



Margaret Gray life in Sydney

In **October 1959** we arrived as a family in Australia. My husband **Ron**, our two children, **Linda 4** and **Peter 2**, and my mother **Mary Norrie**, settled in Sydney. **Ron's family** were already here, and that made such a difference. Found out that I was pregnant while on board ship, so my first few months in 'the land down under' were, to say the least, uncomfortable! The temperatures over these first few months were the highest on record for some years – so cold showers were a blessing! – and visits to the beach limited. Our 'Aussie', **Rhona**, was born on **6th April 1960**.



Life was good to us. Ron got a job the second week we were here, and was eventually promoted to **Area Manager** for the **Dunlop/Olympic Tyre** company in **Northern NSW**. After Rhona's birth I went to work for an **American pharmaceutical company** and remained there, as **Secretary to the Managing Director, Australia and Southeast Asia**, for **20 years**. Probably would have stayed on there, but Ron's promotion meant that we had to move to **Tamworth** (the **mecca of Australian country music!!**), and we lived happily there **from 1981 to 1988**. Sadly, my mother **passed away in 1975**, and she has been laid to rest beside my father in **Kirriemuir cemetery**.

Whilst living in Tamworth, I worked as **Secretary to the local television organisation**, a group of five regional television stations operating throughout New South Wales. This became **Prime Television**, and I continued working as **Personal Assistant to the General Manager**.

When we **returned to Sydney in 1988**, Ron went to work for the **Australian Defence Force, RAAF Personnel Administration**. On his **retirement**, he received a **commendation from the then Air Commander Australia** for **exemplary personnel support** between the **RAAF and Defence Centre Sydney**. I also applied for a job with the **Defence Department**, and subsequently **worked for Recruiting**, the **RAAF** and, last but not least, the **Royal Australian Navy as Personal Assistant to the Admiral, Flag Officer, Naval Support Command**. Must admit, work has been varied and interesting! I **retired in 1995** and **Ron retired a year later**. We then **moved to the South Coast**, close to the beach, but missed the close family contact so we **moved back to Sydney in 2002**. **Ron passed away in 2004**.



Ron's favourite hobby was **tenpin bowling** – and we travelled all over Australia **competing in Australian Championships**. He never quite made the perfect 300 score – but **did manage a 299!** – of which we were all very proud! He also **won the Australian Veteran Masters Championship in 1993**. Mind you, he **wasn't a bad golfer either!!**

Now the family all live in **different directions throughout Sydney** (but their lives are another story!) – each about an hour's drive away – but we keep in close touch – and we've just celebrated the best family Christmas ever. I'm now a **grandmother**, and **great-grandmother**, but no – of course I don't spoil the kids! One day, in the not too distant future, I plan to make a trip back to Westmuir. It would be so good to visit all the old places again – and to catch up with friends not seen in many years.

In 1961 the **Couper family** from **Horniecross** joined us. My **mother's sister, Karen**, her husband **John**, and their five children (**Kathleen, Karen, Jimmy, Alistair** and **Malcolm**) decided to make a new life in Australia. **John's family** had for many years lived and worked **Springdate**, the **berry farm in Westmuir**, and were well known there.