

# *Place of wheat and wattle....*

## **The Reflections Continue....**

We continue our selection of interviews with long standing members of our community. This time we are sharing the story of Neil and Margaret Batterham. 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 your contact details. All suggestions are welcomed. Our aim is to capture the history from our residents while they can still share it.

Margaret Batterham was born in Mt Hawthorn and grew up at Carmel in the hills of Perth. Her parents were orchardists and nurserymen and Margaret's grandparents were pioneers in the Carmel area. They built Fawkes House, a heritage house which is now a bed and breakfast.



Faulkes House, Carmel

Margaret grew up with one sister and one brother. She attended primary school in Carmel which was a 20 minutes' walk from home. For high school she travelled by bus to attend Perth Girls High, this trip taking an hour each way, arriving home around 6:15pm daily. The next year she attended business college in Perth.



Neil Batterham was born in Dalwallinu. At the tender age of six weeks he survived a major operation. He lived on the farm and grew up with 2 brothers and 3 sisters.

His parents were farmers in both the Dalwallinu and Kalannie area and he attended Dalwallinu primary school. He suffered with tonsillitis throughout his schooling which eventually resulted in him missing almost a whole year of school. He left school in grade 7, aged just 14 years old.

The children used to travel to school on a truck with seats each side of the back and a canopy over the top. Luckily the trip was only 6 miles each way. Once he left school he went straight onto the farm to work. He has been a farmer his whole life.

When Margaret left Business College she worked for her parents doing domestic work for her mother and

some office work for her father until she married. She worked for her parents for five years until she and Neil were married.

Margaret and Neil's families were old friends. As their parents were known to each other through church, Margaret and Neil eventually also became friends.



Margaret recalls travelling to stay with friends in Dalwallinu and this is where they continued their friendship and dating began. Distance was definitely an issue but they overcame this to continue dating, and when they were both only twenty-one they married.

After their wedding in Perth they travelled back to Kalannie. This is where they settled and started their family. In 1966 they built a home in Dalwallinu, moving there with their 3 little girls as the

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Kalannie farm had been sold and another one purchased in Wubin. It was at Dalwallinu their son was born. Their son is still working the family farm. One daughter lives with her husband west of Dalwallinu, while their other two daughters live in Perth and Ravenswood. They have been blessed with twelve grandchildren and six wonderful great-grandchildren.

While Neil has been a farmer their entire married life he still found time to enjoy playing golf in winter and taking his family to tennis in summer. Margaret supported him at home. Together they have faced some issues but overcame them to remain strong in their relationship and faith.

Margaret has been a committed community member who has been actively involved as a publicity officer for the P&C, a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, a volunteer at the Craft shop, and as a member of the Tourism committee for many

years, and due to her work with the Tourism committee she was awarded in 2020 with Life Membership of the Committee.



When asked what they love about living in the Dalwallinu area they responded that it is the community and friendliness of the people who live here that makes living here so good. They also appreciate how clean and tidy the locality is. As has been mentioned by others, they suggest that having a local dentist would be an asset. Overall there is nothing they would change about the area, they love Dalwallinu just the way it is.

When asked the question about what they had that young people may not understand, Margaret responded with the wall phone. Youngsters today would not know how to deal with party lines and phones connected to the wall and not mobile in their hands.

Margaret and Neil's passion for their family remains strong and whilst Neil continues to farm to this day, they do manage to enjoy their travelling as much as possible.

It was a pleasure to share their story.

