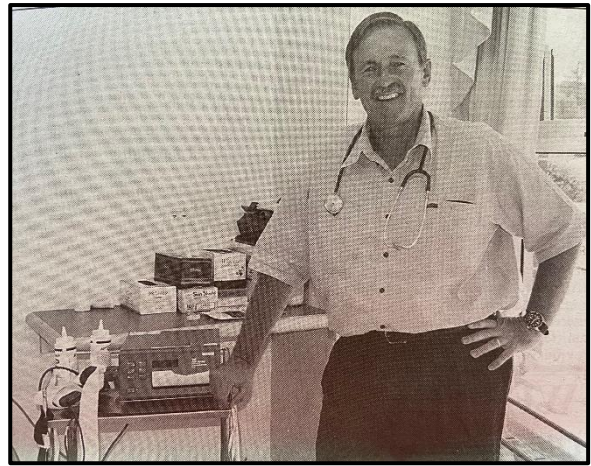


Andrew Godden

Oberon has been the unexpected treasure of my life story.

Being born in 1950, it was always easy to calculate my age. But growing up in West Ryde, negotiating school there and at Epping, studying long years of medicine in Sydney and London, none of this suggested that I would spend most of my life in Oberon. Early days in Sydney were happy, with an older brother and sister, and boyhood fun, exploring the local neighbourhoods on scooter and bicycle.



Family beach holidays brought a love of the ocean, but my great joy was spending time on my grandfather's farm at Tocumwal in the Riverina. Love of the country helped shape my later decision to join the Oberon medical practice.

Sunday school was a small part of my early days, and through this I slowly became aware that there could be a God who claimed my allegiance. This was unsettling. I just wanted to live my life according to my own plans and purpose, but at the age of 19 I surrendered and prayed this prayer: "God, if you're there, I will be your man."

Within a few days I was surprised to realise He was indeed there, and my life changed radically. I suddenly had many wonderful friends in the local youth fellowship at the Beecroft Uniting Church. My life took on real direction, and I read the Gospels again, with a new revelation and awareness of Jesus.

Subsequent hospital training and medical practice was at Hornsby, St Vincents (Darlinghurst), Penrith, Hillingdon (London), and Inverell. I was entranced by the radiance and spiritual qualities of a beautiful Christian youth worker and made the best ever decision by asking Carol to marry me in 1976.

We came to Oberon in 1980 when Carol was pregnant with the first of our four children. We never regretted the move, and our children are all grateful for their childhood in "the Berg", as they called the town.

Here I joined two gifted and dedicated GPs - Dr Lance Robey and Dr Bill Morrison. My consultation room was adjacent to Dr Robey, so as I encouraged patients to quit smoking this was often accompanied by clouds of smoke and coughing coming from across the corridor.

There were more gifted and dedicated doctors in our practice over the years, and the work was rewarding and challenging, and it sometimes determined the outcome of people's lives.

We attended the Oberon Uniting Church and made great friends there.

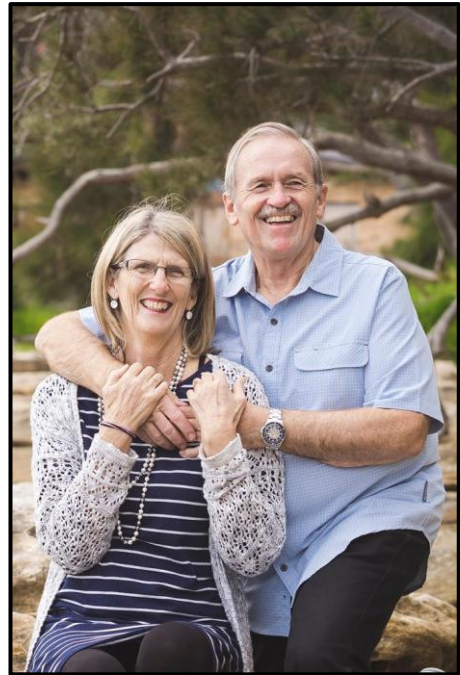
We had settled in a farmhouse on the Bathurst Road at the edge of town, and enjoyed a wonderful family life there for 38 years.

I prayed one morning each week with people from the other churches. It was encouraging to join in prayer, and to see our prayers answered.

Our four children are now leading very different and fulfilling lives, but each one values the unique qualities of their Oberon childhood.

Country medical practice was often busy but with limited scope, so I used my afternoon off each week to attend Southern Cross Bible College, which was then in Katoomba. Here I mixed with students from around the world, and some gifted and inspiring Bible teachers.

After completing a diploma I took on pastoring the small Pentecostal fellowship in Oberon, and in time we sought a home for the church that had been meeting in various locations around town. The church bought land in an industrial zone on Albion Street and built a modern well-appointed auditorium that was a great blessing and subsequently used by schools and others for different events.



After 35 years medical practice and 20 years pastoring it was time to pass on these tasks to others. Oberon has been at the heart of our wonderful family life, and a rewarding professional career.

This account sounds like it has been much work, but actually it has been joy. Jesus encourages us to abandon our own ambitions and follow Him, and in doing this we encounter a deep peace and a rest that the world cannot match. His yoke is indeed easy and His burden is light.

Jesus is the foundation and the certain hope of a wonderful eternal future.

(November, 2025)