and they couldn't get back. (*Catabatic winds – "of an air current or wind; moving downward or down a slope because of cooling, especially at night."* – *The Free Dictionary definition. "Can rush down elevated slopes at hurricane speeds"* – *Wikipedia definition*). With no extra clothes, no food and no cover out of the wind, they stayed the night – pretty uncomfortably. We made up a pontoon of 44 gallon drums tied together and fed it out on a long rope and pulled them back the next day.

Around August/September I accompanied Bill Cowal (cook) and Pat Moonie (radio operator) some 70 or so kms on ssea ice with two husky teams and sleds. We camped each way pm the sea ice, as risky as that was. On the way, one of the huskys took sick and we loaded him onto a sled. A few kms on, we noticed that he had fallen off. We seldom rode on the sleds, preferring to run along side to reduce the dogs' work load. I ran back a couple of kms but found no sign of him. We continued on and a week later he turned up back at Mawson, fit and well, all by himself. When we arrived at Taylor Rookery, which is at Taylor Glacier, that day we went into a small caravan-sized hut that had not been visited for some years. On the stove there were two saucepans, one with mashed potato and the other with red cooked berries in them. We heated them up and mixed them together, then ate them. Delicious!!! That same day, Pat and Bill continued on out around Taylor Glacier, which was

maybe a km or so, with one dog sled and dogs, then back to the coast on the other side, whilst I held the fort back at the Rookery. They went around to find the plaque left there by Sir Douglas Mawson in 1930 on the first BANZARE Expedition, which they found in good order. The plaque had been thrown ashore in 1930 as the weather was too wild to get ashore. The next year, 1931, on the second Banzare Expedition, they were able to go ashore and fix the plaque to a rock. The Proclamation claimed the territory at Taylor for Britain at the time, and five years later, in 1935 Britain handed it over to Australia, I believe.

We counted the King Penguins, all males plus the two-month old baby penguins. After leaving Taylor to return to Mawson, we came across an 'Ice Block City' out in the sea ice. This was made of square blocks of ice about 10 feet high and a few yards long and square, with 'walk ways' between them. These were arranged quite orderly, like a city block of buildings would be, only on a smaller scale, as above. We were very tempted to enter one of the 10 foot wide 'streets' to see where they went. Caution told us not to, as turning around would be difficult to come back out and, as well, the chance of thin ice between was highly likely. We looked at each other for a minute then headed straight in! After some time, and some twists and turns, we came out safely and continued on. I have often wondered if others have seen this phenomenon elsewhere, anywhere. Like a whole bunch of orderly ice cubes.

Not long after this, two of the men were driving along the sea ice part way to Taylor in a VW Beetle when, all of a sudden they broke through the sea ice quite close into the ice plateau cliffs.

Apparently a piece of plateau cliff ice had calved off recently and the hole frozen over, so was only a few inches thick. Very quickly, they had to get out of the two-door Beetle through the windows as the freezing water poured in. This was difficult to a very high degree in their Antarctic clothing, including boots. They managed to clear the vehicle as it quickly sank, and pull themselves onto the ice. Without the VW to push against, they would have had no hope of getting out up onto the sea ice. The vehicle was gone to the bottom in seconds and there they were, 10 – 15 kms from Mawson, in way below zero degrees, soaking wet right through, including their boots full of litres of water, also below zero degrees. It is history now that they were able to walk back to Mawson and tell the tale. An amazing example of the highest determination.

I recall that, later in the year, when the sea ice had cleared from Horseshoe Harbour, I was the one that went for a SWIM. My plan was to get my skimpy bathers on in my very warm Donga, out the door with only a towel and walk the 100 metres across frozen rock and dive into the water with great discipline and swim out 10 – 15 metres with dignity, turn around with dignity, and swim back to the shore, then get out and repeat it, just to show how much (self) control I had. Forget the control and dignity. My dive took me out 5 meters, at which time my body took over from my brain and spun around 180 degrees and came back out of the sub zero water with my arms and legs going like a windmill in a hurricane. Forget the second swim, I very quickly convinced myself. I had done it and there was definitely no need to do it again.

One other experience that I had not been expecting was the amount of melting of the plateau ice under the surface around the Mawson Base, which enabled one to walk in under the plateau ice standing at full height up to 100 meters in. Much further was free of the rock but had less height of gap.

Lastly, the voyage back to Hobart in the Nella Dan was the ultimate Grand Tour, with visiting Sandefjord Bay at the very southern attachment of the massive Amery Ice Shelf, where we delivered a dismantled building from Mawson for a wintering party to use on the Shelf during '68. Those prefab panels were flown in the 100 kms by helicopter to the very centre of the Amery Ice Shelf.

From there, we proceeded to Davis Base, which had been closed in 1967, then onto Wilkes and Repstat, where we spent 10 days of construction of the new station to be known as Casey. After that, we moved on to Commonwealth Bay where the status of the 1914 building was assessed, and then we proceeded to Hobart as the Antarctic Division had translocated to Kingston during our 15 months away.

Every year of the 53 years since Mawson '67, I have felt privileged to have been selected to winter in the Antarctic and give the task of installing, operating and maintaining the first WF2 balloon tracking Radar for the Australian Weather Bureau at Mawson. One of the very last and biggest highlight was that every member of the Mawson Expeditioner's taught me something worthwhile, often what I would not have learnt elsewhere. The medical responsibility picked up by Ian Wood, Brian Jackson and others, along with the Casey doctor was also pretty special.

Now, the very last highlight was, when we left Melbourne the dress fashion was below the knees, and when we arrived back, hems were knicker-high miniskirts, and skirts and tops in psychodelic colours.

Ray Sharrock.



(Certainly not the Antarctic for a holiday, nor even the Opera House!)

I had some reply emails from my forwarding of John Bennett's email re the Zoom dancing. It was great to hear from Cherry Servis, who commented that there would be no danger of standing on anybody's foot, from Daryl Hodson, who said he would post the email on the Club's website, from Michael and Margaret Allan, who think it is a fun idea, from John Code, and from Charlotte Roberts, who is hoping she and her father can join in. It was lovely to hear from them but you will need to contact John, as detailed on Page 1, for more information and to be included.

Margaret and Michael are doing a Zoom course with Sunbury U3A which they are finding good to work with. (I might get in touch for some advice from them as I had thoughts of trying to set up Coffee Club or Happy Hour chat sessions.)

I enjoyed a good talk with Marie Clifford (Gisborne), mainly about family. She and Don are okay and are managing in the current situation without too much hassle. She sends their regards and best wishes to everyone.

Please keep smiling, stay strong and be safe. We may be getting older but we sure do have the spirit and determination to stay the distance until we surface sometime in the (near – we hope) future.

So long for now. JW