

VAL'S BACKGROUND - A FEW NOTES

PARENTS

6th January
1914
Bill Born

William Charles Cuthbert Hickson

(Parents: John Frederick Hickson & Edith Mary Hickson (nee Wearne))

15 Dec. 1915
Leah Born

Leah Merle Blunden

(Parents: Thomas Blunden & Violet Amanda Blunden (nee Coath))

?
Marriage

William Charles Cuthbert Hickson & Leah Merle Blunden

BROTHERS

25th Aug. 1944
Ray Born

Raymond William Hickson - (married Patricia (Trish) Gibson)

- died 4th January, 2017 (age 72)

15th Aug. 1944
Alan Born

Alan Russell Hickson (married Viki Knight)

19th July
1941
Val born

Valmai Lorraine Hickson born at
Woodleigh Private Hospital, Hurstville

In the early days Val's family lived at
2 A Salisbury Street, South Hurstville
- she attended Sunday School at the
nearby Methodist Church and started
school at South Hurstville Public
School. Their next door neighbours
were Uncle Ralph and Auntie Norma
Shephard.

(a highly skilled cabinet maker)

Val's Dad began building their
home at 3 Yarran Road, Catley -
amazingly without any private transport
or electric tools that we take for
granted.

About
1948/
1949

The family moved to Yarran Road
and Val moved to Catley Public
School. She then went to Lutherland
Intermediate High School for 3 years
and then St. George Girls High School
for 4th and 5th year

1962 - AN EVENTFUL YEAR.
(Marriage; completion of Uni degree; Ordination as Deacon and Ministry commencement.)

Note: Moore College had introduced a fourth year which was not compulsory for those already "in the system".

Principal Broughton Knox had suggested (I suspect with little expectation of convincing me) that I defer marriage for a year and remain in college while I completed my Arts degree. I wasn't keen on that suggestion and I'm sure Val would have shared my lack of enthusiasm about the suggestion. I decided to defer ordination to allow me to finish the final two units of my Arts degree. (and, of course, marry)

20th
January
1962

MARRIAGE

Trevor Albert Cuthbertson and
Valmai Lorraine Hickson
by Rev. S.R. (Rix) Warren
at St. Paul's Church, Catley
Attendants: Jeanette (Jan) Downie.
and Harold Milham.
Flower girl: Michelle Cuthbertson
(my niece: 5 yrs old)

The reception was held at Roslyn
Gardens, Peakhurst.

Our honeymoon On the way to touring
Tasmania (in my Dad's station wagon) we
stayed at Muttahong, Canberra, Malacoota
and Melbourne before overnight passage
on the "Princess of Tasmania". Accommodation
was a mixture of motels, hotels and camping.

Places we stayed at included Launceston, St. Helens and Hobart (even though it was January there was snow on Mount Wellington one day). We then travelled to Queenstown - the "road" in those days was little more than a muddy track. The view approaching Queenstown was spectacular, but in a way shocking as the surrounds were more like a moonscape as a result of mining activities. What was intended to be a two-night stay turned into four nights as I had particularly looked forward to travelling to Strahan on the "abt" railway (rack & pinion) train and on arrival discovered that it did not run on weekends. The very old Railway Hotel was quite memorable - not least because of the metre high single beds which creaked with every movement (not ideal for a honeymoon). We then travelled to Ulverstone where we camped by the beach before travelling back to the mainland the next night on the "Princess of Tasmania".

After the honeymoon

For the remainder of the year we shared a large house at 124 Carrington Road, Randwick with Bill and Barbara Graham (Bill had been in college with me and we both married around the same time).

It was quite a quick bus trip to the city where Val continued to work at Perpetual Trustee as a typist/clerk while I worked for part of the year in the ever-diminishing telegraph department at the PMO (Postmaster

General's Department) - located at the rear of the GPO building in Martin Place. There were still a few places in Australia to which telegrams were sent by morse code but teleprinters were now the more common method. Around the middle of the year I resigned and drove taxis a few nights each week giving me more flexibility for Uni work.

While living at Randwick we attended church at St. Luke's blovelly which was a 15 minute walk from our home. We enjoyed the fellowship there but, because of other activities our church involvement there was fairly limited.

November
1962

I completed the final exams in History (Asia & Far East) and Anthropology for my Arts degree (at last).

Ordination

16 December
1962

I was ordained as a deacon by Archbishop Hugh Lough in St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Beginning of Ministry

17th
December
1962

I began ordained ministry as curate at St. George's Hurstville with Rev. Rudolph Dillon. Ministry included most of the usual responsibilities but with a special involvement in the youth work.

Initially we lived at 5 Sackville St., Hurstville in the home of a widow Mrs Ellis. Val was still working at Perpetual Trustee.

Less than two weeks after my ordination I conducted my first funeral - quite a large one - at St. George's Church while the boss (Rudolph Dillon) was taking a short break. As I had never even attended a funeral previously I was extremely nervous but somehow got through without making any obvious errors.

5th
January
1963

It was a special privilege and delight that my first marriage as a celebrant was our two closest friends Jeanette (Jan) Downie and Harold Milham - less than three weeks after my ordination - at St. Paul's Church, Catley. Just 12 months before they had been the attendants at our wedding.

31st
May
1963

Val's Dad Bill Hickson died at the age of 49 after a long illness. A real regret for Val was that she didn't have the opportunity to tell him that he was to become a grandfather. Her pregnancy had only just been confirmed. This was a reminder that "as one life comes to an end another begins."

Mid-
1963

Rudolph Dillon accepted another position and I was, in effect, in charge of the parish. A retired minister came to lead Communion services on Sundays - as a Deacon I was not permitted to do so. This was for about 6 weeks before the new Rector, Rev. Reg. Langshaw arrived.

I was thrown in at the deep end to deal with everything in a very busy parish. One thing that stays in my mind is that in one week I conducted seven funerals including two on the Saturday morning (I suspect that a hearse has never gone so fast to fit in two trips from Hurstville to the crematorium at Sutherland)

Conditions for Scripture Teaching also were very challenging for a newly-ordained minister. Apart from Hurstville Primary School and a special school in Wonnora Road I took a large class in the auditorium of the (new) Sydney Technical High School. But the one that sticks most clearly in my mind was trying to teach the scriptures to about 100 boys sitting on the bare floor of the gymnasium at Hurstville Boys (Tech?) School with a teacher at the back with a cane in his hand to try to keep control. I doubt whether this was conducive to a positive attitude towards the Christian gospel.

As Val's pregnancy progressed she left work at Perpetual Trustee and the Church rented an old house for us at 17 Woids Avenue, Hurstville.

My year as a deacon was considered as part of the training for priesthood. Both by being mentored by the Rector and in further study including the writing of four essays.

Rudolph and Reg were quite different personalities. Rudolph was a gifted evangelist (more than 40 years later I met his grandson who observed that "Grandad was quite a performer") To me he was an encouraging, friendly mentor. Reg was a strong leader but our relationship, while always cordial, was much more that of boss and employee.

19th
April
1963

Graduation (at last)

My Bachelor of Arts degree was conferred in the Great Hall at Sydney University. - the qualification was based on a triple major in History, Education and Anthropology. plus individual units in Psychology and Physics

15th
December
1963

Ordination as a Priest by Archbishop
Hugh Lough in St. Andrew's Cathedral,
Sydney.

Val arranged a family celebration in the afternoon at our Wards Avenue home - she had made a lovely cake in the shape of a church.

As we were farewelling our guests, Val (8½ months pregnant) unfortunately fell down our front steps breaking her arm. One consequence was that when she gave birth to Mark less than three weeks later her arm was still in a cast. She had to take care in handling our new baby.

5th
January
1964
8 p.m.
(Sunday)

Mark Stephen Cuthbertson born at St. George
Hospital, Kogarah.

We were thrilled at his birth - as the beginning of our own family.

We had resisted buying a TV after our marriage, but relented to enable Val to have something to entertain her while feeding our beautiful baby son.

August
1964

BERKELEY (August 1964 - April 1966)

I became curate in the Parish of Port Kembla living in what had been a Housing Commission house in Kelly Street, Berkeley - next to the fairly new church building.

Berkeley was almost completely a Housing Commission suburb on Lake Illawarra. Many of the residents were English migrants including some in temporary Nissen Hut accommodation.

The Parish consisted of seven churches (all except Port Kembla very small buildings). The Rector Ken Leask treated me as an equal colleague and, in effect, put me in charge of three of the churches - Berkeley, Lake Heights and Longilar.

The work load in Scripture teaching (up to 23 classes a week) at Berkeley High School and two or three primary schools was exhausting. With seven centres Ken and I had a very heavy work-load with up to 4 services each every Sunday assisted by a number of lay readers.

Ken Leask's exuberant personality at first came as a surprise but we quickly loved him and his wife Val (another Valmai) and it was clear that same love was shared by all church members (and many others as well) - Ken and Val were to become Debbie's godparents.

November
1964

We purchased vacant land at 43 Pacific Ave., Warri Beach for £550 with a loan from my Mum and Dad. (they later refused repayment of the money)

19th
April
1965
(Easter
Monday)
11:30
p.m.

Deborah Joy Cuthbertson was born at
Wollongong Hospital.

We had not specifically planned to add
to our family so quickly but were
delighted when it did happen even if
two babies under 18 months can be
quite an exhausting challenge (especially
for Val.)

1965

We obtained bank finance (about
£2000 I think) and I began drawing
up plans to build at Merri. The
idea was initially to leave a shell
downstairs and build upstairs - a
lounge area, kitchen & two bedrooms.
We began to build doing some work
ourselves and employing tradesmen.

December
1965
(?)

The family business at Mortdale was
forced to close when, without warning,
the bank withdrew finances. Dad
had to notify nearly one hundred
employees that there was no job
for them to come ^{back} to after the Christmas
holidays. This hit him very hard as
those out of work included Alan and
two cousins Blair and Jim.

MERRYLANDS WEST (April 1966 - Sep. 1969)

2nd
April
1966

I was inducted as curate-in-charge of the Provisional Parish of St. Matthew's Merrylands West - with branch churches at Greystanes and Frances Street South Wentworthville.

We lived in the Rectory next to the old St. Matthew's Church in Arcadia Street.

At different times I had three part-time student assistants/trainees: Eira Adams, Ken Hainge and Jim Sunstall. There were also at least three licensed lay-readers who helped with the services.

Perhaps the highlight of the work there was the youth work. In 1967 we had 50 confirmands - too many for our small church, so we were permitted to use St John's Parramatta. ^{we made a point (learned from battery days) of opening up our home to the young people.}

Another highlight was the second Billy Graham crusade in 1968. I remember being with Val on the final Sunday afternoon sitting on the ground of the Sydney Showground - only a few days before Janelle was born.

1967

For one year Val's brother Alan (14 years old) lived with us due to relationship issues with his Mum. While there were challenges I know that Alan has never forgotten Val's kindness to him during this time.

4th
May
1968

Janelle Anne Cuthbertson was born at the Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington.

We clocked up a lot of miles along Farranatta Road, including the time a couple of weeks earlier when Mark was in St Margaret's Hospital Darlinghurst to have his tonsils removed.

Feb (?)
1969

Mark commenced school at Hilltop Road Primary School - a short walk from our home.

During this time we spent much of our spare time working on our Warri Beach house. In 1968 we were able to re-finance it with IMB allowing us to complete the downstairs area as a separate flat. Quite a few times we went down to Warri (3 kids and lots of building materials on board) after the Sunday evening service.

THE OAKS (September 1969 - Jan. 1972)
(I had to decline an "offer" to go to the Parish of Littleton [part of Lithgow] because of the inadequacy of the Rectory for a family of three children)

26th
Sep.
1969

I was inducted as curate-in-charge of the Provisional Parish of St. Luke's, The Oaks. Services were also held each Sunday at the Methodist Church at Oakdale and, once each month at the historic St. Matthew's, the Old Oaks and at Nattai River.

The main industries of the area were coal mining and apple orchards.

The Rectory was a very old timber house, on the main road with a procession of coal trucks going past for 20 hours each day.

A couple of days after we moved in Janelle (then 17 months old) fell down a small step, and stopped breathing for some time. After a very high speed dash to find a doctor in Camden, we were assured that she would be OK and that similar instances are common in children around that age. It was a frightening experience and we were really afraid that we had lost ^{her}. A couple of repeat instances of "breath-holding" were still frightening - even though the doctor had assured us that normal reflexes always take over in a short period.

Another frightening event some time later was when the inside of the laundry was badly burnt when the clothes dryer caught fire. As Janelle

was sleeping in the adjacent room (we were at the other end of the house) we were thankful to God that the fire did not spread further - probably with disastrous results in the old timber building.

1970

Debbie started school at The Oaks Primary School - joining Mark there. It was a small school with about four class-rooms (-if I remember correctly).

One small settlement within the Parish was the small mining village of Nattai River - well down in the Burragorang Valley. I went there each week to teach scripture in the one-teacher school. I took my lunch which I ate at the Burragorang lookout before going to Oakdale School for scripture lessons in the afternoon. The Nattai River Village was abandoned many years ago and access to the valley has been cut off for the public..

1970-71

I was quite involved in the planning of and building of a new Rectory. We never lived in it as it was officially opened just before we moved on.

My health

For many years I had been taking large amounts of Migral (ergotamine) tablets for migraines/headaches. I also underwent neurological scans. As the headaches got increasingly severe, the decision was made to try switching to teaching - which leads to the next stage: Barker College.