

## **Tim Trigg: A Eulogy**

My Dad, Tim Trigg led a rich and happy life, full of love, music, travel and boats.

He was born on the 10th of December 1944 and grew up on the north shore of Sydney. Because his parents were travelling for extended periods, Dad and his brother Michael boarded at Shore, which gave him an early connection to friends from the country.

Dad said he was never a great student at school, but he was good at sport. He was an outstanding rower, and ultimately rowed for the school's First VIII. He was also a fine rugby player and was selected to play for NSW Country while at Armidale.

At the University of New England he was part of the first intake at Earle Page College, studying for a Bachelor of Rural Science. This was where Dad's lifelong passion for agriculture was really established. From my conversations with him, I know this was a great period of Dad's life. There were regular parties, plenty of beer and he just had a great time.

Tragedy hit in 1965 with the sudden death of his older brother Michael. It is difficult for me to understand the enormous impact that this awful event must have had on Dad's life. While Mike was mentioned in conversations and his picture was in our home, his brother's loss is not a subject any of us could ever bring ourselves

to discuss in great depth with Dad. It clearly remained something that was very painful for him for the rest of his life.

The tragedy did seem to light a fire within Dad on the academic front. He moved to the University of Sydney to commence a Diploma of Ag Economics and was resident here at St Paul's College.

Paul's is where he started to apply his significant intellect to his studies and the results started to flow for him. He maintained a healthy balance though, being deeply involved in College affairs and establishing a reputation as an excellent host: his valet in the Pauline suggests that while his room cleanliness may have left a bit to be desired, *"he certainly knew how to live well and many a good conversation went far into the night as his guests ate camembert and sipped a fine port"*.

There is also evidence of the negotiation skills that would serve him well later in his career. The valet reports on a College wine cellar trip to the Hunter Valley: *"Who else but Tim,"* it asks, *"could have convinced the toll collector at Hawkesbury that the boisterous, imbibing mass on the bus was a church group on an educational outing to Newcastle, and hence was exempted from the toll?"*

His strong academic performance led him to Scotland and Aberdeen University, where he finished a Masters and then a PhD on animal nutrition.

It was also at Aberdeen where Dad met the love of his life, Mum. Mum and Dad married in a beautiful service in the Lake District in 1972 and moved back to Australia.

This must have been quite a stressful period for them. While they had a lovely house in the Southern Highlands, Dad was unemployed for around 12 months and I had arrived so there was an extra mouth to feed. He eventually got a job teaching in Armidale and later in New Zealand, where Bob was born. In New Zealand he contributed to the success of that country's dairy industry through working on improving the nutrition of dairy cows at Ruakura. The call of home was strong however, and in the early 80s we came back across the Tasman.

Dad loved his time at the Kyabram Agricultural Research Institute, where he led the Animal Production section and worked with a great team of people.

Mum and Dad bought a block of land on the intersection of two irrigation channels a few kilometres out of town. It was quite a brave move because at the time of purchase the entire block was

covered in water, thanks to a hole that had been dug right through the channel bank by an industrious yabby.

They built a beautiful house on that block with an incredible open fireplace that Dad loved. He dug a cellar in the garage that periodically filled with muddy water due to the irrigation channels playing havoc with the local water table. For years, Mum and Dad were drinking unidentifiable and muddy bottles of wine rescued from the flooding.

He and Mum broke their backs planting scores of different trees around the house and it is amazing to go back to Kyabram now and see how the trees have established and transformed that little corner block.

We had a wonderful country lifestyle and it was a fun place for Bob and I to have our childhood. There were camping trips and expeditions to the river to chop firewood. We played around the channels, rowed boats under the bridges, dodged tiger snakes and had a treehouse in an old peppercorn tree on the banks of the channel.

We moved to Sydney in 1987 when Dad landed a great job at Peptide Technology. He ultimately became MD of Peptech Animal Health, and was responsible for conceptualising and developing products to manage the fertility of thoroughbred horses, cattle,

dogs and wildlife. Under Dad's direction, the hard working team at Peptech became the first Australian company ever to have a pharmaceutical product for animal use approved by the US Food & Drug Administration.

Dad went to great lengths to hide his achievements and significant intelligence behind a humble and understated exterior that belied the sharp brain beneath. He was a thoughtful and committed scientist - going through some of his papers this week it was awesome to see the careful rigour of his work and citations from other researchers. He never really let on or discussed any of his scientific achievements - it just wasn't his style. As a family we are so pleased that his contribution to science and the growth of human knowledge will continue for many years to come, through the donation of that amazing brain to Brainstorm at the Brain and Mind Centre.

Beyond the chronology of his achievements, there are some passions and character qualities that define who Dad was.

Aside from Mum, his great loves were the ocean and his boats and he poured time and money into them. We had some incredible family camping holidays on the water, in particular on the Hawkesbury River and a couple of trips to the spectacular Gippsland lakes.

Dad was happiest when out on the water and the wind was really blowing. I can recall one day trip where we spent a lovely afternoon snorkelling at Maitland Bay. On the return home we were sailing across the mouth of Broken Bay when a savage southerly change came through and the waves were towering - one was so big it actually broke over our boat. Mum, Bob and I were cowering in the bottom of the cockpit while Dad was standing at the helm. White water was gushing across the deck and I looked up in fear from the unusual sight of my mother praying and I could see Dad squinting into the horizontal rain and he just had this huge grin on his face. Either that or it was terror, but I'm pretty sure he was having a great time.

In more recent years he and Mum have been getting their ocean fix through their beach house in Killcare, where Dad swam in the sea as often as the water temperature allowed and fought an ongoing battle with the surrounding trees to ensure he kept his beloved expanse of blue water in clear view.

He loved to travel and did plenty of it over the years, for work and pleasure.

While he was travelling with work, Bob and I used to have a countdown on the fridge to when he got back. We loved the anticipation of his return and the amazing gifts he brought from the

US in particular, when his suitcase was filled with astronaut food like freeze dried ice cream and strawberries, NASA pens that could write upside down and other cool stuff from the Smithsonian museum.

Dad spent hours planning his trips with Mum, sorting their itineraries into baffling spreadsheets and swinging plans to indulge his passion for war history.

Of all the many places they went around the world though, Lord Howe Island holds a special place in his heart. Again, each trip was planned with logistical precision - the perfect amount of wine was shipped out several weeks in advance, the first morning was always bacon and eggs cooked at Ned's Beach, the favourite meal was fresh kingfish cooked on an open fire barbecue, and he made a regular pilgrimage to surf at spectacular Blinky's Beach, which he described as like swimming in champagne.

Dad was thrilled by the great feats of human endeavour: ocean explorers, navigation and most particularly the Apollo program and moon landings. He was one of the original "space nerds" and in 1969 hosted a notorious three-day marathon party in Warrawee to celebrate the successful landing of Apollo 11.

He loved parties, food, good wine and entertaining and so many people have written to us this week saying what great company he

was at those parties. He loved a laugh and had a very dry wit, delivering his lines quickly and in a laconic Aussie drawl. Some sort of roast meat - usually beef or ham - had to be served at events he hosted, and an enduring memory will be the sound of a carving knife being sharpened while one of his dogs, Jessie or Sally, slobbered at his feet waiting for him to drop a morsel.

He also loved music and had an eclectic taste, but his preferred options were classical and jazz. I can hardly remember a time at home when there was not music playing. At dinner time he'd always have a think about what tunes were appropriate to match the mood and occasion.

Given the joy he took from music it's one of life's quirky ironies that Dad was a terrible singer. I only ever heard him sing on a few occasions: the national anthem before Wallabies Tests, hymns in church, and, surprisingly, in the car once in the 80s after he had bought a new Carpenters Greatest Hits cassette at a servo. The noise was more of an atonal mumble that had a vague sort of rhythm to it, but he did love the sound of other people singing and choral music. He and Mum got a lot of joy out of chasing Ana's school choir around the UK a couple of years ago.

He was never a great one for airs and graces and had zero interest in fashion - for him it was all about comfort. Once he had found an



item of clothing he loved, he remained incredibly loyal to it well beyond its usual wearable life, and he was happy to go about in a stained, threadbare shirt, low hanging jeans and beaten up old sneakers, to Mum's great frustration.

He was incredibly courageous and did have some health challenges, including rheumatoid arthritis which meant he was often in great pain and he had multiple joint replacements. However, when he got his devastating cancer diagnosis he dealt with it and the treatment with patience and dignity. It sounds clichéd, but he truly never once complained or lamented the cards he had been dealt. Dad got just three months in the end but he made sure he lived them to the full. As a family we are grateful we were given the opportunity to walk on the beach, go to dinner, focus inwards and spend some great time together. He was able to go up the coast and go out for lunch with mates and he really enjoyed himself.

Dad's modesty means he would have been absolutely blown away by the outpouring of love and emotion that greeted the diagnosis of his illness and news of his passing.

Bob and I and our families are incredibly grateful for the love and companionship of all Mum and Dad's many friends from each of the stages of their lives over so many years. As I went through the

chronology of his life, it struck me that he and Mum have kept lifelong and treasured friendships from each of the places they have spent time over the years, and that is something really worth celebrating.

At the same time, it is sad to us that the restrictions of Covid mean there are many friends and family who cannot be here with us today. We are thinking of those family members and friends who we know would in normal times be here but cannot. This includes loved ones in Sydney and regional NSW, England, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, WA, Spain, New Zealand, the US and many other countries.

Dad was a wonderful father to Bob and I - always there and ready with clear advice if we asked for it, but unfailingly supportive and never dictating, allowing us to make our own way. I will miss knowing I can turn to him on the really big issues.

He adored his two daughters-in-law Araceli and Anna as if they were his own daughters, and was absolutely devoted to his grandchildren Ana, Max, Emily and Holly and so proud of each of them. He was great with kids - each one he met was taken as the individual they are and treated on their own terms - and that made him a wonderful Gpa. His loss is keenly felt by each of them.

The great and enduring love of Dad's life though is my Mum. His love for her was true, deep and total, and their romance has been the major constant backdrop to my life. A dear friend wrote to my Mum this week saying that they had a connection that we all aspired to. While his loss leaves a huge, aching gap, a romance like theirs is never over.

Dad wasn't a regular churchgoer, but he was a deep thinker about life's big issues and from my conversations with him I know he did have a private, personal faith in a Higher Power and purpose for us all.

Travel well then Dad, and in the words of the Irish blessing:

*May the road rise to meet you*

*May the wind be always at your back*

*May the sun shine warm upon your face,*

*the rain fall soft upon your fields,*

*and until we meet again*

*May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*