

The Reflections Continue....

We continue our selection of interviews with long standing members of our community. This month our reflection focuses on Hugh and Joan Barnes. This is the first story we have written about a deceased resident but with the help of his wife we hope we do Hugh and Joan's story justice. When we first approached Joan she was adamant they didn't have a story worth telling. When we asked about the buildings that Hugh had built, not to mention the amount of tourism their motel has generated to the Dalwallinu area over the years she agreed to sit down and talk with us about their lives.

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 your contact details. All suggestions are welcomed. Our aim is to capture the history from our residents while they can still share it.



Hugh and Joan Barnes

Joan was born in Perth at King Edward Memorial Hospital the youngest of six children. Joan had one sister Edie and four brothers, Fred, Bill, Frank and David. Her childhood was poor although she didn't realise it till later. When she was little she had very few toys to play with other than a skipping rope and a ball. She recalled her mother making her doll out of porridge bags. Joan's dad was a farmer in Katanning before moving the family to Perth to begin working for the Water Board.

Hugh Barnes was born at Konnongorring just south of

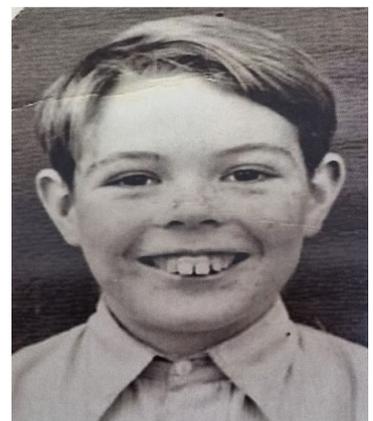
Wongan and was also one of six children. Hugh has three sisters, Patrica, Sally, and Penny and two brothers Kevin and Donald. His father was a farmer early on, but then became a truck driver and eventually owned Wubin Transport.

Joan attended primary school at Highgate near Hyde Park in Perth before going on to Girdlestone High School in James St. She walked to school in primary and secondary school as they were both close to her home. After school she attended City Commercial College where she studied typing and shorthand. After qualifying, she took a



position at the Dunlop Rubber Company as a Secretary.

Hugh started primary school in Wubin before moving to Perth. Joan relayed that Hugh always maintained that when he left Wubin for Perth they didn't have a class low enough to put him in.



Despite this inauspicious start, he ended up attending Leederville Tech College and graduated Dux of the School. Whilst in Wubin he walked to school, but when he attended Leederville Tech he boarded with his Grandma.

After leaving school his father secured him a job with a watchmaker repairing clocks. This lasted all of 3 to 4 weeks before he gave notice and headed home

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to Wubin to drive trucks. Over his lifetime he did a wide variety of jobs including truck driving, building, farming and pegging land for Mining companies. He also took up several hobbies which included panning and sluicing for gold, and then metal detecting.

During the war years many city children from Perth were evacuated to the country under the threat of a Japanese invasion. Joan and her brother David were evacuated to Dalwallinu. Joan lived with Jack and Eva Harris and had correspondence lessons whilst David was fostered at the Harris homestead with Joyce and Grandma Harris. They lived in Dalwallinu for over a year before they were allowed to return home to Perth.

After working in Perth for several years, Joan had even managed to travel interstate for a few months holiday. It was after she returned from the eastern states that her brother Fred enticed her to move to Wubin and work for him at the Wubin Trading Company. It was here that Joan and Hugh's paths crossed for the first time. They were only engaged for twelve months before marrying and settling down together in Wubin. They enjoyed attending the dances that were held and this was something Joan in particular missed when the dances stopped.

Hugh had started to build them a home, although for the first few years it consisted of only two rooms. There wasn't a

bathroom in their house so they had to go to Hugh's mother's house for bathing and washing their clothes. At this time there was no running water or electricity in Wubin.

Eventually in 1963 the family moved to Dalwallinu. Hugh left Wubin Transport and started a building company on his own. He built many local buildings including the Wubin Town Hall and the old Wubin Sports Club and repaired many of the buildings in the area including Dalwallinu Town Hall. His most prominent building remains the Wheatland Motel which continues to operate at full capacity today.

Hugh had a vision to build a supermarket in town with an underground carpark, but when bureaucracy got in the way he changed his mind and focused on the motel complex. During the time of building the motel he was diagnosed with cancer. The couple would travel to Perth for Hugh's treatments and then would return to Dalwallinu to continue with the build. Joan supported him with all his ventures, even though in her words sometimes she thought he was mad.

Together they raised their family in Dalwallinu. All three of their children are involved in farming. Graeme, Alan and Lynette are all farming locally in the Wubin and Buntine area. They have nine grandchildren and eleven

great-grandchildren who bring joy to Joan's life especially since Hugh passed away in 2011.

Hugh and Joan ensured the children also enjoyed annual holidays. The family caravanned and camped at Bremer Bay for many years before eventually buying a house in Jurien Bay which cut down on the travel considerably. In later years Joan and Hugh would spend between four and six weeks prospecting each August and September with a group of their friends. This continued for about twelve years.

Joan had the opportunity to travel to Canada, Alaska and Norfolk Island which she enjoyed immensely, but Hugh would rather head bush to go prospecting. He did manage on a couple of instances to accompany Joan to New Zealand and the eastern states.



Volunteering also formed a large part of this couples lives. Joan worked at Totally Locally for many years, volunteered at Meals on Wheels, helped with the Parents and Citizens, assisted at the Dalwallinu Show as well as

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Wubin and Dalwallinu CWA's. She has also been a devoted member of her church and cleaned and gardened there for many years which she described as a labour of love. Hugh also volunteered at the Wubin Museum and was also made a Honourary Member of the Perth Museum.

Joan also recalls the day Hugh advised her he was going to write a romance novel. She laughed and said that he didn't have a romantic bone in his body but he did produce a romantic story. His book "A Humpy in the Bush" was typed up by Joan on her typewriter. Joan said she would spend nights typing up pages of the story, only to

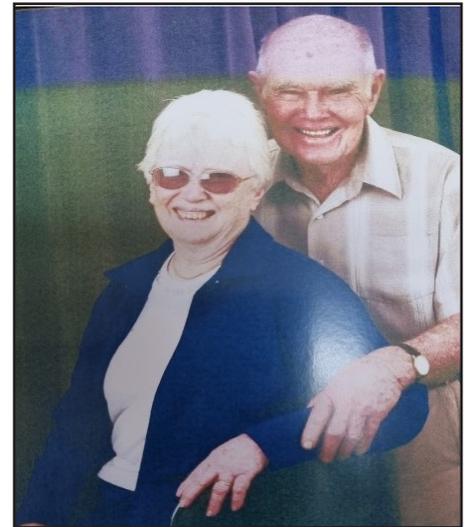
have Hugh get up the next day and rewrite it.

Together they have contributed greatly to the Wubin and Dalwallinu communities and through the Motel, this continues to this day. When I asked Joan what she loved about Dalwallinu she responded with three points, Family, Church and good health. These continue to be her passion to this day.

When we asked Joan the same question we ask all the people we interview about what it is they think young people wouldn't understand today, Joan felt that the

old hand pump washing machine would be one thing they definitely wouldn't understand.

We thank Joan very much for contributing hers and Hugh's story to this publication.



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