

Neville Moore

My father, Cecil Rupert Moore, was born on a property at Walcha. When he left school his mother helped him buy a clothing business in town. He didn't have it for very long when there was a fire and it burnt down. Then he took a job at Stroud where they were looking for someone to manage a clothing business. Meanwhile we stopped in Walcha with our grandmother, and we weren't there very long when he came back and said he'd taken a job managing a business at Burruga. The business belonged to Howell Brothers who also owned a store in Oberon. We later moved from Burruga into Oberon when they gave Dad the Manager's job. I started school in Burruga when I was 4 and finished school in Oberon when I was 14. I got the cane nearly every day; I was always in strife you know.



Dad wanted me to go and get a government job. He said you'll be right forever then. I went and got a job at the post office, when it was down next to the nursery. I started it and stopped after a while, ...bloody rat a tat tat! Then Dad got me a job up at Howell Bros and I didn't like that much either, so I went and got a job with Eric Rogers. Eric had a building business, and I did all the arrangements before I told Dad. He was bloody mad.

I hadn't finished my apprenticeship when I got called up into National Service. I was 19 years old. It was the first National Service in Australia (1951), and you had no option then.... you had a medical and if you passed the medical you went in, unless you knew somebody high up in the government.

I went to Holsworthy and did 2 years there and then we did a year at Singleton part time. It was supposed to be three years. We'd only do a fortnight and then go back home to work. (When asked what special skills he gained Neville said, "peeling potatoes and throwing hand grenades!")

During this time I continued to work with Eric Rogers until I just about finished my apprenticeship. Then I had a yarn with Eric's brother, Herbie, who was a bricklayer, and I decided to go out on my own. From then on I worked for myself except for the five years I spent in Sydney. I only went to Sydney to build a house for my father out near Epping, but I ended up staying on working for an old pommie bloke who owned a sawmill. He talked me into staying on.



Neville deciding where to start the build for Titania Motel

I used to come back to Oberon at weekends to build the Titania Motel. I'd come up and bring tradesmen from Sydney with me, until we got to the stage where it was all closed in. Then I could do the rest myself. On and off it probably took me about 6 months. In those days tradesmen were hard to get and I used to do my own plumbing, and electrical...you're not allowed to do that now. From then on I decided to stay in Oberon and build houses around here.



I met Wendy when Ken Kitt introduced her to me at the Club. He said, "She reckons you are the best dancer in Oberon...and you should have a dance with her." Her face looked familiar but I couldn't place her until she told me I had been going out with her sister. Anyway, that's how we met, and the rest is history.

My kids were all born in Sydney, one girl and two boys, Brett and Craig. We lost Gail, our eldest, when she was 15. It would never happen today with modern technology.

Wendy more or less just looked after the kids until such time as they were old enough to look after themselves. Then she did work down at Jenolan Caves. She worked down there for about four years. She also used to help in her father's Bakery shop. Her father, Clarrie Cole, and Les Letondeur, started it. It was down nearly opposite where the veterinary practice is. Yeah, the Laundry now is in what used to be the old Bakehouse.

I played a fair bit of tennis and some cricket as well as a bit of rugby league. There were tennis courts everywhere in Oberon as well as the little villages like Black Springs and Hazelgrove. There were quite a few courts in Oberon as well, including two at the Methodist Church, two up at the Catholic Church and one where the Commercial Bank was. We used to travel around on the weekends playing tennis, not always competition. I can hold my own with most in tennis often finishing in the final four and, sometimes, winning a comp here and there. I didn't play much cricket as it was a little bit slow as far as I was concerned.

When the kids were young we travelled all around the different towns playing League. Wendy used to take a truck load of them. We had a wagon, a big one you know, with the all the seats in the back. We travelled to places like Blayney and Lithgow.

Brett was a pretty good footballer until one day he was getting up from a tackle and a bloke flew in, jumped on him and put his ankle out. To this day, he's still got a crook ankle. They told us when he started playing football, that in the reserves, he was covered for any injuries. But when it came to the point he was off work for quite a while and he wasn't covered.

I started building when I was about 17 and retired when I was 72, and other than the five years I spent in Sydney, I've worked in the Oberon area all my life. I mainly built houses around Oberon and some memorable ones are the houses I built for Laurie Evans, and Noel and Grace Cunynghame. I got an award for that one from the Council, the best house of the year.



We built the shops up next to Cunynghame's Butcher shop. We built the flats down behind the Royal Hotel. We built Mawhoods where it is now. We also built the Mitre 10 down below when they split up. Yeah, and we built the extensions to Mawhoods Shopping Centre.

There used to be a house where the Council Chambers is now and Council purchased it and we pulled it down and built all that's there now. We did the whole lot...and then I added a second storey.

Brett did his apprenticeship with me and then he did some more study so he could go and manage a building business. He took over the business when I retired. The only time he didn't work for me was when the High School was being built. Brett and Peter David were there for about a fortnight when they both said to me, "For ##### sake get us out of here!" I put Peter David through his apprenticeship as well. He's been with Brett, on and off, most of his life.

Our eldest son, Craig, left Oberon when he finished school and worked in the Westpac Bank in Sydney. I'm proud to say that he reached a very high level in the bank before he retired.

Our granddaughters, Lydia and Ivy, have been a big part of our lives. Wendy and I are hugely proud of them.

Well, if I had my time over again, I'd probably still be a builder. No, first off, I'd be a farmer. Yeah, but other than that, I just enjoyed making things, you know, working with my hands.

Getting old...I suppose it's better than the alternative. When you get to my age, you can consider yourself bloody lucky. I'll be 92 next birthday.

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