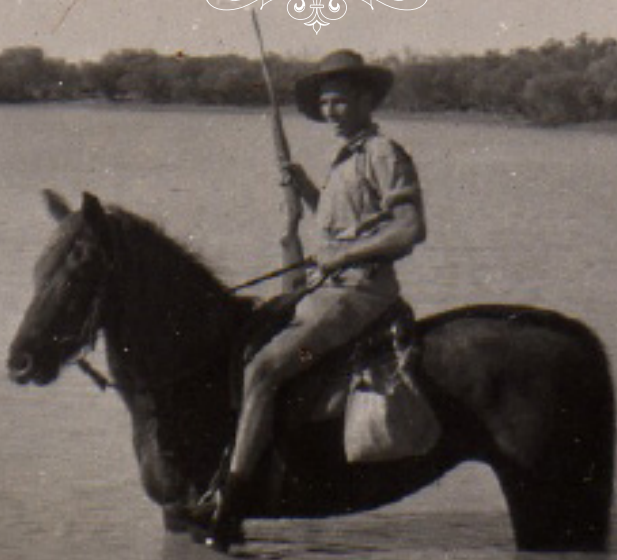




MURCHISON MEMORIES



DAVID LEJEUNE



David Lejeune on his beloved horse Jibilla



.....
In Loving Memory of

David Russell Lejeune

(1st June 1926 to 10th August 2013)
.....



Mt Magnet District

The Beginning

In 1878 Joseph Watson walked the first flock of sheep to the district and named his lease Yoweragabbie. When the railway from Mullewa came through, the siding near the homestead that Watson built was the closest point (about 32 kms) on the line from the future Boodanoo North. A well was sunk and Watson opened a store for prospectors. Several other leases were granted about this time, including George Dowden's lease at Challa in 1880.

Gold was found at Mount Magnet between 1890-91. By 1893 there were 3 hotels in the town, the most ever in the town's history. The railway from Geraldton to Mullewa reached Mount Magnet in 1896. S.R.L. Elliott and Richardson took up the lease that became Boodanoo.

Whether they made any improvements to Boodanoo is unknown. They also leased adjoining land that was sold to Goolam Badoola (an Afghan), who had made a name with camel teams carting stores to stations and wool from the stations. He was honoured for his feat of assisting the people of Cue cut off by the floodwaters of Lake Austen. Goolam owned one of the first cars and the roads were rough. Drivers using the bush tracks had to dodge trees, stumps, and rocks. In a



E.R. Lejeune



story I remember about him, he was driving Jimmy James, my godfather, and Jimmy questioned whether the speed he was driving was too fast for safety. The reply was "when my time come he come, kismet".

In the early part of the century a quantity of sandalwood was cut in the district for export but I am not aware of this occurring at Boodanoo. In 1901 the Rabbit Proof Fence was commenced from the south coast to the 80 mile beach, north of Broome. Strangely, it was stated that the fence was to prevent rabbits crossing from the eastern states. This fence formed an eastern boundary of Boodanoo. I remember on mill rounds chasing emus along it in the Chev utility and shooting at them through the open windscreen. Emus were a hazard because they could suddenly charge the fence and catapult across in front of the vehicle.

In 1924 Bruce Fleming, a man whom I recall as being a very friendly and gentle man, married Marjorie Du Boulay, daughter of the long time Roads Board secretary. He established and ran the Magnet Power Station and had several mail runs. Later he did motor mechanical work. As I recall they were the only friends my mother and father had in Mount Magnet. My mother must have been most grateful to the family in her sad and hard times.



Ayris with a sheepdog next to the verandah at North Boodanoo homestead



The Flemings had two daughters Ailsa and Nancy. I remember Ayris, my sister, telling me about how Ailsa, a town girl who had never spent time on a sheep station, on a visit to Boodanoo saw some rams and asked Ayris why they had long tails. In fact they had no tails.

There must have been a car of some sort soon after my parents were married but I have never heard of one. In 1924 the first cars appeared and the Lejeunes acquired a Dodge Tourer with running boards. Running boards along the side of the car meant that the dogs could stand with hind legs on the board with their bodies nestled between the bonnet and the front mudguard. You could stand on the running board on the side of the car if you wanted to.

The running board was handy for carrying dead roos or sheep. There were no graders for private roads and for the main roads the graders were horse drawn until after World War II. On private roads cruising speed was about 30 kms per hour as there were no corrugations, but on main roads there were plenty. On the main roads you were rattled to bits.



Boodanoo Station

The name Boodanoo is Aboriginal for stony ground. Boodanoo North was 60,717 hectares and Boodanoo South was 85, 110 hectares. The average annual rainfall for Mt Magnet is 9 inches. We had drought between 1936-1941 but no average was established at Boodanoo. The summers could be extremely hot with no sea breezes, being so far inland. Summer nights were generally cool. In winter, frosts were common.

It was common for homesteads to have a bough shed with ti-tree walls and a roof, situated close to the homestead. If water was available this was trickled down the sides and any breeze would render the inside quite pleasant. This was ideal for a siesta in the North End of the station where we had beds set up, but the South End was like an outcamp.

Edward Russel Lejeune: born 1886 Manchester

I have his photo album dated the 22nd of December 1901 with the address of the family home 10 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester. My father's parents were Adam Eduard Lejeune and Jane Louisa McLaren. In descending order the family were: Franziska (called Cissy), Marion, Juliet,



*Edward Russell Lejeune
Born 1886 Manchester*



Helene, Alick, Russell, Arnold and Caroline. Alick had been a Church of England pastor in South Africa. By the time I was a young man he was back in England. Unbeknownst to me he had offered to bring me up after my father, Russell, was killed. I corresponded regularly with him until about 1950 and he gave me much information to compile the family tree.

Russell's father Adam Eduard died in Switzerland a few years after Caroline was born. According to Caroline's book, "Thank You For Having Me", her mother did a wonderful job bringing them all up. With the help of Mrs Hahndorf (nursery maid and general factotum) they were given the best education.

They all attended a good kindergarten called Lady Barn House. There are photos of Russell's school Head Master Mr Thring, his gym and drill sergeant, and footie and cricket teams. There were boxing gloves at Boodanoo North but I don't recall them being used. Boxing it seems is a recreation fast disappearing.

My paternal grandmother Jane Louisa McLaren was a suffragette and the daughter of the famous Baptist preacher Alexander McLaren (he was mentioned in an English Encyclopedia). Alexander's father David played an important role in the early development of South Australia. Jane Louisa's close friend Mrs Smith spoke highly of her, 'I loved Arnold's {Russell's brother} mother very dearly and still miss her visits, so full of rich humour and still richer understanding. No one else has ever seemed to me so swift and certain in human understanding, so wide and generous in opinion and so comfortably unshockable. I still find myself, so-to-say, telling her things and imagining what she would think and say.'

In 1905 at the age of 19, Russell arrived in WA and worked as a jackaroo at Tibradden, owned originally by J.S. Davis (my great grandfather) out of Geraldton (later to come under the ownership of J.B Percy my grandfather and his wife Elizabeth, the



daughter of J.S Davis). It was there that he met Rachel Percy from Melbourne, who was visiting her grandparents at Tibbradden. They fell in love and so the story goes her mother Elizabeth at some stage during the stay reprimanded her severely for sitting on Russell's lap. Rachel, so innocent, thought this could cause her to have a baby. Russell worked at Tibbradden until he took up Boodanoo in 1910. After a long engagement of 5 years they were married in 1915 and Russell by this time had built a house for his new wife to come to.

John Sydney Davis 1817 - 1893



John Sydney Davis 1817-1893

J.S. Davis arrived in WA from the Ireland (near Dublin) and took up a farm, Tibbradden, approximately 20kms from Geraldton. He married Sarah Heal (1822 –1906). Sarah had landed as a young woman with her parents and siblings at Fremantle shortly after Governor Stirling in the 2nd Fleet.

A death notice of Sarah's mother, also Sarah, appeared in the Inquirer & Commercial News (Perth WA: 1855 - 1901), Wednesday 27 December 1882, page 2. Births, Marriages, and Deaths. DEATH HEAL.— On the 15th instant, at her residence, Guildford, W. A., Sarah, the relict of the late Lieut. Charles Heal, R.N., in the 85th year of her age. Deeply regretted by her family.



One of her children Elisabeth, (Bossy Bessy, 1855-1929), married Jocelyn Beverley Percy an immigrant from Ireland. Bessie and Jocelyn had four daughters, Amy, Lilla, Evelyn (Evie) and Rachel and two sons (who survived), Jocelyn and Reginald. He had various posts with the Union Bank (later to become the ANZ), including Geraldton, Roebourne, New Zealand, England and Melbourne.

Rachel was educated at MCEGS (Melbourne Church of England Grammar School) and while the family was in England she spent a year at a finishing school, Le Chatelere in Vevey, Switzerland. She learned German and had a great friend Lotte Lemke, a German with whom she corresponded in French for the rest of her life. At Boodanoo she tried to have the children speak French at breakfast - this was a real dampener on conversation. But I never forgot the few words I learned.

Russell Lejeune develops Boodanoo



North Boodanoo camel team 1920s



Russell and Vernon Sewell (a neighbour to Tibbradden at Sand-springs) took up the lease on Boodanoo and Russell moved to a camp on the North End in about 1910.

There was a story told to me by Adrian Morrissey (Meeline) that Goolam Badooala and Russell were in Mt Magnet and heard that a large area, later to become South Block on Boodanoo, was being sold by Mr. Dowden of Challa Station. To negotiate a purchase with Dowden the only transport available to them was a camel for Badooala and a motorbike for Russell. Russell won the race to Challa and made the purchase. Mighty good purchase it was too.

Russell built a cottage at the north end later to become Nellie Smith, the cook's, abode. There is a photo in my album of father and Jimmy James standing outside the cottage. He lived pretty roughly and my mother told me that he suffered food poisoning (there was no refrigeration and probably no Coolgardie safe). The only transport was a motorcycle. By 1912 the drought was breaking and by 1913 wool prices were up.

In the book 'Mt Magnet' by Karen Morrissey, there is a photo stated to be 1911 of a camel team taking wool to Yowerragabbie. I can't figure that this date is correct as it is prior to my understanding that Russell would have been producing wool at this stage.

Russell engaged Bartlett, a builder, to construct a house that he could bring Rachel to when they were married. The house had 4 bedrooms and an uncovered bridge to the separate main dining room and men's dining room. There were verandahs all around the building. The framing was jarrah and the lining inside and out was galvanised iron with an attractive pattern thereon, which was then painted. Today it would have been insulated.

By 1914 paddocks were fenced. My Aunt Caroline Lejeune's au-



tobiography Thank You For Having Me states that Russell was rejected from military service due to varicose veins. I find this unlikely. How could he walk off the property? I imagine he would have been man powered. On the whole station there must have been at least 300kms of fences (mostly wire) and many cocky's gates. Sadly I have no knowledge of who established all this and at what cost financially (much information has been donated to the Battye Library by Ayris Lejeune). Virtually all posts would have been mulga from nearby. Vernon Sewell was the silent partner but the two corresponded regularly. Ayris found some of their letters at Sandsprings.

My parent's marriage

In 1915 my parents were married in a double wedding in Melbourne. Rachel's sister Lilla was the other bride and she married Percival George Wickham Bayly. Another sister, Evie married Dr Eric Gutteridge. When the 1914-1918 war broke out, Evie was engaged to one of the Burt family of Brick House Station near Carnarvon. He was killed in the War and she inherited his share, which assisted her and her children considerably in later years. Back at Boodanoo, mother vigorously got to work making furniture because cash to purchase household items was short. She converted imported



Rachel and Russell on their wedding day



soft wood petrol cases, two by four gallon tins in each, and packing cases into wardrobes and tables. These were attractively decorated with chintzes and paint.

Nelly Smith was the cook from the outset until she retired circa 1943 and was not replaced, primarily for economic reasons. She was not the greatest cook but was reliable and protected me from my bigger sisters, Josceline, Ayris and Patricia. The isolation at the North End was not bad. There was no telephone between the two ends of the station until after 1929 and it was 40 kms by road to Mount Magnet and half of that was along the Great Northern Highway. There was of course no radio. Mother and father probably visited Magnet almost weekly for mail etc. They also played tennis there prior to constructing a court at home.



David under five with Rachel and Russell (and puppy) in front of the bathroom and rainwater tank at North Bodanoo. The tricycle preceded the pedal car.



Onwards from 1915

Mother apparently learned more about producing children. My sisters Josceline, Ayris, and Patricia preceded my arrival in 1926. I was born in Perth and Dr Roberta Jull was the doctor who assisted my mother.

Births and deaths were:

Josceline	16/09/ 1916	died 10/10/ 2004
Ayris	14/01/ 1919	died 30 /06/ 2003
Patricia	10/06/1920	died 08/08/2010
David	01/06/ 1926	
Father	1886	died 29/05/ 1931
Mother	20/01/ 1892	died 22/02/ 1972



David Lejeune and Otto

Russell badly wanted a son and as he drove home from Mt Magnet with the great news that a son (myself) had been born everyone at home could hear the horn blowing for the last mile.

In 1929 a three-bedroom house and shearing shed were built at the South End, 58 kms away and Jimmy James and his wife were installed as overseers. In a circuitous manner a telephone line connected the two ends, using the top wire of four wire fences. It was rea-



sonable when dry, but rain shorted it down the wet posts and that made it useless.

As they reached school age the girls all had a governess and when they were old enough they boarded at Perth College. I won't forget an occasion when mother and I were with the headmistress Sister Rosalie and I was allowed to have a swim in the school pool. The only male ever! The first governess was Betty Randal. The overseer of the North End, Jack Broadhurst, courted her. After visiting him in the evenings in his room at the shearers' quarters, they were married and left to go farming at Boyup Brook.

Jack Westwood worked for some time at Boodanoo, then left with an Aboriginal couple Larry and Emily to go prospecting. Ayris kept in touch with him. He was lost with his lugger off Darwin in Cyclone Tracey. At shearing time, help came in the persons of Eric and Reg Sewell (sons of our silent partner) and Eric Gurr. They used machines from the beginning. The shearing shed at North End was not big.

A rabbit proof fence was erected between the south coast and Broome. Louis Carron was employed as inspector of the Rabbit Proof Fence. In May 1930 Mr Carron was travelling with Snowy Rowles (an alias) when Carron disappeared. Rowles did not leave the state. It was some time before Carron was missed, as he came from New Zealand and had no relatives here. Eventually



The gate in the rabbit proof fence to the bore where Louis Carron's body was burned by Snowy Rowles



his family contacted Wally Hearn, the Magnet policeman. Wally interrupted his holiday to trace Carron's last known movements.

After some time they found a campsite near a bore just through the rabbit proof fence at Boodanoo South on our property. There had been a big campfire, which made him suspicious. Sifting the coals he found false teeth and bones, the teeth were identified by a New Zealand dentist as those of Carron.

Rowles was traced and found and it was said he had murdered Carron for a paltry 30 pounds. He was tried and hanged. It was thought he was responsible for murdering other persons who had been identified as missing.

Sunday Times (Perth, WA : 1902 - 1954), Sunday 14 February 1932, page 1

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Stationowner's Fate. CUE, Saturday.

Imagine what new light would have been thrown on the Murchison mystery drama had not Edward Russell Lejeune (45), part owner and manager of Boodanoo station, met a tragic death in May, 1931? Lejeune was struck by a bullet that travelled nearly a mile. It was fired by a roo hunter. "Accidental" was the coroner's verdict. The Boodanoo property is near the place where Carron's alleged bones were found.

There is a persistent rumour that Lejeune mentioned seeing "a peculiar thing in the bush and bones in an ash heap." This was before the police made the discovery. Officials will not confirm this, but it is likely Lejeune would have been an Important Crown witness.



The Homestead (North End)

The lake at North Boodanoo was situated around the windmill. Sometimes the lake would appear overnight with tadpoles. When the lake was drying up I would catch the frogs and put them in a water hole to save them. I spent hours and days catching frogs and tadpoles. The frogs appeared like magic immediately following a good rain.



The lake at North Boodanoo homestead (when there was decent rain). David paddling in a bath tub with makeshift paddles.



David and Patricia with pets at North Boodanoo homestead in their mother's beloved garden



Mother always insisted on an attractive garden and photos confirm this. There was a well, windmill and overhead tank for water pressure. Around the well was a clay pan. After reasonable rain the clay pan would be as much as 30 cms deep. We grew most of our vegies and had a beautiful navel orange tree and a number of shady trees, including pepper trees. About 1,800 metres from the house was a mill that watered several paddocks. There was a good water supply there for growing lucerne to feed the horses and cows. After the North End was sold (about 1945), marijuana was grown there and was spotted from the air. The owner of the marijuana plants spent time as a guest of the state.

In those days the toilets at stations were situated away from the houses and were of the long drop type. We all had chamber pots for use during the night. I recall the holes for the toilets being excavated with dynamite, windlass, bucket and shovel. When complete, a supply of newspaper as well as ash and phenyl, to alleviate the smell, was on hand.

A tennis court was built at Boodanoo and I remember trying to play there before we left the North End. One of my few memories of my father was watching him playing with Ian Thom, when the latter started visiting from Wydgee Station. In those early days mother went riding for pleasure, smartly dressed in jodhpurs and riding boots.



Tennis Court at Boodanoo North. A staple source of recreation on the station.



One summer holiday, when mother stayed with Aunt Lilla Bayly, I attended St Mary's Girls School in Collin St, West Perth. I attended the primary school and was probably placed in grade one. The primary school had a few boys in attendance, Peter Durack (future Attorney General in Malcolm Fraser's government) was in my class and his parents were friends of mother. They lived in Perth, not far from Aunt Lilla's. In later years, Pat and I played tennis on their in-grass court along with Elizabeth Wallace, Bunty Craig, and others.

At North Boodanoo a motorcycle was often used for regular mill rounds. Mill rounds were checks on the availability of water for stock. The regularity of the checks depended on weather conditions and other circumstances. Later, overseers included Edmund Stewart (he could walk on his hands), Evan Cresswell, and Alec Mc Pherson. I recall Alec gloating over photos of his young niece, Helen Lyons.

When I was about 21 she was my favourite girl. She graduated and got a job at Woomera in SA. She married there and had four children. Helen lived in Darwin during Cyclone Tracey. I knew her in Perth, after two husbands she died of cancer soon after I saw her in 2002.

Some years ago, friends visiting Magnet saw a photo of my father as one of the road board members and obtained a copy for my album. A matter of days before his demise I recall receiving a severe spanking. We had been gardening when he asked me for the trowel. I flung it and it hit him. He responded with a spanking.



David with old pedal car and new pedal car, 5th birthday



The death of my father



Pun (Graham Bean), David and Ayris

On the 29th May 1931, I recall my father telling my mother that we would need to take a trip to a certain windmill to drop Jack Westwood's camping gear. Would we go am or pm query? She chose pm. So we drove there with my sister Pat.

After checking water at two mills we saw a shooter skinning a roo. Two brothers from a poor farming family had been granted permission to shoot, provided they handed over any blue skins to make a rug. This did occur. Pat, father and I gathered around the shooter talking. Mother was in the car. There were several shots and then my father fell on his back with a bullet wound through the head. Death was immediate. The shooter was a considerable distance away. The chance of hitting someone he could not even see through the bush was one in billions. It could equally have struck any of us. I do not know whether or not a roo was hit with the same 303 bullet.

My mother heard the shot from the car and rushed over, distraught when she could see the group. Nothing could be done. The brother with us took off at a run to find the shooter. Eventually my mother drove us home where Nellie and Ayris were informed. Josceline was at Perth College. The shooters picked up the body in their truck. Someone must have driven to Magnet to inform the policeman, Wally Hearn. He came out and held an inquiry. The shooters left as soon as possible. Their father wrote a very nice letter of sympathy. The grave of E.R. Lejeune is in the Mt Magnet cemetery.

Three days later was my fifth birthday. A red pedal car had been



hidden. I was overwhelmed with joy at the possession and until I outgrew it I raced around the verandahs, a constant menace. Jimmy James, my godfather and the overseer of South Boodanoo, gave me a box of tools for my birthday and I still have the box today. Jimmy was a great mechanic and probably helped my father considerably in that area. Jimmy stayed on at the South End until the drought forced us to move south to the house where he and his wife had been living. He then moved to Yoweragabbie to work for Ian Thom.

In the same year that my father died the wife of a neighbour, Herman Bogle of Narndee was killed by lightning when driving sheep on horseback. Mother had the task of driving our chev ute into Magnet with her body. You can imagine how she felt and she always vividly remembered the tragedy. Herman was left with Stewart, Douglas, John and Mary to bring up. The last three children were younger than me. When Josceline was small, mother and father took her to England to meet the family. That was the only time father returned to his home country.



David and Robin May with dolly cart and Dolly the horse that they learnt to ride on. The dolly cart was not for any purpose other than having fun. The building at left is the shearers' kitchen and the dining room and Kurrajong tree. The 1926 Dodge is to the right with the homestead behind.



Eventually I grew too big for my pedal car and the men on the property made me a "depression car" with heavy jarrah frame and bicycle driving wheels connected to pedals. It had no tyres and they should have realised it would be a failure, but they had put a lot of work into it. I do not know when I started riding. I possessed a part Shetland pony, "Dolly" who was not lively and had a habit of "jibbing" (stopping dead and not moving despite kicking). This got me bad tempered. The only time I have ever fallen off a horse was off Dolly and it wasn't far from the ground. I had a headache and must have gone to sleep (perhaps bringing the cows in) and the next minute I found myself on the ground.

Mother takes over as Manager (1931-1948)

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After my father's death "Uncle" Vernon Sewell our partner made regular visits. He was a good businessman and accustomed to running a farm with sheep, cattle and crops. He would spend hours in the office with mother. He travelled up and down from Kojerina siding, near Sandsprings, or Northern Gully by train and amused himself on the train by doing crossword puzzles. He was well educated. We enjoyed his visits and his sense of humour. I remember him as a tall, dark man. He had plenty of jokes. He was the first person to tell me the joke, "why do white sheep eat more than black sheep?" At times his sons, Reg and Eric would come and help. Eventually Reg bought his own property, Kojerina. Reg was an outstanding batsman often making his name in country cricket. For a time he was a member of the board of the Reserve Bank. He used to fly to and fro to the eastern states.

At the time of my father's death we had an overseer and one or more other workmen because there were many



more sheep than in later years. Over the years the seasons became worse and with the Second World War there was usually only one man employed at a time. Eric Sewell came to help out a number of times, particularly after the move to the South End, often for long stretches of time. Paul Bird was a young Jackaroo who also remained for several years. He was manpowered out of the army at the same time as Eric Sewell. Eric was rejected from the army for “medical reasons” after being fully trained. He was diagnosed with a heart defect, which never as far as I know caused him any problem in later life. Vernon Humphries and Chum Milne were others who spent time working for my mother.

My mother didn't appear to have any problems managing the workforce (such as it was) and the men were there to do tasks that she didn't want Ayris or Pat to do: going down wells or working on windmill heads. The main tasks on the station were maintaining the water supply to the stock, maintaining vehicles and managing the sheep and some cattle. My mother and the cook, Nellie Smith watched the stores' supply. Stores were ordered through the mail run. The mail came once a week and the stores would come with the mailman. This period, still during the depression, was terribly hard on mother.



From 1939 to 1943 Patricia and Ayris did all the stock work and straggler shearing with machines.



She had always followed the station work whilst housekeeping and caring for us, but organising all the work activities and the small workforce was new. She did well to hide her problems. She had inherited some income from her mother but that was limited. Some had been invested in the new shearing shed at the South End and she never retrieved that. She kept family expenditure to a minimum, with education and clothing the main items. The station provided a roof, transport and food. Mother made a lot of our clothes if she had time. I remember her soaking and softening leather to nail onto the soles of our shoes. She also made soap.



David approximately 11 on a rocky outcrop near the South End homestead

We were forever grateful to my Californian Uncle Arnold and wife Gladys for parcels of clothes sent to us. Arnold was a School Headmaster. In later years I saw one of his schools outside Los Angeles with his grandson Gordon. My mother was a good correspondent and maintained family relationships with her own family and her husband's family, many of whom she met when she and Russell had visited England with eldest daughter Josceline. One of Russell's sisters, Marion, had settled in Canada. Mother maintained a letter writing relationship with her throughout her life though as far as I know they never met.



In about 1937 when I was 11 years of age we moved to the South End of the property because there was no stock food for the sheep (due to the lack of rain for years). My mother hoped that this would be a temporary move until the seasons improved. All of the stock moved to the South End too. Everything was moved except the buildings. The North End was a comfortable homestead with a lovely garden and a well that provided a satisfactory water supply. My mother must have been very sad to leave the homestead and her memories of the place and her husband. As things played out she was never able to return to the North End but managed to hide these feelings from the rest of the family. In those days at the North End we were only 25 miles from Mt Magnet and "society". She and Russell had played tennis and had a number of friends in town. At the South End she and the family were much more isolated, being about 70 miles from town. It was also wartime and petrol was rationed. We ran the car on the gas that was produced from charcoal we burnt on the property. We never had electricity at Boodanoo right up until we left the place. For lighting we used kerosene and petrol lamps and even candles at times.

Life before leaving for school

Before starting lessons my life was pretty boring. I craved the ocean or any water in summer. I had learned to swim breast-stroke at Rottnest Island when I was six, during the summer holidays. I imagined I could strike water if I dug a deep enough hole that rain would fill it up; hence, I excavated a swimming hole about 3 metres square, but no water. As a small boy I did a lot of running in bare feet; I liked it and it probably served me well in later years. I was extremely small compared with children of a similar age to me. The girls being so much older were not interested in entertaining me or training me. If I annoyed them and could not escape I would run to Nelly the cook who would protect me. I remember once being tied up by them and left in the cow yard.





From left to right: Brian Bayly, friend of Pat's, Pat, Ayris, Josceline. Front: David and Pun

On rare occasions I would see Lyle Broad, who was older than me, if we visited her at Kirkalocka or if she visited us. Bob Patterson was a good friend on Winingoo, the other side of Magnet. He stayed with us once and I recall showing him a secret camp I had made away from the house. My plan was to run away and live there. I don't know whether the family, having found my camp, realised I was not a very happy chappy. At various times Aunts Lilla and Evie visited us. I recall the last camel team in the district coming to take our wool in about 1935. Some of my sisters had a ride on the camels.

When Ayris was 15, Aunt Amy took her by ship to England. She enjoyed that immensely and flirted with a Young Australia League Scottish lad. She played a lot of deck tennis with a quoit. After Ayris returned from her trip she left school and Pat started at Perth College about that time. I do not recall playing tennis at North End but later at South End when I was older we played a lot when there were four players. I learnt the tricks of the game and as the Official Sports Secretary at the Australian Forestry School I



organised tennis at our school camps. Later when I did Pacific cruises I won many useful prizes. I only recall being beaten once in singles. I still have a trophy, Shipboard Tournament Grand Supremo TSS Fairstar.

When the girls were all at home there were many happy times, particularly when friends such as Carol Harper, Patience Warburton and Lizaby Forest came for holidays. We played gramophone records of the popular songs and Ayris, Pat and I all played mouth organs. I recall placing a six-foot bungarra beside the bed while Patience slept. She was a city girl, so when she saw it the roof nearly fell in. I also played a nasty trick on poor cousin Brian Bayly, who was about 5 years older than me. He had arrived very late and tired. When he settled into his bed, the double gees I had planted under the sheet made themselves felt. In later years Brian and I stole some bottles of beer from North Boodanoo, but we didn't like the taste. We tried to feed it to a cow but she didn't want it either. In later life Brian was flying for MMA when a wing fell off his aircraft and everyone including Brian was killed. He was one of my favourite cousins.

School for David

At Boodanoo my mother insisted on everyone dressing for dinner. A bath came first and if water was short it was shared. Chip heaters were used. Sometimes even long frocks were worn if they were owned. One day the family was driving to Wogarno, where Cath Grant was to have meringues and cream for afternoon tea (especially for me). Paul Bird was driving and his inexperience allowed him to hopelessly bog the car 16km out from home and about half the way there. It was a long walk home and we had a sheep dog that mistook the stockinged leg of Patience Warburton for a tree trunk. Great hilarity! I started presumably at age 6 or 7 with Ullilee Ellershaw as my governess. I remember well how she helped mother by having me stay with her family in Peppermint Grove during the summer holidays. I particularly



enjoyed the ducks and chooks, but to keep me occupied she devised an occupation for me: I would take a clock with me and sit in turn at every outside doorstep of the house. They were a warm and kind family. One of the boys, Elden was killed in World War II but the other was still playing tennis at Peppermint Grove Tennis Club at the age of 80, when I left Perth. From her trip to England Ayris had brought back a good wooden bow with metal tipped arrows. It could be dangerous and I was fortunate I did not kill someone.

When Josceline left Perth College she took me over and we started correspondence. She used to roar at me unkindly when I made mistakes. I remember Jos being very intelligent but not interested in station work, horses etc like Ayris and Pat were. She actually passed her Junior Certificate. I suppose I was a happier chappy at that time because I was kept busy.

Woodbridge House School

In 1936 (aged 9) I was sent as a boarder to Woodbridge House School, right beside the Swan River at East Guildford. For my first year sister Pat was still at Perth College and we travelled together on the train to and from Perth. It took 24 hours to Magnet and we could not afford sleepers. Woodbridge had originally been built as a home for the Harper family. The Head Master was Cecil Priestley, who was a good teacher and a fine person. The maximum number of pupils was about 30 with a high per-



Woodbridge House present day



centage of boarders. The classes were smaller than in state schools today. Half a dozen wasn't an unusual number for a class.

It was a large house and some large rooms served as dormitories and there was space for about 10 beds on a verandah. There was a palm tree just beside the verandah and possums used to climb up onto the verandah and would scuttle up and down and over the beds during the night. Just before we went to sleep, Priestly would come around and give us each a biscuit. Great for cleaning your teeth! For the first Easter holidays I stayed with the Edgars at Gin Gin. They were the parents of a friend Ron, who was at school with me. Ron's father had constructed a good dinghy from steel, which we took to the beach at the mouth of the Moore River. Before catching fish we left the boat on the shore and had breakfast. When we returned, the tide had risen and the boat was 30 metres out to sea. As no one offered to swim out and retrieve it, sinking by gunfire was necessary to remove the hazard. What a waste! Ron had made himself a crystal radio and he helped me make one. You could lie in bed and listen to the music.

Pun (A.G.S. Bean) was in my class. He invited me to his home in Fremantle for a weekend. His father was the prison Doctor and



David and Pun on bike with Otto



he had his own practice. The gaol provided a large house, garden and prisoner gardeners. Mrs Bean was very musical, playing the piano and all the children learnt the piano. Pun at one stage was going to the Conservatory of Music. They had a grand piano and Pun played the cello. They were very kind and considerate people, so I always felt at home there. From the age of 9 (for the next four years) I often spent weekends at their home, Pun and Gary being weekly boarders.



David in Woodbridge school uniform with mother Rachel. David would arrive home for school holidays on the train "the Wiluna Express". He would get off at Yarragabbie or Mt Magnet (usually Mt Magnet).

Transport to the Beans was easy because we could catch the train from East Guildford to Fremantle Station and walk the remaining distance to Woodbridge or their home. Gary was two years older than me and Meryl and Pem were younger. They had their own grass tennis court and we made great use of it. My friendship with the Bean family grew and has lasted throughout the years. Pun's parents were very kind and great fun. We boys rode bikes to South Beach and enjoyed going to the wharf and seeing all the ships. The Doc sometimes joined in the tennis.

Woodbridge was a happy school and I was very satisfied there amongst all those friends. We could only swim when supervised but did that often in a nice clean river. I was sport mad, as were many others. Outside school hours we played cricket or kicked a footy and



when there was time we played tennis on our own court. Other schools visited us to play cricket or football, but the only time we played away was against Guildford Prep and that was just over the fence. If you made 25 runs or took 5 wickets twice you received your Colours and I think that went on your blazer. Mr Priestley's daughters Cecily and Helen were at Perth College and we played several matches against the A hockey team. We were faster and much rougher and we played on their ground and had afternoon tea, which was much appreciated.

On one school holiday Pat's friend Joy Monk, who came from Singapore was to come with us on the train. However, some boys at my school had mumps so her trip was cancelled causing great disappointment. The joke was that I developed mumps at Boodanoo and was late returning to school.



David with Jock and Otto in a buggy made from petrol cases from imported timber. This was 1935 and David would have been 9 years old. Most of the cupboards were made from petrol cases. Jock was David's sister Josceline's dog. He was a Cairn terrier. Otto was David's dog and a cocker spaniel.

The move to Boodanoo South

After the shift to Boodanoo South there was a 3-hour car trip of 100kms to the railway. The train went all the way to Wiluna but the line was later closed from Mullewa in about 1975. Gold production had reduced to a trickle along with the population in many towns.

John Stokes, in my class, became a good friend and I was often a guest at his Darlington home and he came to Boodanoo for the August holidays in 1936. In the summer of 1936 the Australian test team played in Perth versus WA, while on its way to England. The WA fast Bowler, Ron Halcomb was playing against the Don in this match. Ron was a friend of John's father. We went to the match and at lunchtime John and I were taken down to the change rooms and Bradman, our idol, came out and shook hands with us and signed autographs. That night at the Stoke's house we were flooded with tears because John had lost the autograph. Ron had to get another on Monday. My autograph disappeared when Boodanoo was sold, probably in an old diary that was thrown out! Despite the loss of the autograph I had the amazing experience of seeing Don Bradman hit a six into the stand and make a century and all probably before lunch!

At Woodbridge there was normally one other teacher besides Priestly, the first was Dennis Carrol who had played hockey in India and he could demonstrate his style to us. Then there was Geoff Russell-Smith who delighted in using the cane or the sharp edge of a steel ruler, which made bruises on the butt. When Charlton was having a shower matron pointed out to him that he had a dirty mark on his butt. We all roared with laughter, it wouldn't wash off because it was one of the bruises made by Geoff. He belted us for all sorts of reasons. There were many misdemeanours for which you could be belted. Luckily I was not regularly picked on for caning.



For a time we had Buzz Kennedy, who was at Guildford Grammar School but lived at Woodbridge where Priestly was his guardian. His father had managed a sheep station out of Leonora (a bit of a boozier) and he was orphaned at an early age and Priestly kindly offered to educate him at no cost. After World War 2 he wrote an interesting book, 'It was Bloody Wonderful.' For a time he was Press Secretary to Prime Minister Bob Menzies. He liked booze just like his father and according to my cousin Elisabeth Bayly he drank himself to death.

We had boxing lessons from Major Saunders. I never became a proficient boxer; despite many fights at school particularly one almost daily with Bob Adamson. Bob came from Yakkabindy Station out of Wiluna. Eventually Western Mining bought Yakkabindy because of their interest in the mineral value there. I did well at sport, winning the Tennis Cup in 1939 and various sprint events and cricket fielding. I won the mile (around streets and paddocks) the three years I competed, but I didn't receive a prize for that achievement.



Aunt Lilla Bayly, David and Ayris & dogs at the creek
when the rains came



I had some fun on long train trips to Mt Magnet. I had a favourite girl, Mary Maund whose father owned a cool drink plant in Wiluna. On one trip Gary Bean went to Tallerang Station with Tony Elliott. The latter was very smart (now a professor) and together they made bombs in glass jars. These exploded when thrown from the train. The conductor did not approve. Pun came to Boodanoo in 1937 and again on later trips.

There was drought in the period between 1936-1941. The North End was mainly mulga country with good winter rains, necessary for growth of annual stock feed and wonderful wildflowers. The South End was largely saltbush, which resists drought remarkably well. A painful decision was made to dispense with my Godfather Jimmy James and his wife and move into the three-bedroom house. It had very little garden and a poor water supply. It must have been a painful decision for my mother to leave her friends, memories and a nice developed homestead closer to civilization. I presume she hoped we could return if the seasons improved and for a time we tried to save the trees. The sheep and cattle would have been driven the 58 kms. I was at school when the move occurred and it was necessary to build an extra room for me.

In succession I had two cocker spaniels Otto and Benito (Benny). I was very fond of them and taught them to sit on the pillion of my bike. While I was at school, Otto was killed when he jumped from a moving trailer. Benny possibly lasted until we sold. The girls always trained and used sheep dogs. We had roo dogs for a while and they were successful. It was considered a waste to use sheep meat for dogs.

I remember receiving a letter from my mother when I was at boarding school, at Woodbridge in Guildford, saying that my beloved Otto had been killed jumping out of a trailer. Otto was also the name of the gardener at Wydgee (old Dr Thom's property). Otto used to trick Dr Thom (when the Lejeunes were visiting) by creeping around through the creek to the Lejeunes' car to put fresh vegetables from their large garden into the car. Benny (the dog), who was named after Benito Mussolini the Italian Dictator, followed Otto.



Even before World War II and petrol rationing, we made few trips away. Mother and I drove to Yuthapina Station near Meekatharra and stayed with her younger brother Reg and wife Mary (their daughter Rachel married Richard Oxenburgh and she later lived next door to mother in Crawley). Rachel's brother Jos eventually retired to a property near New Norcia.

While we were at Yuthapina Station we visited Hector Brooks at Menara, near Peak Hill. They had the first refrigerator I had seen—an Icy Ball—a kerosene burner powered it. It was some years later that we obtained one. My wife Meg and I visited the Brooks out of Adelaide on our honeymoon. Mother and I, and possibly one or more sisters, went to Cue only 95 kms north of Magnet. I think we stayed with the Morrissey's at Nallan Station and attended the annual Mileura Races. There was a circus in Cue and I well remember playing slot machines for the first time. While at Boodanoo we spent at least 2 summer holidays at Rottnest Island sharing cottages with friends such as the Harpers. Family friends always visited while we were there. Pun and Gary Bean and school friends of my sisters often came over to visit. It was all great fun. Some kind friend taught me to swim breaststroke in the basin at Rottnest. I used to chase and catch quokkas and remember being severely reprimanded by my sister Jos for tying one up. I recall going fishing in a dinghy with George Sharp of Woolleen Station. (While I was away at school the family drove to Woolleen Station to bring back a bull.)



Family and friends at Rottnest Island

Lighting was always by kerosene lamps at Boodanoo. The lamps were on pedestals for rooms and the hurricane lamps were kept outside. The method of keeping food cool was by means of a 'Coolgardie Safe'



placed in a breezeway. The safe needed to be large, with all of the sides charcoal and 3 inches thick and enclosed in chicken wire. A reservoir above had rags dripping water through the charcoal. It was not until 1940 that we acquired a fridge. The fridge was not good enough to make ice cream and I don't think it replaced the big canvas waterbag that hung in the breezeway.

From the South End to Yoweragabbie or Magnet it was 100 kms and we allowed three hours travel to catch trains. On one occasion Pun and I tried to cause a puncture in order to miss the train. We placed a series of nails upended on the road. They didn't work but we missed it anyway because mother had looked at the wrong day in the train timetable. So it was back home for three days. There was a 10 kms strip of Spinifex right across the property midway between the two ends. In later years we went to Magnet through Meeline (formerly Bulgabardoo) with fewer gates and better roads. Spike Thomas had a mail run around the stations. Mail came fortnightly and urgent mail was dealt with quickly.

We needed to devise schemes to make pocket money. Ayris and Pat collected motherless or sick lambs and reared them in a yard by the house. Sometimes the lambs required bottle-feeding. The value of the lambs' wool was theirs but when fully grown they returned to the flock. There could be as many as 20 at a time being hand fed.

On one occasion I used a box trap with string between the house and the lamb's yard to trap cockatoos. The cockatoos were caged and taken to Perth for sale when we travelled there for the summer holidays. I remember one escaping and flying off down Bagot Road, in Subiaco. My sisters also shot kangaroos when they were on mill rounds. Or like me, waited at night by the water. The skins were pegged out in the shearing shed and sold.

During the holidays I often took a rifle and a powerful torch to the mill 800 metres away. On one occasion I ran out of ammunition but had Benny (the dog) with me. I sent him after the roo through several fences until it was cornered. I approached this big creature with the rifle butt and the roo succeeded in cutting my



shoulder slightly with a hind leg kick. Perhaps I was lucky not to be disembowelled. Eventually, Benny and I won the encounter.

A certain amount of camping was required, e.g. at Reserve Block (a paddock) approximately 16 x 8 kilometres, when erecting a dividing fence across the block. I also recall driving sheep to rail for agistment. We went via North End and put them in bush yards overnight. The trek exceeded 100 kilometres.

Before we left North End, Ian Thom had visited us a few times with his eye on Jos. In about 1935 Christmas he presented us with an Airzone cabinet battery operated radio. It was the first we had possessed and I believe it was still in use when the property was sold. It was some time before we heard it working. Edgar Grant, smart guy, neighbour at Wogarno succeeded in blowing all the valves when wiring it to the batteries. Ian did not show anger but must have felt it. Ian was a shy chap and rather than ask for an ashtray he would place the ash from his cigarettes in his trouser turn-ups. That radio was the only communication we had with the outside world. At that stage the only telephone communication we had was between the North and South End, which was run along the top wire of fences. If it rained we had no telephone.



Ayris and Patricia shearing the sheep.



Josceline's wedding and Wydgee

Josceline and Ian Thom's wedding was in 1937 and the reception was on a verandah of the Esplanade Hotel in Perth. I have no idea how my mother afforded this, but the book 'Drawn to Mt Magnet' described Jos as outstandingly dressed and deported. John Stokes accompanied me and it was a most happy event. All of my aunts, including Evie from Melbourne, were present. Ian's younger brother Jimmy, a doctor, had come from Scotland for the event and we all liked him very much. Jimmy was killed in the 1944 Normandy landings.

Ian's father, Dr Thom, had taken up Wydgee, 170,261 hectares, when he was medical officer for the district based at the Magnet Hospital. The Wydgee house had been well built in the early days, using mud bat coated with cement. There were large rooms and plenty of veranda space. From the South End we reached Wydgee by travelling through the Bogle's Narndee, a distance of about 70 kms. Ian's father was a difficult and tactless person. He developed a feud with Herman Bogle and there were times when the boundary gate between the properties was locked (by someone).

By the time Ian and Jos was married I think he were the manager. His mother came out from Scotland for a short stay and I remember they bought a new Hupmobile car to transport her.



That car proved a lifeline later when Bill Kennedy had disabled our car while under the influence. He had been left in charge when the family went to Perth.



The earth-return telephone was run between South End and Wydgee via Nandee. Later on, Wydgee had a line to Magnet—possibly a government line due to the homestead being on the Great Northern Highway. Through this line it was possible to send and receive telegrams via the post office. This meant that for the first time communication with the South End via Magnet



Rachel and baby Josceline

to Perth was possible—just! We valued this greatly. At one time Bogle refused to connect us through. It was mother's anger and personality that won him over. She needed to remind him of the dreadful journey that she had made with the body of his wife to Magnet.

After Dr Thom died, relations with the Bogles improved. Bogle married the governess and I remember being invited there for a weekend after I had learnt to drive the Chev and start it when it stopped. The family was in Perth at the time. His sons Doug and John were at Guildford with me, but several years younger. The eldest, Stuart, was in the RAAF and lost over Germany.

We had constructed a tennis court soon after we moved to South End. We carted anthills with Biddy (station horse) and the spring cart, which eventually had rubber tyres. Broken up, rolled, watered, and dragged with railway line a beautiful surface was created. Thereafter we had tennis parties but these were restricted during WW II. Wydgee also had a court so whenever we visited we all played.





Carting water



Rachel, Aint Lilla, David, dogs and creek flowing

In due course Ian bought Yoweragabbie Station and installed Jimmy James there. It was there, ill in bed, that I last saw him. Jimmy was my godfather and had given me for my 5th birthday a good set of adult carpentry tools. Many of them I still possess in the original softwood box. They were a wonderful present for a young chap with little to occupy his time.



Ian was extremely active at both work and play. He made good money with shares in Hill 50 Mine and playing poker. Throughout his life everything seemed to turn to gold. Moola Bulla Station at Halls Creek was his greatest success and it eventually left the family very well off.

Returning to Boodanoo

I recall the first dance I attended with the family in the Magnet Hall. I probably could not dance at all. We arrived home at sunrise and played tennis before breakfast. Activity was restricted because of petrol rationing. Before fuel was supplied in 44 gallon drums, it came in 2 x 4 gallon rectangular tins in good quality imported pine boxes. These boxes were used to make all our bedroom cupboards and were attractively decorated with curtains. When I left Banjup (Perth) in 2000 I still possessed one, albeit termite affected. We had a gas producer on our vehicle during the war and burnt our own charcoal. The Morrisseys from Meeline 33 kilometres away were good friends and they visited. I also remember Rice Gemmell, he was a miner near Magnet and had been a WA singles tennis champ. He was noted for the amount of spin he put on the ball.

At the homestead the soil was shallow over clay hardpan, making any gardening very difficult. We had no fruit trees and not many trees of other sorts, but mother insisted on a garden. We slaves had to cart the water with Biddy and the cart from a tank near the shearing shed. It was a slow and boring job but I enjoyed getting into the tank. We had a number of young men come and work for us. Paul Bird, ex Hale school, was employed for about 5 years –he and Ayris were very close. I recall mother catching them cuddling in the AA, combing wool on one occasion. Other men employed included Bill Kennedy (brother of Buzz), Chum Milne and Ron Inglis.



In my later years I recall camping with Ron as we installed a fence across reserve block 16 x 8 kms. We also drove sheep to rail at Yoweragabbie 100kms –a painful journey. Over night the animals were put into bush yards. I will never forget having crib under a mulga reading the paper wrapping. The paper described how Jimmy Mazza and his brothers had found a new mine behind the Gwalia Hotel. This was his first fortune. He occupied the room below me at St. George's College and we were good friends until his death in 2000. He was also my solicitor.

I learned a dreadful lesson in safety when Ron Inglis and I were fixing the windmill pump at the house. He was at the bottom of the 100ft well on the windlass seat, when I dropped a spanner from up the mill. It hit the water just missing him and he didn't even notice. We were the only people on the property.

Medical emergencies on the station

While I was at St. George's College I recall mother having to come to Perth for an operation, possibly gallstones. I would ride a bike through Kings Park to visit her. Looking back over all the years at Boodanoo, I cannot recall any occasion when any of the family or the staff sought medical attention; however, boils were fairly common due to the limited diet range. I was reminded of this when I was often working alone in the Forest Department away from civilization and out of communication. Generally I used an axe blazing trees on the route for new roads. I think I became more careful and concentrated better under those conditions. In the 39 years in the department I never had an accident that required treatment.

One year at Boodanoo they were so poor that they could not kill any sheep. They lived on tinned meat, roo and poultry. I loved it when good rare rains came; a claypan about 1km across in Reserve block filled with water and there were plenty of ducks nesting in ti-trees on the banks. It was about eight kms from the



house. I made a canoe from a sheet of flat iron and it worked well as a boat, but was not a good platform for shooting ducks with a .22 rifle. When desperate for meat, Ayris would carry the rifle on horseback. When she shot roos she would hang the hind legs from the saddle to the annoyance of the horse.

The girls mainly or the men would kill the sheep (called killers) kept for the house, skin them and cut up the carcass next morning. They couldn't be bothered teaching me and I think I only did the whole job once. When I was at home my standard tasks were cutting firewood, carting water for the garden, and catching poultry and then killing and dressing it. Mother did not like me being idle.

From 1939

In 1940 I started as a boarder at Guildford Grammar, mainly because cousins Colin and Brian Bayly had been there. From 1939 – 1945 we were at war and life was even more difficult. Paul Bird and Eric Sewell enlisted in the army early in the war but Eric was later rejected due to some apparent heart defect, which never affected him later. Paul was manpowered out to work on the family orchard.



Ayris and Eric on the first day of their Honeymoon, outside Aunt Lilla's house in Subiaco, Perth

In 1943 Eric and Ayris were married and made their home at Sandsprings near Geraldton. Vernon Sewell and his wife moved



into Geraldton. Hence mother lost one of her major hands and after Nellie retired in about 1942 mother was also the chief cook. From the time Ayris was married, Uncle Vernon agreed to sister Pat receiving a salary. This was obviously long over due after years of unpaid work. Ayris having married by then had..... never received any compensation for her unpaid work.

Life at Guildford Grammar School from 1940

I was obviously a boarder. The fact that I did not know any boys did not matter. I started in Year 9 Lower 4 A or Sub Junior. At the end of first term I was 20th in a class of 22 but then got the work ethic and by year's end was tenth. We had one lesson per week in scripture from the head Canon Freeth. I took no interest and studied other things. On my end of term report he commented, "apparently lacks religious background". That was not the truth and mother felt insulted. She set the example by praying nightly; however, I doubt whether she had much faith by the end of her life. Something that had a profound effect on my religious beliefs was a prayer offered by Canon Freeth in Chapel every morning before we had sport against other teams; the prayer went, 'we pray that the Lord will look down with his

favour on all those contending in the name of this school today'. I felt the poor Lord would be totally confused if all teams made the same request.



Fairbridge, Guildford Grammar School (GGS), 1942

I really enjoyed all the sport



including tennis, which at that time was not played between the schools. The Swan River was about 800metres away and we could only swim on a supervised basis. I was never good at Maths but Digger Collison (maths teacher) gave me some free tutorials, for which I was most grateful.

At GGS we had plenty of weekends when we could stay with relations and friends. Although the Bean boys had gone to Scotch College it didn't affect my visits to Fremantle. I remember spending many weekends at Aunt Lilla Bayly's and Aunt Amy Percy's at 82 Bagot Road Subiaco and 169 Thomas Street Subiaco respectively. These were a break, but I don't recall having much entertainment.

I was not interested in Chemistry or Physics and I knew I did not have to take them for the Junior exam the following year. What a fool I was and lived to regret it. In the Junior I passed Geography, Latin, French, English, History, and Maths A and B. I was 15 that year and won the under-15 breaststroke. Tony Ewing and I competed in the 880 yards in the interschool sports; I'm fairly sure I was 2nd in the class. I would never beat Johnny Saunders, who later gained a degree in Engineering and then successfully ran a menswear shop.

Harvey Barnett was a beautiful singer and pianist. I never had time to listen but Erik Kongsted and others used to hear him play 'Boogie Boogie' on the chapel organ. He was supposed to become a priest but ended up as Director of ASIO and died some years ago. I did well at age 15 in the second 11 cricket and second 18 football teams. Having passed the Junior easily, I was hell bent on trying to pass the Leaving in one year. I studied early and late and on weekends, which made me a bit of a loner because there was little time left to interact with others.

In 1942, I had just played my first and only cricket match in the first 11 at the WACA when the whole school was taken over as a military hospital. I never heard what use was made of it. Erik Kongsted was not good at most sports but had been selected for the honour of Stroke of the first rowing 8 about to be competed.



Unfortunately we moved to Fairbridge Farm School. Many day-boys and some boarders left.

This ended sporting achievements for me. I was able to have on my honour blazer pocket the word swimming in gold, I was in the Open Breast stroke when I was 15. I also had white for..... athletics in 1941, 2nd XV111, and 2nd X1. I would have liked to have them all in gold for open events, but I left school too soon.

Fairbridge Farm School

Fairbridge Farm School was situated in the hills behind North Dandalup, about 40 miles south of Perth. The school was set up by an Englishman as a means to give English orphans a chance in life. It consisted of about 8 large houses for children and their minders plus a Head's house and cooking/dining area. The children were educated and learned farm work and had a playing field. Due to the war there were few in residence and none coming. We took over virtually the whole place. We had no tennis or



David far left. First 18 Guildford Grammar



cricket but footy training and athletics continued.

As I recall there were no laboratory facilities but that did not prevent Alan Hodge from gaining a 'Science Exhibition' without a real Science master. Some of the best teachers left. The only senior Maths and Science teacher was Pug Milne, who would have made good canon fodder. He didn't teach - he told the boys to follow the books and was not pleasant company. One disappointment for me was to be without a good French teacher; however, Uck Gladstones did his best, despite his previous experience at lower levels.

On weekends we were free to go on long bike rides and even picnic in the hills. I didn't go away much and concentrated on cramming to pass Leaving in one year and I'm glad I did. When it was time to apply to sit the Leaving exams, Harvey Barnett and I were in Year 11 when we decided to enter Geography. The subject had never been taught past Junior Level. We were fortunate that a master had done it in his day and still had his practical book and some texts. With his help we did a plain table survey of the settlement and that was sufficient. I will never forget being at Boodanoo for Christmas holidays when a telegram arrived by phone from Aunt Lilla congratulating me on passing all five subjects- English, French, Latin, History and Geography. I was determined not to return to GGS the following year as I didn't like Freeth and Pug Milne and had been castigated for leading several others into objecting to play a First 18 football match in Perth. We would have returned with little sleep the day before the Leaving Test Exams. Pug was footy coach and there was no negotiation. That was really badly handled by Freeth and Pug and a lack of tact by us. So good bye GGS on a sour note.

Time of Reckoning

This applied to the summer of 1942-43. I had no desire to lead



my future life on a sheep station but had nothing else particular in mind. Mother was quite prepared to send me to university and could probably get financial assistance from the government. There was not the range of vocations and courses 60 years ago. I could have got into Law, but favoured an outdoor life without the social isolation of a station.

An old friend of mother's Mrs Barrett had a son Phil, a professional forester at Kalgoorlie. What she had heard of the life appealed to me. My knowledge of trees and Botany was nil. I should have spoken to a forester in Perth before making a firm decision but remained ignorant until I was at the university and had a few weeks work experience at Dwell-ingup. I distinguished myself there. I was in a gang chopping up the bark of grass trees (in the past referred to as blackboys) and bagging it. The overseer and I were a team and we beat all the others. I had plenty of experience with an axe. The overseer remembered this until his retirement speech as a senior field officer. I discovered that I would require science subjects and Maths for Leaving. To achieve them I could go to Perth Technical College as a number of others were intending to complete their Leaving.

Life while at Perth Technical College

After staying a few weeks with Aunt Amy in Malcolm St, Erik Kongsted and I managed to take a room at Mrs. Sarrell's boarding house at 15 Ord St, West Perth. The boarding house was a large home with up to half a dozen or more boarders, all older than us. It was walking distance from the technical school in St Georges Tce or an easy bike ride.

In our classes at tech there were a number of girls whom we got to know well such as Anne Troupe, Anne (Bunty) Craig (later Killen), Marge Metcalf (later of Battye Library), Shirley Harold and Pat Skevington. Pat became a good amateur actress and married John Roe (formerly of Guildford Grammar School) who



drank himself to death. Coming from GGS we were rarely casually dressed in town. Erik was quite a dandy. His family had lived in Cheribon in Java where his father was a doctor. They were all interned by the Japs. Erik's father, mother and brother-in-law all died. Erik was supported by the Dutch government in exile in Australia and had a guardian Dr. Hark who lived at Darlington. We knew Dr Hark's son Larry and daughter Sue. Larry became one of the leading golfers in WA.

We were friendly with Peter Turner, who was our age and had been in School House with us at GGS. His mother, separated from her husband, lived in the Noah's Ark House (now gone) on Mounts Bay Rd near Jacobs Ladder. Mrs Turner needed help to control the large front garden and former fish pond. She very generously offered to give us evening meals on weekends in return for our labours in the garden, generally one weekend day. We had a reasonably active social life because Peter had many contacts in Perth.

In those days I took out Dawn Carew-Reid whose brother had been at GGS. Geraldine Brownell was another and they both lived in Lawson Flats, on Riverside Drive. Geraldine's father Air Commodore Brownell was AOC Western Area. I sometimes played tennis at Dr. Wallace's home in Leake St Peppermint Grove. At tennis I met Gill Sandover and took her out once. At some stage I stayed for a time in the McRae's house (rented by Aunt Lilla) next to the Sandovers. I had been at school



Rachel Lejeune and her sister Lilla Bayly

with Bill and Robin Sandover. Much later Margaret McRae was a steady girlfriend. I also played tennis at parties held by Peter Durack's kindly parents. Bunty and Elizabeth Wallace also played there.

I managed to go to a number of great occasions such as the Karinyup Golf Club Ball and WA Hunt Club Ball. I can't remember who took me, but Bunty would have been one. Maybe I was her favourite. We lads were very keen on listening to music which included the radio or records of the big bands of the 1940's, with performers such as Tommy Dorsey, Glen Miller and Artie Shaw. At Sarrell's someone must have given us a radio, so that relieved the monotony of study.

I started doing Maths A at tech but gave it away and only did Physics, Chemistry and Applied Maths. Turner had a tutor 'Pills' Polard a master at Perth Modern School. I soon joined him for Maths A and Chemistry. He was excellent and had a mass of Leaving practice questions answered so that learners, like myself, could follow and improve. Phil Arnold, who secured an Exhibition from 'Mod' (Perth Modern School), recently told me that none of 'Pills' students ever failed. He was also quite an entertaining character.

I cannot remember what pocket money I received, but I had enough to start smoking roll-your-owns in a limited way. I made a filter using cottonwool, glass tubing and a test tube from a tech school laboratory. It was about 8 inches long and was most effective in stopping the tar coming through. People suggested that my mother had told me to keep away from cigarettes. Of course Australia was inundated with American servicemen and we liked their cigarettes. These service men were mainly from submarines, Fremantle being a base. The girls we took out were generally too young for them.

Erik and I did our own washing in Sarrells' laundry. Most clothes were boiled in a copper fuelled by a wood fire. I cannot remember when I first saw a washing machine. Like



real pansies we starched our detached collars and did our own ironing. I well recall Aunt Lilla Bayly visiting someone at Sarrell's and we talked about the war. She had just received a telegram stating that her son Colin was missing in action. She knew he had been sent to defend Greece and read a letter from him that described when they had been pounded by German artillery in Northern Greece.

Sometime later it transpired that with the remainder of Australian troops he had reached Crete. After hiding with others in the mountains he had escaped in a submarine to North Africa and was then sent back to Australia. Colin finally fought in the islands north of Australia and won the MC as a Major. His brother Brian Bayly after flying training here had operated throughout the war as a bomber pilot in the Middle East. Many of his school mates were lost there. He was severely reprimanded for flying out searching for one of his group. As a result he failed to receive a medal with the remainder of the pilots. As a Viscount pilot in WA, he was later killed with all passengers when a wing fell off in 1968, during their approach to Port Hedland Airport.

As young students in Perth we did not spend much. I was very conscious of being supported by a mother with very little private income. Members of the family existed on the bare private necessities and an annual holiday. The latter was often at the home of a relation, mainly Aunt Lilla's. The family received nothing from the station except a roof, three meals and transport.

Exercise

Erik and I used springs to help our physical development. I went running along the paths in Kings Park. My cousins the Cockshotts (nee Davis) lived in Bedford Avenue, in West Perth near Aunt Lilla. Frank Cockshott introduced me to the Kings Park



Tennis Club, which I joined as a junior. I played with him and sometimes others on week day afternoons. I remember Lang Hancock playing in long whites.

Leaving Exams

Poor Erik passed 4 subjects but not English, so he could not matriculate or secure a Leaving Certificate. When he arrived in Australia three years previously he could not speak any English. I passed Maths A, Chemistry and Physics but failed Applied Maths – in all I had 8 subjects, which was probably the reason I was accepted for the Science faculty. My marks in these subjects would have been very borderline but I never heard of anyone passing 8 subjects. Some others who passed did not get into the limited quota.

Vacation Work with Cooperative Bulk Handling (CBH)

In the summer vacation we obtained work with CBH (Cooperative Bulk Handling), like many others in similar circumstances. Erik was sent to Carnamah as a bin attendant and worked really hard most of the time. I had an easy job as a weighbridge officer. CBH had things well organized. Erik resided in a hotel and I boarded at a farm near Winchester Siding nearly 20 kilometres away. I had my bike to get to and from work. One of the family had a motor cycle and sidecar, in which I sometimes rode.

Erik Gur, who had shorn at Boodanoo, gave me a lift to Geraldton. I was met by Ayris and spent the Christmas holidays at Sandsprings. When I returned I found the sidecar had been wrecked in a collision. I can imagine that I could have very likely been a passenger in that side car. At my office I studied Botany in my spare time. Shirley Harold, on whom I was keen, had lent



me a book on Botany. When wheat carting was finished I en-trained to Boodanoo.

St George's Col- lege 1944-45

I was awarded government financial assistance, which took me off mother's hands at last. She must have been most relieved. This enabled me to board at St George's College and this was the most pleasant phase of my student life to that time. There were not many restrictions on one's activities and the warden Josh Reynolds was a very tolerant and understanding fellow. Most students were in pairs with two rooms.



David Lejeune

My room mate was Norm Thurston, a country lad who had an Exhibition (scholarship) from Wesley. He was in engineering, one year ahead of me. He was quiet, modest and possessed terrific tenacity. Being brilliant, he was a great help to me in Chemistry and Physics. When we needed a break we played a lot of table tennis and grass court tennis. The food was good, our washing was done for us and we had lots of fun. Water bombing from upper floors on to targets below was a common sport if you had a temporary enemy.

Crawley Bay was a Catalina Flying Boat Base of great importance. This was just below us in the Swan River. At all hours of day or night we heard them warming up, but knew nothing of their activities. These planes had a terrific range and constituted the main link for mail and important passengers between UK and



Australia. They flew non stop to Colombo and had floats on the wing tips for rough landings.

Visitors were supposed to be out of the college at a certain hour at night. Bob Hawke used to visit John Stone (later a Senator and Secretary to the Treasury). One night Josh Reynolds, a very tolerant and well respected person, was doing late night rounds. Stone heard him coming so Hawke hid under the bed. Josh entered and seemed bent on having a long conversation with Stone. As he eventually left he said "good night Mr. Stone" and then as he closed the door "goodnight Mr. Hawke". Much later when my wife Meg and I went to the UK, I stayed a few days with Norm and his organizing wife in Scotland. He had retired from a big and important role in preventing the River Thames from flooding London at high tides.

In first year I did Geology, Chemistry, Physics and Botany. After one week of Maths I was most relieved to find I could do Geology instead. Otherwise I would have still been there. In Leaving I used to gamble on not needing to learn certain sections well. This did not work at university and I hated the Taxonomy part of Botany. In the sups Miss Baird grudgingly let me pass only because I wasn't going on with it.

While in Perth, swatting for sups, I stayed at Sarrell's but had dinner at Kendenup (post war it was CWA) in Hay Street. There I met Barbie Cooke, a farm girl from Grass Valley near Northam, and fell in love. That remained the case until she got engaged to a Bushell in 1947. I used to dance with her at the Embassy Ballroom.

At St. George's, a lasting friendship with Phil Arnold another engineer with an Exhibition from Perth Mod was formed. He and Norm both graduated with First Class Honours, which was only gained if you had a distinction in every unit throughout the whole course. We were both members of



the Uni Tennis Club. Phil used to get the use of his father's car for balls and outings.

Dr. Stanley Craig's family was very kind to me. He had extracted sister Josceline's appendix and she was not pleased with the result. Later he turned to gynaecology. Daughter Anne (Bunty) was a fine person and I was invited to many outings. Being a junior member of Kings Park we both had lessons from Herbert A. Edwards. The back hand grip he taught me handicapped my tennis for many years.

1944-45 Second Year Uni

I became serious at hockey and our team played in the top grade competition every Saturday. We won the A 1 premiership in 1945. A representative WA team played the Services twice. I played left wing the first time but was at Boodanoo for the second. I was our club secretary.

At St George's we had an annual handicap cross country race through Kings Park. I won in 1944 and because we ran a book on it I made a handsome profit by backing myself. In 1945 Phil won and I got fastest time and a trophy.

I trained fairly hard for athletics and Elizabeth Bayly gave me her running shoes and I loved running in them. I saw quite a lot of Shirley Strickland's father, a former 'Stawell Gift' winner. It was the richest professional sprint race in Australia. He would sit and watch me train rather than watching his daughter on the next field. He wanted to massage me but I didn't think I needed it. He said I had the gait of an emu, but I failed to ask if this was a compliment or not.

I managed to win all races I entered: 880 yards, mile and 3 mile. I was told I had done the 880 in time for a full Blue Award but was told later that the track was too short. I had not been involved with the administration with the sport



but felt it was a poor show to make such a mistake. Hence, I only gained a Half Blue and I believe Shirley got the same. At that stage Shirley was not hurdling and that is where she excelled later in the Olympic Games. We had to dance the winners dance at the presentation of our half Blues. I was men's champion athlete and she was women's champion athlete. I had already received a Half Blue for hockey and supposed the rest of the A1 team did also.

We had a St George's College Ball at the end of each term. At the conclusion of one of these, Bunty wearing an evening dress had to be taken home to Dalkeith. Norm lent his baggy rugby shorts and she tucked her frock into these shorts then it was home via the bar of my bike. During such a long friendship I never even kissed her until after she was married. I was best man at her wedding when she married a very nice South African diplomat Ray Killen. When my wife Meg and I were in London in the 1989 he was South African Ambassador to UK. We stayed at their official residence. I remember the residence and car were protected by bullet proof glass.

Summer 1945-46

When the final 1945 exams were over I joined a group attending an ASCM (Australian Student Christian Movement) at Rottnest Island. I think there was a religious side but for me the attraction was the beach and fun. We were preparing to catch the zephyr back to Perth when Marie Healy ran a sweep on the first to be seasick. I had the winning ticket so made sure Marie had plenty of refreshments so she would be sick. We were not far out when she obliged so I reluctantly nursed her for the rest of the journey. To thank her for helping me I started taking her out.

Aunt Evie, in Melbourne had befriended the Baroness Van Arsen, wife of the Dutch Consul. Two sons about my age came



out from Holland and had a few days in Perth. I had to help entertain them. Marie was an adventurous character and we took them to a dance at Kings Park Tennis Club. She was a runner and challenged them to race her down Bagot Road, at midnight. Marie after being a journalist worked in the Northern Territory and married a ringer Jo Mahood whom I had met. They had a weird life all over the Territory and ultimately settled on virgin land south west of Mackay. Jo was killed in a helicopter muster. Marie wrote several books including an autobiography and had three grown up children. The daughter also writes.

While studying for sups in Biochem and Plant Pathology I boarded at a home near uni. My name was entered in a mile race, at Gloucester Park trotting ground. There was a big crowd such as I had never raced before. There were trots as the main events. I won the race and received some minor prize despite the war being over.

I was booked to entrain to Canberra along with all the 1944 and 45 year students from the AFS (Australian Forestry School). They had been camped at various places in the WA forests. I would miss the WA state championships so ceased training. However there were heavy rains on the Nullabor and trains were cancelled for many days. Before the line was fixed the state mile was scheduled but I only got third. That was the first time I had been beaten at Uni or the interclub competition over summer.

Australian Forestry School

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Forestry School was a part of my Bachelor of Science. I applied for and received a Commonwealth Forestry Scholarship which covered my expenses associated with attending the Commonwealth Forestry School in Canberra. Allan Hatch from NSW had also been awarded a Commonwealth Forestry Scholarship.



They must have been desperate for foresters throughout Australia. The scholarship paid for everything including travel, camps, and trips to the home state, and a reasonable living allowance. We were not bound in any way upon completing the course. All other students were financed by their states and were bonded to them for several years.

When I turned 17, my sister Pat had taken me into the Magnet police station for a licence. Constable Wally Hearn asked her if I could drive. When she said 'yes' he issued one for car, motorcycle and wagon. That fixed it for me in all states in Australia. As a result at AFS I was one of two people who could take the truck into town. We did this at least weekly for stores and generally needed to drive truck loads of students on camps.

The trip on the train to Melbourne was fun. About four of them had completed the second year course and another four had completed first year. Whenever there were eucalypts at the stops they would all dash off in an endeavour to identify them.



We had four berths per cabin. In those days the rail was three foot six to Kalgoorlie on a WA train, then four foot eight and a half to Port Pirie, three foot six to Adelaide, and five foot three to Melbourne. At every gauge change you boarded another train. The train ride took much longer before it became a standard four foot eight and a half gauge Perth to Sydney, missing Melbourne. The other chaps stayed in Melbourne for a few ... days studying wood technology at CSIRO. I stayed with the Gutteridge family at number four Como Avenue, in South Yarra.

David at the AFS in 1948



Staying with the Gutteridges

That was the first of many short stays while I was at the Australian Forestry School (AFS), or while travelling interstate. The stay was always most enjoyable. The boys were real socialites and would find me blind dates for dances. They had a tennis court, which we made good use of. I remember Merrill Bean coming to a tennis party one day. She was in the Borovansky Ballet. We would travel in Wimpey, a Willey's overland that had tyres filled with old tennis balls instead of tubes.

Occasionally one would pop out, to the amusement of other motorists.

Once when I was staying there Phil Arnold visited. Phil was working at a paper plant north of Melbourne. After he had gone Aunt Evie said to me, 'Phil is a nice chap, but is he a gentleman?' Phil and his mother had strange gravely voices, which is what lead to the question. They certainly were gentle folk. His voice has improved with age.

From Melbourne I took the very nice Spirit of Progress, a five foot three gauge, to Albury and then a four foot eight and a half to Canberra.

The Forestry School

The Commonwealth Forestry and Timber Bureau housed the school, which in those days did not need much space. The school was located at Yarralumla, with extensive grounds adjoining the Governor General's Residence. Students were housed 100 metres from the school. Each had a weatherboard hut 10 x 12 and timber lined. The huts were perfectly satisfac-



tory. There was a common mess, laundry, etc. Most practical work was done on the grounds and there was a great variety of genera species, mainly northern hemisphere. The Principal Dr. Max Jacobs (from South Australia) lived close to the school. He was an unusual chap, quiet, generous, and a good teacher. He later became world famous for the work he did on eucalypts and forests in general.

As a result of the war some lecturers were very poor and failed to teach the sort of things we needed to know. We spent a lot of time in Mt Stromlo pine plantations, felling trees and taking measurements to prove a lecturer's pet theory.

The school had two clay hard tennis courts, where we had



*Left Evie and Margaret Gutteridge,
Right Rachel and David Lejeune*

great games and about six of us played reasonably well. We had elected various office bearers: I was sports secretary; Allan Hatch was commissariat. The cook was responsible to Allan and his job was to see that we had food.





Phil Arnold and a friend, 1947

We took it in turns to fill in when the cook had a day off. I will never forget the time I foolishly roasted a corned beef. Dick Leck (NSW) and I were appointed truck drivers because we happened to have licences, although I had never been near a truck. There were three old cars owned by ex-service students. Those who ventured out at night generally rode bikes.

Phil Arnold came for a weekend and we hired a car. I dated two teachers who I had got to know and

we took them to a cabaret. We also took a trip to the snowfields and skied for twenty metres. A few of the lads used to go skiing at Mount Kosciusko.

I was invited to dinner at the residence of the Dutch Consul in Mugga Way. The boys and I were then taken in a chauffeur driven car to the flicks.

Throughout my time at the AFS I spent a lot of time studying rather ineffectively. The longer I stayed the more people I met. There were several girls whom I took out after meeting them at dances and some how or other I got to know some teachers and nurses. I only recall being invited into two homes for meals. ~~One was the Piggins home. The daughter Nanette and I were~~ good friends for a long time. The other was the home of the CO at Duntroon. His much younger sister was great fun and a wild thing.



Camps and Field Trips

A number of field days took us into the high country west of Mt. Stromlo.

Transport was normally an open flat top five tonne truck with commonwealth driver.

One occasion the accident prone Allan Hatch fell off without any real damage, but was narrowly missed by the Governor General's vehicle. We saw lots of research work on pines and also many species of eucalyptus, which we were expected to remember.



We had experience for a week planting pinus Radiata. The plantations there

Loading Water, Imbil Camp QLD

are almost 100% Pinus Radiata. This was very good practical experience, but the locality was almost certainly destroyed by fire. This fire in summer 2002-2003 started in the Victorian Highlands. It destroyed the Mt Stromlo observatory and many houses on the Canberra outskirts. This was an example of hopeless civic planning. The pines burned first and only a road separated the plantation from houses on the other side of the road. In WA this would not have occurred because of our burning policy.

Up to that time no prescribed burning had been done in plantation. I wonder if a lesson has been learned. There used to be an annual tennis match between the staff of the observatory and the AFS. I was told they had a reputation for cheating on line calls and was surprised when I saw for myself that this was correct.



Field Trips Away From Canberra

There were three terms per year. At the end of each we all went away for experience in different types of forests. For Easter it was a few days at Batemans Bay on the south coast of NSW and the closest beach to Canberra. Many people from Canberra go there or other places along that coast for holidays. We were accommodated in a building and found it very pleasant. As in many cases we assessed the various species after learning how to identify them.

The first camp was in the Penola Pinus Radiata forest of South Australia. We caught the train to Melbourne then by bus across some of the most productive grazing country in Australia to Mount Gambier. We were camped under roofs in the Penola Pines. Some of the work involved felling with an axe and bow saw and measuring the production. We were equipped with a five tonne flat top truck on which we reached Nangwarry Sawmill – a fairly big one. I drove the truck on the main road at 60 miles per hour. When we returned to camp there was quite a heated argument between Les Carron and Jim Alexander about whether or not it was too fast. In retrospect I'm sure it was. We were shown various plots by the forester in charge Mr Davy. I was invited to his home one evening for dinner. Mrs Davy was keen for her attractive daughter Lorna to meet a young forester. The Dr allowed me to take this truck for this outing, on another occasion he let the cook and I take it to a dance in Nangwarry. There was a plantation close around the township and the spirited lads took their girls into the pines at intervals.

A few years ago the mill and town were destroyed by fire. Alan Harris our conservator saw a video of the result and we agreed



that would not have occurred in WA because of our burning policy. We had the odd trip into Mt Gambier, which has a famous crater lake and a very big pine sawmill.

On the eve of our departure we were booked into a hotel in Mt Gambier. Lorna was making her debut at a ball and her mother supplied me with a ticket. That made a rather fun finale to the trip. We returned to Canberra as we had come with a few days in Melbourne. The second term camp was at Coffs Harbour. Coffs Harbour was just a village then, now it has a population of 25,000. We did the usual sort of assessment fieldwork and had a good introduction to leeches and peanuts. We



Tram Train to Canberra

all remember Vic Lindsay who supplied and drove a nice bus for trips. He was a fine character and the company he started still exists. We went well inland to the Cyprus Pine forests. That was the species of pine that my brother-in-law Bob Singleton fatally felled on himself. Members of the same genera grew on a few spots on Boodanoo. In the East they represent very good timber for flooring and are termite resistant. At Boodanoo they were of value for big stock and yard posts.

On another camp we were sited on the north side of the Murray River near Echuca. The purpose there was to get a good understanding of the Murray River Redgum (*E. Camaldulensis*). This species is the most widely distributed of all the eucalyptus and occurs in parts of every state except Tasmania. The heartwood is reddish, strong, durable, hard, and resistant to termites. Be-



cause of the above it is one of the most important eucalypts. Its regeneration and survival has always been dictated by flooding of the Murray River. Around 2005 the low water levels seriously affected the river.

At the end of 1946 I caught the train to Melbourne and then by air to Perth. In Perth I was delighted to find that Phil Arnold had arranged a day at Scarborough with Barbie and Joy Arblaster. From Perth I travelled by train on the then existing railway or by Youanmi taxi to Boodanoo. On return to Perth I recall staying a while at Turners then flying to Melbourne (7hour flight) with a dreadful cold. Earache on the plane was maddening. I was most relieved on arrival to be met by good old Brian Bayly and thence to the Gutteridge's.

Tasmania early 1947

All the students met at Melbourne Port and embarked on Tarooma for Launceston. It was rough and I think I was the only one at breakfast. I have never experienced any sort of travel sickness. Then it was by old train to Hobart and the YMCA. We had enough time there to see the sights in the city and have a swim. Even in January, we swam mighty swiftly. We travelled by logging train up to the camp in the Styx River Valley. We were in tents but had a roof over the kitchen and mess. We were all impressed by the tallest trees in Australia, E. Regnans (Mountain Ash) and E. Gigantea (Alpine Ash).

In Tasmania, we were under the tutelage of Phil Barrett, whose mother had influenced me into forestry; I had not previously met him. He had been seconded from WA because the school was short of a lecturer (strengths and properties). I last saw him in Perth about 1998 when I had afternoon tea with him and his wife. However they shifted and I lost touch with him.

Our job in the steep country was to locate a route for a logging



railway using a certain grade limit and equipped with an abney level. I still have the one I was issued in 1948 – it was old then. The vegetation was thick and I imagine the job was more a test of individuals to stick it out rather than our skills. It was work for Australian Newsprint Mills (ANM). I was confronted on the trail by a fallen log about six feet in diameter pointing straight up and down the very steep slope. I was forced to go across it carrying an axe. I managed to get on top of the log, which was the first step. Having achieved this I started to slide down towards the river with no way of stopping. I had to alight rapidly or else. I jumped into the thick undergrowth unable to see what was in it. Bert Hanson was watching and thinking ‘all I’ve got is a band aid’, I was extremely lucky. I threw my axe away and it landed in the thick undergrowth.

On the last day at the camp I was selected by Phil to go out to the end of the track we had cut and collect a few items of equipment. I felt a very lonely chap after several enormous snakes had crossed the track in front of me. It was then back to Hobart and the YMCA. We did a trip to Port Arthur and the Hastings Caves and had a good look at the ANM paper mill in Hobart. Logs of a suitable size from the Styx area Alpine Ash were used. These were supported at both end as in a lathe and revolved while a knife the length of the log shaved off very fine layers of fibres. These were mixed with 30% of imported soft wood pulp to produce newsprint for all of Australia. We saw the whole process to the finished product. Such a crude method is no longer used and it should never again be necessary to import pulp. All states have extensive plantations and some are exporting pine woodchips for pulp.

We travelled to Launceston by train then and along the north coast from the dry east to the wet west. At Burnie we were conducted over another paper plant, Associated Pulp and Paper Manufacturers (APPM). Here better quality papers were produced using entirely imported pulp (that company no longer exists). I then went back to Launceston, Tarooma and then to Melbourne where I had several days at the Gutteridge’s, then



back to Canberra.

The first term camp was in a *Pinus Radiata* plantation at Greenhills near Batlow NSW. I cannot remember what we were doing, but it was terribly cold in our tents. In both years of the course about half the members were ex-service personnel, very familiar with tents but not in the cold.

At the end of second term we took the train to Brisbane where I stayed for two days, at our schoolfellow Alan Gardner's home in Greenslopes.

Erik Kongsted was working at the Dutch Embassy in exile and I was invited there for lunch. That was my baptism of chilli, the meal was so hot that I had to leave the table. Erik teed up a blind date for me and we enjoyed dancing at the posh Lennons Hotel. His partner Betty Smout is the daughter of the late Ted, who has often been on TV being over 100 and a WW1 veteran. I also had a day at Scarborough Beach with Erik and Betty. I enjoyed it then but was most disappointed with Scarborough when I considered buying a house there.

The school moved to a camp by a creek near Imbil. I used to go for a run before breakfast and dive through a freezing creek to cool off. One job we had was climbing Hoop Pine (*Araucaria Cunninghamii*) and taking the usual measurements and bark thickness. They are very prickly and we needed gloves and long trousers. We travelled widely to nurseries, hardwood saw mills, and different eucalypt species. We even played a cricket match against a local team.

Back in Canberra we entered a team in the town's tennis competition. During 1947 we had several tennis parties to which we invited lady friends. Mrs Jacobs, the wife of the principal, very kindly put on afternoon tea. At the end of the year we had a ball in the school. Andy Helms, a hopeless lecturer but very nice chap, let me use his car to transport Nanette Piggitt to and from the ball.



My Last Visit Home to Boodanoo

At the end of 1946 I entrained to Melbourne thence by air to Perth. In Perth I was delighted to find that Phil Arnold had arranged a day at Scarborough with Barbie and Joy Arblaster. From Perth I travelled by train on the then existing railway or by Youanmi taxi to Boodanoo. That was the only time I went back to Boodanoo during my stay at the AFS. I was not aware that it was to be the end of an era. The people on the property were mother, Pat and Ron Inglis. Pat of course milked the cow as usual. For a time Ron and I were camped establishing a fence across Reserve block which was far too big (8 x 16 kms) for effective mustering. Mother and Pat were away in Perth for holidays.

Boodanoo Station Finances

It now seems amazing that I had never known or enquired how the original purchase had been financed. No one had mentioned the matter but I know the stock firm Dalgety and Co. was what we were in debt to. Was it impolite to ask in those days? Neither my sister Pat nor I are aware that there were any improvements on the property when the partners Lejeune and Sewell took over the lease. That does not mean that there were none. Pastoral leases were very cheap, the aim being to encourage development. However the cost of fences, windmills, tanks and troughs would not be small. Then the nice house at the North End had to follow soon after.

Of what capital my father possessed I am ignorant. Coming from a large family and his father a cotton merchant dying in



Switzerland at 40 years it is unlikely to have been substantial. That means that the overdraft with Dalgety must have been very high. The word overdraft was often mentioned by mother and I was so naïve that I never ascertained the amount.

My mother's family had a saying which must have originated from English predecessors: if they needed something beyond their means they would say; 'it will be possible when our ship comes in'. I often heard it but no ships ever came to Boodanoo.

North Boodanoo having been sold a few years before, finally in 1948 the Lejeune share in South Boodanoo was sold and Vernon Sewell and son Reg Sewell (Eric's brother) became the owners of the new lease. No sooner was this done than wool prices rocketed. I was not at home when Boodanoo was sold and some of my belongings were lost including my valued autograph from Sir Don Bradman. What became of mother and Pat? I never heard or noticed how they felt at losing their home. It must have been a great relief from the tough times, but tinged with sadness. I had no feelings of regret and also have never regretted my decision to pursue a different course in life.

Mother must have been pretty run down after 17 years managing the place. She lived for a time with Lilla Bayly, at Bagot Court as her house at 82 Bagot Road had been sold. Happily mother had saved enough to take a last trip to Europe. At last I was completely off her hands. Pat took off to the Eastern States at first staying with friends and relations and later working on properties in Queensland. Cousins of the Melbourne Gutteridges were very good to her in Brisbane.

The following is information relating to the sale of South Boodanoo in 1948

LEJEUNE and SEWELL

South Boodanoo



ALLOCATION OF VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP ASSETS

1948

Leases:

2100 pounds

Buildings:

Residence

1400 pounds

Other Station buildings including

Shearing shed, men's quarters,
kitchen, dining room etc

1350

Fencing and yards

800

Windmills, tanks and troughing

450

Wells

200

Bores

400

Vehicles and Equipment

Chev Utility 1941 model

225

General Station Plant including

Shearing plant – 5 H.P. Motor Cart harness, tools, etc.

200

Stores

100

Furniture

200



Livestock:

7,500 sheep (1 pound each)

7500

10 cattle at 3 pounds

30

9 horses at 5 pounds

45

TOTAL

15,000

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The above is the only information remaining on paper and has been copied from it.

As mentioned previously North Boodanoo had been sold a few years previously – any profit unknown. As the above account is Lejeune and Sewell, presumably Mrs. Lejeune received half but that may not be correct. However I am not aware whether the overdraft had been paid prior to this allocation.

David Lejeune

I would like to acknowledge the help I have received in compiling these memoirs from:
Marion Lejeune, Geoffrey Yeates, Francesca Lejeune, Geoffrey



Smith, Georgia Lejeune, Sarah Lejeune, and Maeve Lejeune.

References

Drawn to Mt Magnet: Lorna Day and Karen Morrisey

Thank You for having me: C.A Lejeune

National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article65935647>







Percy's from Left: Evie, Amy, Rachel, Reg, Lilla, Jocelyn (boy)



Jane Louisa (McLaren)
Lejeune with baby
Josceline Lejeune



Mary, Reg, Rachel and Joc Percy
with Rachel (Percy) Lejeune, (front
row) Ayris, Roger Mountain, David



Pat, David and Rachel, North Boodanoo





David Lejeune



Rachel Lejeune



David, Otto, Rachel



Young David



