

From Billericay

to

Glen Waverley

A Bayly Family Journey

by Dr Ron Bayly

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Gum trees at Yapeen – original oil painting by my late wife, Rosemary Bayly

Dedicated to:

My Parents for their Love and Care

&

Rosemary Ruth for her Enduring Love and Support

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Introduction

As far as I have been able to ascertain, I am the sole surviving member of my generation of the Bayly family. I have been reflecting for some time on the life experiences of my family and the people I have known. I realised that in many ways, I may be the only custodian of all this knowledge, and so I have decided to write down my experiences and show how they affected the family. This book will enable the present and future generations to answer questions that will invariably be asked by the generations that follow about the earlier life of the Bayly family.

I knew if I did not do this then it would all be lost and that would be a shame, because it is a good story; one that deserves to be told.

It is also an opportunity for me to let the family know how much each member of it has meant to Rosemary and me, and how aspects of their lives have affected us both so wonderfully.

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The Baylys have been a successful family in all the ways that are important. We have all sought to lead by example and even when things were too bad to contemplate, we reacted to the problem and then got on with our lives.

The material for these memoirs has been drawn from many sources. Old letters, post cards, photographs, diaries and even notes on scraps of paper, have provided information, some of which had long been forgotten. Recollections by members of the family, relatives and friends have also been a valuable source. I apologise in advance for any mistakes or omissions that have occurred; in some cases, the years may have clouded the memories.

I hope you enjoy reading about our family. It has given me a great deal of pleasure to write it and, perhaps in the years ahead when you find it on a shelf, it will remind you of Rosemary and me.

1

Early Days – Billericay to Essendon

My father, Clifford Leslie Victor Bayly, who was the eldest of fourteen children, was born in 1898 in Billericay, Essex, England and arrived in Melbourne in 1913 with his parents and eight siblings (four brothers and four sisters). Two girls died at a young age in England and two more sisters and one brother were born in Melbourne. Two of the sons were born in Singapore. My grandfather, Cecil Gustavus Bayly was a military clerk and served in Hong Kong and Singapore between 1906 and 1907.

Cecil Gustavus was born in 1867 in Norfolk, England and married Edith Mary Savill in Billericay in March 1897. She was born in 1877.

Their first home in Melbourne was in Young Street, Moonee Ponds. They later lived in other homes in the same area.

The limited information about my father's life in England was that the family lived in Colchester, Essex from 1900 to 1905 and in Singapore in 1906/07. He was a student in a council school in Coventry in 1911/12 and that in 1913 he was employed at the Reform Club, Coventry, as a marker in the billiards room. He left there in September 1913, so the family must have left for Australia about that time.

My father obtained work in the bake house at T B Guest & Co, a biscuit manufacturer. He rose to work in the office of the company, apparently because of his very good handwriting and became Works Manager and the Secretary of the Company. About three months before he would have served 50 years in the company, it was taken over by Arnotts, another biscuit company, and because he was 65, he was compelled to retire. This greatly upset him.

Two colleagues retired with him and between the three of them, they had a total of 157 years of service to the company. On his retirement, my father was presented with the antique solid oak roll-top desk (1910) and the chair that he had used for over 40 years. Both now reside in my study and are used every day.

In the late 1970s, his health began to deteriorate, and he was admitted to a nursing home where he was visited almost daily by his beloved wife. He died peacefully in November in 1983.

After my father died, we found a small black leather case that contained an amazing collection of letters, cards, reports and paper clippings, some dating back to his early days in

Billericay and Coventry. There were reports from his school in Coventry and a reference from his first employer. There were also cards and letters concerning his wedding together with the original wedding certificate from 1921.

A surprise finding was an invitation to the celebration of Victoria's centenary at Parliament and to Government House. I do not know if they attended the functions or why they were invited, but I have a vague recollection of being in a crowd on Princess Bridge to see His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester pass by in a parade.

On their Golden Wedding anniversary, Mum and Dad received a telegram from the Governor of Victoria and a letter from the Premier of Victoria.

Another interesting item was his diary containing details of salaries, etc. of company staff from 1941 to 1955. In 1941, a 19 year old female bake house employee received in today's currency, \$3.60 a week and a male of the same age, about \$5.00. By 1950 the rates had risen to \$9.00 and \$11.00 respectively. Factory hours were 44 hours per week. As a family we had no knowledge that Dad had kept all this information.

My mother was born Elizabeth Lillian Fuller McDonough at Richmond, Melbourne in November 1900. She was fourth in a family of four girls and two younger brothers. Her eldest sister, Hilda, died while giving birth to her first child.

Little is known about the early years of my mother's life other than she left school after primary level and worked as a seamstress. Her family at some stage moved to Primrose Street, Moonee Ponds, which was the family home until the early 1940s.

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My mother and father met in 1917, how I do not know, and married in October 1921 at the Ascot Vale Congregational Church. My mother's wedding present to my father was a silver fob-watch and chain that I inherited; it is still ticking away after 90 years.

Their first home was in Bowen Street, Moonee Ponds from where my sister Joyce Lillian was born in 1923. In 1926 they moved to a house that they had built at 2 Wood Street, North Essendon, which at that time was on the outskirts of Melbourne.

The house was a modest two bed-roomed home - later to be enlarged. The kitchen had few amenities. All cooking was done on or in a wood-fired stove from which came delicious meals. Mum was a wonderful cook. Later a gas stove was installed. For several years after gas was connected the supply was only available if money was inserted into a meter; no money, no gas.

The kitchen sink was porcelain with a wooden draining board on one side and a work bench on the other. Hot water came from the stove and as there was no refrigerator in those days cold food was kept in what was called a 'Coolgardie safe', which was a wire screen encased box hung on the veranda outside the kitchen. This was later replaced by an ice -chest that was supplied with ice from the 'ice-man' who delivered from a horse-drawn cart. After several years a refrigerator brought us into the modern world.

The laundry was washed in a wood-fired copper which was replaced by a washing machine in about 1950. Mum was a magnificent cook and even now I still think that her scones and cakes were the best ever. Gradually, over the years the

house was enlarged, and modern amenities added. In all ways, it was the Family Home and remained as such until 2008 when my brother died.

Joyce, Ken and I were fortunate to have parents who cared for, reared us and gave each of us a good start to our adult lives. There were times in our early years when it must have been very difficult, especially in the years of the Great Depression to overcome the financial problems to pay the mortgage as well as feed and clothe the family. Somehow they managed and we all grew up.

Fortunately, my father was never unemployed and my mother was a good organiser at the financial level, even taking in washing and ironing to pay the bills.

To retain the house they had to take on a second mortgage just to pay the interest and this of course lengthened the period of the first mortgage. It was not until late in the 1960s that the final payment was made, and I remember her joy.

I was born in 1929 in the house at Wood Street and never really realised the problems they had until I was 6-7 years old. Ken arrived in 1936, which must have made life even more difficult. However, Mum never conceded we were poor financially and often found a way to assist others, but looking back it was probably at her own loss.

My mother was firm but fair, and she set standards which we were expected to meet both in the home and in the community.

She was very musical, a good pianist and had a fine singing voice. There was a piano in the house, but I never knew how

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we obtained it, and it was quite common to have friends and relatives in for musical evenings. It was clearly expected that all her children would become involved in something musical and so Joyce and Ken learnt the piano. I took violin lessons and Joyce also learnt singing. Our love of music was firmly entrenched at an early stage.

My mother had a strong social conscience and was always ready to assist those in need.

When one of her sister's family had to move from their house, Mum rearranged our house, and they lived with us for some months. When one of her brothers required help when he returned from WWII, she gave him a room until he could settle down. She was a member of the Home League of the Salvation Army, a group that cared for those in the community that needed help.

In 1967 my mother and father joined The Salvation Army as full members. I think that it was my mother's role in this field that led me to become involved in community service at a later date.

In 1951 she was diagnosed with breast cancer that required radical surgery. With the strong determination for which she was renowned, she survived after a long battle to live for another 35 years. In 1985, she entered a nursing home and passed away in 1987.

Rosemary and I were in Germany on study leave at the time of the death of my mother and, in line with a family arrangement, we did not return for the funeral.

My father was the quiet member of the family.

Perhaps because he could not afford to employ tradesmen, he taught himself to do work around the house. His work manual was a book published in the early 1930s by the Sun News Pictorial. It began by showing how to set up a Home Workshop and ended with a section on Workshop Commandments! I still have the book as a treasured possession. With the aid of the book, he built an extension onto the rear of the house, a fernery for plants, and a garage/workshop; I remember assisting him with the latter. It was many years before the garage housed a car.

He paved a driveway and other areas around the house using second-hand bricks that had to be cleaned manually before their use. Rarely did dad raise his voice, but it was always clear who was in charge. The only time I saw him get extremely upset was when Joyce, who had beautiful long curls, came home with them cut off - I remember it well.

Dad loved good music, especially that played by brass bands. He was an excellent parchment sketcher but unfortunately none of his work can be found. He was a lover of dogs and there was usually at least one in the back yard. By far his favourite was a black Labrador named, 'Laddy', who was given to him by my brother in the mid-1970s. After dad entered a nursing home, we occasionally took Laddy to see him.

After our father died, Ken kept Labradors until his death in 2008.

Together with his wife, he was an ardent follower of his beloved Essendon Football team, and I accompanied him to matches all around Melbourne. The team had many ups and downs, but he never wavered in his support. His favourite player was the triple Brownlow medallist, Dick Reynolds.

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World War II

I still clearly remember the first Sunday evening in September 1939 when I arrived home from church and heard that Australia had declared war on Germany. My parents were visibly upset, but it was several months before I realised the implications of war.

My parents had lived through the First World War and like most people, they thought it had been the war that would end all wars; they were wrong of course. A cousin of my mother was injured in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915 and was crippled for life. War comes close to home when this occurs.

War-time wasn't easy; clothing, food and petrol were all rationed, and it was difficult for most families. Two of my uncles were in the army, another in the air force, and I had two cousins who were also in the army. They were constantly in the thoughts of everyone; Australians everywhere worried

as to the possible fate of relations and friends. One of my uncles was killed when the troop-ship on which he was returning to Australia was sunk. A cousin was taken prisoner by the Japanese in Singapore, and was forced to work on the Burma Railway. He was one of the few to survive, but the experience affected him dreadfully and for many years afterwards he experienced severe health problems.

When Japan entered the war, all homes had to have their windows and doors fitted with black-out curtains and tape. Air Raid Precaution groups were formed and two mates and I were trained to be Air Raid Messengers; we were to use our bicycles to relay important messages if necessary. Everyone had a job to do, and I suppose everyone was naïve in believing that whatever job it was, it was the most important. At High School the male students were pressed into digging Air Raid trenches. Thank goodness we never used them except when Air Raid practices were called. The trenches were not filled in until several years after the war.

One exciting event - for the local school boys - was when an American Liberator bomber flew over our house with flames issuing from it and crashed on paddocks near Essendon Aerodrome that was under the control of the USA Air Force. It was school holidays and several of us rode to the crash site only to be ordered away by troops. Ammunition was being ignited but fortunately it was not carrying any bombs. A few days later we scoured the site and took away several souvenirs.

In retrospect, except for the attacks on Darwin and an attack on Sydney Harbour by three mini-submarines, civilian life in Australia, relative to many overseas countries, went on with only small inconveniences.

I was at work on the day that the surrender of Japan was announced about midday. Most of the staff immediately left to go down to the inner city area of Melbourne to join the spontaneous celebrations that took place. It was organised chaos. I have little recollection of what we did over the next few hours – everyone was just so happy that after five years the war was over. When I arrived home, there was my mother worried about where I had been, but soon all was forgiven; the war was finished.

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Dad's Cars

We did not have a car until late 1940 when my father arrived home with a T-model Ford. For those who weren't around at that time, or can't remember, model T Fords didn't have gear levers. Gears were changed by using one of two pedals, like a motorcycle I would imagine, by manipulating the pedals.

By the standards of today, it was a beast of a car, but back then we were happy and proud to have it. We had never known the joy of motoring up until that time. Of course, we had to wait for a few more years for electric starters and batteries. I am sure that some cars had them, but our model T was started with a crank handle. Whoever was cranking the car had to be very careful not to break their wrist because it almost always kicked back in the opposite direction. Not having a battery also meant not having a powered windscreen wiper. The wiper had to be manipulated by hand. If the driver was alone, he would be driving with one hand and manipulate

the windscreen wiper with the other. Passengers were always welcome to go along for a ride when it was raining.

The model-T gave very good service for about five years, until Dad sold it. He'd paid £12 in 1940, five years later in 1945 and just as the war was coming to a close, he sold it for £20. Inflation was even rife in those days. Dad replaced it with an old 1926-28 Dodge Tourer that he bought from a friend for £20. He sold that car in around 1953 for about £200. Dad had bought it from another friend who also worked for T.B. Guest; it had been modified with bigger wheels to match the tyres on the boss's very good cars. When the boss changed his tyres, they were recycled onto dad's car because there was always a fair amount of tread left on them. Dad had the Dodge for many years until the company finally gave him a company car; a Vauxhall, for his own use.

Later he was given the use of a Rover 800, a rather nice luxury car that became his pride and joy. On his retirement from the company, he bought the Rover and continued to drive it until 1979 when ill health prevented him from driving.

4

My Sister Joyce

Joyce Lillian was the first addition to the Bayly family. She was born on April 30th 1923 in Moonee Ponds. She was of course the ‘apple’ of her father’s eye. The family moved to Wood Street North Essendon in 1926 and Joyce started at Essendon North Primary in 1929. On completion of sixth grade, she attended Flemington Girls School and was almost immediately offered a scholarship to the prestigious MacRobertson Girls High School in Albert Park and after five years gained her Leaving Certificate. She was an outstanding student specialising in Music and Arts. During this period, she also took piano and singing lessons and qualified to teach piano. Her design and art work was in the family for several years but were subsequently lost along with the only record of her singing.

Joyce had a beautiful soprano voice and was often called upon to perform in speech nights and concerts. There was some discussion in the family about the possibility of her

making a career in singing, but our father was not in favour of that course.

Joyce then decided to join the Education Department and, after a short training period, (there wasn't any Teachers Training College in those days), she commenced teaching at Wilson Street Central School in Moonee Ponds.

Over the next few years, (it was during WWII) she taught at many schools, mainly in country areas. On two occasions, she taught at Hinnomunjie (near Omeo), Uplands (located on the Gibbo River near Benambra) and Lindenow close to Bairnsdale, all of which were single teacher schools. Hinnomunjie became a special place for the family and is discussed in more detail elsewhere in this book.

In January 1941 while the family was on a camping holiday at Lorne, a beach town, Joyce met John Walton, who she married in 1944 after John returned home from a period of service in the Royal Australian Navy on N-Class destroyers. They married at South Essendon Methodist Church which Joyce had attended for many years.

Joyce and John had three children, Robert in August, 1945, Rhonda in September 1952 and Andrew in April, 1956.

For the first 3-4 years of their marriage, Joyce and John lived with Mum and Dad until they built a house at Hardinge Street in Beaumaris. At one stage Joyce conducted child-care groups at their home and taught at Beaumaris Primary and Beaumaris North Primary schools as a relief teacher.

After his discharge from the Navy at the end of the war, John returned to his previous position in the 'Rag Trade' in Flinders

Lane, Melbourne and continued there until his retirement at 65. He had an involvement with the Beaumaris RSL in fishing and bowls and had a great 80th birthday celebration at the RSL. After a long illness due to failure of her kidneys, Joyce died in February 1976. John continued to live in the family home for several years until he entered a nursing home, and he passed away in February, 2005.

Robert was a teacher for a few years, and then worked at CSIRO before going into the mining industry. He currently owns a company called Top Rock Technology and consults and makes instrumentation for mines around the world.

In July 1976 Robert married his long-time friend, Megan Sangvinetti (nee Davie). They reside in Margate Street, Beaumaris, close by the former Walton Home.

Rhonda worked as a Human Relations Manager at Myer, Melbourne, and then set up and managed a business, King Sports Nets for 20 years. She returned to Myer at Chadstone as a part-time consultant in the Bridal Registry for ten years and is now retired.

Rhonda married Edmund King in May, 1972, and they also reside near the Family home. They have two children, Benjamin and Jessica and three grandchildren.

Andrew has worked for many years as a salesman/consultant in the timber industry.

He married Wendy McFarlane in October 1980, and they live in Pearcedale, several kilometres from Beaumaris. They had three children, Jason, Sharni and Scott. Sadly, Scott passed away in 2007.

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My Brother Ken

Kenneth Leslie Bayly was born in Moonee Ponds in January 1936. He attended the same schools as I had but because of the six year difference in our age, we were never at school together.

After obtaining his Leaving Certificate at Essendon High School, he entered the Teachers Training College in Parkville, qualified as a teacher and worked for the Education Department of Victoria until he retired in 1991.

He taught at several primary schools, generally in the North and West areas of Melbourne. He had the reputation of being an excellent teacher and organiser and of having a good rapport with students. He was promoted to Vice-Principal and later to Principal.

In his final year at Essendon High School, he was chosen to represent his school in a tour of England organised by The Sun News Pictorial for 100 boys. They travelled to and from

England by ship and spent 5-6 weeks on an education and goodwill tour of Britain, spending part of their time billeted with local families. In retrospect, I think that this tour was the catalyst that gave him the 'travel bug' for the rest of his life.

Later, on his vacations and periods of leave, he toured much of Europe, Russia, North Africa, South America, much of South East Asia and China. He also walked the Kokoda Trail with a group of scouts and visited Persia a few weeks before the Shah was ousted, and it became Iran.

In 2005, he and I did a three week tour of China and Tibet, during which we visited many of the 'tourist sites' including the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Warriors in Xian, a five day trip on the Yangtze River and the Potalla Palace in Lhasa(Tibet).

Ken was amazed at the changes that had occurred in China since his visit in 1969.

In 2007 we also toured the little known country of Bhutan, which adjoins India, Nepal and China. Bhutan has a population of about 900,000 people. The country is stunningly beautiful with untouched forests, pristine rivers and steep gullies. There are only two main cities in the country with numerous small villages/towns. To our surprise, we found that English was spoken by a large percentage of the population as it is compulsory to learn it at school.

The number of tourists per annum is strictly limited, and it seems likely that Bhutan will retain its attraction for many years.