

## **OBITUARY – Stanley William HAWKER – 30.09.1914 to 15.10.2014 – 100 Years.**

Stanley William Hawker was born in Richmond, Victoria on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1914. Stan was one of four children to William and Beatrice Hawker with an elder sister, Marjorie, and two younger brothers, Alan and Len.

In Stan's early years, he lived in Belgrave and Clifton Hill, attending school with his sister and brothers. From an early age it was very clear that Stan had an innovative mind and a tenacious spirit. As an ambitious teenager he built his own speedboat, a fine achievement for one so young, but unfortunately, in Stan's recollection "it was a disaster, because the motor blew up".

Stan loved sports and played AFL as rover and centre for the Comrades – Fitzroy's second team. This lifelong passion for AFL would continue for Stan, who religiously watched every match of the round during the AFL season – "all day long, every day of the week" (Wendy recalls). He was a spirited supporter of the Fitzroy Lions – a team which eventually followed Stan to Queensland and merged with the Brisbane Bears to later become the Brisbane Lions. He had great delight in watching their multiple wins and premierships which included many fond memories of the games, teams and players. This was, of course, paired with vivid recollections of the many poor umpiring decisions throughout the years.

In 1929, due to the Depression and financial pressures, Stan was forced to leave Grantham State School and start full time work to help support his family at the age of 15. He commenced his first job at Tilbury & Lewis Manufacturers earning 10 shillings per week, of which his mother allowed him to keep 3 pence per week! This job was where Stan's love of woodwork began and while employed in Collingwood at G. N. Raymonds Box Factory, he quickly earned the respect of his colleagues, working his way up to top hand in Box Design at the factory.

It was around this time that Stan was to meet his future wife – Dorothy Joyce. Stan's older sister, Marjorie, worked with Dorothy at the local 90-minute dry-cleaning business. Marjorie invited Dorothy to join her at a dance one night and this was where Stan first met Dorothy.

Stan recalled that Dorothy was a graceful, talented and energetic dancer who won many dancing competitions...but just not with Stan as her partner. All Dorothy wanted to do was dance and all Stan wanted was for Dorothy to be his dance partner. Although Stan was not a skilled dancer like Dorothy, he loved to sing and had a captivating tenor voice. His beautiful voice did not go unnoticed by others, as he won a number of choir competitions which included a memorable performance at the Cosmopolitan Town Hall, Melbourne.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1941, Stan and Dot were married in the Sacred Heart Church, Kew. Only six short days later, while honeymooning in Belgrave Heights, Stan was called up to national service. He joined the Number 2 Squadron of the RAAF as a leading aircraftman working out of Darwin. While on active service stationed in Darwin, Stan continued to pursue his love of singing as first tenor of the 20-voice Darwin Mens Choir.

Stan escaped injury while on duty in Darwin, witnessing 39 of a total of 64 air raids on the northern airbase. During one particular night raid, a bomb fell injuring Stan's co-partner, Ron Maddy. On

that night for some reason Stan was elsewhere and in his own words, "Normally I would have been with Ron. God was looking out for me".

While Stan was in Darwin, Dorothy worked in the Army Postal Service sorting the mail back in St Kilda, Melbourne. When the war ended in 1945, Stan and Dorothy were reunited in Victoria again and their first child, Wendy, was born. Their son, Wayne, was born seven years later in 1952.

In the coming years, the young Hawker family would spend many short periods of time in a number of different renovated houses. Stan's plan was buy/renovate/sell.....over and over again. Except on Sundays of course, when he and Dorothy played tennis at the local courts in Glenhuntly. Tennis matches were always finished in style with Aunty Lal's lovely fruit salads, roast dinners and beautiful sponge cakes with passion fruit icing.

In the coming years, Stan continued to build, renovate and innovate. He invented a machine for making vanity and chocolate boxes and a reliable fuel gauge for the Lockheed MK4's that was further developed by the RAAF for use in their aircraft. Stan also fitted out a large number of caravans with his brother (some which have still not been returned from their weekend rental business in the late 1950's).

In 1961, Stan packed up the family and made a permanent move north to the Gold Coast. The Hawker family stayed at Miami while Stan built their first home in Breaker Street, Main Beach. In the early 1960's the Gold Coast was a largely undeveloped area so Stan built the first manufacturing factories at Mermaid Beach and began a profitable bedroom furniture company which continues to operate today. When he was 94 years old, Stan reflected in his memoirs, saying "I am amazed at the volume of industry on the Gold Coast. To think that we started all this in 1962, I feel so proud that this is what we started. I wonder if anyone knows this. Probably one day someone will." He was publicly acknowledged for his efforts in the late 60's, when he was endorsed as the first President of the Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce at Mermaid Beach.

Stan, "the innovator" even built the Gold Coast's first houseboat named the "Jacqueline Anne" and always seemed to have something on the go!

But.....there were still Sundays and tennis. Stan loved playing in local tennis competitions, even playing in Brisbane and country tournaments, where he showed great doubles skills with numerous victories. Stan played tennis competitively and socially well into his 80's and equally enjoyed watching his son Wayne, grandchildren and great-grandchildren play competitive tennis at the club, regional and state level.

Stan's interest in tennis led to the foundation of Gold Star Tennis in the 1960's, in partnership with his brother Alan and George Paulsen. At a time when Queensland tennis was on the rise, the Gold Star aluminium racquets manufactured on the coast above a strip of shops in Mermaid Beach, were in high demand. Stan even had the opportunity to personally present one of his own racquets to the Prime Minister William McMahon in 1971. In 1975, Gold Star Tennis became Master Tennis as Stan's son, Wayne joined the family business. Master Tennis eventually relocated to Ferry Road, Southport, closer to the home of tennis on the coast, Queens Park.

Stan also saw a need for a separate association for veterans' tennis players in the early 1980's. He played a key role in securing the allocated land at Pizze Park, Miami, where the Gold Coast Seniors Tennis Club remains today. In recognition of his work founding the Club, Stan was made a Life

Member of the Club in 1984. He was also made a Life Member of the Burleigh Heads Tennis Club. Stan had a long association with the Veterans Club, with Dorothy by his side always assisting.

In the years that followed Stan continued to work, play, build and renovate....*and drive*. His personalized number plate *SWH-80* graced the front bumper of many a fine automobile – including convertible Morris Minors and a convoy of fine Mercedes Benz sedans. And didn't Stan love to drive! Most mornings would commence with a brief journey down to the Ferry Road McDonalds for a morning coffee and read of the local paper. This early morning ritual continued for many years. He only surrendered his licence at the age of 95 after a brief encounter with the neighbour's fence and some very direct words of advice from Dr Michael Pearcy, his GP.

Still Stan's building continued but on a more intimate scale. Motorised cars, rocking horses, cubby houses, grandfather clocks and carved wooden toys, allowed Stan to continue to work with his hands for the pleasure and delight of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This hobby continued until his early nineties and these treasured items will always remain in the homes of Stan's extended family.

In February, 2007, Dorothy Hawker passed away at the age of 93. For a brief period, Dorothy was cared for at the Abri Home, Southport. Stan lived nearby at Wendy and John's house, frequently visiting Dorothy with Wendy and the family. It was at this time that Stan began to write his memoirs of his extraordinary life – some of which we are recalling in his own words today.

Stan was cared for by Wendy and John at Southport until August 2010. At that stage, Stan required a higher level of care and health support than Wendy and John were able to provide. So grudgingly at first, Stan moved into Ozcare, Labrador. Over the next four year, Stan developed great relationships with the wonderful staff of Ozcare in a community of great banter, congeniality, faith, support and care.

On top of his incredible list of achievements is one that very few of us will have the good fortune to experience. Three short weeks ago, Stan was surrounded by family at Keith Turnbull Place, Labrador for his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Cards from family and friends stood side-by-side with letters from the Queen, Governor-General, Prime Minister, Premier and Mayor of the Gold Coast.

The family would like to take the opportunity at this stage to sincerely thank the staff for their exceptional care and support during Stan's four years of residence at Ozcare, Labrador. There are too many individuals to mention but we sincerely thank you all. Our deepest thanks also go to Fr John Pinson of St Peters Anglican Church Southport, Somerville Funerals and the Southport branch of the RSL for their guidance and support here today.

Stan or "Poppy" will be deeply missed by his greatest legacy, his family; Stan's two beloved children – Wendy and Wayne; grandchildren – Jacqui, Greg, Jason, Anthony, Matthew, Simon, Patrick and Elizabeth; and great-grandchildren – Tom, Bianca, Stephanie, Chloe, Michael, Isabelle, Mia and Amelia. For a man of so many challenges, achievements, legacies and gifts, it is only fitting that the final words today are his own: "I look back and wonder how we did it. It goes to show you can do anything if you don't give up trying".

Thanks to son, Wayne, for this story of a remarkable life.

**15 October 2014**