

## The Reflections Continue....

We continue our selection of interviews with long standing members of our community. This month our reflection features Bill and Barbara Dinnie. They have both lived very busy lives and have been involved with so many groups and committees it will be difficult to condense their stories. 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](mailto:ea@dalwallinu.wa.gov.au) with your suggestions and your contact details. All suggestions are welcomed. Our aim is to capture the history from our residents while they can still share it.



*Bill and Barbara Dinnie*

Barbara was born in Pingelly and lived in Bencubbin where her father was a farmer. She was raised with her three brothers and educated at home by her mother early on with correspondence lessons.

The family lived too far out of town to attend school as in those days there were no school buses. It was when she was about eight years old that the family relocated to Bencubbin due to the families increased size and all the children needing to attend school.

In her last year of primary school Barbara won a Districts Inspector's scholarship which enabled her to attend Northam High School for the next five years. Barbara excelled at high school becoming a Prefect, Sports Faction captain as well as a member of the hockey, tennis and softball teams.

After their family moved into Bencubbin Barbara could walk to school but when she moved to Northam for the first year she boarded out of town and had to catch a bus. She later moved into Northam township to board and walked to school.

Bill was born in Mt Lawley Perth. He started his education at Buntine Primary School. He recalls riding his pushbike through the paddocks towards Buntine School and meeting up with the Counsel boys who were using a sulky as transport. As a pushbike was a novelty the Counsel boys would want to ride his bike and he would ride in relative comfort in their sulky.

During his primary school years he moved to Perth and attended Forrest Street Primary School in South Perth. He later went to Wesley College for secondary school before moving on to Muresk Agricultural School for a final two years.

After school Bill joined the local Department of Agriculture doing soil conservation. During this time he got to travel around the state extensively helping to educate primary producers.

In 1953 he took up farming. He also enjoyed professional dancing and even went to Sydney for additional training. Barbara relayed how much she and Bill loved dancing. The couple would attend dances every weekend, sometimes travelling up to 100kms to attend and not making it home until daylight.

After leaving school Barbara returned home to the farm to help out. She also became involved in farm work including mustering, wool classing, stooking hay and vegetable gardening. Barbara retains her love of gardening to this day.

Barbara and Bill met in 1955 at a Junior Farmers Leadership School.



# Place of wheat and wattle....

In those days distance was a huge obstacle. With no phone and no car their only option to communicate was writing.

They lost touch for a while and pursued their careers and other interests but Barbara laughingly related how Bill saw a story about her in the newspaper which jogged him to get back in touch.

They married in 1962 and set up home on the farm at Buntine. It was here they welcomed their four children, sons Alan and Roger and daughters Jo-ann and Julie. They have six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Bill became a Dalwallinu Shire Councillor in 1965 and remained in office until 2014 completing almost fifty years of service. During his time at Council he was Shire President for ten years and Deputy Shire President for fifteen years. He is also a Freeman of the Shire.

His involvement in the local community was extensive and included; representing the Dalwallinu Shire as a Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) member,

member of State Rural Water Resources Council, Bushfires Board, (APB) Agricultural Protection Board, Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee, Justice of the Peace, founding member Farm Advisory Service, President Dalwallinu Ag. Society, State Tidy Towns Judge, State Bowls Coaching Committee and National Bowls Umpire.

Bill has played tennis, hockey and bowls where he was awarded Life Membership of both the Central Midlands Bowling League (CMBL) in 2009 and the Buntine Bowling Club. National Awards have included the Order of Australia Medal, Centenary Medal and Bushfires Service Medal.

Barbara, although raising four children and helping Bill on the farm, had a separate and fulfilling life outside her family with her many memberships and her longtime commitment and involvement with the CWA.

Barbara joined the CWA and Junior Farmers in March 1954 and has remained dedicated to both.

Initially she was President of

the Bencubbin Junior Farmers before being elected Secretary/Treasurer of the North Eastern District Council and was elected first Girl State Vice-President in 1961. In 1958 she won a trip to the Sydney Show & Queensland as a guest of their association. Her involvement with Rural Youth as an Adult Advisor spanned ten years and she was awarded Honorary Life Membership in 1997.

Once she married she became involved with the Buntine community and joined the Buntine CWA branch in 1962. Barbara was a prolific fundraiser and regularly hosted afternoon teas and lunches at her home. She was also a member of the Buntine P&C for fourteen years and still found time for golf and tennis.

Her many achievements include membership of the Uniting Church as Elder and Lay Preacher, member of the Rural Ministry Committee, Secretary Wheatlands UC Patrol, member of the Leibe Women's Field Day, member of the Latham & Dalwallinu Garden clubs, critic of Penguin clubs, organiser of fashion parades, judge of town gardens, Show Girl also numerous Agricultural Shows, member of the Dalwallinu Townscape committee and she has assisted with Wattle week since its inception.

Barbara was CWA State President 1991-94 and was a delegate or leader of delegations to Area and World Conferences including to Kansas City, The





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Netherlands, Tasmania, Fiji and New Zealand. When Chairman of the State Rural Water Advisory Committee she saw expansion of valuable water supplies including



Barbara proudly shows off the Western Australia CWA Banner .

Goodlands, Kalannie and Yuna. Barbara and Bill contributed to Dalwallinu Tourism with their Anzac Centenary Memorial and Freemason's Commemoration Projects. In 1994 Barbara was awarded the Order of Australia Medal and CWA Honorary Life Membership.

She also enjoyed a tour with her daughter in England and visited with her son's host family in Copenhagen. When hearing all this I asked her how she managed to raise four children, help run a farm, organise Bill's activities all at the same time. She replied "*be organised, have a good diary and get up early*".

When asked about what they missed the most it was the population of Buntine. They fondly remember when there was up to 60 families in town, with a busy and thriving school and townsite. They said they particularly miss the dances that they used to attend regularly.

When asked to reflect on what youngsters would not understand from previous times they listed the 32 volt lighting plant and also how to use a flat iron.

Their passion remains family, gardening, friends and church and also recording their history. Barbara continues to preside at

funerals and produces funeral pamphlets for them. She cares for Bill and their home as well as her many hundreds of plants and flowers in their garden.

The couple remain devoted and they still live at "Cambrae". Although they sold their farm in 2002 they rented the original homestead back and remain in their home to this day.



It was so informative listening and recording their stories and we thank them for their time.