

THE EX Director's View

This bit is all my own work; and has ABSOLUTELY no relationship (implied or otherwise) to the policies of PA, AISL, 'Herself', or any other person or organisation...

April 2021

Foxes:

There are foxes pretty much everywhere in Australia, and Baulkham Hills is no exception.

Over the years I often see one or two of our local skulk trot past our place around 10:30PM which undoubtedly coincides with the closing times for the local restaurants.

Yesterday around 8AM I noticed a number of noisy mynahs chasing something in a neighbour's front yard – I was somewhat surprised when a fox trotted out of the neighbour's and then down the street to the local bushland.

Update on the 'eyes':

With both eyes 'done' last year, subsequent visits to our friendly optometrist and check ups with the eye-surgeon have shown that the surgery was successful:

- I do not need glasses for driving,
- All the predicted outcomes regarding colours achieved – colours are more vibrant and I am no longer viewing the world through brown tints. The translucent brown coffee mugs I have been using for decades are actually a purplish-blue.

April 2020

COVID-19 is going to make a hole in my week.

Wednesdays are usually my 'regular' day at the range (SISC) when I kid myself that I can still shoot Rapid Fire Pistol.

The saga of my cataract operation (what only one?) was an interesting experience, and COVID-19 had an effect:

- At a regular eye check-up with my optometrist I was told that the time had come for cataract removal... off to the specialist,
- The specialist said 'the time has come'... (there is a bit of consistency creeping in here) and bookings were made for 14th April (right eye) and 21st April (left eye),
- At the specialist to get measured for the implants, I was offered a 'bump' to 31st March and 14th March – accepted,
- Followed by a phone call to say there was a operation spot on 26th March – accepted,
- 24th March, PM announces elective surgery to finish 26th March,
- Hospital phones to say they are closing 25th March (oh well...),
- 09:00 26th March the specialist phones to say the hospital is open and be there by 13:00,
- Right eye done.

The left eye will be done some time in the future.

February 2019

Reports of my heart attack are premature.

Yes: I do have two stents fitted to coronary arteries, but no heart attack.

When you turn 75 the Federal Government pays for a medical checkup and assessment – as is my wont, this had been postponed, but I finally got around to it. It is a very, very thorough checkup; eyesight (yes – I need my glasses), blood tests, physical examination, hearing (yes – I need my hearing aids), ECG, memory, hand-eye coordination, reflexes, Doppler scans on the carotid and femoral arteries, you-name-it.

The ECG showed some minor anomalies and I was referred to a cardiologist. The cardio specialist had more ECG tests and a 24-hour wearable ECG fitted – all of which showed ‘minor anomalies’. For normal people the next step would be a stress test, but with arthritis in the feet, this would not work for me...

...straight to an angiogram.

When I woke up after the angiogram I had two stents.

November 2018

A return to (improved) mobility...

Over recent years, the arthritis in my feet has been getting worse; to the stage where I had trouble walking even 100m. Slowly, but surely, excursions outside the house have become limited to visiting locations close to where I can park the car – the alternative has been to regularly sit to give my feet a break. The last few weeks have seen a further deterioration in my feet and an acceptance that the time had come to consider some form of ‘assisted’ mobility.

Consider, conshmidder – I am now the owner of an electric mobility scooter:

- It folds up for transport; at under 30kg it is ‘luggable’ and I can lift it in and out of the back of the Kia without too much trouble,
- I have found out:
 - o ‘Herself’ has a range of walking speeds. I can cope with this by adjusting the ‘top speed’ knob; ‘herself’ tends to walk at about three rates matched by slowest setting (supermarket aisles), 3 o’clock on the knob (general walking), and 5 o’clock on the knob (when she is pacing it out). Yes, I do use the top setting, but only on flat surfaces clear of personnel.
 - o that the usual layback in kerbs has a 25mm step at the start of the layback (very inconvenient),
 - o Our local council has done a fairly good job of grinding down any uneven bits in the footpaths around Baulkham Hills.
- You are considerably lower in mobility scooter (not necessarily a disadvantage for a ‘leg’ man) and people in shopping centres and on footpaths are not aware of you when they step backwards/sideways/out from doorways/whatever. This can be a problem even when you are fully ambulatory – more so in a wheelchair, with a walker, or (now, for me) on a mobility scooter,
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October 2018

A pair of King Parrots had taken to sitting on the rail of the front verandah and chirping at us. We bought some parrot feed and when they appear putting some out for them – thank you very much. The King Parrots are totally unafraid of us – the female has even nudged me on a toe when I was not quick enough getting up to put out some seed.

Some of the local Rosellas join in occasionally, though they will fly off if we move while they are feeding.

A Sulphur-crested calls by occasionally and if there is no seed in the usual place has been known to attack the geraniums in spite.

April 2018

Been a while but there has been a lot happening!

Chronologically:

- January had me in for spinal surgery – all went EXTREMELY well! The last thing surgeon (Andrew Kan) said to me as I was drifting off under anesthetic was “when you wake up, all the pain will be gone” and he was right. The back pain was gone and there was only very minor soreness (not pain) at the operation site. It has taken some time to get back into condition (well, my 76 year old, overweight, smoker’s version of condition); I was off my feet for about three months. During all this, herself was in hospital, then rehab and has slowly but surely improved. She is now only using a walking stick when venturing away from home. I discovered the convenience of Coles online shopping and home delivery. Our undying thanks go to Judy Bronger who stepped in to ferry me around, accompany me to the surgeon’s, visited Paula and helped out in a million ways.
- The Gold Coast Commonwealth Games was interesting. I am left with the impression that the sports ran despite the CG Organising Committee – certainly the case for shooting! Our accommodation was great, the food was OK and mostly (but not always) the transport was OK. That said, uniforming was chaotic and the CG imposed overlay at Belmont was ‘interesting’. E.g., there are five toilet locations at the pistol/rifle part of the Belmont range – four of these were closed to the volunteers and workforce...

Happiness is a plasma cutter.

What a brilliant bit of gear: 240v power from a standard outlet and 40psi from a small compressor and, hey presto, cut steel. On 1 to 2mm steel plate it cuts like a hot knife through butter; 4mm steel is a bit slower and 8mm steel takes time but is no real problem.

The story goes like this:

- bought a new box trailer, herself asked what happens to the old trailer:
 - o 40 years old and had done about 500 000km lugging truck tyres and wheels around
 - o left in the open and WELL rusted
 - o answer – buy a plasma cutter and cut the old trailer up for delivery (in the new trailer) to the scrap metal dealer.
 - the online manual was next to useless, but YouTube is a great resource. My experience is that manuals for welders and (now) plasma cutters are written on the basis that you already are an experienced welder/plasma cutter operator – they all seem to lack any information for settings!
 - after a couple of bloopers with house fuses/cutter heads and insulators and a dying compressor (which caused the burn-out of the fuses/heads/ceramic insulators) I was off – what fun!
 - New 2HP compressor
- Cost of cutting up the old trailer about \$500 who cares...

January 2018

Crikey – has it been that long since the last update of this page?
A few things have happened since...

2017 PA Nationals at Cessnock saw Ray Andrews and I enter the Iron Man competition – what started out as a throwaway line in conversation in 2016 saw two oldies who should have more sense in a ‘if you will, I will’ situation and it seemed like a good idea at the time. - a dozen matches over a week...

Black Powder Zone event, BP Zone Championships and BP NSWAPA Championships. I have been using Simple Green in an ultrasonic cleaner for my BP pistol and it is brilliant! (free plug).

Most of September was in Europe, starting with a cruise from Amstrdam to Zurich and a week or so with friends in Zurich – they have a place about halfway up Lake Zurich and we used that as a base for trips up the alps (there was early snpw covering everything above 1000M), St Gallen, Intelarken, etc.

October saw Cheryl Moore, Judy Bronger and I off to Belmont for the Oceania Championships/Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships (a de facto test event for the 2018 Commonwealth Games). The tree of us drove there and back in the Moore's vehicle and a merry time was had on the trip. The refurbished Belmont range had the new 25m range with its new EST all ready (well, almost all) for the competition.

Early December I 'popped' my back. For one reason or another (Murphy was an oiptomist!) I have only today goy myself booked in for spinal surgery next Monday. To make kife interesting, Herself tripped in George St. City and broke her pelvis... She is now in rehab and recovering, but will be hospitaliused for some weeks to come.

March 2017

I have lived in the current address for almost 60 years and while I knew there were foxes in the area I had not seen one here until fairly recently. Late last year while sitting on the front porch at around 10:30 PM I saw one trot past up the footpath; and again a few nights later, another one. Presumably they were heading for the restaurants up the street to check out their bins.

A few nights ago while sitting on the porch a fox wandered up the footpath – this time the fox was in no hurry and was checking out scents. There are doves nesting in the large camellia nearest the nature strip and the dove stopped to check the camellia very thoroughly before climbing up the shrub.

The doves made a great deal of fluttering noise and (surprise) the fox came back down quite quickly:

- I thought the fox would have been more determined, and
- I never knew that foxes climbed shrubs!

February 2017

Purchased a Timex 'Marathon' – big numbers and stopwatch function.

Got me thinking – about 40 years ago after a string of quality wrist watches were quickly consigned to that great watch heaven in the sky (using a sledge hammer lots, $\frac{3}{4}$ " impact wrenches lots, and other mechanical jarring that did not prolong the life of wrist watches might not have helped) I tried a Timex.

At the time, a Timex watch cost \$15, looked cheap and nasty, were reasonably waterproof, and lasted at least 12 months. To tell the truth, it was the Timex watch band that gave up the ghost long before the watch – what the heck, for \$15 I used to shout myself a new one each Christmas.

January 2017

After the 12 days of Christmas the lights came down; of note:

- While I was allowed to take the strings of lights down, 'herself' did the winding up and putting each string into its own plastic bag, took the timers and hid them where I cannot find them (but she can!).,
 - Took down the stainless steel wires and wound them up; 'herself' putting each wire and its shackles into its own plastic bag, and hid them where I cannot find them (but she can!).,
- One could get the impression that 'herself' does not fully trust my ability to put something away in a safe spot where it can be reclaimed as needed...

December 2016

Into Advent and the Christmas lights are being 'installed'

A trip to Bunnings to purchase some stainless steel wire, a tensioner and some 2mm clamps.

Find the wrench (for the clamps) and a pair of fencing pliers and away we go...

Wire installed

Untangle the lights

String the lights

Run the wiring into a garage power point

Find the powerboard (so far so good)

Look for the timer...

I KNOW I have at least four timers; and I have a set of remote 240V switch plugs

And I can not find any of them!

I will buy ANOTHER 240V timer in the morning, and HERSELF has already stated that once I get home I will find the timers, remote switches – she has history on her side.

There will be an official 'switching on' for the grandson once it is all up and running.

Funny thing about being a first time grandfather when the grandson reaches an age of awareness...

November 2016

Sitting on the front verandah the other day I watched as a couple of Indian Mynas set about 'seeing off' a Magpie that had wandered into their domain; nothing unusual in itself as the Indian Mynas are aggressive mongrels and will take on almost anything. Different this time was that the Magpie was joined by a sibling or mate and the two Magpies made a stand. they stayed on the ground close to each other, each covering the other's back...

...two magpies working together outmatch Indian Mynas.

There is a moral there somewhere!

Dealing with Telstra is 'INTERESTING'!

October 2016

Sheesh! Has it been three months?

Recently acquired a CZ SP-01 Shadow (so I have a pistol for WA1500 Pistol) and back to reloading 9x19mm after a break due to the buy-back...

- A new pistol to be modified, fine-tuned and otherwise played with,
- What the heck(!), another reloading press 'cuz I hate changing over dies, powder throwers, etc. in progressive presses – it's easier to have a separate press set up for each of my pistol calibres.

Of course, another press means that I need to clear a bit of space on the bench to bolt it down. Anyone who has seen my garage will know that the act of clearing

enough space for the press is not a simple task – the temporary ‘solution’ has been to unbolt one press and replace it with the new press. I unbolted the .32SWL press – and NOW I need to reload some ISSF ammunition...

- X

Last month I had another minor hand op – yet another digit with ‘trigger-finger syndrome’, the seventh finger (so far). This time the surgeon operated with only a local anaesthetic for my hand; I got to hear his choice of background music for the surgery and he operates to hard rock at a fairly low volume.

June 2016

The end of a love/hate relationship.

Anyone who has visited the Baulkham Hills Hilton will be aware of the Liquidambar (that was) in the front yard – now no more.

Love:

- A beautiful tree that I used to mark the passing of the seasons and the passing of the years.
- In decades past, the girls diving into the leaves at this time of the year.
- The colours of the leaves as the seasons come and go.
- The foliage shaded the front of the house in summer, and the bare limbs allowed the winter sun through.

Hate:

- Those bloody seeds that were like ball-bearings underfoot, and could dent the bodywork of a car parked under the tree,
- The leaves (that had to be cleaned up eventually). Of recent years I have used the ride-on mower and catcher to provide a neighbour with mulch (and LOTS of it).
- The dollars spent over the last 45 years on replacing water, gas and sewer lines – Liquidambar roots are very aggressive.
- The cracks in the house foundations, and doors that need a pass with the electric planer every now and again as the house moves.
- Falling branches (and I mean really big ones) that could kill a pedestrian walking down the footpath, had taken out power lines, had blacked out Baulkham Hills when they dropped on the 10000V lines.

A magnificent tree that unfortunately was in the wrong place. It was already a mature tree when I purchased the house and is now only a stump almost at ground level.

There is a warm inner glow when a ‘household product’ works as advertised – over the decades at the factory and at home I have tried various cleaners, degreasers, rust converters, rust removers, metal protectants and the like, and probably 95% of those products were disappointing.

Some (a few) stand out as actually working as promoted:

- Windex; forget glass (which it does quite well), it is a great cleaner for all sorts of things,
- CT18 cleaner; been using this for about 25 years and still amazed at the crud it will get out/off when allowed to soak in for 30 minutes and then apply the pressure washer,
- CT14 degreaser; from the same company as CT18 and nearly as good, but needs some elbow grease for really baked on grease and grime,
- WD40, (an oldie but a goodie). CRC and RP7 probably work as good, but I pick up WD40 when I buy. I recently discovered that WD40 ‘fixes’ La-Z-boy rocker recliners,
- Inox; now my general purpose lubricant for firearms,
- Lanox; Inox with lanolin – brilliant for storage of firearms,

- Camphor wax (another oldie but a goodie); a bit of camphor wax in your safe/s and in your toolboxes will help prevent surface rusting...
To this list I now add Evapo-Rust! Advertised as “an environmentally safe water-based product that removes rust without the need for scrubbing. It's easy to use and anyone can restore their rusted tools, auto parts, even firearms to like-new condition”.
It works as advertised!

April 2016

Welding is an ‘art’ that I have done over the years (i.e. when ABSOLUTELY necessary): my introduction to electric welding was very much a bushies’ approach to getting some new farm gates made and installed – a 15-year old bushy teaching(?) this 13-year old townie cousin...

My time in the engineering shop somehow skipped any electric welding module (except how to make oxy/acetylene bombs, how to weld someone’s steel heel caps to the floor, and other related rites-of-passage in an engineering workshop).

However, somewhere along the line I must have picked up some clues – a comparatively large awning I welded up from a pile of various round and square section tubing is still keeping customers dry some 30 years later.

However (#2), that WAS some 30 years ago and my hands are not as steady, and my welding prowess (?) definitely has not improved...

However (#3), some things have changed: my enormous (by today’s standards) transformer welder that needs a 15amp power point lies neglected at the back of the garage – replaced by a) an inverter welder and b) a MIG welder; each of which is small, light and run of a standard 240v wall socket; my self-darkening helmet works like a charm (no more ‘flash’ in the eyes!). The two smaller welders are both from the ‘handyman’ end of the market and once I had replaced the supplied ground clamps (Cheap, Rubbishy And Pathetic) with man-sized 500 Amp clamps do a good job for their cost – I do not envisage any ‘big’ jobs and they both quite happily cope with the occasional use.

However (#4), with a stick welder, Cigweld Satincraft welding rods remain the weekend welders saviour.

1. Electric welding creates heat...
2. Steel parts remain hot for some time after the last welding run...
3. Welding gloves insulate your hands and fingers from heat (for a short time)...
4. It takes just that extra bit of time to put down the welded bit and get off the glove...
5. By the time you feel the heat through a glove, it is too late...

NOW (!) I remember;

- a) give welded parts a goodly time to cool off before picking them up, and
- b) **GIVE WELDED PARTS A GOODLY TIME TO COOL OFF BEFORE PICKING THEM UP!**

I have the blister on my thumb to remind me.

March 2106

Interesting – four days in hospital (three on antibiotic drip) as a result of an infection in the right leg. Most of the time I slept – my solution to having nothing to do is to sleep; good thing I was not planning on going to Perth for the Nationals.

February 2016

So far the high point (?) of February has been having my right hand opened up and 'corrected'. The surgeon has operated on the little finger and index finger. If nothing else, this has caused me to reminisce on the good old days when I was remarkably ambidextrous: once upon a time I could do most things with either hand, including such things as write or print forwards, backwards and upside down when needed. This level of ambidexterity mainly came in handy (pun intended) when working on machinery.

Alas, for whatever reason/s, over the last couple of decades I have become quite right-hand dominant, and having my right hand heavily bandaged for a few days (and bloody painful when I absent-mindedly went to use it) has made me realise how much of my previous ambidexterity has disappeared.

Up-date 28th Feb

Ah! Life's simple pleasures!

Today I was allowed to take off the bandage and have a shower without a plastic bag on my right mitt – ah, bliss!

A never-ending story

Some time ago my sparky mate Phil took one look at my garage and stated "we will fix this up": in February he announced that he was going to do so.

In order that Phil could move in the garage and have (somewhat) access to the areas where he would be working on wiring I have upped the garage tidy-up process: for a dedicated Australian Garagologist 'tidying up the garage' is in the same category as painting the Sydney Harbour Bridge...

A quote I heard on Antiques Roadshow was that a man with some impressive collectibles had not been a hoarder, he was an archivist.

January 2016

Home from Europe:

- 17 days of luxury on the Scenic Jasper from Amsterdam to Budapest. It was sheer luxury with superb service, tours, great food and great wine all included. It is a well-travelled group of oldies in the 07:00 group at the local pool (Yes! I 'work out' most mornings), and the general consensus when it comes to European river cruises is that Scenic is the best. I concur.
- Up to Berlin for four days commencing on New Year's Eve. In Germany you can buy whatever fireworks you can afford – and they do. We transferred from the airport to the hotel as night was falling and the locals were letting off fireworks in the street – from small children with monster sparklers to adults (?) with 200mm mortar star shells, basket bombs, skyrockets, etc. – and it went non-stop 'til well after 03:00.
- Back to Vienna (and snow) before training down to Zurich to catch up with some ex-pat friends. They have moved from Central Zurich about halfway down the lake to Au – their units are on the top floor of a building up the side of the range beside the lake and the views (day and night) are to kill for.
- Knowing what Europe can be like in winter, I took some heavy-duty cold weather gear and basically used little of it. The heavy duty boots got a good work out along with the leather jacket when we off the boat for tours but most of the time it was pretty much as for a cool day in Sydney: -10° and blowing a gale in Berlin saw me putting on a pair of ski mittens a couple of times.
- In the major European cities the one-day and two day public transport passes are cheap and great. Combined with these passes, it is worth noting that in the 'tourist' cities the shops all seem to be coffee shops/restaurants, clothing shops, jewellery shops and tourist trinket shops –supermarkets and the like all seem to be underground at the 'metro' stations.
- Summer in Sydney is hot and humid!

December 2016

In preparation for the trip to Europe I have purchased a digital SLR camera. For some time I had been using various point-and-shoot digital cameras and been happy with the results: the transition to a modern digital SLR has been quite an experience. It's a long time since I played with an SLR camera and at this level of photography I was more than pleasantly surprised by the SLR/digital revolution. Generally, I leave it in full auto mode (focus, anti-vibration, light levels, etc.) other than the flash set to 'off' – many museums and churches have a ban on photography, but seem to turn a blind eye provided you don't use the flash. Daytime shots have been brilliant, but notably the interior and night-time shots far exceeded expectations.

November 2015

I have never had a computer 'beat me' (yet – no doubt the day WILL come!). Sometimes it only takes a few minutes to re-jig the settings (once I know where the problem lies), but the 'interesting' fixes can take time spread over weeks of researching the internet and manuals to identify a problem – and come up with a fix that works!

I feel sorry for those who google a problem and discover websites that guarantee a solution if you download and run their program – invariably these will assure you that the problem/s has been identified and can be fixed when you buy their program... , or worse, the analysis program itself infects your computer...

Of late, from a case of perversity as much as anything else, I have been seeing how Windows 10 goes on older PCs with reasonable success – usually I have found that Windows 10 is an improvement over older versions of Windows.

The latest oldie (+10 years) has my attention as it will run concurrently both the older IEEE and newer SATA drives, and (reasonably) happily will run both Windows 7 and Windows 10. It has been boosted with a lot of RAM and a top level video card for my HD wide-screen monitor, BUT has a generic Realtek AC'97 sound system embedded in the motherboard.

Windows 10 and AC'97 are not natural bedfellows! If the AC'97 sound adaptor is active, expect Windows 10 to go into a loop (go loopy?) trying to repair itself – solution: disable AC'97 before updating to Windows 10 and leave it disabled! If you want sound, install a separate sound card.

Oh, yes – I have had to recall some of my old MS-DOS coding skills! Windows 10 still has a raft of DOS commands that the intrepid 'fiddler' can play with.

October 2015

A weekend (well, sort of: Sunday to Tuesday) in Melbourne.

Drive in to the airport on Sunday morning for a 10:00 flight with Virgin (so far, so good), park the Mazda and into the terminal – the queues for both check-in and baggage drop zig-zag through the roped lines and back to the outside door (not so good) – even with electronic check-in and boarding passes, the baggage drop takes about an hour...

...Fortunately, the flight was about an hour late.

The elder daughter's domicile is on the 27th floor at Docklands Acrophobia

September 2015

Some thoughts on Windows 10...

- I now have installed (i.e. updated to) Windows 10 on a number of laptop and desktop computers; both 32- and 64-bit operating systems; ranging from older machines that were originally running XP, not quite so old running Windows 7, to brand new machines running (cough, splutter, retch) Windows 8.1.
- I do not know that Windows 10 is bombproof, but it certainly seems remarkably bulletproof – e.g. in the interests of scientific research, on my test machine I loaded a graphic driver that DID NOT match the graphics card on the particular machine: when rebooted Windows 10 politely notified me (on screen) that there was a problem and enabled me restore to previous settings that worked.
- My 'solution' to make (cough, splutter, retch) Windows 8.1 usable has been to:
 - a) Install Classic Shell>, which takes the desktop appearance and start button (and experience) back to Windows 7 (or even XP), and then
 - b) Un-installing most of the bloody annoying pop-ups and apps.This 'de-apping' of windows 10 makes it much more usable as the annoying, and usually unintended, apps are greatly reduced.

August 2015

This cleaning-up lark can get out of hand: you never know where it will lead...

In one of those fits of enthusiasm that men get when the cleaning-up bug bites, I tackled my collection of shoes and boots.

- a. I am not in the Emelda Marcos category, but over a 45-year period I had managed to accumulate quite a collection: shoes that really should have been turfed out long ago; shoes that were probably reasonably 'fashionable' back in the 1970s, shoes that were worn out and not turfed out, shoes in colours and styles that are long out of date...
- b. The first process was to apply a bit of triage: shoes that were beyond the pale went into a discard pile, the rest underwent cleaning and waxing before further appraisal.
- c. Next was to seriously assess any likelihood that each pair of shoes or boots would be worn again...
At least there is a bit more room in the cupboard!

June 2015

Cleaning up / sorting / pondering over the various paperwork, computer files and CD/DVDs relating to being NRC Director has reached the stage of CD/DVDs (there is still half a ton of old paperwork, but most of that is my own records (herself reckons 'junk')).

The CD/DVDs require one-at-a-time insertion and waiting to see if they are readable (I am becoming quite expert in reviving scratched CD/DVDs) and then reviewing the data:

- Some of the media goes back to the mid-80s.... and there is some distracting stuff on them – it is easy to get side-tracked from the initial (intended) triage: the 30-seconds task of identifying the content takes a bit longer...
 - Some of the (re?) discovered data is more 'essential' than merely interesting – this goes WAY beyond the expected 30-seconds task of identifying the content.
 - Some of the CDs are install media that I MIGHT just need some time in the future.
- Ah! The fun (?) of going through old media...

May 2015

Low-tech works too!

For the last 60 years my pliers have managed to get to the bottom of my tool box (back in the days when I used a tool box), disappear under other items on the workbench, or just plain 'go missing' – time to do something!

I have a goodly amount of pegboard on one wall of the garage, but many of the pliers are top heavy and topple off the mounting pegboard pins – solution, magnetic storage rack/s.

Magnetic tool racks are not always that easy to track down, but Google helped.

Magnetic 'tool' racks were unavailable at any of the usual suspects (Super Cheap, Autobarn, Repco, etc.), but kitchen knife racks were a goer. A trip to Ikea and I had four 30cm magnetic racks (\$10 each) and all that was needed was to mount them on the pegboard – easy: a ten minute job – dream on...

- The existing amount of pegboard was/is well populated – another sheet of pegboard and some spacing timber,
- Find the box of masonry drills, wall plugs and screws – surprize! It was easy to find in the jumble,
- Mount the spacing timber,
- Screw the pegboard to the spacing timber – surprize #2; the packet of flat head screws was easy to find (this is really pushing my luck),
- Screw the base bits of the magnetic strips to the pegboard (same packet of screws as the previous item),
- Take the bases off and put them back on, but this time the right way round (not immediately obvious from the Ikea drawing),
- Start accumulating pliers (large and small), circlip pliers, pincers and put them on racks.

Low-tech works too!

April 2015

OK! It is now official!

I admit to having a lightness of step when I got out of bed on the Sunday Morning after the PA AGM where I 'saw out my time' as NRC Director and handed the magic purple pen to Sharon Reynolds.

I was presented with a lovely writing set and a PA Plaque at the Nationals Dinner, and Herself has subsequently received a beautiful flower arrangement and a Teddy Bear for tolerance and support during my term.

Now comes the cleaning up process of sorting out 20+ years of accumulated paperwork, boxes and weights, test gear, other 'equipment', etc.: some as handed on by Norm Tilley, much accumulated during my stint as NRC Director, and even more following Les' death, some from NSWAPA (is anybody collecting OLD copies of the NSWAPA Focus?), all mixed in with 'stuff' to do with ISSF Officiating, AISL stuff, Oceania stuff, etc., etc., etc.

Dealing with the accumulated paperwork is a major chore – and there is a LOT of accumulated paperwork (after all, I am a notorious bowerbird!) and old paper has lots of paper dust and mould that when stirred up gets into the air. There are two crammed filing cabinets together with innumerable boxes of paperwork around the house, in the laundry hidey-hole and in the garage.

Herself takes a few inches of paper at a time out of a filing cabinet drawer and relocates to the front verandah to put the contents through a preliminary 'triage':

- A. obviously out-of-date/irrelevant/unneeded, or
- B. (might) possibly worth keeping, or
- C. (might) be worth keeping. I then get to go through piles A and B to give a final verdict...

Interesting that the limiting factor seems to be the capacity of the recycle bin. We are currently stopped until the recyclables bin gets emptied next week.

March 2015

The Easter Nationals were my last 'stint' as NRC Director:

- The weather gods smiled on us with the really gusty winds holding off until the WA1500 and Service events were over and only one day with a short-lived bit of rain.
- Most of the programmed 08:00 starts were held off a bit so that the sun could peek out around the clouds.
- Dean Brus got a National Record.
- The catering was great
- After the AGM declaration of positions, I handed over the symbolic purple pen to Sharon.

And, Feb/March had a cancer scare, but after x-rays, CT and MRI scans everything appears to be benign.

The MRI involved the usual questions about any metal in my body, to which my answer was 'maybe'... ...about 50 years ago I acquired some shotgun pellets in my legs after a bloke to my right at a 'roo drive stumbled. A few pellets were missed in the country property first aid process: most, not all were pulled out after a drink or two – one popped out about four years ago, and there is still one lonely OOO pellet in my leg and I have the x-rays to prove it..

January 2015

What fun – a dose of cellulitis> in the left leg started on Christmas Eve and laid me pretty low throughout January. In a fit of 'I'm not too bad' (Herself did not agree) I reloaded 100 .32s for the January Old Farts competition and for the first time in my life did not check the powder weight after the last reload through the press (I had checked the first five and they were OK) – the powder reservoir had been turned off after the previous reloading session and had only about five charges under the powder hopper. The bullet puller has had a good workout.

December 2014

Beautiful, downtown Norfolk Island – if you are after a fast-paced, jet setter holiday perhaps somewhere else; but for a fully laid back break with very friendly people, unbeatable! The pace of life is much slower with cows having right of way on the roads, chooks wandering around in the bush and a crowd gathering to watch the boat unload supplies for the island.

Friday flight in, and a week later the Friday flight out with five days of the Norfolk Island Pistol Championships in between.

Next time I go there I will take a cake of Tilley's Sea Soap – much of the Island is on bore water.

International travel with firearms and ammunition is always an interesting experience. It is really fairly straightforward provided you are a/ using an airline that carries firearms, and/or b/ are not transiting through an airport that has an 'unusual' policy on transit firearms, and/or c/ are not flying over a country that prohibits the carriage of firearms in their airspace:

- a. using an airline that carries firearms – not all airlines do. I have lent pistols to o/s shooters who despite booking their national shooting team on an airline, found out at their departure airport that the airline has a total no-firearms policy.

Interestingly, even on airline that carries firearms, IATA policy allows the Captain of an airliner to refuse to carry firearms – does not happen often, but...

b. are not transiting through an airport that has an unusual policy on transit firearms – Singapore springs to mind. Transit through Singapore can be a breeze (if you are staying with the one aircraft), or can be an expensive and time-consuming exercise (even if you are staying with the one aircraft) -

c. are not flying over a country that prohibits the carriage of firearms in their airspace: - e.g. India.

For all of the above, it is better to find out before you make any airline bookings! In any case, find the airline's current policy for the carriage of firearms, and ammunition (usually somewhere on their website), print it out and take it with you to book-in. Even on domestic, I often encounter a check-in clerk who is not familiar with their policy on firearms and ammunition.

Domestic on Qantas, it is usually only a matter of going to the Services Desk, showing your Firearms Licence and declaring the firearms and ammunition. The old 'Qantas Permit' has been replaced. Taking firearms interstate a few weeks back, I had told herself (travelling with me) how easy and quick it all was, to get to the Service Desk with a mass of passengers re-booking from a cancelled flight, PLUS three coachloads of group bookings being processed; easy, but not all that quick...

Paperwork:

- CCID: this is a one-off number for individuals
- 709 forms: for pistols and ammo I do three; 709 (general), 709H (handguns) and 709A (ammunition)
- RGP
- The destination permits

Well, it must be getting close to Christmas, 'cuz I have a date with a surgeon. Nothing major; just a fix-it operation for a case of 'trigger finger' (kind of fitting for a shooter?); this time in the right hand. Over the decades the majority of my discretionary surgery has been slotted in around the Christmas/New Year break to give a bit of recovery time before going back to work. Now retired (?) the timing was optional, but sooner done the better.

Update 18/12/2014: back home after the op – all going well.

– 27/12/2014: allowed to take off the bandage and have a shower without plastic bags over the hand – what bliss!

– 30/12/2014: stitches out and all healing well.

November 2014

Well! At the October ECM I announced that I would not be standing for re-election as NRC Director next year.

It has been a good run: I took over as Director from Norm Tilley some 21 years ago and will 'finish up' at the 2015 AGM.

It has been an enjoyable experience (most of the time) that has taken me around Australia, and as an ISSF Judge, around the world.

Fortunately (for me), I was a competition shooter when Paula and I got married: as my competition days passed (putting your fingers in an industrial press puts paid to good competition scores) I became steadily more involved in the officiating side of things – she has only known me as a husband who was sometimes home on a weekend. The 10-day stint at Easter Nationals took care of Easter, and often the Christmas/New Year break was taken up with various operations by the family bone cutter. Throw in the Australia Cups and the occasional overseas competition, workshops, courses, interstate meetings, etc. and I have not been home all that much.

Am I getting out of shooting when I am no longer NRC Director – NO WAY! Most weeks find me on-range 'playing' at Rapid Fire and/or experimenting with CF loads, there are the monthly Old Farts competitions at SISC, Norfolk Island next month, and I cannot see me escaping duties at any competition at SISC. Deidre tells me that she still expect articles for the 'Bulletin'.

July 2014

George Formby comes to mind.

1. The sloping windscreens on modern cars a) are difficult to properly clean on the inside, and b) have a tendency to 'fog' along the lower part of the windscreen. This seems to be fairly general irrespective of the make or model of car. I usually give the cars a clean on a Friday and like to have nice, clean windows; but achieving the window bit is getting more difficult as they always end up somewhat smeary... Some time back, the resident idiot picked up the wrong sprayer to clean the inside of the Mazda widescreen – this definitely made the situation a lot worse! Despite several strenuous efforts, tyre shine left inside of the windscreen slippery, resistant to Windex and the like, and collected dust something spectacular. Vinegar and elbow grease has (eventually) removed the film and window wipes from Aldi (excellent and about ¼ the price of anywhere else) have removed the streaks. Unrelated,
2. For the windows and mirrors around the house I purchased a Karcher window cleaner about a month ago: it works.

I have been preparing the copy for a PA print of the 2nd printing of the ISSF rules. To make things suitable for PA use, I have removed pages not relating to pistol keeps the number of pages down, and the changes are underlined. ; this has been an interesting exercise. There are all sorts of changes tucked away in the 2nd printing and the 'easy' bit was running the 1st and 2nd printings through a compare-documents program; this identified the changes (all of them including spelling, formatting, etc.).

Step 1 – run the compare-documents program,
Step 2 – write up the changes (discarding the inconsequential changes). For those interested this file is available for download>,
Step 3 – remove the pages relating to events other than pistol,
Step 4 – mark-up the changes in the document by underlining. I don't have Adobe Acrobat, so this involved converting the file to Word, doing the mark-ups and converting back to PDF. This step worked, other than the double conversion left the ISSF symbol at the top of each page 'mucked up'.
Step 5 – reassemble the document from the original ISSF version and the marked-up pages to end up with a document a bit over 100 pages to cover sections 6 and 8.
Step 6 – proof read.

All up, this has taken over a fortnight – sheesh!
Postscript 18th July – make that 3 weeks...
June 2014

Egad! I have used a corkscrew for the first time in a LO-O-O-O-NG while. More and more of the wines currently in your local grogshop have a screw-top closure (and I know that the wineries would love to have us accept crown seal). Odd thing that somebody pointed out is that almost everybody pops the screw cap back on the bottle after pouring a glass (or two). Back in the day, I can remember 'really good' wines being decanted with candlelight, and both 'good' and ordinary wines at least being given 20-30 minutes to 'breath'

before consumption: now we tend to open it, pour it, and put the screw top back on...

May 2014

For me, the passing of each year is not marked by a birthday, New Year's Eve or the like, but the changing leaves on the Liquidambar in the front yard: for 35 years I have watched its change from the lush, shading green of summer to autumn red in a seasonal race before the leaves start to fall in earnest.

Yes, cleaning up the leaves are a nuisance (it's a BIG tree) and the damnable seed pods a menace, but that magnificent autumn colour...

A low-level rant

When discussing shooters' attitudes with overseas Judges (over a glass of refreshment) I sometimes comment that while most shooters around the world accept rules, a number of Australians look at a rule as something to be bent and/or pushed to the limit and/or to find some way of getting around it.

February 2014

Argh...gurgle...

Or – there is a first (and hopefully, last) time for everything...

Plan A – now that I have pretty much caught up with my reloading, keep the stock up.

Plan A, v2.0 – In a fit of enthusiasm, with 140 x .38Spl empty casings, and a rush of blood to the head I decided to put the casings through some casing cleaner solution before reloading them.

Many a slip... – a/ put casings in container (OK), b/ add case cleaner solution (OK), c/ drain off solution (OK), d/ rinse casings THOROUGHLY in water (OK), e/ spread casings out on some towelling to dry (OK): after a couple of days I run the casings through the progressive press, and Hey! Presto! 140 x shiny reloads.

To the range to shoot ISSF CenterFire:

- first sighting shot = phut, and shot does not get 25m (thinks: in 50 years of reloading, that's the first time that has happened to me)
- next four shots OK and group well – change to competition target
- first and second series OK-ish, but recoil is varying from shot to shot
- third series – one goes pop-pphhuutt and there is a '2' low on the target – fifth shot goes pop and cylinder is locked up. The projectile ALMOST made it all the way into the barrel, but not quite!

120 x loads to pull and start again – the !@#\$ casings were not dry!

I think that in the past I have always de-primed casings before running them through any case cleaning solution: not so this time, but I will in future. The weather in Sydney has been fairly humid and the inside of some of the casings and primer pockets were still damp.

Argh...gurgle...

Trojanned computer...

Somehow I picked up a Trojan infection in the #1 computer. Tracking back to the time around when the infection started, I had been on the internet to a well-run website (on which I am a guest moderator), and had received a couple of e-mails from a very computer savvy shooter: neither of these sources would be expected to be the source.

The first indication that something was 'wrong' was that I could not send e-mails – Bigpond quite rightly had blocked any computer on my home network from sending e-mails.

Whatever, it was an interesting couple of days to properly identify (a version of 'akamaihd'), research, and get rid of the virus, then to get unblocked by Bigpond! This particular virus has the ability to carry other problems ranging from the basic and very annoying pop-ups (the version I had), to full blown hacking of data, passwords, etc.

Stupid bl#\$dy sport

How can a shooter get a 48 in one series of CF Precision, and 35 in the next?

January 2014

Passing of Tibor

Well! Early into another year and already, in Jenny Gregory's words, "sadly we are gradually losing all that 'first generation' of leaders of pistol shooting in Australia". When somebody writes down all that Tibor had achieved, it will be some list!

The reloading presses

I happened to notice I was well down on reloaded ammunition; the way things have been I have not done any reloading since August (when the weather was cooler) and the only centerfire 'stock' I have on hand are power-factor loads for Service Pistol – I might not be all that popular if I turn up with these for an ISSF centre fire match. This leaves...

some reloading sessions in the heat of summer – sigh!

And the joy(?) of stripping down the presses:

- I have two 'permanently' set up for my preferred loads; one for .32SWL and the other for .38Spl
- Unless a press has been used in the previous week or so, I strip it down and give a thorough clean before using it – it's amazing how build-up of powder in the powder measure, bullet lube in the dies, dirt, fluff and/or spider webs can accumulate...

Subsequently, in mid-January we had a bit of temperate weather in Sydney and the .32 press has been dusted off and put into 'production'. The problem is that with a moderate stock of .32SWL now on hand the temptation to spend a day at the range reacquainting myself with the Walther proved irresistible – the intent was to fire off the accumulated (about 120) odds-and-sods loads with various projectiles, powders, primers, etc. While at the range I might as well put in a full centerfire match...
...back to the reloading press.

A project that has been 'deferred' has been a day or two at the ballistics testing range running a number of .38 projectile shapes and weights through with TrailBoss powder. At least the ballistics range at SISC will be cooler than my garage.

November/December 2013

This was marked by the 10-day stint at Whiteman Park (WA) for the WA1500 2013 World Championships at the start of November, and ISSF Judge course at SISC in between, then to finish of the month back to SISC for the Oceania Championships and the AISL Youth Nationals (with the AOC Youth Olympics Selection Shoot thrown in).

To all the dogsbodies that pitched in, my gratitude and thanks.

October 2013

Passing of Les

Sufficient time has passed that I can start to put down, and publish, some thoughts reminiscing about the past, dealing with the present, and regarding what comes next. Sorting out the NRC 'stuff' at Les' home is an interesting exercise that will take a long time. The 'stuff' is in two forms: there is the physical material of paperwork, NRC stock, etc. and there is the digital material on files scattered on computers, CD/DVDs and USB memory sticks.

The hard copies of paperwork going back decades are formidable – I don't wish that to see it all scrapped, but storage is a problem.

The sheer amount of paperwork has prompted me to acquire a document scanner. Copying the amount of paperwork on a flat-bed scanner is an option for comparatively small amounts of paperwork, but stacking up to 50 pages at a time into the sheet feeder of the document scanner and having it do both sides of each sheet of paper in a couple of seconds is outstanding. The machine is currently set to scan to PDF, but can convert most stuff to text files.

Thinks; then there is the mass of my 'documentation' stored (i.e. accumulated) at Railway St.

When(?) I get through Les' stuff, I could start on mine...

Sorting out the computer files requires steadily trawling through them all to classify each into a) nothing to do with the NRC / redundant / draft items / current, b) internal NRC files / masters for the scoring overlays / officiating / holster accreditation / coaching / whatever, and c) the various judges-in-training around Australia.

Plan A was to work my way through the files in one hour sessions – realising that it is 2:30 or 3AM and I have been sitting at the keyboard for 5 or 6 hours at a time does not fit well with Plan A, or 'herself'.

Sorting my way through all this material reinforces how much Les has given to our sport:

- So many items were conceived by others and put into a finished form, and then implemented by Les.
- For many of these items, my contribution was little more than that of a proof-reader and formatter.
- Les was a self-starter, developing and implementing many of the programmes used by both PA and stse-based courses.
-

He will be missed.

August 2013

World Masters Games, Turin

Ah! The romance and magic of travelling the world – balderdash! A day packed into a plane is not romantic or magical.

That whinge aside, over to Perth to 'stage' the trip then off to Milan via Dubai (GREAT Emirates lounge in Dubai) and a few days there before off to Turin. In to Turin and our first call was to the range to suss it out, where Ray's Garmin died – a strange city, no Italian between us, and no means of knowing where we were or how to get anywhere...

Heat and humidity.

Practice day and fire a few shots out of our 5Kg allowance on the airlines.

Compete, win medals, catch up with WMG regulars, drink coffee.

Games over and Ray and I have a car, passports and no particular place to go, so:

Turin: Fiat Museum

Munich: BMW Museum

Stuttgart: Porsche Museum

France: the world's biggest car museum

Switzerland: Morini factory, and on to

Lake Lugarno and in to

Italy: Lake Como, and on to

Venice, then over to

Pisa

4000Km and (ever reliable) Maccas for lunch each day.

After the heat of Europe, back home to a frost on the first day back...

International transport of firearms and ammunition was a breeze provided you have the right paperwork and do the right thing.

June 2013

A cautionary tale:

- A PA Judge (not me, but 'no names = no pack drill') was running a RO seminar
- Said Judge took his Morini for the candidates to practice Equipment Control checks
- Pistol failed trigger check

If you are a Judge, make sure your pistol will pass EC! Just because this NRC Director failed a random (?) trigger check at a Nationals is no excuse.

Turin is getting closer on the calendar: lots of things to check...

- Passport and visas ✓
- Airline permit for ammunition ✓ Turns out that you don't need a permit for firearms anymore, but you do need a permit for firearms through Dubai
- Paperwork for export and return in hand ✓
- (Start) cleaning out the gunbox to remove unwanted weight ✓
- Load centerfire ammo for trip ✓
- Try to remember where I put those air pellet trays (you have to 'account' for all ammunition, including pellets, going out and coming back in).
- Make a decision on which air pistol to take – the advantage of an AirMatch 600 (I now have two) is that I don't have to worry about air cylinder dates.
- Etc.

Ah! A nice Pinot Noir has a lot going for it – the curse of browsing in a bottle shop.

May 2013

A funny thing happened on the way to the printers...

With the passing of Peter Harding, my delegation of matters relating to the printing, storage, and distribution of rule books, etc. has gone – Peter did all these things quietly and efficiently in the background.

The 'system' has had to change, and this has involved visiting printers...

This old body and paper dust do not get along together...

Printers = paper dust!

The last four weeks have been accompanied by a LOT of coughing, sneezing, and ss-ll-ee-ee-pp – the allergy medication I take (when needed) puts me to sleep.

Up around 06:00 and off to the pool (so far, so good),

Back home around 08:15 for brekky (so far, so good),

Switch on computer and get brain into gear by doing the day's crosswords (so far, so good),

Catch up on the e-mails and zzzz.

If I know I have to stay awake, I skip the meds (and cough, splutter, wheeze and itch).

April 2013

There have been various 'suggestions' that the ISSF Nationals could be run at SISC each year – what a great idea, except:

- Where would the required 'technically competent' people come from to keep the 25m printer tables operating

There are about six volunteers that can 'operate' the printer tables on-the-run: and of these core volunteers at SISC, several are 70+ and the others are 60+, and during various matches, the emphasis on 'on the run' can be on the 'run' bit...

Where are the (replacement) volunteers to a/ learn the ropes, and b/ keep in practice by working regularly during competitions?

- (and I am quite serious) One of the great incentives to fully maintain and upgrade ranges is running a Nationals

February 2013

17 Feb – Tiny daughter has presented me with a 9lb 10oz grandson (ETA was 14th Feb; the last three days have been 'interesting'):

- 'Herself' says that she will now be sleeping with a grandfather
- At my age, most men are great-grandfathers – this will be a new experience, it's nearly 40 years since there was a newborn around this house
- Son-in-law does not drive, so EVENTUALLY (!!!) a 'phone call at 00:30 this morning saw a pick-up and transfer to the hospital: at which point I returned home to await developments – lots of coffee and late night TV
- 06:00 labour starts for real
- 15:17 the woolly-headed giant appeared
- 22:00, and with my share of a bottle of good champagne, I am ready for some sleep

January 2013

Hot and dry:

- On the trip back home on the M7 after Friday's competition in the Olympic Youth Festival the dashboard instruments were showing an outside air temperature of 49C: I thought 'that can't be right' and cracked open a window – it was! Some locations in the western suburbs recorded 51C (on the same day, 'rels' in Yorkshire were having snow...).
- The only bit of the lawn that has been watered is the patch that I laid last year – after all that work and expense I was determined it would survive (it did).

The hand is coming along well and strength and dexterity are improving. I even cleaned and adjusted the reloading press, but 'though the stock of loaded CF ammunition is getting very low I have not been brave enough to do any reloading.

2012

December

I am a sucker for technology gadgets (fortunately, not all technology gadgets, but for lots...) and the thought of an 'eye-fi' card for my digital camera was too much temptation.

This SD card slots into the camera and works exactly as a 'normal' SD card, EXCEPT that it can connect by Wi-Fi to a computer, Ipad, or Iphone to transfer photos and videos.

- Step 1 – unpack the card (don't you love that plastic packaging that takes 10 minutes and a couple of finger nails to remove!),
- Step 2 – read the instructions (well... at least a cursory glance...)
- Step 3 – take out the old SD card and put in the new eye-fi card
- Step 4 – turn on camera and not understand anything that is coming up on the display
- Step 5 – read a bit more of the instructions
- Step 6 – back to the camera: go to steps 4 and 5 above a few times
- Step 7 – log on to card manufacturer's website and read Q&A section
- Step 8 – back to the camera: go to steps 4 to 7 above a few times
- Step 9 – set up (i.e. try to) laptop to receive photos
- Step 10 – back to the camera: go to steps 4 to 9 above a few times
- Step 11 – realise that I HAVE transferred photos to the laptop, but do not know which bit of steps 4 to 9 actually worked

I AM getting the hang of it, and it certainly makes transferring photos to a computer/Ipad/etc. a lot easier: no cables needed, or to remove the SD card and put it into a computer (the latter being my usual method in the past).

With the fridge on its last legs, a new fridge was purchased and delivered same day: advantage of 'aged' status is that the retailer concerned has for pensioners a free delivery and free disposal policy on whitegoods.

The new fridge has had a thorough workout with the Christmas period supplies; on top of the usual Tweedie collection of stuff in the fridge there WAS (past tense) a whole ham, a kilo of smoked salmon, half a prosciutto, additional cheeses, wines, etc. (there is still some ham and prosciutto, and very little smoked salmon...).

My supplies of .22LR were getting low so I 'stocked up' (only a few days after the Westchester massacre in USA). Walked in to the gunshop and a few minutes later there was two cases of Federal 714 in the boot of the Mazda.

Made me think about:

- The possibility of the government limiting the amount of ammunition that each individual shooter is allowed (as in the UK). That 10000 rounds will possibly see me through to about May/June in 2013 (Yes! I do a goodly amount of live-fire training for Rapid Fire).
- When I started out in 'serious' target pistol, most members in the club purchased .22 ammunition in lots of 100, a few would buy a 500-round brick, and a small number would group up to buy a case lot. Things have not changed all that much, but (somehow) I now seem to know a quite a few who also buy 'by the case' for their own use.
- The cost of .22LR. Back in the 60s/70s I was paying a bit under \$2/100 for CCI and T22 (T22 was great stuff when it first came out...) – now paying a bit over \$5/100 for Federal 714 (my Morini CM22M loves it). Not many things have gone up by only 350% over that time.

November

Despite decades of tradition, the ISSF has released the new rules before they 'come into force'. In the past, delays have not been any problem for international competitions (i.e. there aren't any ISSF World Cups until March 2013), but have made life interesting at PA level with 'new' rules being introduced just before our Nationals.

I did have some information on the proposed changes in October (a copy of the draft changes and drafts of the General and Pistol rules), but an advance copy of the 2013/1st printing and the subsequent release of the rules put absorbing the changes high on my agenda.

In October I was able to give PA Management and our Exec Officers a fairly extensive (and as it turned out, accurate) run down on the new ISSF rules.

October

We managed to sneak off to the Hunter Valley for a no-driving 'wine appreciation' tour: bus to Hornsby station, rail to Singleton and transfer provided to Pokolbin. We had been talking about a no-driving wine tour for decades, but never got around to it; finally, we did it.

It was a really pleasant and relaxing break. We learnt lots, tasted lots, ate lots, relaxed (having no internet connection helped), watched 'roos hop past the door, slept and then did it all again the next day – it's a hard life.

Update on the hand

A month later and:

- the scarring is rapidly disappearing and most of the swelling has gone down, though I am still not wearing my wedding ring.
- Fingers now work without the trigger finger syndrome; i.e. I can open and close the fingers without any jumps and, more importantly, if I hold something in my left hand for more than 10 seconds the fingers do not freeze and require me to peel them open with my right hand.

- Operation went well. In to the day surgery at the local hospital at 12:00, 'under' at 14:00 and picked up to come home at 16:30.

Now to build up strength in the left hand and wrist...

Today's (Friday 5th) day surgery session will hopefully remove the trigger finger symptoms from the left hand. The problem was affecting three fingers and making life quite miserable at times.

September

Head down, bum up, trying to get the proposed ISSF rule changes into some sort of order for implementation.

Monday 17th: Bummer – I finally have broken a part on the Morini RFR pistol.

Mondays (all things being equal) are spent shooting (and lots of it) at SISC. Just after lunch the Morini started to jam with un-ejected cases – I know of a small number of reports of broken ejectors in CM22M pistols, and sure enough mine has busted.

I have a spare ejector for the CM22M in my 'kit' and it's a fairly simple replacement, but this type of ejector is one of those things that should not break – ever!

August

ga·rage/gə' rāZH/ Noun: A building or shed for housing a motor vehicle or vehicles.

'Tidying up the garage' is seen:

- by 'herself' as an euphemism for slacking off out of the house proper. She judges the success of the tidy-up only by the size of the discard pile...

- by most of my fellow 'blokes' as a reason for offering sympathy (i.e. they understand the heartbreak that comes from disposing of items carefully stored for years; sometimes decades)
- by the neighbours as a source of 'stuff' that they might use sometime in the future
- by me for its true nature: as the rediscovery of items put in the garage waiting for repair/renovation, bits and pieces of and for projects initiated, tools and equipment stored in case they will be needed some time in the future, sporting goods from pastimes long discarded (I have not played golf or used the fly-fishing gear for some 40 years...), a goodly number of computers (some working, some not), printers and lots of cables

In part, I view the venture as a Baulkham Hills version of Time Team: identifying items discovered in their archaeological context: in part it is a multi-ton game of fiddlesticks as I figure out which item to remove next without bringing down a mass of important bloke-stuff on my head...

This time I bite the bullet and to give a deadline had booked a council kerbside pickup and planned an order of attack on the garage: start in the area of the reloading presses and work clockwise.

Day 1 – the area around the loading gear seems a bit better, but the progress is a bit slow and there is not much in the discard pile

Day 2 – start with a defined intent to up the rate of progress and a determination that cleaning, oiling, tightening up of screws, etc. of each item as it is picked up is less important than the keep/toss decision and the relocation to a spot in the garage or the discard pile

Day 3 – I can see SOME progress as most of the bench at the back of the garage is visible and I am most of the way down a side wall, but progress needs to be improved...

Day 4 – start working my way along the other wall and admit that I purposely put this part of the garage off until last: it is the 'toughie'! Along this wall is the garage tidy-up equivalent of heartbreak hill with the highest concentration of really important bloke's stuff, and lots of it.

Day 5 – normally this would be a day at the range, but the kerbside pickup is scheduled for the next morning. By 3PM I start to put 'stuff' at the kerbside, and within minutes cars are slowing down as they pass to inspect for any goodies. By 4PM one of the neighbours is after the industrial sewing machine that I have carefully disassembled to liftable sub-assemblies. By 5PM another neighbour wants to add to the pile and people are stopping to scavenge.

Day 6 – by the time I get back from my morning workout at the pool the council has been and the kerbside is pristine: BUT there is still the back corner of the garage to go! Most of the remaining 'stuff' in that corner that is to be discarded can fit in the garbage bin or the recyclable bin (albeit this might take a bit-at-a-time over several weeks).

Can I get a car in the garage – no!

Can I get from the door of the garage to the back without an orienteering map – yes!
Do I know exactly where all my various bits and pieces are in the garage – more or less!

Did I find any of the 'things' that had been temporarily misplaced (herself says 'lost') in the garage – some!

Is there a logic to the sorting out of 'stuff' – yes: various plastic bins now contain like-stuff (the location of the individual bins within the garage already is a bit iffy.

Did I discard lots of stuff – yes!

Is all the remaining stuff vitally important –there might be some disagreement between some members of the household, but I think so: it's MY garage and MY opinion.

Is the tidy-up procedure completed – come on now: we are talking about a bloke's garage...

There is a pile of sweepings in the middle of the garage floor that is yet to be carefully gone through with a magnet as it WILL contain a multitude of springs, small parts and pins from firearms – finding the springs, etc. is one thing: identifying them as to their particular pistol is always an interesting exercise...

June-July

Trigger Finger Syndrome is back with a vengeance: the Doc told me that cortisone 'sometimes' works – so another try.

Seven weeks later and after some minor relief, it's back...

Surgery?

April 10, 2012

Cessnock Nationals:

Be warned – this NRC Director uses physical harm...

...Les' finger came off second best to the hatch door of his Mazda when I closed the hatch.

Knowing what a downpour at Cessnock PC can be like, herself made me pack my Wellies and claims responsibility for the good weather during the Nationals (it HISSED down on the night of the Dinner).

2012

And a new car!

After 11 years of faithful service the Daihatsu has been replaced by a Mazda. If the Daihatsu Pyzar was still available in AUS I would have walked in and updated without any questions: over the time I had it, it had one indicator light fitting that came loose...

The Mazda was picked up and a few days later driven to Canberra and back, next day in for the 1000k service and then off to Victoria for a week. So far, so good. My rev-head days are long gone and in response to questions about engine size and type, etc. my response has been that it has a hole in the back that takes petrol and a dipstick to check the oil – beyond that 'I know nothing'! I did cheat the other day and look up the manual to determine the engine capacity, and there has been the occasional check of the manual to find out what each newly discovered button is for...

February 6, 2012

As noted on the NRC homepage, the passing of two stalwarts...

Doug Gregory

Doug was one of those 'get things done' sort of guys who was usually in the background at competitions, getting things done, making sure that items were available where and when needed, .

Joan YetFoy

Joan was a character in the 'once met, never forgotten' category. Anyone who knew Joan would have a funny ha-ha story about her and I am lucky enough to have more than enough:

- Joan was a firm believer that Asian food must be eaten with chopsticks – at a high-ranking dinner in Malaysia I was seated between Joan and Pauline Pilkington when Pauline asked us how to use chopsticks... I sidled closer to Joan to give Pauline lots of space only to have Joan uncharacteristically have a piece of food (liberally coated in sauces) pop out of her chopsticks onto my lap, with the sauces liberally splattered over both of us.
- After promising one of the best Chinese restaurant meals ever, we arrived at the restaurant to find it had changed hands and was now 'Lebanese' (Joan HAD made a phone booking!) – a great meal and night out with Joan's family, but definitely not Chinese.
- Joan could trip over a pencil line drawn on the floor and while some of these falls had some hilarious outcomes, some much less so: she typically had bandaids or bandages over one part or another. I think the Belmont complex should be renamed in her honour – she left more skin there than anybody else.
- Until recent years Joan's red hair was a popular topic of conversation – it rarely stayed the same shade of red for long.
- Perpetual motion!
- Over some 30 years, the list goes on!

January 1, 2012

Ahhhhhhh!!!! One of those evenings
26° - clear blue sky - delicious meal – sitting out on the back ramp with a post-prandial glass of wine...
What more is needed to be said?

December 2011

And the saga of computers

Switch on #1 computer on Christmas Day morning to get as message that the demise of the hard drive is predicted...

...force a backup and off to the family lunch...

...not game to leave the beast running while we are out of the house (the thought of it seizing up and starting a fire) and reluctant to switch it off in case it won't restart...

...the shops are closed until Tuesday and living without a #1 computer is a drag.

Some things don't change much with the passing of decades: setting up a new computer and getting the needed programs and files transferred on to it still takes about a day. In many ways the procedures are simpler thanks to file and setting wizards, but over the decades the amount of 'stuff' to be transferred to each successive new computer grows:

- my first 'home' computer had about 20 cassette tapes of document files to transfer,
- the first PC about 60 5¼" floppies,
- the second PC (on 3½" disks) took about 100 disks – since then I used a cable to transfer stuff and now the wireless network.
- This latest transfer of data to a new computer tied up the home network for about 12 hours and I am finding programs, bits and pieces that the transfer wizard did not pick up!

More on trigger finger syndrome

By the end of the Oceania competition I was in real trouble: when I could not load a magazine it is definitely time for some remedial action.

On the Friday I had the cortisone/xylocaine treatment – just as well that herself went with me as by the time I got out of the surgery I was flying high from the xylocaine and stayed that way for the next day or so. A bit over a week later I could at least load a magazine for some 25 rounds and by the Wednesday after that at the December Old Farts I managed to load for both Standard Pistol and Centre Fire.

'Trigger Finger Syndrome'

Poetic justice? I have trigger finger, not in the trigger finger but in the left hand ring finger (and developing in the index and middle fingers...).

Painting

Between e-mail problems, PA ECM, IPC-Shooting World Cup at SISC, Oceania Championships, AISL Junior Championships, etc. the painting is on hold – more in future 'views'

Computer/e-mail problems

My incoming e-mails are back on line after over a week of server 'problems'. This is one of those things that few would encounter, but to save the time of connecting and reading my various (personal, NRC, Google etc.) e-mail addresses I aggregate them through the server for my personal domain and (usually) they all automatically pop up in Outlook...

I opened Outlook Wednesday 26th October to find that there were no new e-mails or RSS feed notifications – odd! But it does happen occasionally...

Off to Canberra on Thursday and away from the main computer I did not try for new e-mails until I returned on Sunday – still no new e-mails... Odder!

With no e-mails on Monday 1st November I started to make some enquiries and received information that there was a 'problem' with the server's database and this should be resolved by midnight Thursday 27th (this on the following Monday?)

It is now 17:39 on Wednesday 9th November and at last...

I have 157 e-mails to read and deal with...

Argh, gurgle...

Every time I open Outlook there are more...

Annealing casings

While writing one of the articles that will be submitted to the Bulletin I mentioned annealing of centre-fire casings – thinks... It's a long time since I annealed any casings and some of my .32SWL casings have a wide range of 'pull' on the projectile; might as well do some and refresh my memory on this process.

1. Find a burner with enough temperature to heat the brass (normal LPG/propane torches usually won't be hot enough)
 2. Find a suitable tray (for obvious reasons, not one of Herself's good kitchenware)
 3. Set up outside the garage door
 4. Move set-up into the shade (you cannot judge the desired cherry-red in sunlight)
 5. Line up 10 casings and start – oops, too much heat on the first case and the brass starts to melt
 6. A little less time for each subsequent case and pop them into the water tray (things going smoothly until...)
 7. Remember why it's a good idea to apply the right amount of heat quickly when one of the casings gets cherry-red all the way to the rim (then...)
 8. Remember why I used a piece of steel or aluminium to stand the casings on while heating up the case mouth – extinguish piece of pine I was using this time.
- By about 50 casings things are in a routine and working well

9. Glad that annealing is not one of those things you have to do often: it's been about 20 years since the last time.

October 2011

About paint...

I started last month thinking that two or three weeks would see the interior painting over and done with – the kitchen was a good starter with the ceiling and walls done 'on schedule'. The lounge/dining room has been a bit different.

Rarely do I 'bag' any product, normally preferring to say nothing...

I have been using Dulux Nevermiss One Coat on the ceiling of the lounge/dining room.

The ceiling was sealed with an undercoat primer-sealer, allowed to dry overnight and then the (one-coat?) ceiling paint. The pink dye that fades out so you can see where you are up to is a great idea, but the paint itself...

...after the THIRD coat on the ceiling, what you see is what you get – it can remain that way as an ongoing reminder to me to never buy any Dulux product again.

...I'm not the only one – try googling the product.

The experience has been quite soul-destroying.

September 2011

The Baulkham Hills Hilton...

...is closed, for renovations!

Not that it needed renovation work – provided one overlooks the fact that it has been in danger of collapse, implosion and/or closure by Worksafe for a while (OK, for a couple of decades).

The trigger was a visit by some friends (one of whom is a retired chef) who arrived with a portable fridge and cooked an excellent evening meal for the four of us: but (!) professional chefs have kitchen hands who clean up after them – how can one man use so many pots, pans, skillets, bowls, etc. and splatter so much marinade, oil and other bits...

Subsequently, in a moment of temporary insanity I started by scrubbing down the kitchen cupboards and walls; after inspecting my handiwork I decided the kitchen needed repainting – one wall in the kitchen is shared with the lounge/dining room so it needed doing as well – once started, I might as well do the whole lot.

This will be a long-term project – the kitchen and lounge dining rooms have taken about four weeks with furniture corralled in the centre of the dining room and covered with plastic sheeting. The main downside is that Herself's sewing/embroidery machines and work area has been in hiatus, and herself has withdrawal symptoms (as a spin-off, my shooting excursions have been curtailed).

1. Decades of accumulated important paperwork and secret bloke's stuff is being disturbed,
2. That pink dye in Dulux ceiling white (that fades out after an hour or two) works great in morning light and is not much use in late afternoon light,
3. If there is a gap in the painting sheets, that is where a splot of paint will fall,
4. GladWrap is great for wrapping brushes, rollers and paint trays overnight,
5. Water-based (i.e. acrylic) paints don't smell as bad as they used to.

August 2011

Computer Programs

In a fit of enthusiasm I have updated my Office 2007 suite to Office 2010...

...a fairly straightforward and painless process that transferred the old data files seamlessly.

Getting accustomed to the slightly different 'features' has been smooth. The newer version has a few changes that (so far) appear to be a bonus: predominantly the review panes in Word...

...BUT...

...the update of the Outlook program has revealed a number of 'folders' that had been invisible (to me) in the older version: some of these folders have been 'interesting' to explore: no doubt due to my own 'tinkering' various categorised items (e-mails and reminders) had been flagged and automatically transferring to specific folders. E-mails and reminders relating to specified keywords can be, and had been, automatically transferred to specified custom folders. E.g. any e-mail or reminder that contained the word 'projectile' was transferred to a custom folder that was not showing up on the normal Outlook screen – and I had about a dozen of these 'keyword' folders. I am searching through to find these folders and their contents (sigh!).

...customising the quick access toolbars and the ribbons to suit my preferences is a bit of a pain, but not a problem.

Even I will admit that PDF is a document format that has some advantages, but can be a pain when you want to extract a section to include in another document.

Authors will persist in trying to lock a pdf document as read-only, and I have to unlock it to extract quotation material – given that pdf files are specific to electronic (i.e. usually internet) transfer, if you have the access to the internet to get the pdf file you also have access to freeware unlocking programs – why bother to lock the file in the first place. No doubt there are super-locking systems for pdf files, but I have not struck one yet (and there is always the old-fashioned, if time consuming, way developed back in 1993).

Which all leads to Corel PDF Fusion, a comparatively low cost program that converts pdf files into (among others) Word format. Over the years I have tried various pdf>word conversion programs with varying degrees of success: most of them had problems with files that included text boxes and anchored graphics. The Corel program seems to work extremely well: to try it out I pulled up the largest and most complicated pdf file I had on the computer; 449 pages with all sorts of graphics and inserted materials (yes, the ISSF rulebook). Hey, Presto!

The Corel program (understandably) will not unlock a locked pdf file; that has to be a separate step before converting pdf>word, but once any locked pdf file is unfettered the Corel program does its job well.

I am so impressed that I have changed my file associations for .pdf files from Acrobat Reader to the Corel program – and (almost) ready to delete Acrobat Reader from my #1 computer: those seemingly never-ending Adobe updates have been driving me nutty(er).

And, while on things related to computers: internet scams:

In my spare (?) time I look after a number of websites – some club websites are tacked onto my personal domain and their domain names are registered through me. As an outcome, renewal notices for the various domain names renewals come to me for confirmations, payment, etc.

One of these sites was getting close to renewal, so I was only slightly surprised to have its renewal invoice arrive by mail (strange, why not the usual e-mail?). On reading the invoice I was struck by a/ the domain name renewal 'service' sending the invoice, and b/ the cost which was considerably higher than expected...

Some slug has slimed onto the 'legitimate' rip-off of identifying domain names due for renewal and sending out an invoice for about three times the actual cost – good money if you can get it.

And yes, the invoice is going to consumer affairs.

I have had a few 'phone calls from a 'corporation' informing me that their system is reporting error messages from my computer. This one has been around in variations since the birth of the public internet – it is an 'in' to get you to buy their anti-virus/system repair software. They usually ask a mark to switch on their computer an open Windows Explorer to see if a particular file is on the computer (surprise! It will be one of the obscure but legit Windows files so everybody using Windows will have it on their computer). "Aha! You need our program to fix your computer" – worse, in some cases the 'fix' (\$\$\$) will actually infect your computer requiring their even more expensive program. It is a successful scam, now warranting the scammers to work their way through the phone book on the chance that you have a computer on Windows operating system.

June 2011

PA/APSUA History

A week ago (16th June) I attended the funeral of Jack Morris – many of you will ask, who was Jack Morris?

Jack was one of the many stalwarts who formed the backbone of the 'movement' in years past: love him or hate him (and, as for all of us there were undoubtedly both) he was tireless in 'working for' the sport. Jack's forte was a treasurer and worked his way up the system from Club to Zone to State to National and along the way various stints as team manager for o/s competitions.

Which leads to...

...over the 50+ years of APSUA/PA there have been a lot of stories and people that are disappearing from memory.

Sure it would be fairly easy to generate a list of all the various office bearers for the organisation, a list of all the pistol shooters who have represented us at overseas competitions and the like, but it would fall far short of a 'history'.

The 'history' of APSUA/PA needs to be written – before too much more of the memories are irretrievably lost!

One of Peter Anderson's phrases that come up when discussing with him some facet or person from the past is 'you could write a book', and I know that there are numerous hand-written pages that have been put down when we have gotten him to make a start...

Got one or more 'characters' in your club? Why not spend an hour or two with each of them in some fairly quiet place with a tape recorder or whatever and at least get an oral history of the club: if they have been a representative shooter, team manager or whatever, this type of session can be quite revealing.

Back to an APSUA/PA history – any volunteers?

Travellin' Man

I can remember having the thought in early January that 2011 looked like being a fairly quiet year with me spending a goodly amount of time at home...

...Ha!

E.g. in the last couple of months here has been Adelaide Nationals (11 days), Arafura (8 days), three more competitions (one as an 'official' and two as a competitor) and an AISL meeting in Adelaide.

I have been home more than 'away', but it's a close run thing.

Volunteers and volunteering

A fairly common topic around competitions and various meetings has been the lack of 'volunteers' entering the various roles involved in our sport, i.e. officiating, coaching, administration, workers.

Looking back:

- Most of us 'got into' our various volunteer niches in our mid-30s. While there are examples of those who came in as juniors and are still with us, and those who came in at a more mature age, for many people in their mid-30s their life is becoming more settled and they have the time to 'get into' one or more of the various roles that keep our sport going.
- The golden era appears to be through the 1970s until about the mid '80s. Put this in the context of the previous dot point and many of our volunteers are 70+. I notice this when I look around at the other volunteers when sitting at the various meetings I attend, or at the 'workers' at the major competitions. Young (comparatively) volunteers are noticeable. One couple find it amusing when I sometimes refer to them as 'juniors': they were when they started out back in the '70s...
- Whatever it takes, we should be nurturing our potential volunteers for both the club structure and for the 'competition' structure – cajole, mentor, encourage, whatever it takes!

While the pistol and smallbore rifle bits of shooting run on 'volunteers' with a volunteer-based cost structure, one item of interest that came out of a recent meeting was how some other shooting disciplines in Australia compare:

- Shotgun generally runs to about \$1 per target, i.e. for a Trap competition the entry fee is around \$125 and Double Trap around \$175
- The entry fee for a Fullbore Rifle Queens Shoot is up to \$175. All their volunteers get reimbursed for some of their expenses and those working in the target pits get \$50 a day and accommodation...

(mid) May 2011

Arafura Games

Shortly after the Adelaide Nationals a group of the 'Arafura Irregulars' assembled in Darwin for another of these biannual events. In addition to the Australians we had teams from Macau, Malaysia, Singapore and Taipei competing.

On Adelaide, I was not the only 'unfortunate' at the Adelaide Nationals (refer below): Col Farquarson managed to run up an impressive total of broken guns (which put paid to his Iron-man aspirations).

At the Arafura Games we waited through each event to see if he could maintain his tradition, but each day he managed to complete events...

...well, all but the last event. Sure enough in the 50m Black Powder event the Gremlins struck! Campbell Morrison worked his magic and Col completed the event, but not without considerable ribbing.

Ray Andrews came in for a fair share of ribbing at Arafura as well: the highest bid (not accepted by the seller) on the one-eyed, and non-starting Range Rover was \$75.

Oh, yes! I might have had a small skid shot in Rapid Fire Pistol

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