

THE GENTLE AND VERY ENERGETIC LIFE OF THE LATE JILL ROSEBY

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Jill Roseby was about 3 years old when she asked for a horse. Her father, Alan, never one to deny his daughter a wish, stood firm and said that she firstly had to learn to properly crack a stockwhip. His reasoning for this was that no one should learn when on horseback. With classic family determination, "she sought her own abode" on a stump in the paddock, to gain a bit of height. In time she became proficient, managing a competent single handed, front to back to side smoothly flowing whipcracking action, under her father's expert tuition.

The family home and property was "Tallawang" on the Murrumbidgee, at Colinton, about half way between Cooma and Canberra. The year was 1945.

Taught her school lessons at home by her mother, these were mailed away to the Education Department for marking and assessment and came back about 4 to 6 weeks later. Jill was naturally left handed, but the lessons said ".....take the pencil in the right hand" So she learnt to write right handed, and was right handed at field hockey and batting at cricket. She threw a ball left handed. Jill played tennis with either, which to her seemed totally natural, just as she also bowled with either arm at cricket. The outcome of this was that her opponent at the batting end never knew which hand the ball would come out of. A pace bowler taught by her father and brother, she learned the same easy, fluid, high arc action she acquired for whip cracking, as she refined her bowling technique.

On the farm wise parents turned work into play and lessons were completed quickly, with Jill and younger brother Tim ever anxious to get back outdoors. To counter some of this, her mother moved half of the reading time outdoors to the verandah.

To Jill, her first year at boarding school was both shock and revelation. She arrived at PLC Pymble for a "... first look at a real school...." in December 1951, aged 8 years, and with some trepidation adapted well enough to a system she had no idea existed, excited and enthralled by the vast amounts of new information. The student with an attentive mind, a shy manner of speaking, a great sense of fun and a love of learning, opened her mind to the world and eagerly sought its wide wonders every day thereafter.

In 1954 the family moved from the farm on the Monaro to Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands and in consequence, Jill moved school to SCEGGS Moss Vale at the start of the 1954 school year. She was proving to be another literary person from an obviously literary family. Her family's tuition in childhood had instilled a love of reading which paid huge dividends, and her father's 'mental aberration' in writing beautiful poetry about the land and life in general was a joy to share. Family letters flowed back and forth, taking a wry, humorous look at life everywhere including school, where great and lasting friendships were made.

Entrance was gained to Sydney University in 1959 and with the benefit of an amazingly retentive memory she switched majors, as her interests had changed, completing a few years of history in one final year, gaining her Bachelor of Arts Degree at age 19, then continued on to a Diploma of Education.

The original name of Roseby in Denmark was "Rozebi", pirates who plundered the coastal seafarers, sailing wherever the wild wind and weather took them. A century or two later they had settled in Britain and were established as farmers. Eventually a Rev. Thomas Roseby and wife Sarah moved to New Zealand. He was a minister of the Methodist Church. In a short time however, being a very learned amateur astronomer and writer, Thomas moved the family to Australia since earth tremors in New Zealand did not permit stable telescopic observation. In Sydney he established the Congregational Church in Marrickville, having left the Methodists as they had an adverse view of his science, inconsistent with his own worldly and advancing learning and analysis of life.

The Rev. Thomas Roseby had six children, the third being "Sid", and the youngest being "Amy" who was a headmistress of SCEGGS Redlands in Cremorne, Sydney. Jill was born in 1942 in Cooma, the daughter of Sid's youngest son - Alan.

After University, Jill worked variously as a teacher at Dover Heights, a secretary to a departmental head at Sydney Uni, and in Market Research as a data analyst. In 1969 she married Ted Wearne, a consulting engineer. They had 2 children. She and her husband studied a year of Contract Law together in 1971.

Joining the Department of Education & Science in 1969, Jill satisfied a strongly held desire to assist overseas students in their progression through university studies and their life in Australia. Many years later this led her to a project officer's position with IDP Education Australia, who conducted development programs under the auspices of the Australian Universities Vice Chancellor's Committee. From there she administered a medical education program funded by AusAid as support for the School of Medicine of the University of PNG in Port Moresby. She was in her element, making strong friendships among PNG medical staff, doctors, specialists and nurses, either sending specialists from our hospitals, universities or private practice to UPNG, or bringing individual students to Australia for training. She visited PNG three or four times a year.

With a quiet, unassuming and very respectful regard for all with whom she worked, her efforts were always directed towards guidance of PNG staff, believing the best management outcome would be achieved by encouraging them to attempt as much of the program work as possible, and to accept responsibility. Jill administered or managed several sizeable medical support programs over a period of about 15 years.

After a long and difficult period of illness Jill passed away in Canberra on 9th October 2010. A card received by her family from the Dean and Professor of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPNG, Sir Isi Kevau, writes of a "...great Australian woman who made a huge contribution to PNG... remembered by the many PNGuinean medical and health professionals as an extremely caring person a cautious nature which always delivered a deeply and

thoroughly considered intellectual opinion, leading to the right strategic and contractual result for the school she was whole heartedly dedicated to PNG's nation building."

Before the farewell given by her family at her home in Canberra, her whip was found along with a few other precious mementos from her childhood. The whip has now been repaired and also needed a new cracker.

And incidentally she did get her horse, which she named 'Lady Rebel'.

One significant story remains to be relayed to close the chapter on Jill's life. Jill had been with the Department of Education and Science in North Sydney for about ten months and shared the work with another colleague, when an assistant was appointed. Apparently this wonderful addition to their team had an aversion to the task of filing, but could write beautifully. In recognizing this skill, Jill said to him ".....I'll do your filing, if you will write my letters", and it was agreed. The touching thing is that the lovely talented man went on to publish some 30 books, had his poems translated into 18 languages, was awarded three major literary prizes and at one time was engaged to write Australia's Oath of Allegiance for New Citizens. His name is Les Murray.

Gillian Lesley Wearne, Jill, is survived by her husband Ted, daughter Jodie and son Nicholas.

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