

## LIFE AFTER TANFIELD

**NAME MOIRA BRYAN (née NETHERTON)**

**PUPIL AT TANFIELD FROM 1947 TO 1952**

### MY LIFE AFTER LEAVING TANFIELD



Prior to leaving S.G.S -as it was then, in 1952 I had applied to the R.V.I to take up a nursing career & was accepted. In Oct of that year, I commenced working at the R.V.I's Convalescent Wylam. I was excited & nervous at leaving home at 16 and a half, but being quite a confident lass, I was keen to start work & have some money. In those days, you were able to learn the Practical side of Nursing, prior to commencing your nursing training at 18. I loved it all made life-long friends. Looking back, my Nursing training at the R.V.I was exceptional, moving through the different wards to gain all facets of Medicine & Surgery. We worked long hours in those days. We would save our money for holidays, which included back packing in Scotland, good fun. Going by boat from Newcastle to Bergen to Ulvik, on the Hardanger Fjord & returning by Stavanger. Good fun spending Midsummer- daylight all night at a party with students at an island across the fjord. Rowing there in a boat, 5 of us, no life jackets. We also went to Salzburg, all the way by train, 3 days & nights staying in Anif for 2 weeks in a pensionette, doing trips to Hellbron, a salt mine, fun, Black Forest & Badgastein in Germany & Hitler's bunker house & Eagles nest at Berchesgarden etc.etc.

After 4 years at the R.V.I I decided to do another year & become a Midwife. Did the 1st. Part at Middlesbrough Maternity Hosp. & 2nd part at Nc/Le General Hospital delivering babies on the District around Nc/Le & loved it. I also took another exam to become a Queen's Nurse, QIDNS. Queen's Institute of District Nursing.

By this time I was engaged to be married & my fiancé Alistair had just finished National Service in Germany & decided to join the Metropolitan Police in London. When I qualified as a Midwife, we moved to London in 1959. I worked as a Midwife at St George's Hosp. which was then at Hyde Park Corner. The Mid. Dept. was on the top floor & had amazing views of London. Quite a few perks working there with free tickets at times to West End shows. We lived in a furnished flat in Battersea on the middle floor of a terrace house with a typical London land lady. Lots of stories there.

Eventually we saved enough money to buy a bungalow in Erith in Kent, on the edge of the Met Police District, Al still in the Met, & I, the local District Nurse.

Considering starting a family, but Australia was advertising that you could go to Australia for £ 10 each for 2 years. Alistair was very keen, so we applied, accepted & had a sailing date on the 'Fairstar' in a month. People we knew bought the house & took the dog. I was in tears when we left. Our families thought we were crazy leaving good jobs. etc. etc. They we're born in a different era.

In 1965 when we left the population of Australia was 13 million, the same as Greater London, it is still only 26 million.

The "Fairstar" looked huge, sitting there in the docks at Southampton. We had a cabin on our own, & enjoyed every minute of our cruise to Australia. Plenty of activities on the boat, great food bands & artists entertaining us, dancing.

The trip was great going thro' the Med to Pt. Said, traders coming to the boat to sell their wares. Coming thro' the Suez Canal, so fertile on one side & sandy on the other. We were followed by numerous boats from various European Countries all emigrating to Oz.

Next stop Aden where we bartered for cheap electrical goods, movie camera & equipment, binoculars etc. Across the Indian Ocean to Perth, where I met a nursing friend, hubby & 4 children, who had emigrated & couldn't settle & were going back.

We disembarked in Melbourne & had a flat waiting for us in Frankston, a beach suburb about 30 miles away & soon bought a new house. I got a job as a sister in a doctor's Surgery & Al joined the Police Force.

We started our family, Andrew was born in 1967 & Graeme in 1969. Our 1st trip back to the UK was in 1971 to visit family & friends.

In 1974, my hubby thought it would be a change to live in the country - good for the boys, so we moved to Bairnsdale- tears again leaving friends & a nice area.

Al now worked for the Country Roads Board & they gave us an old house to live in for a cheap rent. It was so bad compared with the new one we had sold.

However, this enabled us to buy a 51 acre property about 5 kms. from Bairnsdale where we still live. We became farmers rearing cattle which still continues.

In 1977 Colin was born which was great.

We have had lots of ups & downs in our lives & one bad incident where Alistair was badly injured in a car accident on his way home from work with serious injuries, including head injuries & brain damage. He was 46 at the time, Colin was only 6 at the time. Al did recover after a long time but had to leave his job, as he had short term memory loss. Life was never the same. He passed away in 1983 due to heart problems.

The boys have grown up & have families & they have built on the extremities of the property. I have 11 grandchildren, so we have helped to populate Australia.

I have travelled extensively - before Al died, we travelled to Perth by train, across the Nullarbor Plain to see The Americas Cup when it was held there- amazing experience. Also to L.A then UK to see family again, & Hong Kong. In the 80's we had a trip on the old Oriana around the Pacific, taking in Fiji, Tonga, American Samoa - all beautiful, New Zealand, Tasmania, most of the Capital cities. After Al died, I visited Italy, Switzerland, Paris, Bordeaux & vineyards in Loire valley, then to Barcelona, Istanbul, Izmir, Greek islands, Egypt, Rhine cruise, Prague, Croatia, Norfolk Island plus most of Australia, Outback & remote areas & all the Capital cities.

I feel so fortunate to have achieved so much in my life & feel that it's important to take any opportunity that arises, life is so short.