

December 2013 | January 2014

50something

AUSTRALIA'S WIDEST CIRCULATING OVER-50S MAGAZINE

Happy Summer Christmas!

Valli Little Cooks for the Climate

New Beginnings

Finding Love at Sixty

Annuities

All You Need to Know

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Five Favourite Walks



Bob McTavish

"Riding a wave is still a wonderful thing"

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50something

AUSTRALIA'S WIDEST CIRCULATING OVER-50S MAGAZINE

18 Shaping Up

Surfing comes full circle for legendary larrikin surfer and shaper Bob McTavish. By Rosemary Desmond.

20 In Love & Loving It

Older Australians are finding intimacy in social clubs, through friends and online, says researcher Sue Malta.

24 The Incredible Journey When Gerald Davis boarded a bus for Bombay in 1966 he never thought he'd be writing about it 50 years later.

28 Annuities 101 They may promise a steady retirement income but what are the downsides to annuities? Craig Hall explains.

30 Agony Planner Struggling with superannuation, pensions or property investments? iPac finance expert, Colin Lewis, has the answers.

32 Mens Business Erectile dysfunction is much more than a problem in bed, writes Professor Doug Lording.

First Up

9 Letters

12 News

14 Executive Diary

16 Campaigns

Epicurean

35 Books & Movies

36 Top Shelf Stylist Sibella Court draws inspiration from the Turkish coast, the Galapagos Islands and Byron Bay.

38 Summer Christmas ABC *Delicious* food editor Valli Little rethinks the traditional Christmas dinner.

40 Going Walkabout Nature-lover Liz Ginis shares her top five Australian walks.

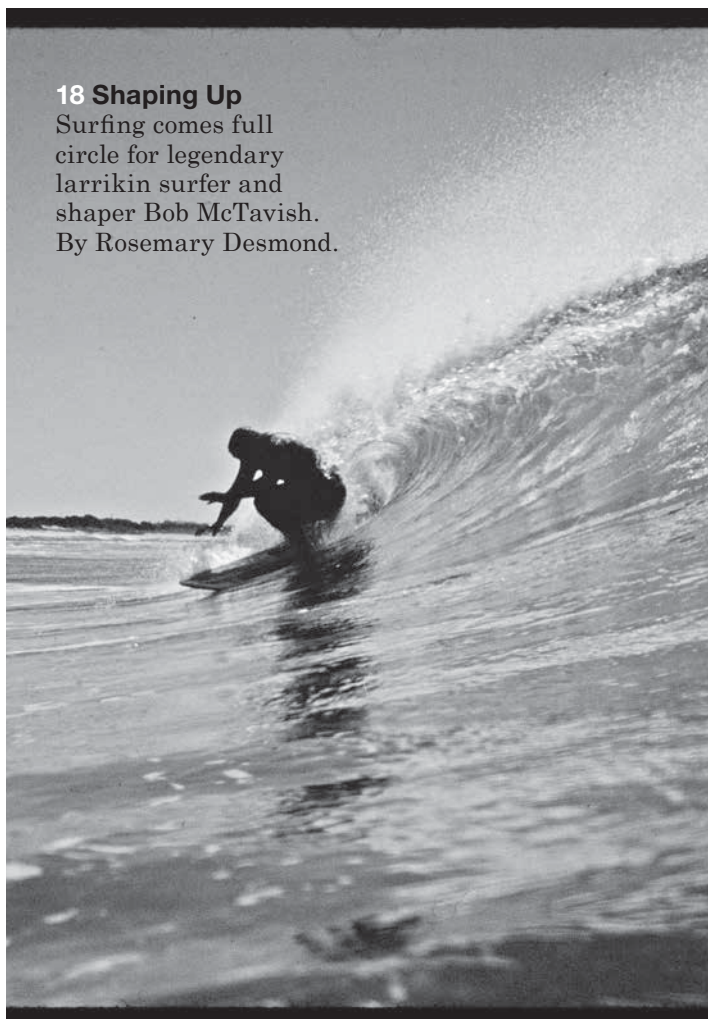
Time Out

44 Tech Spec Filing photos

46 Yachting Sydney to Hobart

48 Puzzles

50 The Last Word Vale David Deans





Throw open the windows, let the summer in. Breathe the sea air, smell the frangipanis and sway to the cicadas at dusk. It's Christmas and the year is drawing to a close.

This issue is about the now, about living for the moment. Legendary surfer Bob McTavish, still rocking it at Byron Bay, will inspire you to wax up that longboard languishing in the dark recesses of the garage (page 18). Valli Little, ABC *Delicious* food editor, will entice you into the kitchen – for but a moment – with a light Christmas berry pavlova (page 38).

And bush walker Liz Ginis will lead you gently along Australia's craggy coastal paths (page 40). For romance, researcher Sue Malta knows exactly where everyone's going and what they're doing (page 20). And for lessons in style, Sibella Court is the master (page 36). From Galapagos to Turkey, then back home to your very own front steps – style is free, it's fresh, it's all around you. It is what makes you happy. Enjoy your summer.

Sarah Saunders
Editor

contributors



Associate Professor Doug Lording B.Med.Sci. MBBS FRACP is an endocrinologist and andrologist in private practice at Cabrini Hospital, Melbourne. He is also a board member of Andrology Australia, a Melbourne-based government-funded centre for male reproductive health.



Experienced walker Liz Ginis also writes for Australia's leading outdoor, adventure and geographical magazines. A mother of two young daughters, she shares her love of the outdoors with them: escaping into the bush or to the beach to set up a tent and roam free, unencumbered by electronic gadgetry.



Sibella Court is an interior stylist, owner of Society Inc and author of the bestselling and award-winning books *Etcetera*, *The Stylist's Guide to NYC*, *Nomad*, *Bowerbird*. She creates commercial interiors in Australia and internationally, holds regular workshops and is also a contributor to leading interior and fashion magazines.



Sue Malta is a sociologist and researcher. She was a plenary speaker at last year's national Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) conference and a keynote speaker at this year's South Australian AAG conference. She is co-editor of NEXUS, the Sociological Society's newsletter and a Victorian AAG Executive Committee member.



Rosemary Desmond is a member of the National Seniors public affairs team. Originally from New Zealand, Rosemary has worked in Australia for over 30 years, most of that time as a journalist for Australian Associated Press in Sydney and in Brisbane.



Henry Tung is *50 something's* regular Tech Spec columnist. Henry has taught computers in NSW high schools for about 15 years and is now the IT manager for the Anglican Technical College Western Sydney. Henry prefers cycling and hiking to computers.



Casey-Ann Seaniger is a member of the National Seniors public affairs team. Hailing from North Queensland, Casey completed a Bachelor of Journalism (Hons) from James Cook University and is a former News Limited journalist. Casey enjoys writing about social affairs, cultural issues and sport.

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The journey of life

Having twice faced “the last months of life” (“In sickness & in health”, *50 something*, Oct/Nov 2013), my wife and I have a tale to tell. Catastrophic trauma, heroic surgery, and infection over the age of 65 twice led us to being told to go home.

Initial emotion and confusion quickly changed to hopelessness. Anger, anguish, unfairness quickly waned, and hopelessness returned. Financially we were comfortable self-funded retirees. Years ago wills, powers of attorney, and even funerals had been signed, sealed, and paid...yet hopelessness remained. Health insurance was in place, life still seemed hopeless.

As a couple we grew closer, learning advanced skills in being mutually supportive, less demanding, more aware and empathetic, even enhancing time apart. We became increasingly aware of each other's needs, all time was valuable, the dog was a further bond. Hopelessness slowly faded as reality matured, things were planned but with a short horizon. Though antipathetic to organised religion, faith grew with frequent, if neither regular or all-embracing, discussions with a higher being – definitely a “she”.

Eventually we dismissed the instruction about going home to die with the comment “I will die, but in my own time”.

Years have passed. All of the above remain clear in our memories, life is good. Love and mutual respect are indomitable, the more we share, the greater the prize, and the fear or terror merges into the shadows. Death is not avoided but delayed.

Peter Talbot
Golden Valley Tas

Helfgott “shines”

What a joy to read Rosemary Desmond's article, “Piano Man” (*50 something*, Oct/Nov 2013). If ever we need to be reminded of the healing power of love and music, we need look no further than the life of gifted pianist David Helfgott. While a cruel mental illness crippled him for many years, David Helfgott's passion and extraordinary musical talents never abandoned him. And, along with the love of his wife Gillian, it probably saved him. I will never forget seeing the Oscar-winning film *Shine*, and sometime later, sitting breathless in a concert hall listening to a David Helfgott live performance – truly music from the heart for the soul.

Judith Caine
Donvale Vic

Wheelchair volunteers

I was pleased to read of the Perth project, ‘Wheelchairs For Kids’, in David Carvosso's “Last Word” (*50 something* Oct/Nov). I can add little to the well-presented summary by David other than to confirm the work of this incredible team of volunteers.

When visiting family in Perth, I have always found time to call on the Wheelchairs For Kids workshop and have, over the years, noted the ongoing development of the wheelchair that has produced an unorthodox well-tested design that satisfies the need in developing countries.

My interest in wheelchairs is through my Rotary activities in Brisbane that sends donated health and education items to the Pacific Islands. Regrettably, many second hand wheelchairs we receive are well past their best days and W4K certainly offers a reliable alternative.

My visit in March saw more than 20 senior volunteers each with their own area of expertise happily producing a well-designed wheelchair. A good example of satisfying work after retirement.

Bill Waterfield
Kenmore Q

Reform the Senate

Augustus' comments on the need to reform the senate voting system struck a real chord with me (*50 something*, Oct/Nov 2013).

In the week leading up to the election I was made aware of the fact that because of deals done with and between minor parties, voting 1 “above the line” could see my vote going to a party whose views I actually disagreed with.

I did some research online and, thanks to the ABC, found a list of ALL the preference allocations for ALL the parties on the Queensland ballot paper. I was horrified to see how random many of the minor party preferences were. I realised that numbering below the line was the only way to be sure that my vote meant what I wanted it to mean.

In the final few days, I was busy lobbying work colleagues and family members to do the same. And on election day, for the first time ever, I numbered my ballot paper from 1 to 92.

Of course we need to reform the system. A system that so poorly reflects people's wishes is not democratic. It merely rewards politicians who are willing to deal with anyone – of any political persuasion – in order to get elected. Will they have the courage to put self-interest aside, and consider change? It would be good to think so.

Mary Tibben
Toowoomba Q

Augustus mentions the minority government and our being in election mode for three years. We had a similar situation in the Northern Territory when Gerry Woods used his balance of power to maintain the ALP in government for a similar period of time. He did an excellent job and one condition was for the government to serve its full term, which it honoured. We even knew the date of the election years ahead. I have to say that the Territory politicians, government and media handled this situation in a far superior manner to that demonstrated in the federal equivalent.

Richard Tucker
Alice Springs NT

Whingeing

I agree with the sentiment of those recent letters that point out the large amount of complaining done by seniors (and others) these days. Having recently done a lot of travel in Australia, we came across many well-heeled travellers with very expensive outfits who proudly stated they free-camped to avoid park fees but were here in the park for one night to use the washing machines. These same people also constantly complained about the price of fuel and shopping in the small country towns.

Then there is the whinge by Augustus on the political scene. Sounded like a politician who was in danger of losing his seat because voters gave preferences to others. Isn't that what our system is all about? And what is wrong with a minority government? It is a normal system in most countries and provides for better representation of views of the voters than a single party-controlled parliament.

Michael Kuilboer
Mitchelton Qld

Not so selfish

I wanted to reply to Gillian Rayner's letter (Oct/Nov 2013) titled "Selfish Generation".

Why should people be seen as self-centred or greedy whilst putting the economy and financial matters first. Surely you cannot look after the environment or the next generation if you cannot afford to do so.

It is like any household budget, without funds or income one cannot exist so how could a country like Australia or even our major companies continue to develop and grow without emphasis on this important aspect of life!

To me the argument was around the wrong way.

Jennifer Horsfield
Nelson Bay NSW

Dead end credit cards

Many of us have joint finances, but, as I realised when my father in law died, while all of your bank accounts can be in joint names and continue on with the partner after one dies, credit cards are only in one name and cease at death.

Not only is there the embarrassment and inconvenience of having your card rejected and cancelled, you may also find that you cannot get a new one issued as you are no longer eligible, as my mother-in-law found out.

It seems that unemployed 18-year-olds will be offered them, but 80-year-olds who have never had a bad debt in their lives don't qualify.

The bank would not say why the application was rejected even though she had significant funds. One teller suggested not having a mobile phone account was an issue.

To rub salt into the wound, the bank's customer care sent a bereavement notice and offer of help to her only to later say there was nothing they could do to help when we contacted them.

You might wonder "Which bank" treats its customers like this. So a bit of advice – if you like to use a credit card, make sure you have one in your name and not just an add-on to your partner's. Also, make sure you get it while the bank will still give it to you, or find a bank that will!

John Bailey
Rapid Creek NT

Chatter Blogs

On travel bucket lists...

"Every place has its own special delights but the standout for me is Turkey. It is teeming with fascinating history, surreal landscapes and truly beautiful, friendly people." – **Robby M**

On the Melbourne Cup being a waste of time...

"Melbourne Cup holds more cultural and national significance than Queens Birthday holiday. Therefore, it should be elevated to a national Public holiday and replace this other archaic holiday – **jjg**

On the new bikie laws...

"I am concerned, for example, that Ulysses riders... who wear a simple roundel with the Old Man logo will be unintentionally or indeed intentionally targeted – **Long distance flyer**

Check out the blog at www.nationalseniors.com.au



Write next issue's best letter to win a sleek TEAC MCDV66BT Bluetooth DVD Micro System valued at \$199. Connected to a TV, the TEAC DVD Micro System can recreate a movie theatre experience; play FM radio, DVDs and CDs; and convert audio CDs to MP3. See more at www.teac.com.au Peter Talbot wins a Kobo Vox eReader for the letter on page 9.

Write to: 50 something Letters,
GPO Box 1450 Brisbane Q 4001 Fax: (07) 3211 9339

Email: 50something@nationalseniors.com.au
Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity

first up

executive diary

I write this as the first summer storms darken the Brisbane sky. A downpour would be good, for green has become endangered in this part of the nation. The impact of no rain is a timely reminder of how the colour of our outlook may change.

The absence of suburban green compares little with the heartbreaking dry of outback areas at the moment – parts of northern Australia are in bad shape after 18 months or more without water. The new Abbott government has provided additional funding for drought aid. There has been limited, if any, commentary from people accepting the need to support farmers and the agricultural sector.

By contrast there is much speculation around the future of the automobile industry in this country. We have been reduced to only two manufacturers (GMH and Toyota) but have a record number of models to choose from. Imported from large manufacturing bases, the sheer volume makes it hard for local manufacturers to compete, especially when they have not developed export opportunities. There is legitimate reluctance to provide funding support going forward.

There are varying arguments about the research foundation provided by automobile research and development. What is evident is that a significant number of workers in the industry will struggle to find comparable employment.

In NSW, the state government has commenced a process of freeing up public housing with a big stick approach which penalises those who live in public housing in homes that are larger than they need. Amongst those caught up in this 'excess beds tax' are people aged 75 and older



Michael O'Neill
CEO National Seniors Australia

who may have lived in these properties for many years. It is a huge disruption for vulnerable people but is this adequately recognised against the need for reform of public housing expenditure?

These examples highlight the choices that we will increasingly see governments confront.

Tougher decisions around motor vehicles and public housing are a sign of a shifting philosophy to spend less of government funds.

At our recent Perth convention I shared that the ratio of Australians aged 65 plus to those aged 15 to 64 (nominal workforce) would increase from 22 out of 100 to 33 out of 100 by 2030. In short, the number of worker bees would reduce. This has implications for how much the public purse can sustain.

So where does the government's social and moral compass lie? Will withdrawing support for the car industry plunge too many into the irrecoverable unemployed? Will the revised allocation of public housing see the vulnerable disadvantaged? Will tightening of other benefits adversely affect people who have planned their later years with legitimate regard for the rules that govern entitlements?

Our pre-election surveys confirmed that sound economic management was the highest priority for the over 50s. No one was surprised.

The critical challenge for governments at all levels will be to manage economic reform to achieve the soundness desired by all but with a balance of fairness, with a safety net for those who slip through and with a commitment to the kind of society we want to be, and should be, given our blessed circumstances.

It makes for an interesting 2014. I wish all a safe, gentle and peaceful Christmas.

Chairman's Message



As we pull up stumps on 2013, it's tempting to say that it's been a tough year all round. Few would argue that there are too many jobless, too many businesses "doing it tough" and too many seniors just struggling to make ends meet.

But compared to many countries, Australia is blessed.

We've seen a change of federal government after a marathon election campaign during which National Seniors went into bat for the over-50s, putting our case to all the major parties. As the number of seniors grows, so will our share of the voting public and next election, it could be nudging 50%, a very good reason to redouble our efforts.

We thank you for your support in 2013 and wish all a safe and happy Christmas and a bright and productive New Year.

David Carvosso
National Seniors Chairman



Bills stack up

Recent National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (PAC) research has highlighted the cost of living pressures on senior households. *A squeeze on spending? An update on household living costs for senior Australians* shows that

the prices of essential items, including electricity, increased at over double the inflation rate in recent years. Low-income and pensioner households have borne the brunt of these price increases. Almost 250,000 senior households have been unable to pay their utility bills on time, while some have coped by cutting back on essentials such as medical expenses. Details visit productiveageing.com.au, call 03 9650 6144 or email info@productiveageing.com.au

Also, thanks to those members who participated in the National Seniors Social Survey. Your support in this important research is very much appreciated



Photo: Paul Carey/John Witzig ©

7' super-tight Tracker, 1968

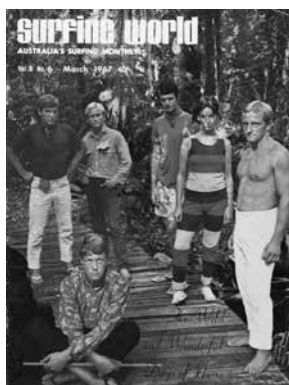


Photo: Paul Carey ©

Surfing World Cover, Noosa, 1967



Photo: Peter Green ©

Lennox farmhouse

Lennox Head with the only long board in town

Photo: Peter Green ©

From teenage
stow-away to
surf icon

Shaping UP

Bob McTavish has come a long way from the kid “at a loose end” with a bad yen to surf in Hawaii but no money to get there.

He’s been into – and then out of – the surf culture drug scene, has juggled work, surfing and being a single dad to a one-year-old girl before remarrying and becoming a father to four more children.

Bob has been a design pioneer in the short board revolution and watched as the once peaceful surf breaks of Australia’s east coast became overcrowded and competitive.

Along the way, he’s also become a legend in the surfboard industry, with professionals and amateurs alike beating a path to the door of his Byron Bay shaping business. He shares his insights with Rosemary Desmond about mastering the ‘beast’, why the drug culture of the 60s and 70s was doomed to fail, and why this one time larrikin is no dope.

Tell me about when you famously stowed away on a ship to Hawaii

It was November 1963, I was 19 and, as usual, at a loose end. I was surfing around the east coast, learning to shape boards and living in an old car up on the headland at Avalon Beach. A few guys were leaving on the *Orsova* that day to go to Hawaii and

a mate and I decided to go as well. We were on board and we just decided to stay. We slept under some other guys’ bunks, then found an empty cabin and decided to sleep there.

I mastered
the beast
about 1985
or ‘86, after
I went broke
with five kids

We made it to Hawaii in 10 days. We had five weeks there before getting busted when a surf columnist wrote in *The Sun Herald* that the ‘missing surfers’ were last seen farewelling their friends on the *Orsova* bound for Hawaii and that it looked like they had made it.

The American Consul’s son was a surfer and saw that line, showed his Dad and two days later we were in jail. When we came before the magistrate on Christmas Eve, he gave us a Christmas present by saying ‘go home, save your money and come back and surf here again’. We flew home in a Boeing 707 and the shipping line P&O took us to court to pay back the airfare which was £400. My Dad was only earning £25 a week as a bank manager, which gives you some idea of how long it took me to pay it back. It taught me to shape fast, which is why I became a very good professional shaper. I’m 69 years old and still shaping.

Have you been back to Hawaii and surfed Pipeline?

Yes I have and got horribly mongrelised and beaten up. But I love Sunset Beach. In 1967 I took a radical surfboard with me which I called ‘the plastic machine’. It was designed to take the vertical drop, glide across the wave and then turn back

up into the top and back down again. The waves were begging for it but the longer boards couldn't do it up until then. That introduced the short board revolution into Hawaii and California.

But by age 26, your first marriage was over and you were a single dad to one-year-old Renee and working at a Byron Bay meatworks.

Did your surfing take a back seat?

I wouldn't say a back seat...it was still in the forefront of my mind but I had to keep the beast (the urge to surf) down and make sure the little one was looked after first. I think I mastered the beast about 1985 or '86, after I went broke with five kids.

Your book delves into the drug culture of surfing and says that dope saved you from over indulging in alcohol...

That's true. I was drinking too much and every night. Not only beer but red wine then dope came along and the whole culture changed. It was introduced to us through Californian 'guru' surfers who were searching for some 'better life' and that's the way we took it too, so marijuana, followed by LSD, was all about trying to find Nirvana. As (American psychologist) Timothy Leary said: when you take LSD it was like instant Nirvana. It was about trying to see the world differently. We weren't happy about the way the world was going and are still not. We were also dabbling in Eastern religions even before marijuana and LSD came along.

But you saw drugs lead to friends becoming dealers, ripping off their mates and running off with their girlfriends and you became disillusioned with the drug scene...

That's correct. I was 'over it' by 1970. The utopian dream of a liberal society based on love and trust didn't exist. It fell apart and the dream became a fantasy when the greed and selfishness came through again and took over.

How has surfing changed since the 1960s?

The essence of surfing is still the same in that when you paddle out and ride a wave it's still a wonderful thing. But it became a sport, rather than an art and a pastime,

through the 1980s and 1990s, with professional sport and big industry behind it. There's been a huge push back from that over the past 10 years and now many surfers are just there for the fun and the art... the pastime again. They are not at all engaged with the face of surfing which is the professionals, the world tour and all that stuff. It's come full circle.

You've been credited with helping put Noosa on the map as a surf break. What do you think of the crowds now?



Lynn and Renee, Noosa, late 1970

It's incredible. We go up each year for the surf festival, just because there are so many friends there but it's hard to surf there now because of the crowds. I also gave up surfing The Pass at Byron Bay about 30 years ago.

Have 'surf rage' and 'drop ins' increased?



Bob McTavish with boards under construction at his Byron Bay shaping workshop

It peaked about 10 years ago but now there's a growing sophistication that we are all in this together. On the hard core breaks like Kirra and Snapper on the Gold Coast it's alive and well but fortunately there are many emerging breaks where the crowds are quite sophisticated and happy to take their turn. Byron Bay is fairly good for that and in some of the Sydney breaks, such as Manly, it's got less war-like. But a lot of the wealthier surfers are taking surfing trips overseas and don't surf much in the crowded areas.

When you started in business, did you have the wherewithal to do it or did you have wealthy friends?

I still don't have the wherewithal (laughs). I've had good partners who have been terrific because they have their skill sets and I have mine. Usually, I've got into trouble when I haven't had partners.

You've been broke a couple of times but never bankrupt?

That's correct. I've ended up paying my bills and giving my house to the bank and moving into a rental...twice. I have a good wife...that's essential. Lynn and I have been married 43 years.

What sort of board do you ride now?

I've always enjoyed a nine footer (long board) that is light. That has been my number one go-to board for the last 15 years but I ride anything from seven feet through to 10 feet.

What is your next book about?

It's about a surfer at Manly named Harry Quigg. Back in 1895, he had surfing going strong before Duke Kahanamoku came to Australia. The popular wisdom is that Duke Kahanamoku started surfing in Australia in 1914 but there is so much evidence that there were many surfers around before that. My novel (published next year) incorporates real people who were surfing

here long before the Duke came to Australia.

At 69, when do you think you'll hang up the surfboard?

When my body won't let me. I'm suffering a bit of a hip issue at the moment but I'm looking forward to getting a replacement.

What advice would you give youngsters taking up surfing now?

Look for the uncrowded breaks and ride a variety of surfboards and make it fun, not competitive. What's the point of going for a surf and coming in all stressed? ■

More Stoked! (HarperCollins) by Bob McTavish is available at bookstores.



Give the gift that keeps on giving this Christmas.

A National Seniors Australia gift membership is the perfect Christmas gift for friends and family. As Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation for the over 50s, not only do we provide an independent voice for senior Australians and their families, we also offer our members a great range of benefits and services too.

This year, gift membership is just \$40* and is packed with some extra special goodies including:



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\$100 international travel voucher



\$50 domestic travel voucher



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Call 1300 76 50 50 or visit nationalseniors.com.au and enter promotional code XMAS13.

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*Conditions apply. Valid from 15 November until 31 December, 2013.

The Incredible Journey

In 1966, Gerald Davis took a life-changing step when he boarded a bus in London for Bombay. Half a century later, Gerald's journey nears completion as his book on the Penn Overland bus company hits stores this summer. And, he did it with the help of *50 something* readers.



Photo: Ian Marks ©

Dusty Trail Penn passengers offered a camel ride, 1961

I first travelled with Penn Overland in 1966 and worked for them from 1971 to 1974. Ever since, I have held an overwhelming desire to write a book and tell the story of their amazing history – pioneering long distance overland bus tours around the world.

When I started my research for the book I discovered that no records were saved when Penn closed down in 1981 and the founder of the company, Michael Wood Power, had passed away. Although I possessed a large amount of information from when I worked for them, it was going to be quite a task to uncover details of their pioneering days and find information on how the company was formed. I made little headway until June 2007 when a letter appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that read:

“Dead Sea, New Life. I can’t believe I am reading about the same Dead Sea (Travel, June 2-3) that my husband, Norman, and I visited several times over 40 years ago when running the overland bus company Penn Overland Tours....” Jocelyne MacLeod, Braidwood.

pioneering years from 1959 to 1964. He provided a brief run-down of his memories from Penn’s early years and gave me the incentive to start further research.

Inconveniently, Lynette and I were setting off for Europe and were not returning until November. We saw them once again before leaving and on

return, were shocked to find Norman was seriously ill in hospital. Sadly, he died a few weeks later in early December 2007.

In February 2008 I read an editorial by Sarah Saunders in

50 something about the theme for that edition – “Life’s Great Journeys”. I was immediately inspired to write to her and ask if she would publish an article from me about another kind of “Journey of a Lifetime” – my first 10 week overland journey by bus with Penn Overland from London to Bombay in 1966. She replied that it would make an interesting story and asked me to write a 1200 word article which was published in the 2008 June/July edition. A note at the end of my article explained that I was considering collecting stories from former Penn passengers and including them in a book about the company and would anyone with interesting stories email me.

In the next few months, I received over 50 responses, most of them directly from readers of the article but also a number from readers who spread the word about the article. One of the most important of these was from Pat Jelf, the wife of a deceased Penn director Arthur Jelf, a good friend of mine from my Penn days with whom I had lost touch many years before. She was living in England but was sent a copy of *50 something* by a friend in Australia. She was able to provide me with some precious photos of Penn’s first Trans Africa tour in 1959 and some stories Arthur had written on that tour. She has also given me a

fascinating story she wrote after her first Penn tour in 1969.

Another word of mouth contact from this article was Mary Morrison who travelled with Michael Wood Power and Norman Macleod on their very first overland journey from London to Ceylon in 1959. The photos Mary took of the first bus and group that appear on the cover and within the book are gems and so important to the historical content of the story.

Another respondent alerted me to a book written by Neville Hoy called *55 Days to Colombo* which I found in the Mitchell Library in Sydney and spent a whole day in the library reading. I contacted Neville and he gave me copies of correspondence he had with Michael Wood Power and other valuable information to use in my book. It was exactly what I needed to endorse and confirm what I had gathered in my talks with Norman and another former director, Derek Cook.



Gerald Davis shows Brian Jasper Jones, Penn’s mechanic, his manuscript

I followed up the *50 something* article with an advert in the UK *Saga* magazine. This yielded another 20 respondents. One of these was Elsie Newcombe, who had written a fascinating book about her overland tour. She lent me *New Horizons*, a book about Penn’s first Trans Africa tour by Katharine Proudman, an early passenger Norman Macleod had spoken about in his reminiscences.

I produced a first draft of the book in 2009 but I was still not satisfied that I had really found out enough about how Penn originated or collected enough short stories.



Penn principals from a 1963 brochure

A month later, my wife Lynette and I met up with Jocelyne and Norman in Braidwood. I had always understood that Michael Wood Power had founded Penn on his own but I now learnt that Norman had been Michael’s founding partner and worked with him throughout those exciting

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profile

My research into Penn's history did not uncover much more valuable information until March 2011 when I found a letter posted by Bruce Manley on the *Indian Overland* website. Bruce partnered Michael Wood Power on his exploratory trip by Land Rover to India in 1958 and was able to provide even more information than I had already gleaned from Michael's correspondence with Neville Hoy in 1964.

In June 2011, I noticed 50 *something* was advertising the Phillpotts Literary Prize for unpublished authors aged over 50. I decided to enter a draft of my manuscript.

I was close to completing the book so I renewed my efforts to contact Michael Wood Power's oldest son Simon. He was a schoolboy when Michael brought him to New York in 1973. I still have vivid memories of a sightseeing flight by helicopter we took around Manhattan. I had information that Simon was living in Southern England so after many enquiries I was able to contact him in July 2011. He was delighted to hear what I had done and immediately put me in touch with his father's sister Maureen and brother Denis. With the help of priceless information and memorabilia from these

family members and other Penn employees introduced by them, I was able to re-draft a final version of the book.

I was pleasantly surprised when I noticed in November 2011 that my entry in the Phillpotts Literary Prize had been short listed along with 10 others. It did not make the final four but it gave me an opportunity to obtain some very useful advice

Bruce partnered Michael Wood Power on his exploratory trip by Land Rover to India in 1958

on improvements I could make to my manuscript from David Needham who established and helped judge the award.

Whilst approaching a large number of publishers I made another visit to the UK in 2012 to meet up with Wood Power family members and other people who had been very helpful with the book.

My manuscript was eventually accepted by Halstead Press in February 2013. The book is now with the printer and should be available in December 2013 under the title of *Far Away Places with Strange Sounding Names – The Penn Overland Story*. ■

Email Gerald Davis at
pennoverlandstory@bigpond.com



Andes Mountain view on the South America Overland, 1972



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Ocean Duel

The Round the World Clipper fleet is set to compete in the Sydney to Hobart for the first time, led by 70-something British sailor Sir Robin Knox-Johnston. Casey-Ann Seaniger reports.



The Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race will have a special touch about it this year when the legendary British yachtsman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston brings a 14 strong Clipper fleet to Australia for the first time.

As the first yachtsman to sail non-stop singlehanded around the world, 74-year-old Sir Robin is now circumnavigating the world in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race, which he founded to encourage budding sailors to experience the thrill of the ocean.

As part of the 40,000-mile race which began in London in September, the amateur Clipper fleet will take on an historic challenge in the Australian leg as they debut in the 69th Sydney to Hobart race.

The organisers of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA), believe the inclusion of the Clipper fleet will add uniqueness to the already iconic race event.

"The Clipper 70s and the crews that sail them will create great interest and dimension to our race," said CYCA's Commodore Howard Piggott. The experience of Sir Robin, who will navigate on one of the Clipper

68 yachts, is another stand-out factor of this year's race.

"His presence will undoubtedly lead to spirited racing in the now 14 strong Clipper Race fleet and certainly add colour to our race," Commodore Piggott said.

But Sir Robin knows the challenges that lie ahead and admits the Clippers have little chance against the likes of Wild Oats XI, which he picks as the 2013 favourite.

"I doubt any of our boats can compare with Wild Oats XI, for example," Sir Robin said.

"At 302 tonnes we are heavy compared with modern flyers, but the crews are now pretty experienced having sailed half way around the world by the time they do the race."

This is the second time Sir Robin has competed in the Sydney to Hobart, describing it as an "irresistible challenge" he could not pass by.

"The timing fitted and it's a great opportunity for the Clipper crews to participate in one of the great classic races amongst professional sailors," he said.

"I am looking forward to being a navigator on one of our 68s which have completed four global circumnavigations and will form a new training and events base in Sydney to expand our presence in Australia."

Sir Robin described the Sydney to Hobart as one of the great offshore races, similar to the Fastnet Race in the UK.

"That makes it a challenge that everyone really wants to compete in and everyone is very excited."

The 2013 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race will feature five super maxis, 22 international entries,

15 new boats, 36 first timers, as well as the previous overall and line honours winners and the many supportive regulars, known as the 'meat' of the fleet.

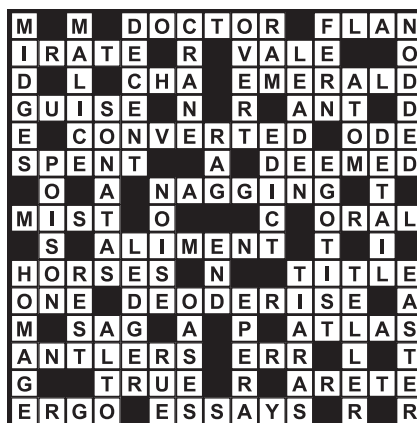
Defending triple crown holder Wild Oats XI (Bob Oatley) will take on one of the world's fastest racing super yachts, Loyal (Anthony Bell). The former Speedboat/Rambler is capable of making 45 knots downwind.

Approximately 97 yachts will race for line honours in the 628 nautical mile race which starts on Boxing Day at 1pm AEDT. ■

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