

# RCH Alumni

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# Aluminations

FROM THE RCH ALUMNI

June 2023 | In this issue:

Alumni involvement in the Arts

plus: a competition to write a story in six words

Photo: Windjana Reflections (Gigi Williams)



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*Cover picture – Windjana Reflections captured at Windjana Gorge in the Kimberleys as the late afternoon sun lit up the walls of the gorge and reflected in its still waters below. Gigi Williams.*

## Credits

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## The 2023 RCH Alumni Executive

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# From the President

Jim Wilkinson

It is a pleasure to write another letter to Alumni members as we move from Autumn into cooler Winter weather and enjoy this latest edition of Aluminations with a variety of pieces on non-medical matters including a number focussing on the involvement of Alumni members in the Arts, and also the "6-word story" competition.

Trish Davidson's tale about her purchase of a Storyworth subscription, for Cliff Hosking to compile chapters about his life, resonated for me (and Helen), having both been the recipients of a similar Christmas gift from a daughter in law.

Alan Woodward's account of a sailing expedition through part of the Southern Ocean makes good reading. Jenny Graves' "Origin of Origins" – "To explore the origins of the universe, of life, of species, of humanity in music" is also intriguing. Jim Breheny and Cliff Hosking have both written about painting and Jeff Prebble about his drumming.

Elizabeth Loughlin's contribution "Creative interventions" about how she integrated dance therapy into Social Work adds another interesting slant. Chris Rodda's discussion piece on heliotherapy and Vitamin D links nicely with our most recent Aluminar.

The first face to face lunchtime meeting (Aluminar) in 2023 took place on March 7th in the RCH Foundation at 48 Flemington Road. 24 members and guests enjoyed a fascinating presentation by Dr Michael Johnson, the head of the department of orthopaedics. He talked about the establishment of the orthopaedic department at RCH, with its first director – Mr John Colquhoun, with whose



energetic leadership the RCH country hospital at Mount Eliza was established and built – opening in 1930. One of the forms of therapy in that early era was "Heliotherapy", involving exposure to sun and fresh air, which was thought to improve immune function and eliminate bacteria. There, many children with chronic diseases such as Tuberculous osteomyelitis were looked after in hospital, with very limited opportunities for parents or other visitors to see them, for long periods of stay in hospital – often for several years. Christine Rodda has written up this very interesting talk on the following page.

*save the date*

## RCH Alumni lunchtime meetings

**Tue 13 Jun**, 12 noon, RCH Foundation with Dr Anne Smith, Medical Director, Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service, title TBC

**Tue 12th Sept**, 12 noon, RCH Foundation Prof Richard Broome, AM, President Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV): "The Making of Melbourne and the RHSV's Remembering of Melbourne"

## Vernon Collins Oration

**Wed 4th Oct**, 12.30pm, Royal Children's Hospital. Speaker Liana Buchanan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People.

## AGM/Annual Gala Lunch

**Tue 16 Nov**, 12 noon, Kew Golf Club Alum-orator: Prof Catherine Crock, Paediatrician and Executive Director Australian Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care.



# RCH Alumni's return to face-to-face lectures and lunch

Dr Michael Johnson's  
"An RCH Orthopaedic origins tale: the machine-gunner, the artist, and sea-side heliotherapy"

Christine Rodda

On Tuesday 7th March RCH Alumni and other invitees including local historians, gathered face to face for the first time since the beginning of the Covid pandemic to hear Michael Johnson speak to his somewhat intriguing title. In a cleverly crafted and most engaging account, Michael started with a case presentation of tuberculous disease of the hip in a 4 year old girl, Joyce, who presented to the orthopaedic unit in 1929, shortly before the opening of the 80 bed Frankston Children's Orthopaedic Hospital, in March 1930.



This world class facility at that time, was actually built on prime real estate in Jacksons Road Mt Eliza, a site chosen for its proximity to the beach, sunshine (heliotherapy), fresh sea air and locally produced quality food. As Michael explained, in the 1930's there was a widely held belief in the efficacy of these environmental factors for the restoration of health, and furthermore as he highlighted it was during the era before the discovery of antibiotics and antitubercular drugs. Surgery was problematic for children as age appropriate, cuffed endotracheal tubes were yet to be developed and anaesthesia was limited to ether and chloroform.

Other characters from the era were described including the seemingly indefatigable Mrs Hilda Mackinnon, then President of the Children's Hospital who appeared to whole-heartedly support this wonderful initiative and vigorously committed to the recruitment of the first Superintendent of this hospital, British surgeon Dr John Colquhoun. Returning to Joyce's story, Michael told us that her hip spica was replaced every 6 months and removed manually with plaster shears, compared with nowadays when hip spica's are replaced 6 weekly and removed using a powered plaster saw. His audience was aghast when Michael stated that Joyce was finally discharged at aged 9 years! During her admission, her father Jack McGrath, a World War1veteran, was admitted



to a TB sanatorium in Hampton, and was not allowed to visit Joyce (a case of “shutting the door after the horse has bolted”?) and in the desperation to see his only child he arranged to go from Hampton to Mt Eliza by boat so he could at least see where his daughter was in hospital. He died before she was discharged.

Life at the Orthopaedic Hospital involved children being regularly taken to the beach in wheelchairs or trolleys (plaster or no plaster) or laid on the sunny verandas for their regular heliotherapy - Michael also described a photograph of children painting on the beach!

We were all intrigued to hear that the four-year-old “miserable little Joyce” actually walked out of the hospital at aged nine years. She went on to study drawing at RMIT and was appointed the inaugural arts librarian at the State Library of Victoria.

As a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship, she travelled to arts libraries around the world and subsequently established the largest art collection of any Australian public library. Joyce McGrath OAM (pictured right in her self-portrait) is still alive, aged 97 years!

Michael also highlighted the paucity of documentation of outcomes, and the data that he was able to find cited from the era when Joyce was an inpatient amounted to admission and discharge numbers. The discharge numbers were considerably less than the admissions – was this because many children remained as inpatients during the period described? There was no mention of patients who had died.

The Frankston Orthopaedic Hospital was finally closed and sold in 1971 - the end of a remarkable era in paediatric orthopaedics. During question time Keith Stokes shared with us his memories as a House Officer on rotation to the Orthopaedic Hospital, shortly before it closed. He described the wonderful family accommodation provided on site with ready access to the beach, and absolutely delicious hospital food!

Hearing Michael speak reminded me of the historical, social and political aspects of rickets in Australia. In the 1950s and 1960s, during the post-World War Two economic boom in Australia, rickets was considered a disease of the past in Australia, and in the global setting, a disease of poverty. During this era, the typical Australian lifestyle was characterised by active outdoor living, with many mothers able to stay at home with their children. A seemingly trivial lifestyle practice was that most household laundry was hung out to dry outside on most days on the back yard rotary clothes hoist, an

unrecognised opportunity for regular sun exposure, before the advent of widespread use of clothes driers.

Heliotherapy, or sunlight therapy has been used for centuries therapeutically and dates back to ancient Roman and Greek times, as Michael described. In 1890, Palm studied the relationship between the incidence of rickets and its geographical distribution, and concluded that rickets was caused by lack of exposure to sunlight.

Palm also observed that despite a superior diet and relatively better sanitary conditions, infants residing in Britain were more at risk for rickets than those living in the tropics.

Exposure to plenty of sunshine, which was the norm for infants residing in the tropics, he proposed, was responsible for their protection against rickets. Palm recommended the “systematic use of sun-baths as a preventive and therapeutic measure in rickets”.

As skin cancer rates climbed steeply from the 1940s, the scientific and medical communities began to understand the potentially damaging effects of sun exposure to skin.

Although research has shown overwhelmingly that sunlight exposure is linked to skin cancer, ongoing “sunning” practices are still practised throughout the world, particularly where health literacy and access to health care

is low, likely to be related to the passing down of these practices throughout the generations.

The medicinal use of cod liver oil dates back to the 1700s, among people living in coastal areas, where there was a long-standing folklore describing the medicinal benefit of cod liver oil.

Although it was clear to the medical and scientific community in the late 1800s that cod liver oil and sunlight exposure could cure rickets, it took until the early 1900s for researchers to discover that Vitamin D deficiency was the underlying cause of so called “nutritional” rickets.

Although similar in fatty acid composition to other fish oils, cod liver oil has higher concentrations of vitamins A and D. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, a tablespoon (13.6 g or 14.8 mL) of cod liver oil contains 4080 µg of retinol (vitamin A) [5] and 34 µg (1360 iu) of vitamin D. The Dietary Reference Intake of vitamin A is 900 µg per day for adult men and 700 µg per day for adult women, while that for vitamin D is 5 µg (200 iu)–15 µg (600 iu) per day (doses increase with advancing years).



The tolerable adult Upper Intake levels (ULs) are 3000 µg/day (vitamin A) and 100 µg (4000 iu)/day Vitamin D. The recommended daily intake of Vitamin A (as retinol equivalent) is 300–400 µg for infants and toddlers, 600–900 µg for male adolescents and 600–700 µg for female adolescents. Whilst acknowledging that cod liver oil appropriately administered successfully prevented vitamin D deficiency rickets in the past, there is also a substantial risk of vitamin A intoxication without careful administration and its use to prevent vitamin D deficiency rickets can no longer be recommended.

In 1972 RCH alumni Val Mayne and the late David McCredie reported a resurgence of rickets in Melbourne, recognising newly arrived southern European migrants and premature infants as the predominant risk group.

These authors reviewed radiological cases of rickets from 1961–1971 at the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital, and identified 59 cases of vitamin D deficiency rickets, and these comprised just over half the cases of radiological rickets identified. Of note, in the 1960's vitamin D assays were not available in public hospital settings in Melbourne, and the diagnosis was a clinical one, based on radiological findings without features of other underlying chronic conditions associated with rickets.

The Victorian State Government had established an infant welfare program for all Victorian infants and toddlers, under the directorship of Dr Vera Scantlebury-Brown in 1926. Under her leadership infant morbidity and mortality decreased dramatically. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the use of cod liver oil to prevent rickets was also recommended around this time. However, most of the infants and toddlers described by Mayne and McCredie came from poor migrant families who did not attend maternal child health programs and furthermore had limited sun exposure.

Although the need for vitamin D supplementation in premature infants is now well recognised, other environmental and lifestyle issues leading to vitamin D deficiency rickets were not considered a public health concern at the time. The authors' abstract concluded with "A plea is made for adequate instruction of our migrant population in the prevention of this disease".

Over the past 30 years there have been dramatic demographic and lifestyle changes which have had a major impact on the vitamin D status of the Australian population. Thankfully the White Australia Policy, which prevented migration of darker skinned people throughout most of the 20th century, was finally abolished in 1973. Yet once again over 20 years later in the 1990s, reports began to be published of rickets in Australian infants and children, predominantly from Melbourne.

At that time the only source of high dose vitamin D syrup to treat rickets was from the Royal Children's Hospital

pharmacy in Melbourne, suggestive of the perception that rickets was a rare disease in Australia. Most of the cases identified during this period were infants who were exclusively breastfed, and whose mothers had highly pigmented skin and/or were veiled, and were also vitamin D deficient, consistent with findings of Grover and Morley who reported that 80% of veiled or darker skinned pregnant women attending a tertiary Melbourne public hospital and tested, had a vitamin D of less than 22.5 nmol/L.

More recently, two highly successful and important Australian public health campaigns were appropriately implemented, one was the "Breast is Best" campaign to encourage mothers to return to breast feeding, rather than providing infant formula feeding, and the other was the "Sun Smart" campaign, to protect the population from the harmful effects of excessive sun exposure. However, both these campaigns have major implications for the maintenance of vitamin D adequacy, particularly as breast milk is a poor source of vitamin D, although vitamin D supplementation in formula feeds of course does not negate all the other major benefits of breast feeding.

Australia is considered a "sunny country", so does not currently have national Vitamin D food fortification. Furthermore, developing a national vitamin D public health policy for pregnancy, infants and children in Australia, one of the most highly urbanised and multicultural continents globally, is complex. Since the abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973, there is now a broad spectrum of skin colouring from very fair to very dark within the population. Australia is also a large continent with latitudes ranging from 11° S in northern Australia to 43° S in Tasmania.

Increasing urbanisation has resulted in some families spending less time participating in outdoor activities, in favour of indoor and screen-based activities. This lifestyle is also likely to be contributing to the increasing incidence of obesity, which is yet another risk factor for vitamin D deficiency, across all age groups in Australia. Consequently balancing Australia's public health "Sun Smart" and "Breast is Best" messages with the prevention of vitamin D deficiency rickets remains irrefutably challenging.

An extract from the article "Nelfio Di Marco, Jonathan Kaufman and Christine P. Rodda Perspective Shedding Light on Vitamin D Status and Its Complexities during Pregnancy, Infancy and Childhood: An Australian Perspective *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2019, 16, 538"

To conclude, clearly heliotherapy has had its day, yet we need to remain mindful of the social and environmental contexts in which tuberculosis, nutritional deficiencies including vitamin D deficiency still affect those in poverty world wide.



# The Origin of

# ORIGINS

of the Universe, of Life, of Species, of Humanity

Tuesday 18 July 2023, Melbourne Recital Centre  
Heidelberg Choral Society



Jenny Graves

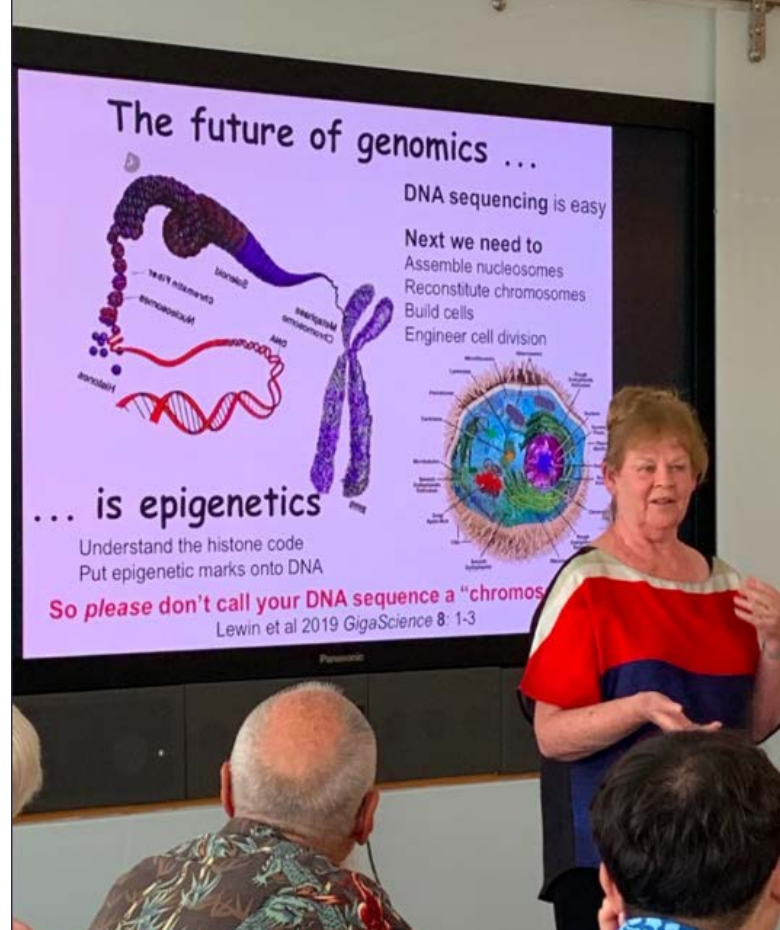
I am passionate about genetics and choral singing, and in both these spheres I often encounter – and sing with – staff and alumni from the Royal Children's Hospital. That's why fellow choristers Garry Warne and Neil Roy asked me to write a piece on a project that brings my two passions together, culminating in the July performance of a new oratorio expressing the creation story from Science. I'm not fantasizing – tickets just went on sale at <https://www.melbournerecital.com.au/events/2023/origins/>!



Each time I have sung Haydn's *The Creation* (one occasion pictured above), I have thought, "Somebody needs to update the Old Testament story of creation. Somebody should write a new creation story using the beautiful words and images from astronomy, from genetics and ecology, from anthropology."

But nobody ever did.

Well, maybe I could? The idea seemed preposterous twenty years ago, so I kept quiet. But it grew and grew as I read and re-read favourite books about the origin of species, the origin of life, the origin of the universe.



Then a few years ago, to my amazement and delight, the choir I sing in (Heidelberg Choral Society, HCS) performed a new work on the Vietnam war, using a libretto fashioned by chorister and poet Leigh Hay, with music commissioned from Nicholas Buc. Maybe Leigh could advise me? Maybe our conductor Peter Bandy would be interested? Maybe Nick Buc would be excited by the concept?

But when, how? Everyone is busy. Concerts were planned far ahead. And who was I, a humble alto with little formal musical training, to suggest something so revolutionary (and so expensive)? I foresaw rolling eyes and grumbles of "who does she think she is?"

Opportunity came unexpectedly last June with the announcement that the International Congress of Genetics meets in Melbourne in July 2023. This "Olympics of Genetics", will attract three or four thousand participants, and has a strong science in the public program.

It was now or never. I needed support from people who know more about music than I do. Convince them that my idea is interesting and worth exploring. Convince them that we can pull it off.

I was resolved. I would talk to Leigh Hay first; she is a published poet, she crafted the libretto for *When the bugle calls*, she'll know if it is a goer. I summoned the courage to seek her advice - the worst that could happen was that she would laugh uproariously. I suggested she come over to my place for a berry smoothie. "Industrial strength coffee," she insisted.



Left, Jenny and Leigh Hay singing in a citizenship ceremony

Right, the Origins team, Leigh, Nick Buc, Jenny and Peter Bandy



So in the cosy corner of the couch I took the first leap out of my comfort zone. I described my longing to create, and to sing a work that

celebrated the beautiful words and ideas of science. To explore the origins of the universe, of life, of species, of humanity in music.

Leigh didn't laugh. In fact, she looked as if she'd just unwrapped an unexpected and glorious present. Her face radiated acceptance and support. She got it immediately. Not only would she support and advise me, but she'd help write the libretto. This was so much more than I had dared to expect; I was overwhelmed.

Buoyed by Leigh's support, I resolved to contact our conductor, Peter Bandy. Could this be a big break for HCS? Or a road to ruin? Could he be confident that Leigh and I could produce a libretto, that HCS could commission marvellous music in time? That our choir could learn and perform a major new contemporary work next year? I suggested Peter come to lunch where I could break it to him gently.

Peter was bursting with curiosity when he appeared in Eltham. Over ciabatta rolls, cheeses and rosé, I described, somewhat more coherently, what had led me to propose creating and performing a new work. Peter looked absolutely dumbfounded, but right away I could see the wheels and gears furiously engaging in his imagination as he looked into the future and saw something that I had hardly dared to imagine – a major new secular work that would fill an oft-lamented hole in choral repertoire.

Now we needed a composer. I had already set my heart on talented young Nicholas Buc; I'd been impressed with his quick and imaginative – and musical and singable – score for *When the bugle calls*, and I liked that we had worked with him before.



Leigh had enthusiastically endorsed this choice, and unprompted, Peter said, "I think Nick Buc could compose a wonderful score. I wonder if he would be interested?" He dialled Nick, newly returned from New York. He was interested. Very.

The creative team lined up, I needed to garner support from the choir to perform it, and support from the International Congress of Genetics to stage it.

I called my old friend and ex-student Professor Phil Batterham, an evolutionary geneticist famous for staging exciting international events, who is co-convening the ICG meeting. A talented researcher, Phil is also an actor and theatre director, and he is serious about using the congress to bring science to the public. His reaction was immediate, positive, wholehearted.

Now I had something I could put before the choir. Uncertainties there were, but in my mind, we could count on a marvellous work and an enthusiastic audience. I wrote a one-page proposal to the HCS committee. The response was immediate, excited and warm (although the treasurer admitted that her brain was going into overdrive), and by June we had formal approval – and a date at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

But we didn't yet have an oratorio, or even a libretto. How to begin writing? Did I even know enough? I gathered hundreds of my beloved old books in stacks on chairs and the floor in my study (they are still there). They had seemed heavy reading when I bought them, over the decades – suddenly they were my old friends.

Should I write an outline? Or at least list the numbers by title? I'm not very good at outlines: I mean, I write a great outline but I don't follow it at all. The way I write a scientific piece (459 research articles and counting) is more like a plunge into the deep end of a pool and a frantic swim to safety; I start from the beginning and write furiously (24/7) till I get to the end. I know this style is frowned on, but I take courage from artist Jenni Mitchell: her first effort at my portrait was a greenish background with an orangish blob in the middle. "First I cover the canvas," she explained. I was thrilled – that's exactly what I do. Cover the canvas.

So I resolved to write a zeroth draft. I already had my beginning line and the ending. I would start by voicing the



miracle that is the evolution of the universe from nothing. "Nothing is not nothing..." (just typing those words makes my hair stand on end). And I would end with a line I first heard as the reply to a despairing cry of how puny and insignificant are humans within the cold, vast universe. "But man is the astronomer." We may be insignificant, but we can understand the universe, life and maybe even ourselves. I loved the circularity, starting with the universe and ending with humanity contemplating the universe and our place within it. Enormous but circumscribed.

So I started, as always, at the beginning. Seething nothingness, the wrinkle on the quantum quilt, the infinite expansion of our universe, the beauty of astronomical discoveries (oh, those stunning photos from the new James Webb telescope!), the hellish early earth, the pale blue dot seen from space "no bigger than Neil Armstrong's thumb" ...

Would I write in scientific language? Spare, concentrated, accurate. But forbidding to non-scientists.

Or verse? I have no experience writing poetry. Well, that's not quite true; as a teenager I wrote the only poem of my whole life. Written the night before the deadline, it won the school's major literature award, to everyone's surprise (especially mine). I found it online in the school magazine (1958 PGC in Adelaide), and was amazed at the consistency of my thinking over 65 years.

So I settled for verse, rough but full of words and images that had meaning for me. Heart in mouth, I sent my zeroth draft of the first few numbers to Leigh. I don't know what she expected. Maybe both of us thought that we'd have to write the whole libretto with dubious help /interference from the other; Leigh probably thought she'd have to translate scientese into understandable English and then fashion it into poetry. I thought I might get artsy criticism and severe editing of scansion, rhyme, alliteration, assonance...

It was neither of these. It was immediately the realest of real collaborations. A few days after I sent her my zeroth draft, back came Leigh's draft of the first number. She'd completely refashioned it, combining solos and chorus, integrating my description of the big bang and a paean about the beauty of simplicity of astronomy into a powerful opening blast of solo and chorus.

I was galvanised. Feeling Leigh close behind me panting for the next challenge, I went into my zeroth draft 24/7 mode, diving into the deep end. I hardly slept for a week; I'd gasp out some new idea at dinner and spring out of bed at 4am and scribble notes to myself.

Abandoning any pretence of an outline, I charged from Darwin's little warm pond where life began to the discovery of DNA, the immortal molecule of life, dramatising Watson and Crick's excited exchanges against a plaintive aria from Rosalind Franklin. To first

life (Australia boasts the oldest animal fossils as well as living stromatolites). To the flowering of life on earth, Darwin's beautiful description of the "tangled bank" and his grand idea of selection of the "fittest" (the strongest, the sexiest, the best adapted). The great principles of evolution, illustrated by Australian lyrebirds, ants, wallabies. Dramatising Darwin and his hilarious hecklers. And finally to the "third chimpanzee", the emergence of humanity, becoming the dominant mammal wreaking havoc on the natural world. And the finale. Could I end on a hopeful note with "Man is the Astronomer"?

I couldn't believe the way ideas and images came tumbling out. As though I'd been thinking and planning for a decade. Maybe I have. In little more than a week I nervously emailed the whole zeroth draft to Leigh, then retired to sleep it off for a month.

But a week later Leigh came back with an entire first draft. I was overwhelmed. Not only had she tamed my wild verse, but she had innovated, rearranged, rephrased. She had got it. The beauty and truths of astronomy, of evolution, the sadness of human self-destruction, the hope that science and understanding would triumph. I felt an immense bond.

Then the fun began. Leigh crafted my Dance of the Lyrebird into a sexy encounter between a frenetic male and a choosy female. I countered with the languid Ant Queen directing her sterile minions. We bounced ideas back and forth for a Gilbert & Sullivan-esque interaction between Watson and Crick, and our standoff between a calm Darwin and raucous hecklers.

And it was only July! With a complete first draft ready, we had time to sit back and think. We read it through, again and again and told each other, "It's profound, it's fun, it's dramatic, it's sexy." "It's beautiful!" I suggested a few rearrangements, Leigh suggested a few rearrangements, but the whole work didn't change much. We were both in love with it.

Down to the nitty gritty; words. I suggested new wording, Leigh suggested new wording. We both absolutely love words. We discussed final changes, and got hysterical over our favourite words ("skullduggery" was top). Working with ideas and words was pure joy. Working with Leigh was pure joy.

To quote the last line of the opening number, "The beginning has begun."

Now it is with the composer. I can hardly wait ...

**Professor Jenny Graves (AC, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and the US National Academy of Science, winner of L'Oreal-UNESCO and PM Prize for Science) has long associations with RCH staff who work on animal genomics, sex, chromosomes and epigenetics.**



# My art journey

Cliff Hosking

I have always had a passion for art. I began drawing when I could first hold a pencil. As a young lad, I would spend hours drawing and painting in a realistic manner. At primary school my favourite subject was art. I grew up in Queensland and still recall using Reeves Pastels on grey paper (Reeves Pastels are still around). For some strange reason my favourite subject was a 'Fairy Queen' drawn in pastel in profile with wings!

During childhood I loved comics - who of our generation could forget 'The Phantom - the Ghost Who Walks' or 'Captain Marvel'. Another of my art passions which combined my love of drawing with my love of comics, was copying the black and white illustrations in comics. This actually led to my first art sale at the ripe old age of eleven! I was sitting on a bench in a park and had a drawing I had just finished on the seat beside me and a man saw the drawing. He assumed I had traced it and when I told him I had drawn it he didn't believe me and said 'I will give you a shilling if you draw one for me' - which I did (and he did!)

My father was a science teacher and it's funny how blinkered one can be and I guess it is why so many children of doctors do Medicine. I signed up for a Science Degree being one of the few University courses I knew anything about and was all ready to go. About a fortnight before Uni started my brother's fiancée, who had just graduated in Medicine said - 'have you thought of doing medicine?' and extolled the virtues of the course and the profession.

Sounded good so I changed to Medicine and never regretted a minute of it. The day I started work as a resident I made a promise to myself that when I retired I would become an artist! Ah - such prescience.

During the last half of my Medical career I pursued my Art career with more vigour, attending workshops, taking part in exhibitions and practising, practising, practising. There is the basic knowledge of colour, tone and composition which every realist artist must know but watercolour is a much less forgiving medium than the opaque mediums like oils, acrylics and pastels. Much practice is required to be able to competently handle the variables such as the relative dampness of paper and the amount of pigment on a brush. However there is a certain magic in the way one can make the best use of the inevitable mistakes.



As many of you will have observed during Senior Staff Meetings (and other meetings), I spent much of the time sketching my fellow internees portraits. An interesting anecdote which highlighted my incompetence. Many will recall the Annual Quiz on the last Grand Rounds of the year. The organiser (Peter Campbell) came to see me in the weeks before and asked for one of those portraits. It appeared as a question "Who is this? and who drew it". Nearly everyone 'got' that I was the artist. However the portrait was decreed by Peter to be a certain staff member, which only about half the participants got right. However Peter's answer was wrong! (with 'no correspondence to be entered in to!') So I shut my trap and let everyone wallow in ignorance leaving me to wallow in lonely ignominy.

One of the unfortunate consequences of climbing the corporate ladder is that it is extremely hard to both Chair a meeting and sketch the participants. (notice that when I Chair, the people attending a meeting change from 'internees' to 'participants'!)

I worked as a Paediatric Immunologist and Chairman of the Pathology Division at the RCH from 1969 until

resigning in 1990 to move to Newcastle as Trish Davidson's husband. After a year of home duties and parenting I re-joined the medical workforce in the public system at the John Hunter Children's Hospital as an Immunologist/Allergist and a Medical Administrator. I finally retired from Medicine when I turned 70 and immediately expanded my already considerable art activities. I became Vice President of the Society of Artists Newcastle, had annual solo exhibitions and participated in several group exhibitions each year, until Covid. I taught watercolour painting for 20 years and still attend and help organise portrait and life-drawing groups

In the early part of my art career, during my learning phase I pretty well stuck with the standard fare of watercolourists, Seascapes, Landscapes, Figures in Landscapes and Still Life. The picture at the start of the article on the previous page is 'Figures in Landscape' of a grandmother and granddaughter on one of the beautiful Newcastle beaches - Redhead.

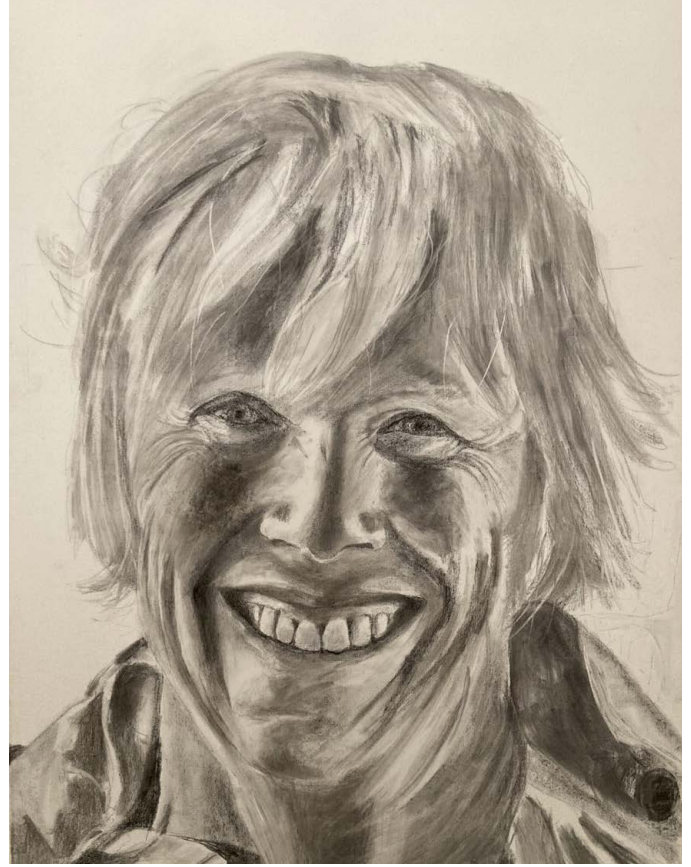
Whilst I usually paint in watercolour, I enjoy other mediums. This is a somewhat dramatic seascape I painted with pastels.



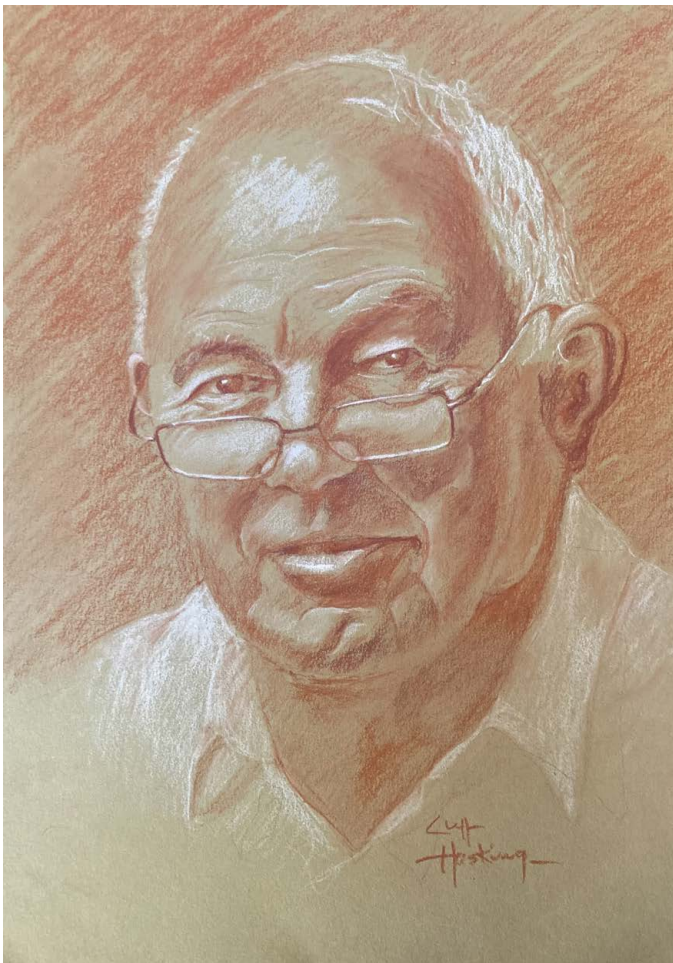




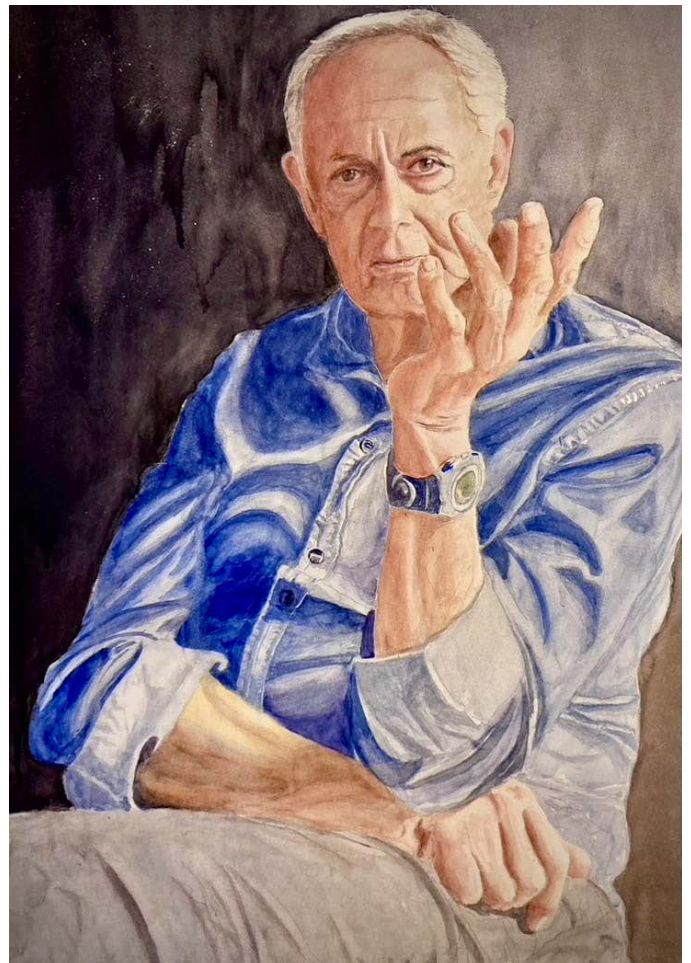
A large (100cm on the long side) red chalk drawing of my mother, Constance Enid Hosking - nee Hill.



A charcoal drawing of Trish Davidson, my wife



A red chalk portrait of the late Andrew Kemp, one of my Paediatric Immunology successors at the RCH.



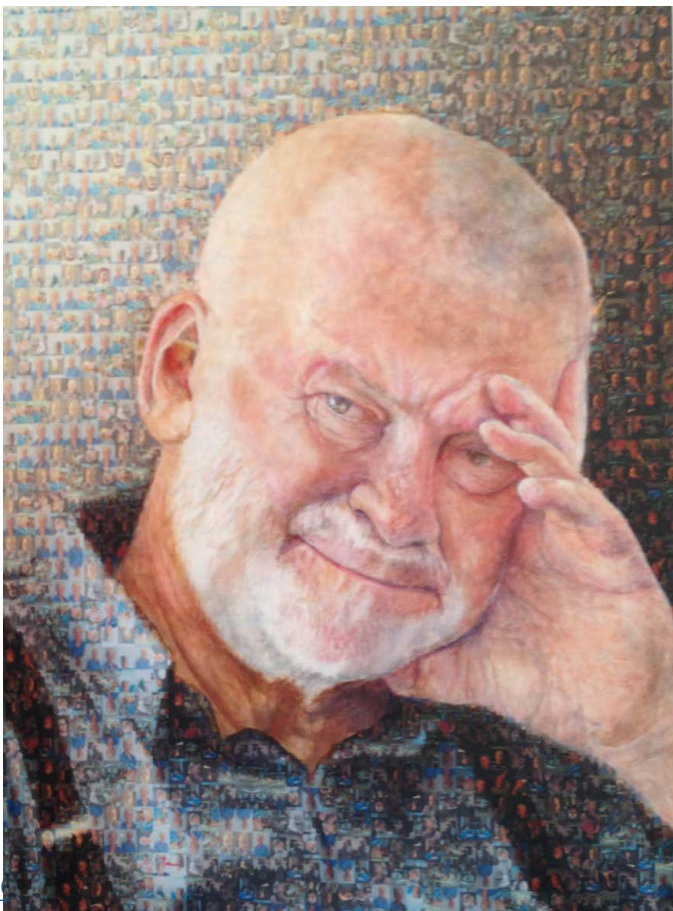
A watercolour portrait of David Hill, a valued colleague and friend whom many of you will know - this joined the long line of my portraits rejected by the Archibald Portrait Prize Selection Panel!





A wistful look on the face of my youngest daughter. Somewhat romantically, I called it "Looking to the Future" - she renamed it "Waiting for the Snow". Too literal these young people! This portrait was a finalist in the prestigious Kilgour Prize Exhibition.

A self portrait below (another Archibald reject!) - I have a number of self portraits - sitters don't come cheaper or with more patience!



During this latter part of my career I have been keen to push watercolour to its limits. I have learnt to paint watercolours on canvas (which handles differently from the more usual paper). As an interesting snippet of useless information - the French company which makes the paper I mainly use, Arches, started as a family company (in the town of Arches) when Columbus sailed the blue in 1492!

Over the last 10 years or so I have developed a technique that I call 'Watercolour Portrait Mosaics'. I start with a photographic image, a portrait, I then electronically place the portrait or portraits on to a relevant background. Using several hundred images, again relevant to the portrait's subject and with the help of a mosaic program I place the subject in a mosaic background. I then use Photoshop to remove the subject of the portrait and have the image printed on canvas, but with a blank space into which I paint the portrait.

An illustration of this, is the portrait of a previous President of the Newcastle Knights Rugby League Football Club. I obtained from the Newcastle Herald (local Newspaper) about 500 action images from past games and from those built up an appropriate background for the watercolour portrait. In real life the portrait is 100cm on the long side and the detail in the mosaic images can be discerned. I understand that Knight's fans are able to name the players in each of the 'tesserae'

Below, the watercolour portrait mosaic of a past President of the Newcastle Knights Football Club







Along the same lines, my daughter and son-in-law very proudly took 841 photos of their first child, my youngest grand-daughter in her first year. I was very chuffed when the nearly two year old by then (it is a slow process) seeing the image on Christmas day ran up to it and pointed out herself and family members (including Papa Cliff) - aaaaaahhh.

Only partly relevant to the subject at hand but I have been blessed throughout my life with loving parents and family - I have great relationships with all my 5 children and 10.7 grandchildren and now I live in a beautiful environment with a wonderful wife. The house that I live in could well be an art gallery - until now a distant dream of mine. I have very little in the way of poor health and am able to indulge my passions for gardening and hopefully, shortly for barbershop harmony singing again (it fell foul to Covid).

### Addendum

I decided at the start of writing this article, to experiment with one of the new AI programs - Chat GPT. The following part in 'bold' is the instructions I gave the program followed by the result. You may note some

degree of plagiarism in the main part of the article above - purely experimental - nothing to do with laziness!

**Write a story in the first person about a lad who was always an artist from a young age but became a doctor until he retired from medicine. He then became a professional artist and art teacher working in watercolour**

This is Chat GPT's version, which took about 10 seconds following typing in my instructions. Comments or corrections I have made are in italics

*As far back as I can remember, I was always drawn (I suspect this pun may have been an attempt by Chat GPT, at humour - groan!) to art. As a young lad, I would spend hours drawing and painting whatever came to mind. My parents were supportive of my passion, and they encouraged me to pursue it.*

*However, as I grew older, I began to realize that being an artist wasn't the most practical career choice. So, when it came time to choose a college major (University Degree), I decided to go into medicine. It wasn't my true passion, but I knew it would provide a stable income and a rewarding career.*



*For years, I worked as a doctor, helping people in need and saving lives. But there was always a part of me that longed to be creating art again. I would steal moments of time to paint or draw, but it never felt like enough.*

*Finally, after many years of working in medicine, I decided to retire and pursue my true passion. I enrolled in art classes, and it was like coming home. I found myself losing track of time as I painted and experimented with different mediums.*

*Eventually, I decided to become a professional artist and art teacher. I focused my energy on watercolors, and I found that the medium suited my style perfectly. I loved the way the colors would bleed and blend together, creating beautiful and unexpected results.*

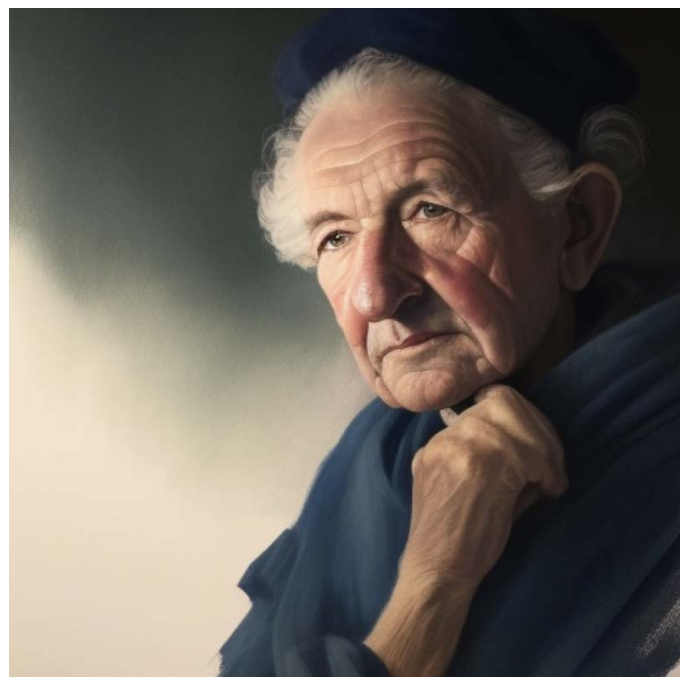
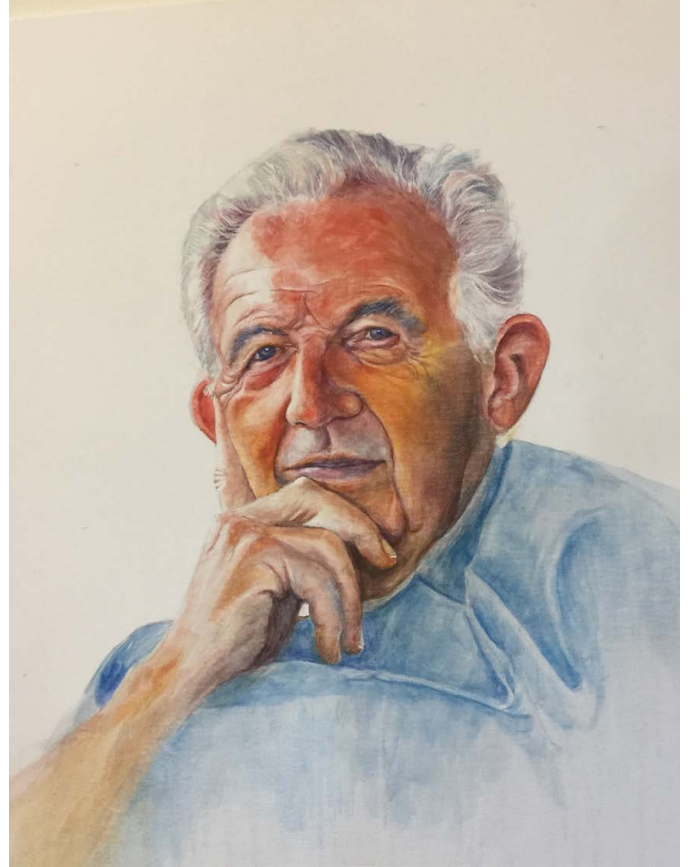
*As an art teacher, I found that my medical background gave me a unique perspective on the creative process. I encouraged my students to approach art with the same precision and attention to detail that I had learned in medicine. And I was thrilled to see their progress as they developed their own styles and techniques.*

*Now, as a successful artist and teacher, I can't help but reflect on my journey. While my career in medicine was fulfilling in its own way, I am grateful to have found my way back to my true passion. And I am grateful to be able to share that passion with others, helping them to discover their own creative paths.*

Along the same Contemporary AI lines -

Top right is my watercolour portrait of the retired Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Newcastle University, John Hamilton.

Bottom right is an interpretation of that painting by one of the burgeoning AI Art Programmes. The likeness is a pretty good one (mine of course is perfect!) but without giving specific style instructions it seems to have been done in the manner of a Rembrandt self portrait. I suspect that the program recognised 'Rembrandtian' skills in my portrait as it sorted through the millions of art works on the internet trying to find an appropriate style!





# My drumming days

Jeff Prebble

As a young child, I had a passion for playing the drums. Initially two spoons on a chair but eventually a drum, then later a drum kit.



In the '80s, I was now a paediatrician in Toowoomba. The Hospital produced a Review. A few of us formed a rock band and performed. We dressed up to look the part.



In primary school, I travelled 20 km by bus to receive lessons. My first professional performance was at the Manly Hotel when aged 12 years.

In the early '60s, I joined a jazz band, playing at weddings, parties and balls. In the late '60s, I joined a rock band. We played at lots of hotel gigs as well as parties. At one time we were the resident rock band at the National Hotel, Brisbane.

After Uni graduation there was no time to be an RMO and in a band.

In 2004, with six other Toowoomba medicos, we formed a rock band, "The Heartbeats" (pictured across the top of the article). While not looking great, and not sounding terrific; we were popular as we didn't charge for functions! We mainly played for charity dinner dances.

Sadly as we grew older, we tired of the regular practices and to be honest frequently forgot what arrangement we had decided just one week previously! Today I just have little jam sessions playing to recorded music. I have thoroughly enjoyed my drumming and it has given me a great appreciation of real musicians.

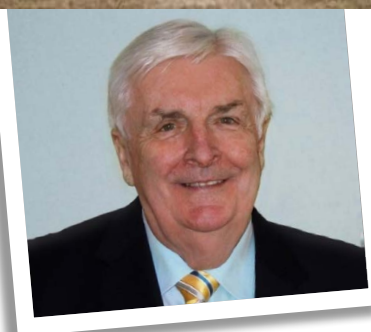






## My painting

Jim Breheny



I had never had any thought that I may be good at drawing or painting. I had grown up in a home that held few original paintings, but I was very admiring of those who could do well in the graphic arts. My mother was good at drawing, and she excelled in copperplate writing. She was rightly acclaimed for her writing and won prizes for her work in that art.

I was busy with work in the mid 1970s but for some reason I was encouraged by my wife and others to try out taking watercolour classes with Reg Cox who was a professional artist in the style of Reginald Sturgess of the Heidelberg school. To my surprise and delight I showed some ability and skill under his tuition. I attended weekly classes on a Friday night and did some paintings that were OK.

In 1977 I had one of my efforts framed and entered it in The Herald Outdoor Art Show which was held in January each year in the Treasury Gardens. It was a scene of the South Beach Mount Martha where we had a home and a boat shed. My pic sold on the first day.

A few weeks later I received a letter in the mail "Dear Artist", we would like you to enter your work in the Keilor Rotary Art Show on Queens Birthday weekend in June. Six works could be entered and one had to be a picture of an historic building in the area. I agreed and submitted six paintings for sale. To my surprise, I sold five and had a commission for a duplicate of my historic home.

From then on, I was a regular successful contributor to Rotary art shows.

In 1978 I was a successful entrant in the Camberwell Rotary Art Show and consequently I was invited to become a member of the Australian Guild of Realist Artists. This was all very good for my self-satisfaction, confidence and self-esteem.

I have sustained my interest and practice of painting ever since. I feel at ease, happy and comfortable whilst enjoying the challenge and then quite chuffed if the product meets or exceeds expectations. If the result is pleasing, I ask myself "did I really do that"?

I have held a few demanding jobs over the years and art provides a relaxing escape. I just do it when I feel like doing it. Sometimes I am driven by a deadline for an Art







Show but mostly for enjoyment and relaxation. I think that the “discovery” of a new talent makes me a better and more interesting person.

My family and a few friends know that I paint but it is really just a private matter.

I have never had a solo exhibition and I have never publicised the availability of the results of my hobby.

I have sold or given away more than 300 paintings . Those that sold were priced \$150.00 to \$500.00.

I am confident of my worth and I recognise my luck in having some worthwhile achievements over a long career, but I am no one of particular importance.

I am happy to be just Jim, Dad, or Darling as a very fortunate husband of 62 years. Maureen and I have three children and eight grandchildren.

If I am sometimes asked “ why do you paint?”, my reply is usually to say that I once tried and found that I am OK.

I encourage anyone interested to “give it a try”; you do not know your talent unless you test it.

I mainly paint landscapes, seascapes, buildings, houses and a few horses. I am tempted but I have not completed any portraits.





# Storyworth

Trish Davidson

When I was younger, we had a family tradition of listening to 'desert stories'. The name implied two things, the story was told after dinner when the adults in the family had enjoyed some sherry ['dessert' stories] but also because my father [Dr Robbie Davidson] went to war as a 1st year intern in the Royal Army Medical Core and at one point participated in the battle of El-Alamein, hence 'desert' or stories from the past.

So grew my fascination with Family History and where people came from and what their life journey looked like. I collated photos, information, sorted out cousins from second cousins twice removed and many other tangles. Not just the Davidsons but for Cliff Hosking and his family. I am now the holder of family lore, all care and no regret if sometimes the information is more memory than absolute historical accuracy.

A couple of years ago as I was investigating Cliff's family, I was asked how others could share in this journey of discovery. Given that I have written a thesis, multiple articles, papers and book chapters I realised that my strengths lie in writing not in painting! It was during this time I came across 'Storyworth' ([storyworth.com](https://storyworth.com)).

This is a US-based web site that featured in the New York Times as a process to record stories and produce a book. This is what the web site says: *'Feel connected to loved ones: Weekly stories help you stay connected to your loved ones over any distance. Preserve your memories: Keep a memoir of the past to pass on to future generations. Learn about people that matter; Discover things you never knew about your family, and grow closer together'*. This looked like a way of recording Cliff's information that I could manage as enthusiast.

The way it worked was that you pay for a subscription that enrolls an individual. In my case, I purchased a 12 month subscription for Cliff Hosking which then generated a series of weekly questions delivered by e-mail to the person whose story you wish to record.

The format was either a pre-determined question suggested by Storyworth e.g., what memories do you have of childhood? or what fascinated you as a child? Then for later in life, who inspired you? or what have you changed your mind about?

It was possible to create your own questions e.g. Why did you become Australia's first Paediatric Immunologist, who are your favourite artists and why?

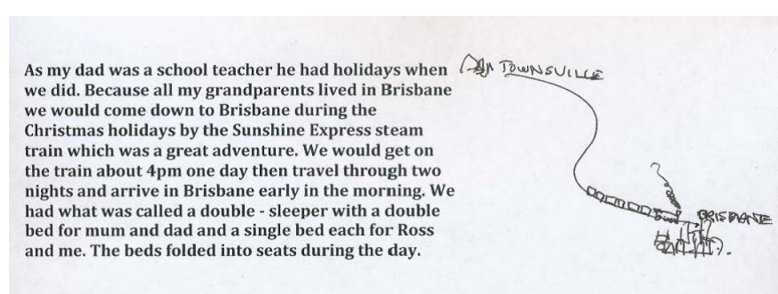
Thus, slowly over the year the stories and memories come together. Of course some discipline is required to reply to the email each week but as long as the individual

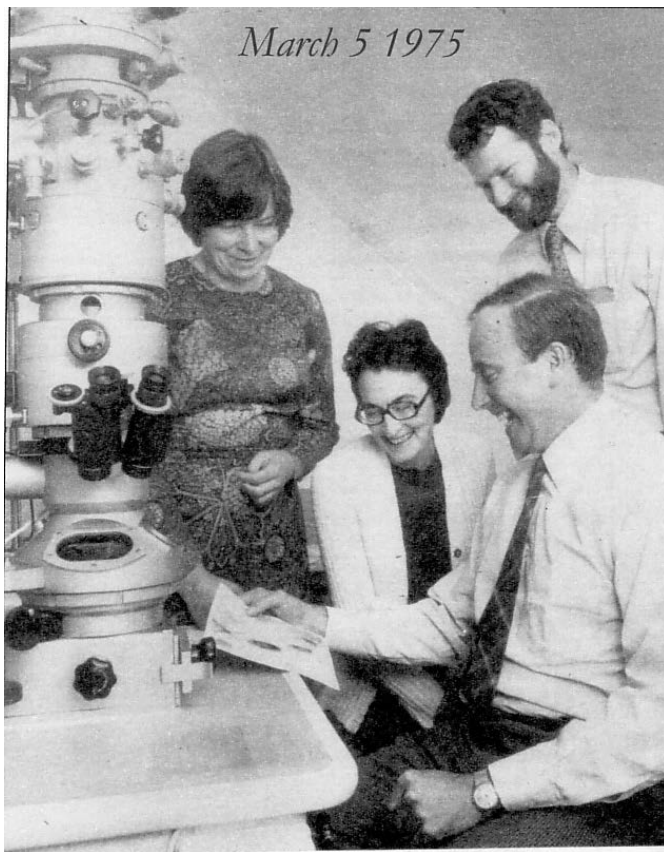


recognised the purpose it is only a page a week or so [of course you can write a thesis if you wish!].

At the end of 12 months, you finalise the weekly submissions and the first author proofs are available for on-line editing. Fortunately, I had given Cliff his subscription for Christmas 2020 and so the proofs arrived Christmas 2021- mid-COVID, which allowed for the time to edit and consider content [who or what did you forget and maybe what might need a little explanation].

One of the appealing processes is that you can include images and for Cliff this was crucial. Everything from hand-drawn memories of childhood (one example below) through to early memories at the Royal Children's Hospital (see next page).

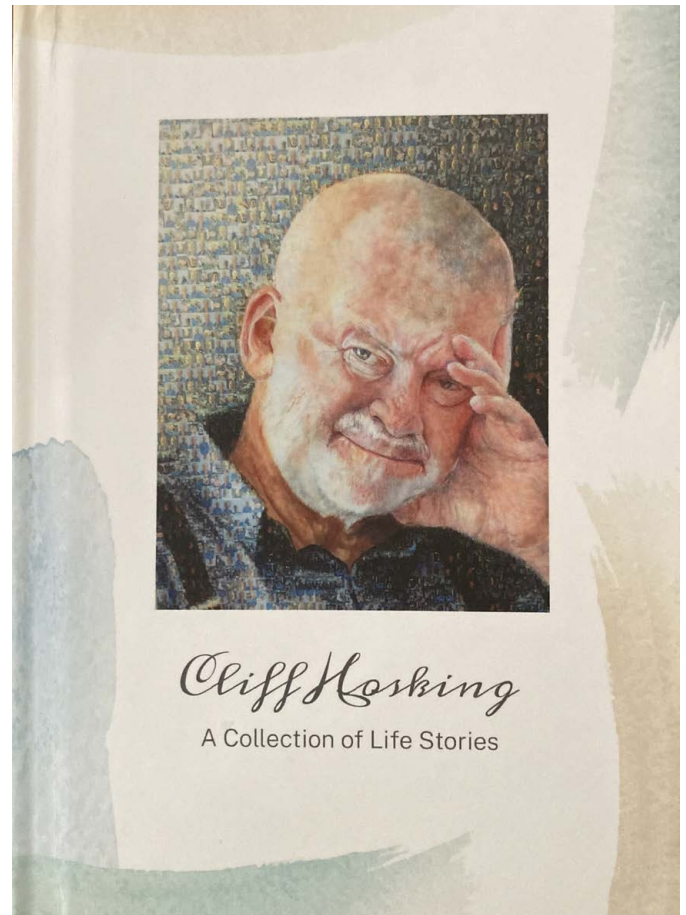




*The doctors who saved Karen Tyler — (from left) Dr Margot McIver, Dr Kathleen Hayes, Dr Jack Hobbs, and Dr Cliff Hosking — around the Royal Melbourne Hospital electron microscope.*

Of course when the images are inserted this materially impacts spacing, pages etc but fortunately I was happy to spend time making sure we didn't end up with one word over the page.

The final stages are to print out a PDF, at home, to review for final checks and then finalise the work. Storyworth software then collates and creates a book. This is viewed on-line and then an 'author-proof' copy of the book is



posted to you so that you can see the final product. If satisfied you finalise on-line and either order more or in our case 6 copies were included in the subscription. These arrived a few weeks later.

Thus, Cliff's collection of life stories came into being. It was a time of joy, laughter and sharing for us both. The family Christmas presents for 2022 were easily sorted and the book sits on the shelves for anyone to browse.



## Creative interventions at the Royal Children's

Elizabeth Loughlin

As a social worker and dance teacher, finding work that encompasses both fields would be unusual. When I applied for the 12-hour social work appointment in endocrinology, Garry Warne was interested in my career as a studio creative dance teacher.

He asked, as well individual counselling of families, taking groups, and work with the support groups, could I take small groups of adolescents using dance.



The endocrine support groups were a special feature of the endocrine department. I was appointed and very soon I was meeting the Turner syndrome support group committee for their regular evening meeting and timetabling. Garry introduced me and said they might like to try out the dance as another way to look at their issues.

I looked for a large space that could be cleared. The Ella Latham meeting space in front of the theatre was available. There was staff to move the chairs and the partitions to define a large space. We set the dates. I brought my Hi Fi and the music tapes. This was 1989. It was a success. The group ran annually for 9 years. I learned much about the subtle difficulties in the syndrome.

Dance is movement of the body in space with form and rhythm and the expressive quality. For those with Turner syndrome I was aware that the space chosen was large, especially for people who felt more comfortable talking in small groups.

To start, I used a Bach piece for the group to stride out in a horizontal line holding hands, with me in the middle to set the pace.

Each week we started with the movement line and then would move on to more fluid movement forms.

Sometimes we would make a creative stop – an individual stands, throws a white cotton 1.5 metre rope high into the air, and watches it fall into a creative shape. Then makes their own matching shape. The others stand against the wall and watch.

Interest by the Turner group increased. In 1991, the President of the Turner Syndrome Melbourne group and I went to the International Turner contact group meeting in Zaragoza where I spoke of the Melbourne activities and showed a video of the Melbourne group.

At the next international meeting in Canada there was increased participation from Victorian members - about eight Turner women attended and one family.

The women's group finished, and a group of adolescents who attended the Clinic, some from Country Victoria, came to RCH on Saturdays for Creative interventions. Dance, clay masks, and 3 D 'placements' offered the 'data' for thinking about the future. I would ask: What stands out for you; what do you notice now, and similar perceptual questions.

Their work was shown in a beautiful poster of a dancer flying across the space with a study about their preoccupations printed below the image.

The work in the support groups had become part of the clinic.

A flyer 'Ask your doctor about our Growth Groups' with a picture of three giraffes on the outside was given to selected children aged 7-12 years from the Growth Clinic. It was a once off group with the social worker and growth nurse introducing activities that reflected growth themes through movement.

Activities included walking in different ways to the drum; stepping from hoop to hoop on the floor; stretching up high. Also making a mural about the bully or teasing words the children were often called. The children wrote the words on a long piece of paper.

The Growth Hormone nurse supervised them while they practised putting an 'injection' into Teddy's arm.

'Growth Groups' ran three times a year with different children. The emphasis was on the movement. It was easily liked.

The third group of adolescents and young adults had Prader Willi Syndrome. The regular meeting of younger families was located in the nurse meeting rooms before they attended clinic. The young people met at a different time in the school holidays, for creative interventions and talking to each other. Two movement sequences stand out. The individual young person's steady movement dancing down the diagonal line, clapping the music sticks into a regular rhythm while the others watched. A different movement of pulling and pushing the rope while in the circle, exciting but hard to engage the body to do this action.

Four social workers had training in creative arts therapy and we formed a Creative intervention group team to exchange ideas. We presented at conferences and taught Creative interventions in the Melbourne University Social Work course. The theoretical, practice and research process we followed was phenomenological techniques. It was direct way to approach the serious issues and to have some joy while dancing. The dance therapy intervention was based on an aesthetic of dance and music.

**Elizabeth Loughlin worked for 20 years at RCH**



# Reverie at Port Lincoln

Alan Woodward

In 2023 the Australian Sailing National Keelboat Championships were held at Port Lincoln in the west of South Australia on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain. So in February Reverie, a Beneteau First 45 sailing yacht sailed out of the Port Phillip Heads and turned right heading for Adelaide. After 4 days sailing over 500 miles through Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean Reverie reached safe harbor at the Royal South Australian Yacht Club in Port Adelaide.

The full racing crew arrived in Adelaide to bring the numbers to 11 for the 150-mile race from Adelaide to Port Lincoln. I sail the boat with my son Michael and most of the crew have sailed with me for 30 years. Some of Australia's best yachts and sailors had come for the Lincoln Regatta, an event held over several races.

The first race from Adelaide to Port Lincoln sees the boats race through the night traversing Investigator Strait and Spencer Gulf through strong tidal waters with rocks and reefs lurking just below the surface.

At night moonlight shimmers on the white foam of waves breaking on the rocks, so no sleep for the navigator. In 1802 the famous navigator Matthew Flinders came along this path to make the first sea charts and now we follow his voyage with the advantage of our electronic charts on the iPhone.



Reverie managed a 3rd place in the long race and celebrated with a long outdoor lunch at the 1802 Oysterbeds restaurant overlooking the beach and the azure waters of Coffin Bay.

Monday saw the start of the inshore racing on Boston Bay at Port Lincoln. We left the marina in a relaxed mood with the boat set up for light wind sailing in calm water. Then everything changed.

A long horizontal cigar shaped cloud came rolling over the Matthew Flinders monument on the hills to the West and strong winds turned Boston Bay into a maelstrom of churning white water.

We had to rapidly adapt to the sudden weather change and balance racing with safety. Shortly after the start of the yacht race a chilling Mayday call came over our VHF radio.

One of the yachts had lost a man overboard. He had fallen to hit his head and was swept overboard unconscious into the water. Rescue boats were near at hand to bring him quickly out of the water and an





ambulance was waiting at the dock. Despite this he could not be resuscitated, and further activity was cancelled that day. The loss of a fellow sailor is a very unusual event and the mood of the regatta on day 1 was very sombre and reflective.

Early on the next morning all competitors in the regatta were called together for debriefing on the circumstances of the fatal accident. The sailor's family had been in close discussion overnight and had decided that the regatta should restart. Andrew McLeod had been a passionate sailor and his family gave their consent for the regatta to continue.

With mixed feelings we set out for day 2 of the regatta. The winds were still very strong and we raced the boat safely at 75% of its capacity and still performed surprisingly well against talented competition. Over the final two days of the regatta the wind settled down and we were able to race the boat to its full capacity and we improved our results to take second in the Australian Sailing National Keelboat Championships.



Some people might say that after nearly 40 years as a surgeon at Royal Children's Hospital a quiet retirement would be in order. Racing a yacht in competitive and difficult circumstances would not be the expected way to go. I must say that after my recent experience I would agree that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak".

Even more so that after the end of a hard regatta we had to sail the boat home through 600 miles of dangerous seas. Well Reverie is now safely home at Royal Brighton Yacht Club.

When to ease up and lead a quieter life? Well, Dylan Thomas had his view.

"Do not go gentle into that good night. Old age should burn and rave at close of day. Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Well, perhaps Dylan Thomas is not the best source of retirement advice. Maybe keep going while you can but work respectfully with the wind and waves.

**Alan Woodward worked as a consultant paediatric surgeon at RCH from 1978 until 2016**

# Our “write a story in six words” competition

## The Editor’s challenge:

Kevin Collins found the following in the Good Food section of The Age newspaper: “It’s a well-known theory that limitation is a useful tool when it comes to creativity. First-year film students are often restricted from using dialogue; and there’s a legend that a bet among Ernest Hemingway and friends that he could not write a story using only six words resulted in the devastating, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

We challenged our Alumni members (and any other readers of Aluminations) to rise to the same challenge: write a story in six words.

## Entries

### Neil Roy

- I love skydiv...
- Wartime weekend leave; therefore I am.
- Mariupol rubble cleared; a blood-soaked doll.
- Hole in one! Ecstasy!! Lightning!!! Paradise.

### James Breheny

- Bright idea, only once, never more.

### Spencer Beasley

- “He kissed. She woke. Spell broken”
- “Slow children crossing”. Must improve education.

### Henry Ekert

- When hope is dying optimism may triumph.

### Bob Adler

- I came, I saw but I didn’t conquer.

### Anonymous

- Nice view. Oops. Scrambled Eggs. Yummy

### Avihu Boneh

- AND THEN, THERE WERE ONLY VIRUSES

### Garry Warne

- Firing squad! How’d I get here?

### Michael Harari

- Bird singing; in the black predawn

### Ruben Warne (aged 11)

- There was a boy, he died.

### Leigh Hay (poet)

- Luggage prefers  
Alternative holiday  
Still flying.
- Full moon  
Phone rings  
Dog Pound.
- Big Bang  
The beginning  
Has begun.
- Altos, basses,  
Tenors, sopranos,  
Harmony hopeful.
- Dry towel  
Deserted beach  
Missing Person.
- Dry towel  
Deserted beach  
Another victim?
- Bride jilted  
No show  
Flat battery.
- Surgery calls  
Make appointment  
Don’t delay.
- Cryptic crossword  
Memory loss  
No clue.

### Trish Davidson

- Purpose, autonomy, mastery, expertise, finish, next.

### Dan Warne

- Lonely astronaut, final transmission: “earth vanished”.
- Rupert Murdoch. Married, Divorced. Rinse, Repeat.

### Mike South

- Lost control, sharp words, irreparable damage.



## Kevin Collins & Associates

### *Antidote to Hemingway*

- First steps. Proud parents. Infinite potential.

### *Optimism*

- Tried. Failed. Regrouped. Conquered. Celebrated.
- Lost my job, found my purpose
- Darkness engulfed, light emerged, hope appeared

### *Tragedy*

- He loved her. She didn't. End.
- Promises broken. Trust shattered. Alone again.
- Shattered glass. Blood stains. Unforgivable mistake.

### *Mundane*

- Rainy day. Umbrella at home. Drenched.
- Boulangerie ouverte. Croissants chauds. Bon matin.

### *Mystery*

- Phone rang. It was the abyss.
- "Secrets discovered!" He fled at once.

### *Quirky*

- Chicken and egg ordered. First arrival?
- "Molly" leaned ladder. Later landed. Learned?

### *Not a story - just a sign-off*

- Lost: one mind. Reward if found.

## Tali Boneh (wife of Avihu)

### *Horror:*

- He saw the light fade away.

### *Hopeful:*

- He saw the darkness fade away.

### *Apocalyptic:*

- The cure was almost in reach

### *Love:*

- This time she walked towards him.

### *Revenge:*

- Revenge better served cold, he thought.

## Liz Williams

- Impossible imbroglio, climate ends, the end.

## Bev Touzel

- After his funeral awoke feeling hot.

## Judging and awards

In acknowledgment of the large number of entries and the level of interest, the Editor decided to invite two impartial judges – a retired literary editor and a retired architect – to award first, second and third places.

Our judges wrote: "What an interesting array of tiny stories! It's hard to create something that qualifies as a story in only six words when so much has to be left unsaid, but carefully chosen imagery and evocative words - their meaning, rhythm and sound - can be enough to trigger the reader's emotions and imagination to infer or invent the rest."

Our choice for first was No.18, by Leigh Hay (a friend of Neil Roy's from Heidelberg Choral Society)

Dry towel  
Deserted beach  
Missing Person.

Judges' comment: "Crisp imagery sets the scene and the thud of the Ds and the loneliness of the deserted beach gain chilling impact from the final words, which bring mystery, fear and horror with the thoughts of possible endings".

Second, no. 9, by Avihu Boneh:

AND THEN THERE WERE ONLY VIRUSES.

Judges' comment: "The spare prose and emphasis on 'only viruses' at the end of this powerful story conjure up a nightmarish vision of the destruction of humanity, a bleak uninhabited world and a sci-fi future".

Third, no. 14, also by Leigh Hay

Luggage prefers  
Alternative holiday  
Still flying.

The judges commented "This quirky, humorous story makes light of a common predicament with the nice twist of animate, rebellious luggage making the choices. We think of previous planning and packing, then a circling empty airport carousel, disappointment and inconvenience, while the new decision-maker happily travels on".

Congratulations to Leigh and Avihu, the winners of our prize (some chocolate frogs) and thanks to all participants. Thanks also to our wonderful judges, Jane and Henry Drury.