

Pat Dwyer

I was born in Blackheath on the 8th of April, 1934, the eldest of nine children - Michael, Lorna, Maureen, Marion, Helen, Ceily, Frank and Terry. Our parents were Michael (Mick) Kirby and Monica, nee Haswell. My father's parents had a boarding house and tea rooms in the Megalong Valley and Dad talked about helping his father chop wood for the Hydro Majestic.



We were a big family and Dad was a hard-working man and although we were not wealthy we never went hungry and we never went without. Mum was a stay-at-home mum as the majority of mothers were in the day, and they were both wonderful parents. I had a very happy childhood. During this time Dad worked at the Scenic Railway which is still a popular tourist attraction today.

When the Second World War began Dad was called up to work in Sydney on the wharf for the Americans. Interestingly enough from the Mountains at night I remember we could see the search lights in the night sky moving back and forth over the Harbour looking for Japanese boats or submarines. Obviously it was not as populated with night lights back then so they stood out. Dad was actually working on the dock when the submarines entered the Harbour and remembered one of the submarines being lifted to the dock.

Dad worked in Sydney and we lived at our Grandparents on the Tarana Road just outside Oberon for around two years. These were also happy times.

One of my clearest memories from my Grandparents house was watching the lights on the Bathurst Road at night, looking over Spring Bank Hill. This was exciting back then as there were not a lot of cars on the road.

I went to the Catholic school in Blackheath and then to St Joseph's in Oberon. We lived in Carrington Avenue and then years later my parents had a home and flats opposite the Catholic School in Queen Street Oberon. This house was very popular with local kids of all ages for my dear Mum's daily afternoon tea with not just her grandchildren but all their friends as well. Everyone was always welcome.

My first job after leaving school was at the local Grocery Store in Raleigh Street, beside where the nursery is today. It was the usual duties, packing groceries and serving customers. I met a lot of lovely people in that place and have fond memories of this time.

During this time I met Mervyn Dwyer who would later become my husband and life partner. However, there was pressure at this time for me to enter the convent and devote my life to religion. I moved to Parkes but, although this was a rewarding time, I felt that my calling was to be a wife

and mother, so moved home and started my relationship with Mervyn. It was not long before we were engaged.

Mervyn and I married in 1955 and we purchased land and then, with help from family and friends, Mervyn built our home next door to the family farm where he had grown up and his parents lived till they passed. It was called "Allwah," at Edith, where I still live today. Our little piece of paradise. Mervyn grew peas and potatoes and he did farming work for other people as well as ourselves.

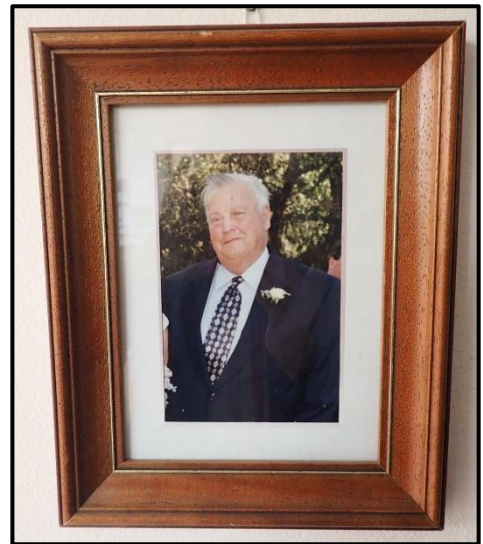
Over the years we had six boys and two girls - Michael, Patrick, Roseanne, Peter, Paul, Stephen, Leo and Louise. I was very content and very busy. It was a wonderful time.

In 1980 we decide to take a very different direction, keeping the farm and purchasing, Oberon Garage and Tractor Service on the corner of Main and North Streets. Our sons worked in the business and these too were good years. Meeting lots of lovely people, and Mervyn and the Service Station even being involved in the Cold Chisel film clip "Flame Trees" which is now iconic to Oberon. Mervyn convinced the film crew when they called to fill up their fuel tank that Oberon would be the perfect location.



Pat serving petrol

Mervyn spent 24 years on Council and he was also on the Hospital Board for years. He loved working for his community. I don't know how many trips he made to Sydney trying to get money for the hospital. He was a terrific worker for the hospital and has a Ward named after him in Oberon Hospital. As his wife I felt like we were a good team.



After the Service Station we decided to change direction again. Mervyn had been involved in the Funeral Business as a side-line for many years and we started MA and PM Dwyer Funerals with the vision of helping people, which was a passion for both of us. It was very rewarding, and all these years later people still acknowledge me and associate me with the business. It's just so nice to know how grateful people were for the little bit of help we gave them. Merv was wonderful. People just opened up to him, I think you'd say. Sadly, after Mervyn passed, I decided to sell the business as things were just not the same. I did however work with them for many years after.



I feel so privileged to have called Oberon my home. I have truly enjoyed working in the community and being involved in all the different community groups. From my local church to the Parents and Friends and then in more recent years Meals on Wheels. I just liked helping where I could. I was shocked and overwhelmed when I received the Citizen of the Year in 2004 - it was an honor and something I am proud of even now.



Citizen of the Year 2004: Pat with Mayor Robert Hooper

There are a lot more people in Oberon these days. I thought I knew everyone at one stage but not anymore. I think the tourism and the timber mills have made a big contribution to Oberon, bringing a lot of people, work and money. The building of the dam as well. I have loved watching the growth. What a wonderful life.

My life has been extremely fulfilling. I am surrounded by a loving family, and still live independently, and that brings me great joy and satisfaction.

My advice is to treat everybody like you'd like to be treated yourself.

(December, 2024)

Cold Chisel's "Flame Trees" film clip can be seen here on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8KgP2aOXcA>