

A love story

Paul Dann needs a hanky

wearing a Harris Tweed blazer that my grandfather had sold him on his sixteenth birthday. It still fitted him because my grandfather had advised him to get a size larger as he was still growing. John has had that blazer for over 45 years and it's still as beautiful as the day he bought it.

I'm expecting that the next 100 years of Muttons will be as good as the last century of service has been. I would really love to see one of my children take over the reins, but of course I want them to really experience life first. Once you know what you're capable of, the rest is both easy and rewarding.



Travelling salesmen would come to Braidwood about twice a year. They'd make an appointment after they'd sent my grandfather a letter to say they were coming on such-and-such a day. My grandfather would wait for them and they'd come with their suitcases and set them up in the office, or maybe at the front counter if it was clothing.

One fellow, who became the managing director of a very successful multi-million dollar clothing business, started out as a young travelling salesman. One day he was showing my grandfather the suits he had. They could see another traveller walking up and down outside the shop waiting with his suitcases to come in.

But he didn't have an appointment so my grandfather decided to play a joke. In those days we used to sell guns and so he pretended to kick the first traveller out of the shop yelling: "If I see another one of you blokes today I'm gunna kill 'im!". And he fired a shot into the air. The waiting traveller of course ran for his life, never to be seen again. So of course it was lots of fun.

APPARENTLY THEY WEREN'T all that fond of each other. For on the morning of September 4, 1955, neighbours found his bloodied body stretched out on the path, fingers still clutching the Cyclone mesh of the front gate, on their 'lonely property about 11 miles from Braidwood'. His wife told one of the neighbours, "You know, it was just like slipping a knife into butter".

This last display of feelings between Herman ('Mick') Seidel and his wife, Adele, happened about 2am. At the subsequent court case in Sydney's Central Criminal Court, Crown Prosecutor WJ Knight said that although Seidel died within two minutes of being stabbed in the heart during a kitchen altercation, he staggered 100 yards to the front gate and tried with his blood-spattered hands to open it, but had collapsed and lain out in the open unnoticed all night.

Fruity stuff, eh? But enough to cause, decades later, a group of little girls conducting a séance one night on the 'lonely property' — now known as 'LaTreen' — to shut down their ouija board game because of disturbing spirit presences in the room.

At the trial, reported by the *Sunday Truth* on December 4, 1955, various witnesses gave evidence of a certain lack of affection between the Seidels. A truck driver who lived some miles

away said that at 11pm of the night in question, a bloodied Mrs Seidel had knocked on his door after walking from their house to ask him to take her to hospital. This he did, then returned her to her house. An altercation then occurred within, she 'squealed', and ran out of the house and under the front verandah. Not wishing to be involved in such a domestic, the witness went home and left the couple to it.

In his address to the court, defence lawyer AJ Bellanto said Mr Seidel was, 'a fiend incarnate, and in the agony of the moment, distraught and distracted, Mrs Seidel had stabbed him in self defence'. This must have impressed the court, for Mrs Seidel was acquitted.

Now there's a sequel to all this. Little remains of the house except some rubble A bit of the path — complete with bloodstains? — is still there, but the Cyclone gate is long gone. However, some years ago I found a stained metal disc — a dog tag, an army identity disc — and on the disc was stamped the following:

NX 60512
H A Seidel

Ironic, eh? Seidel survives years of fighting in several theatres of war during WW2; but meets his end in his own kitchen.



Agony leads to ecstasy

Mandy Thane talks to Dr Howard Ralph, wildlife veterinarian

Howard and Glenda Ralph bought their property in Braidwood about fifteen years ago. They were living in Sydney but came regularly for holidays. Tragically, their Sydney home burnt to the ground and they lost everything. The family relocated to Braidwood and their two daughters went to Braidwood Central School before heading off to university. They established Southern Cross Wildlife Care three years ago.

DR HOWARD RALPH is a teacher, artist, veterinary surgeon and doctor. He decided to qualify as a doctor because 'it seemed ridiculous that as a veterinarian I could treat all animal species except one'. After finishing school Howard attended the Australian School of Pacific Administration to qualify as a teacher and then spent some years teaching and promoting agricultural extension work and public health in

Papua New Guinea. It was an exciting time in primitive locations that also required regular patrols, as the government representative, into sometimes hostile areas. After leaving Papua New Guinea he went back to university to study veterinary medicine and then post graduate wildlife medicine and anaesthesia. After some years in veterinary practice he returned to study human medicine, and eventually human

anaesthesia both of which he practised in combination with veterinary medicine and surgery. During that time he undertook studies in fine arts including painting, sculpture, photography and other areas, and continued to teach animal care and veterinary nursing. 'Finding time to pursue painting and sculpture is difficult but the main source of inspiration is the beauty of wildlife and the relationship between people and other animals, particularly wildlife.' Howard has spent the last three decades treating injured, sick, and orphaned wildlife, all on a volunteer basis. He has earned many awards for his extraordinary work with our furry, finned, scaled and feathered friends. Six years ago, he founded Southern Cross Wildlife Care (SCWC). This charity is involved in wildlife rescue