

Place of wheat and wattle....



Reflections.....



We continue our selection of interviews with long standing members of our community. This month our reflection features local identities Kevin and Shirley Ashby. Remember, if you think you know of someone we should chat with and who may share their story with us please contact Deb at the Shire. You can email ea@dalwallinu.wa.gov.au with your suggestions and details. Our aim is to capture the history from our residents while they can still share it.



Kevin and Shirley Ashby

This month we focus on local identities Kevin and Shirley Ashby. You can't drive down the street in Dalwallinu without being aware of the devotion that Kevin and his trusty off-sider and wife Shirley put into caring for the gardens in town. They also spend a large amount of their own time at the Dalwallinu cemetery to ensure that this is a place of peaceful reflection when visiting your dearly departed.

Shirley was born in Dalwallinu hospital and grew up in Pithara with her parents and their large family of eight children. Shirley was the youngest child and had 2 brothers and 5 sisters. Her father was the CBH supervisor on the bins. Unfortunately, she lost her mother when she was

only 6 years old. Shirley said her Dad did a fantastic job of raising all the children alone with the help of his oldest children.

Shirley attended Pithara primary school and recalls that everyone walked to school. It was only when she started High school and had to go to Dalwallinu that she caught a bus.

Kevin was born in Geraldton and doesn't really know why. His family lived in Moora and he was one of 9 children. He grew up with 6 brothers and 2 sisters, one of which was his twin sister. His father worked for the PMG which is now Telstra. His mother worked full-time at home raising the 9 children. Kevin attended school in Moora. When I asked how he got to school, walked or rode, Kevin laughed and informed me that he ran to school.



When Shirley left school she moved to Perth to work as a shop assistant for Freecorns and boarded with one of her sisters. She only lasted 12 months in

Perth before she returned to Dalwallinu to work at Wesfarmers (now Dalwallinu Foodworks). Over the years Shirley has worked in many different places in Dalwallinu from Foodland, the Service Station and the Hardware shop before returning to work back at Dalwallinu Foodworks.



Kevin's first job was as a cook's offsider for Main Roads Department. This involved helping the cook in a caravan feed the workers on the crew. He then started working for Water Supply which ultimately brought him to Dalwallinu. He was camped at Pithara. He left the Water Supply and commenced working at the Shire of Dalwallinu in 1972. 50 years later he is still happily working here.

Kevin and Shirley met as 16 year olds in Dalwallinu. Shirley recalls that she was at the basketball with a girlfriend when they went down to the Memorial Park to eat some watermelon. Kevin and a mate were in the park and asked to share the watermelon. When the girls handed it over the

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guys promptly wiped it all over their windscreen. The girls gave them the slip by sending them off out of town, but eventually Kevin tracked her down and they have been together ever since.



Kevin and Shirley married when they were 21 at Dalwallinu and held their reception in the Pithara Town Hall. They settled in Dalwallinu and raised their 2 children Stephen and Leanne here. Sadly Stephen passed away at just 23 years of age but Leanne now lives in Busselton where she manages the Cinema complex. They have 3 grandchildren and also have 4 great-grandchildren.

When I asked about their community involvement Kevin proudly informed me that Shirley was a real sportswoman. She played tennis, hockey, basketball, netball, indoor hockey and was also involved with the Girl

Guides. Kevin said they were a team and his job was to babysit so she could go and do her sport. They remain just as much a team today, helping each other with everything they do.



When we spoke about what they love about Dalwallinu, their answer was they know everyone in town, and love the town. We talked about things that are no longer in town and they said they had a soft spot for the drive-in that is no longer around and do miss the picture theatre. Other than that there is nothing they would change about Dalwallinu, they love it just the way it is.



They feel the town is going ahead and are happy to be part of it.

We talked about anything that young people wouldn't understand today from when they were young and Kevin reflected on his younger days in Moora when he used to help the Bottle-O out. They would drive around town in a horse and buggy collecting old bottles.

As recognition for his outstanding service of over 50 years to the Shire the Rose Garden outside the Shire offices was dedicated in his honour. It is now the Kevin Ashby Gardens. Shirley was also presented with a small gift in recognition of her role in supporting and helping Kevin.



This month Kevin and Shirley celebrate 50 years of marriage. They remain just as much a team today as when they first met, helping each other in everything they do. It was lovely to share their story.