

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Members of the Tasmania Branch of the Association were delighted to learn last January that our Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honorable Kate Warner AC had been specially recognised by the people of Australia and now invested as a Companion of the Order of Australia. We also

congratulate all other recent recipients within the Order.

Congratulations must be directed to all members of the Queensland Branch for the great work you all did to successfully mount the recent National Conference in Brisbane. Many Tasmanians attended and enjoyed the varied and well conducted sessions. No doubt quite a number of Tasmanians are already planning to go to South Australia for what appears to be an interactive and exciting Conference. In our own way we are preparing well for the National Conference in Tasmania in 2019 under the co-ordination of Alastair Douglas OAM and his team.

Over the last few months we have seen the production of an excellent brochure that responds to the question - What is

an Order of Australia Award? This was initiated by Dr Frank Madill AM an active member of our Association and warmly welcomed by members across Australia as a very useful tool to share learning about both nominating good people and fostering pride in Australian citizenship.

In May, led by Sue Cox AM the Branch held another successful dinner following the Investiture Ceremony at Government House. We recognise the diligence needed to conduct a successful dinner twice per year but also know the great pleasure that flows from the awardees and their families as their service to such a variety of causes is celebrated. I note that many who attend are not related to the recent awardee or connected but come along to enjoy the friendship and good feelings of people doing good in the world.

Our Regional group committees are conscientious and keep busy, in their different ways, offering a variety of activities to their local members of the Association.

John G. Thorne AM
Chairman, Tasmania

TASMANIAN BRANCH NEWS

The next Post Investiture Dinner will be held on Friday 08 September 2017 at Blundstone Arena. The guest speaker will be Dr Nicholas Chantler AM . Further details are available from the Branch Functions Manager Sue Cox AM (ph 6243 0000)

ROBERT WARD SMITH OAM (ROBIN) AND ELIZABETH M SMITH OAM

It is not uncommon that a husband and wife both receive an Order of Australia award, but almost always on different dates. Robin and Elizabeth Smith were awarded theirs on the same day.

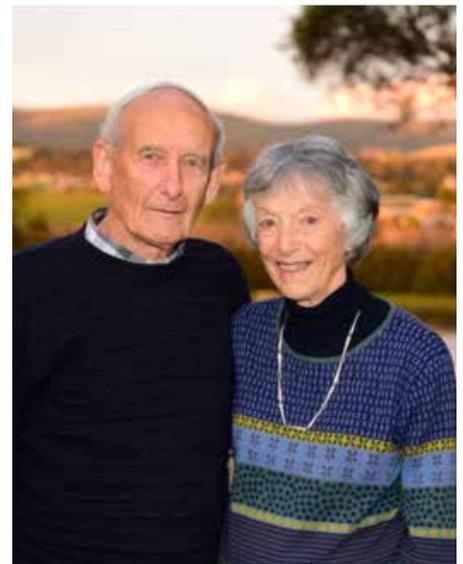
They met at University College London in 1951 and were married in 1953. Elizabeth had graduated from the Slade Faculty of Fine Arts and was studying at the London Institute of Education. Robin graduated in May 1954 and began training in General Surgery and Obstetrics at University College Hospital. Elizabeth then started teaching general subjects to a secondary mixed school with some special art teaching. Robin completed part of his training in obstetrics and gynaecology and was working at The Royal Northern Hospital when they were approached by Alfred Stanway, an Australian Anglican Bishop, and asked if they would consider deferring Robin's further training plans to help with a medical emergency in Tanganyika. A young Australian surgeon had died suddenly and there was a

desperate need at Mvumi Hospital in Central Tanganyika.

Contrary to the advice of Robin's colleagues, they decided that they should go and give time to meet the critical needs of the third world. June 1957 saw them on board the SS Kenya bound for East Africa, Elizabeth was 12 weeks pregnant and the Bay of Biscay's wild weather was not the best way of dealing with the nausea of early pregnancy. After a short stay in Mombasa, they arrived in Dar Es Salaam and went by overnight train to Dodoma a small town in the centre of Tanganyika.

There were challenges in every department of life each day. The senior doctor had been there since 1940 and was keen to unload much of surgery and all the obstetrics and started to teach Robin how to do cataract surgery. They had no time off and worked very long hours, but the atmosphere was such that no one complained.

Elizabeth was in demand at a girl's



Robin Smith OAM & Elizabeth Smith OAM

secondary school and made dresses for African women on her old hand turned sewing machine.

After 4 years they returned to the UK, now with 3 children, and Robin obtained a medical registrar post at St Mary's Hospital



Portsmouth. After 15 months being on call 24 hours a day, they bought a house in Portsmouth and in 1963 Robin started general practice and took up sailing.

All was fine until 1965 when they received an urgent request to fill a vacancy working for Save the Children at the Mvumi hospital. Elizabeth was the one at home when the person called. "Would you be willing to help out with an emergency need in the area where you used to work, would you come if we asked?" "Yes, we would" she replied. So when Robin came home for lunch, he found they were all set to return to what was now called Tanzania.

June 1965 found them again on a ship, now with four children, and bound for Dar Es Salaam.

Robin's work was to find why so many children from a remote rural area up to 120 miles from Mvumi were dying compared with equally remote villages in other areas. It involved camping in a tent and examining all the under teenage children in each village. He had two Land Rovers, a team of African men and one Australian trained nurse provided by the Anglican Missionary Society.



Robin Smith OAM on Safari

"We set out at dawn on Monday and returned late Friday. There were no roads and we followed cattle tracks and advice from herdsmen we met on our way. I would see about 100 children in a day and select those who had signs of significant illness and do blood tests and microscopic examination of blood and urine confirming our suspicions. All conversations were in Kiswahili or Chigogo – the first mother tongue of the Wagogo tribe. While I was away, Elizabeth took on a teaching role in a school in Dodoma. We worked in an area so remote that many of the women had never seen a white person as it was only the men who went to the town to sell cattle.

At school holidays we had a tent big enough for our whole family to accompany me and it was a great experience for them; they have never forgotten it and have all revisited Tanzania in the last ten years."

In 1988 and again 1992 Elizabeth and Robin went back as volunteers when the English surgeon went on leave. It was hard work with endless night calls. Robin did a large number of caesarean operations – 56 in nine months! This was because the government had banned forceps delivery because there were too many damaged babies and mothers from poorly skilled operators. Tanzania had not the resources to deal with damaged children.

During these visits Elizabeth pioneered setting up a Batik fabric printing venture with four women from the village. She taught them the process so they could make 'one off' pieces and in 1993 she took



Painting by Elizabeth Smith OAM of a homestead in Tanzania

it a step further - they made dress lengths of cloth and held a very successful sale – bringing hundreds of people out from Dodoma city the 25 miles to Mvumi.

While their hearts are still in Africa, they have been very happy in Tasmania. Robin entered General Practice when GPs still could do surgery and obstetrics, and was able to renew sailing and seafaring interests as well as take up scuba diving. He volunteered as doctor on Australian Maritime College vessels, the Sydney Hobart Yacht races and as a volunteer doctor in Antarctica.

Elizabeth became head of Art at Oakburn and later Scotch Oakburn College, but with little time to pursue her own art, in 1986 she left teaching and studied for a post-graduate diploma at UTAS with special interest in large landscape. As a member of the Launceston Art Society, she spent 8 years providing art therapy for the permanently disabled. Both have been heavily involved helping African refugees settle here, and in various church related social activities.

To know their story is to understand why they richly deserve recognition with an Order of Australia award.

NORTHERN NOTES

Warmest congratulations to our new awardees from the Northern Region Dr Patricia Ellen Cameron AO, Hon James Cox AM, Dr Timothy Mooney AM, Mr John Cameron OAM, Mr Gary Carr OAM, Mrs Mary Carmel Knowles OAM, Mr Matthew Jacobs OAM, Mr Barry Lumley OAM, Mrs Susan Shea OAM and Mr Brian Baxter OAM. We look forward to them joining the Association to meet fellow awardees and enjoy our many activities.

The Northern committee has appointed a functions sub-committee chaired by Joan Green OAM to plan for the 2018 Functions. The members are Linda Madill OAM, Liz Lee, Anne Taylor OAM, Victoria Cox respectively and our secretary Thérèse von Samorzewski OAM.

Since our last edition, the Northern Region has had a further "back of room tour" of the Queen Victoria Museum at the Inveresk Rail Yards conducted by the curator Mr Richard Mulvaney. All present were astounded by the huge number of items that are stored at the museum and it will be a long time before some of them will ever be put on public display simply because of the vastness of the collection.

Our most recent event was on Thursday the 15th of June when members attended a showing at the Launceston Planetarium. Thanks to Mr Martin George and to the museum kiosk staff for giving us a wonderfully informative and convivial afternoon. Our next function is at TasTAFE



Mr Richard Mulvaney, Director QVMAG and members viewing "back of room" items.

on Thursday the 10th of August with guest speaker Miss Marie Gerke.

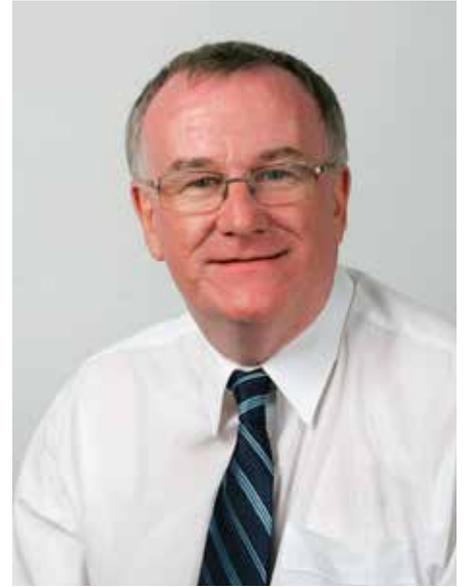
Finally, it is very pleasing to see more members wearing the insignia at the appropriate occasions and events – a practice that the Northern Region Committee will continue to encourage.

LAUNCESTON PLANETARIUM

The Launceston Planetarium is located at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, (QVMAG) at Inveresk in Launceston – the site of the former central rail terminus and railway workshops. It opened in 1968 initially at the Royal Park QVMAG site, but since 2009 its home has been at Inveresk. It operates a Zeiss ZKP3 star projector in conjunction with a full dome digital system. The Planetarium presents a variety of Astronomy shows by projecting images of the southern night sky onto a dome ceiling, accompanied by additional effects and narration.

The Director of the Launceston Planetarium and Curator of Physical Sciences of the QVMAG is Mr Martin George B.Sc. (Hons). Martin is a keen commu-

nicator of astronomy, and makes regular appearances on radio and television. His principal role at QVMAG is to run the Planetarium. This entails writing, recording and presenting Planetarium programs, and dealing with all astronomical enquiries. The projected shows are viewed from a comfortable reclining couch like seat, and they simulate the appearance of the stars as the earth rotates, producing an effect so realistic it's like being outdoors on a clear night looking up at the night sky. A special feature is the solar telescope showing a fascinating live television feature of the sun. It is one of Launceston's most interesting and informative facilities; one that will inform and entertain everyone who visits the Launceston Planetarium.



Mr Martin George Collections & Research Manager QVMAG

NORTH WEST REGIONAL NEWS

Queens Birthday OA awards were received by four residents from the North West region, namely Mrs Gail Richey AM, Mrs Sheree Vertigan AM, Mrs Wendy Charleston OAM, and Mr Alan Dyer OAM. Congratulations to you all and welcome Gail and Wendy who have already joined the Order of Australia Association.

A luncheon which was well attended and enjoyed was held at the Burnie Arts and Function Centre on June 12th to honour the Queen's Birthday and to welcome awardees for 2017.



Mrs Joyce Ablitt OAM from the North West Region celebrating with family & friends at the Post Investiture Dinner June 2017 (photo courtesy of Maureen Oates OAM)

For information on upcoming NW activities please contact regional secretary Mrs Betty Hite OAM (ph 6442 2444)

SOUTHERN REGIONAL NEWS

Congratulations to 11 Southern Tasmanians who received Order of Australia Awards on the Queen's Birthday.

The Regional Committee is planning a visit (with a tour and lunch) to Claremont House on 23 August 2017. This beautifully restored home is situated in the northern suburbs of Hobart.

TASMANIAN BRANCH OFFICE-HOLDERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Patron

Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC, Governor of Tasmania

Chairman:

Dr John Thorne AM, JP;

Deputy Chairman:

Mr Clive D Lee AM, ASM;

Immediate Past Chairman:

Mr. Noel Viney OAM;

Secretary:

Mrs Maureen Rudge OAM, JP:
Ph: 03 6225 3954

Treasurer:

Mr Ron Blake OAM;

Functions Manager:

Mrs Sue Cox AM;

Committee:

The Hon Dr Frank Madill AM;
Mrs Therese von Samorzewski OAM;
Mr John Pease OAM;
Mrs Betty Hite OAM;
Dr Nicholas Chantler AM;
Mrs Maureen Oates OAM