

Charles Adams - YTS 1944 wrote:

To the team that put the newsletter together, my most sincere thanks and congratulations on a very stimulating edition. Your work is much appreciated (I get out a newsletter myself for the RRVV, so I'm qualified to comment). It gets better and better but there is a dearth of content from the productive end of town, the fellas that got the real work done, those from the Tech. This is from one of them.

The exact date is not something that I can give you but it was the first school day of 1944, the day the bush fire got everyone excited and had the cut smoldering for a few days. Having been thru the '39 fire at Vesper via Noojee I wondered what all the fuss was about.

Due to my family moving from Trafalgar back to Vesper, I had to be boarded to go to Tech, and had the extremely good fortune to spend a year with Dr Andrew's family, with Judith Margaret and David. Having boarded once before for the winter of '36 when I was just 5 because I could not, or would not, walk the 7km home by dark, it was no trauma for me. Perhaps it was for the Andrews since I was moved to board at Trafalgar for the next two years. Then followed a year with the Harvey family of Ralph, Col and Jan at Coach Rd, Next were several years with the Myer family in Strzelecki Rd. Maybe all the writing home makes me more prone to writing now. Mind you, Archie Robertson, with the gash in his head from the bullet of a German airman while engaged in a dog fight over France in WW1, contributed to my eventual mastery of the basics of written communication. It still took two attempts at Matric English but I succeeded in passing as the final subject of my diploma.

Other masters were Principal Beanland who was before my time, but have since had contact with his son on RRVV business. Wiseman, the head; Tyrell the Chem teacher; Ford for metalwork and metallurgy - hey those fellas covered a lot of ground. The wood work teacher whose name eludes me was memorialized for "light long strokes". There was also the sole female teacher Miss Sinclair, but I don't recall her subject, but who created quite a stir by her very presence in an 'all boys' school. There was also a very capable young master who drove down from Melbourne in his smart new Singer Tourer each week, when new cars were very rare and a real mark of success.

During school vacations, working on the potato farm at Vesper, the Yallourn power station was just a smudge of smoke on the distance 60km away.



At the end of 7 years at Yallourn Tech, plus an extra year to get Matric, I finally got Elec and Mech Diplomas and knowing no better, went to the SEC as a cadet engineer. A couple of years around the metropolitan area then 6 months in the North East left me with a need for a broader view of life in electrical design. I tried Nilsen Cromie in Cromwell St Collingwood mostly drafting for a year, before moving to GMH for 12 years of Diesel engine application engineering.

The highlight of those years was October to December 1962 in the US. I was met at Idlewild (now Kennedy) airport by a chauffeur in a Cadillac to take me to the Park Sheraton in 6th Av. One day I walked from the Pro Castro group at one end of the UN building thru the police keeping them apart to the Anti Castro group at the other end of the building during the height of the missile crisis. I saw a good deal of NYC, Detroit, Chicago and had a couple of weeks at Speedway Indianapolis IN with a Belgian, a Frenchman, a San Salvadorian and an Iranian all doing the same course at Allison Division on planetary transmissions. Back in NYC, I walked up Broadway on a bright sunny December day with the temperature reading 22degrees F, kind of

chilly. On the way home I had one wonderful day walking and cable caring around SFO before following the longest line of red tail lights on the freeway in the bus to the airport, and that long ride home in the 707 via Honolulu, Fiji and Sydney to be met by my family in a Holden with a GMH chauffeur.

I guess when I got home I was considered an "expert". Later one of the men that I met at the annual division Christmas "do" asked if I would be interested in a job at a new startup company, the Kenworth Truck Company, who were planning to set up a factory to build the truck in Australia. I took up his offer and spent 26 years, mostly in the office of the new factory, built in Bayswater, there progressing from the only engineer to Chief Engineer. This included two years sabbatical in Bellevue (Seattle suburb) right next to Redmond of Microsoft note and just up the "pike" from Boeing. My wife and I took the opportunity to thoroughly explore the Pacific North West, Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands in particular Lopez Is, the Columbia River, the Cascades with magnificent Mt Rainier, though we never got anywhere near its 14410 ft, 48 square km glazier covered summit, as well as adjacent British Columbia and down the Oregon Coast. I frequently see our product on our roads.

Retired in 1994, as best I can remember, and now live in a comfortable retirement village in Burwood East, still keeping in email contact from fellow Yallourn Tech alumni, Jack Crawford, Bob Stevenson and Ralph Harvey.

Yallourn Tech is of course part progenitor of Monash Uni and this week I attended a very impressive Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony at BMW Edge at Federations Square, not, I hasten to explain, as distinguished. "Knowledge is Power" and "We continue to learn".

Clearly the most momentous event of my life of work, after Yallourn Tech, was the development and universal adoption of the PC. One of my main avocations now is membership of Melbourne PC User Group whose several monthly meetings provide great stimulation and many friendships....and with the PC, I am able to make this legible and then refine it to make it coherent, to a degree. Also it allows me to do the same in retirement village residents' battles to get a fair deal from the owners of the properties given we are trapped by an iniquitous and anti competitive "Deferred Management Fee". Thanks again to Archie Robertson.

Please pass on my kind regards to Sonja Bates, George was another class mate.

Thanks again and keep up the good work Charles