

A Gentleman and a Rascal



Autobiography
by
Brian Buzzard

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CHAPTER 17

My children

Front Cover: I wish to thank artist Laura Cole for her kind permission to use the second painting from the triptych **Kimberley Grasses**.

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CHAPTER 17

My children



**My five children in South Perth.
Phillip 2, Brian 10, David 11, Terese 8, Patrick 4.**

David

My eldest son David's first job when he left Aquinas was with the Commercial Union Co. He was there for nearly two years and like myself he did not take to indoor work, so he "pulled the pin". He met Lynne Sherlock who was to become his wife in February 1966. He was introduced to her by one of her girlfriends who was also a friend of David. It happened on the same day that he was called up for National Service. The army does strange things because they discharged him after a few weeks as medically unfit because he had flat feet. I'll admit that he has rather a huge foot and he had difficulty finding a pair of army boots to fit him. Before he joined the army, he and two others sailed a catamaran around Australia, the first since Matthew Flinders.

I had a very embarrassing encounter before Lynne and David were married. Lynne's parents, Edna and Rupert Sherlock, invited my available family and myself to have dinner with them at the Adelphie Hotel, I guess to find out what kind of people we were and what kind of family Lynne was marrying into. I rustled up my brother Millar, his wife Lola, my sister Marjorie, her husband Rusty, Gordon Cuming, Terese, and David and Lynne. We arrived at the Adelphie at 7pm on Saturday night. I did not know them, but remembered Edna as a girl in Bruce Rock.



Rusty Cuming, Nan, Millar Buzzard and Marjorie Cuming

Rusty and Marjorie arrived a bit late and as soon as I saw him I knew that Rusty had been at the Ascot races all afternoon, and by the look of him he had spent most of the time at the bar. However, after introducing ourselves, we sat down to dinner. Rusty promptly started nodding and went to sleep. We did our best to ignore that and to carry on a conversation after drinks. The Sherlocks drank squash and we had wine and beer.

When the time came to order the meal Rusty was still asleep and snoring. Marjorie ordered food for herself and Rusty while we carried on a very forced conversation. When the meal arrived Marjorie woke Rusty up and when he had a few bites he said, "This is bloody awful food." They had a few words and Rusty got up and walked out. Exit number one. Just before sweets were served, Millar got up and said that he did not feel well and excused himself. Exit number two. Lola went with him and put him in their car. She came back but said she could not stay too long, because he did not seem to be too good and that she should take him home. Exit number three. Marjorie felt that she should check to see if Rusty was in their car so that she could take him home. Exit number four. I was the chap that

Edna Sherlock had warned Lynne about if she was contemplating marrying my son David. I was on my best behaviour and acted as a gentleman. I will leave you to work out the impression we made with the Sherlocks. Lynne told me that her mother had warned her about me because she knew me in Bruce Rock as a drinker and a rascal.

Years later, when I met Edna again, she remarked on how well I looked. I replied, "Edna, anyone who leads a good, clean life in their youth always manages to keep well and healthy." She smiled with a knowing look on her face and said nothing.

Lynne and David were married in February 1968 at St Benedicts Church and had the reception in a marque in the backyard at Kintail Road. Not long after their marriage, Lynne and David purchased the store and agency at New Norcia from the Lannigan family, who had been there for sixty years or more. During that time their two children Andrew and Alex were born in 1969 and 1971. Lynne and David left the store after a few years to go farming at Eneabba, where they stayed for several years. When the children needed to go to high school, they sold out and moved to Bluff Point, Geraldton. David managed a supermarket there for some years before deciding to return to Perth to live. David and Lynne now live in Attadale and own the Supa Value store in Mosman Park.

Their children Alex and Andrew were at the Eneabba Primary School where Lynne also taught when she was needed. After they moved to Geraldton, Andrew went to St Patrick's Christian Brothers College and Alex to the Stella Maris Ladie's College. When they came to Perth Andrew finished his schooling at Aquinas and Alex at Santa Maria. When she matriculated she went to Edith Cowan University where she gained her Bachelor of Arts. She then went to Notre Dame where she received her Bachelor of Education. She now teaches English at Curtin University. Andrew went into partnership with a school mate Mark Murphy from Geraldton and bought a service station roadhouse at Lake Clifton and he has been there for twelve months.



Lynne and David's family Lynne, David, Alex and Andrew.

"I Remember My Dad"

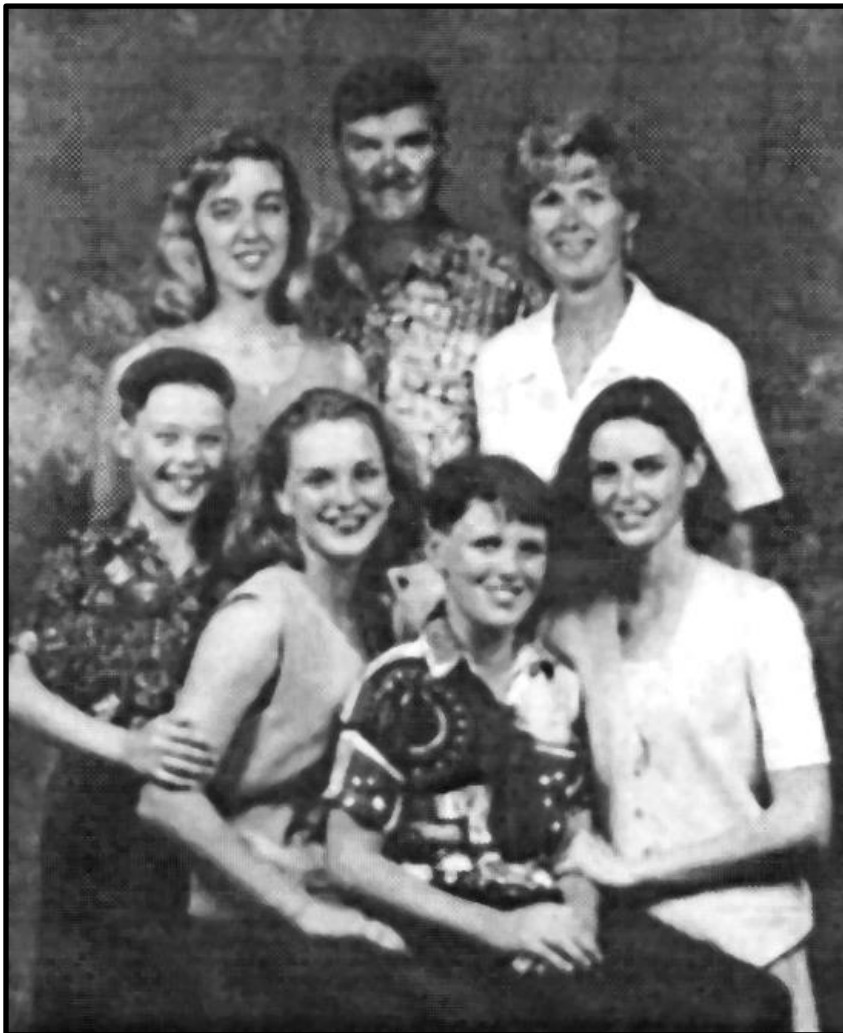
I always had the impression that Dad was in charge. He made a rule and that was it. I can see Dad at the clearing sales and the sheep yards. I remember sitting outside hotels waiting for him, as the sheep sales always finished in the hotels in those days. We lived in three different houses in Toodyay, firstly in the shop, then in a house near the old hospital - where I can remember he brought a tent home, which became our cubby or playhouse for some time after. The next house was next door to the show grounds. Major extensions went on there - kitchen, bathroom, laundry and a large verandah. We had a new chook yard down the back which disappeared when the Avon flooded in 1955. I can remember Dad took us to school when the bridge flooded to the top of the handrails. It took about fifty miles to get to the shop which was usually approximately two miles from the house.

I remember the shop. It was a hardware shop, not like the shops of today. Everything was displayed with a price ticket on it. I remember bits of label and string hanging off everything. I can remember Plume petrol and fuels, FX and FJ Holdens and Jerry Jeffrees who was always nice and never grumpy to kids. Dad was always running from one department to another, talking to farmers. It seemed Dad was always working. I can remember going with Dad on one of his many trips to Bindoon Boy's Town, where he was an adviser on their sheep management. We were very busy, with Dad drafting sheep and me being a "stand in" sheep dog. Dad took us on holidays to Yallingup in the early 50's. He organised all the kids, about eighteen of us, to sleep in the truck. The adults had the beach house. The truck had a mattress on the floor and a tarp over the top. Dad also organised a truck with a stock crate, to take the Toodyay Convent kids to see the Queen at Northam, as the few buses there were hired by the state schools. In 1953 that was the only way that we were going to get to the Northam Oval.

David Buzzard

Brian Jnr.

My second son Brian worked at various jobs until he was called up for National Service in 1966. When he came back from Vietnam in June 1968, after being hit with a bullet right through his jaws in the battle named "Coral", he recuperated from his war wounds for some time. He could eat his meals only after they had been through a blender. He had to suck them up through a straw. When he was well enough he went on a working holiday to England and Ireland. After he came back from overseas he worked for his brother David for a while until he enrolled at the Institute of Technology, which is now known as Curtin University, where he studied and qualified as a school teacher.



Brian and Rita's family.

Top I - r Alana, Brian and Rita
Bottom I - r Aaron, Rebecca, Bryan and Erika

It was there that he met Rita Nieman who was also studying teaching. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts and Diploma in Teaching. Brian and Rita were married in 1974 at the Notre Dame Church, Cloverdale with the reception at the Maylands Yacht Club. They have five children; Alana 1975, Erika 1977, Rebecca 1979, Bryan 1981, and Aaron 1985. When they decided to build a house in Duncraig, they sold up and came to live with me at Kintail Rd for twelve months until the house was finished. We managed very well with five children, three adults (no housekeeper) and a dog that bit all the tradesmen and my mates Arnie Saggars and Jim Boyd. It was just like old times. It was quite lonely when they all left, but I was glad to get rid of the dog.

Brian had accepted a job as Vice-Principal at Prendiville College at Ocean Reef. Both he and Rita are still on the staff there. All of the children were educated at Prendiville College. Alana graduated as a lawyer. She recently married Mark Dowley, a fellow student at University. Erika has a degree in accountancy from UWA. Rebecca does secretarial work and is a very good athlete. She is the captain of the under 18 State Netball Team.

Rebecca has left school and has a job in a travel agency. She recently asked for leave and went on a holiday to England and Holland. Bryan is in year 11 and Aaron in year 7 at Prendiville College.

"Straight Down the Middle"

"Straight down the middle" seems both an ideal and the philosophy which Dad has imparted to those who come in contact with him. I have used this saying in large doses as part of my educational language, when dealing with the next generation, knowing full well where it came from. I believe Dad tried to live by this principle all these years.

"Clean up as you go" is another saying that I heard a lot while living with Dad. (For Rita and I: no problem) but for the young people an impossible dream. We still use this adage and remind the kids of when we roughed it at Pa's in Applecross. We all grew very close.

I reflect sometimes on the huge sacrifices Pa made to keep us in good schools, where we learned in safety those important lessons of self- discovery, self-worth and appreciation of life. We were able to learn while receiving both care and sustenance, all those lessons which have shaped our lives today.

Dad's work was both tiring and time consuming which meant that we did fend for ourselves a fair bit. This has produced its own benefits. All of Dad's kids are very different with our own strengths which were developed through our unique youth experiences.

I realised a close bond was developing when I received the now infamous "call-up". It was my generation's turn to do the right thing. I believe it got a bit tense the day that the telegram arrived to say I was seriously hurt in Vietnam. Things calmed down a bit when word came through that I was OK.

The reunion was a significant sharing of father and son, of two generations, and of two ex-servicemen. Our relationship grew quite strong from that event in our history. This relationship has been growing in a mature way with all my family since that day. The day I realised what a father's love is.

Brian Buzzard Jnr.

TERESE

My only daughter, Terese met her husband Keith Geers in Geraldton. They married in May, 1971 at the Immaculate Conception Church at East Fremantle. I remember saying in my speech, "that I may have lost a daughter today but because I had been to the football that afternoon and Claremont had walloped East Fremantle, I felt that it was some consolation for the loss of a daughter". They moved to Sydney for a short time before being transferred back to Perth. They have two children; Paige, born in Sydney in 1972 and Erin in Perth in 1974. Keith left Mayne Nickless he studied accountancy full time at WAIT. Both Paige and Erin attended Pignatelli Primary School and Santa Maria in Attadale. Paige graduated from Edith Cowan University with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and is currently on an extended working holiday through America and Europe. Erin, who has recently graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Melbourne has returned to WA to complete an accountancy degree at Curtin University.

A Few Words From Terese

Some of my thoughts and feelings for my father are far too deep to share, but some are too important not to acknowledge.

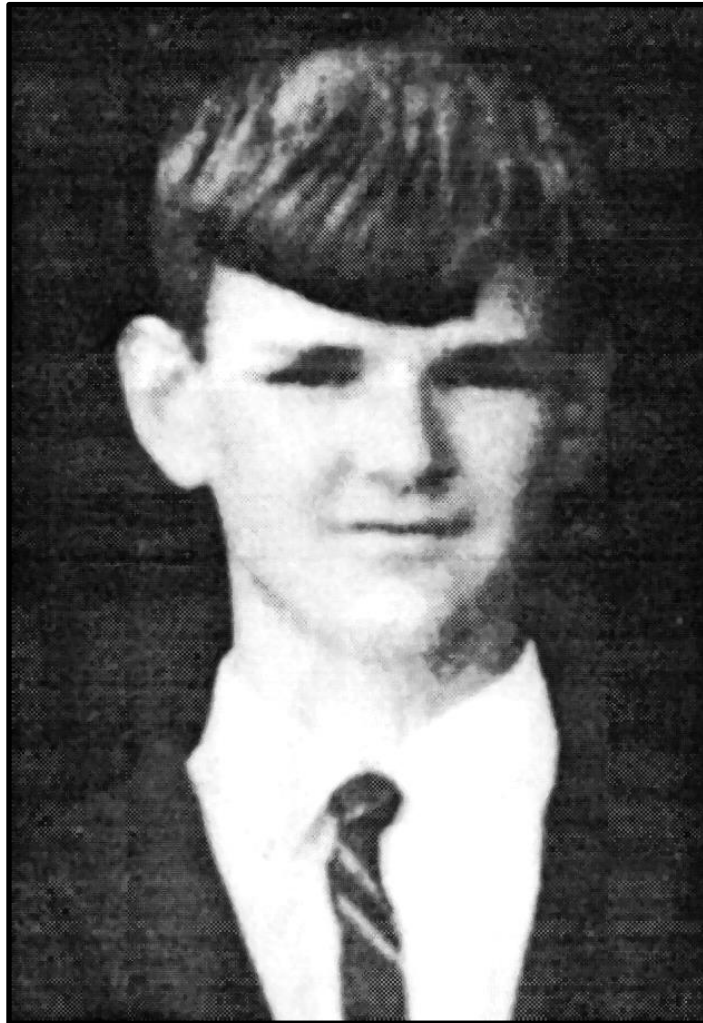
He is constant like a great river or the sun, he is forgiving like a parent's love for a child, he is honourable and truthful as of gentle times gone by There were times in my life and his when things were not good, difficult times, especially during my teenage years, but we survived. We have shared many moments of joy and happiness and a few of sadness, some quiet times when words were not necessary, have held and comforted each other, laughed until we cried over funny jokes or silly situations. He has been my champion in life and I feel privileged in having my father as a best friend.

It would be so easy to paint a picture of Dad, larger than life, better than the best, but he would hate that. So, to the world, he is an ordinary man, but to me he is the world.



Terese's family. Erin, Terese, Keith and Paige

Patrick



Patrick

Another tragedy happened to me with my third son Patrick. He attended Applecross Primary School with Philip, and from there they both went up to Bindoon CBC Agricultural College. He always had a leaning towards mechanics, so on his return to Perth from Bindoon, he went to Clontarf School run by the Christian Brothers. When the time came to leave there, he wanted to become an apprentice mechanic. Western Livestock used to buy all their Holden cars from James Clay Motors and I knew James and his senior staff well. James Clay himself died suddenly when flying a plane along the NSW coast. He disappeared and no trace was found of him or the plane until recently.

Patrick joined them as an apprentice mechanic, with a day or so a week going over to the mechanics school at Carlisle. He was doing very well, passing his exams at the end of the second school year. David took him up to New Norcia to help him out in the store for a part of his holidays. I happened to be staying for a few days nearby at Yericoin, visiting our Western Livestock clients from there up to Miling.

While I was in the dining room having breakfast, I was called to the phone. It was David's wife Lynne ringing. She seemed agitated and said that Patrick had been involved in a serious accident and could I come straight over. I left my breakfast unfinished and drove over to New Norcia only about fifteen miles away David met me and took me into the spare room and there was Patrick laying on the bed in a pool of blood, attended by a doctor who happened to be at New Norcia on a retreat at the monastery.

I did not need him to tell me the bad news, as I could see for myself. On the floor was a 22 rifle with blood all over it, but I could still recognise it as the one that Arnie Saggars owned and left at New Norcia unintentionally, after staying up at David's with me a few weeks before. I knew that the rifle had not been licensed for years, so / took it out and put it in my car boot, wrapped in a wheat bag. The New Norcia policeman had already been there, made his enquires and closed his book. An ambulance driver, Brother Bruno from the monastery, arrived and took Patrick down to Royal Perth Hospital. I knew that he had no chance because a bullet was embedded in his brain.

I followed the ambulance down to the hospital and was there when he died at about 5pm on the same day. He was aged seventeen. His mother was in Perth at the time and she was at the hospital with Terese and Philip when he passed away. Some months later the Police Department gave an amnesty to all gun owners who had not licensed their guns, or whose guns were in bad condition. After I had cleaned it up, I took the 22 rifle and gave it to the police. The officer who took it asked no questions, but he did check it over and tell me that I was wise to hand it in because it

was faulty in the trigger. It went off when he banged it on the floor. He said that it could have killed someone. I did not tell him that it had. Arnie kept enquiring about his rifle for years and I never told him what had happened to it.

I feel sure that if Patrick could give us a message he would say, "Dad and I were very good mates, and I enjoyed my fishing and country trips with him greatly. " He was always very disappointed when for various business reasons I could not take him with me.

Philip



Philip's Family
L-R Amy, Philip, Mandy and Daniel

Philip, my youngest child attended various schools at South Perth Convent and, Bindoon Boy's Town and Applecross Primary and Applecross High Schools. He also went to WAIT to do engineering. He came home one day after nearly two years into the course and told me that he had enough of studying because that is what he had been doing for over 15 years and he was tired of it. He took a job with the Main Roads Department as a clerk at Kununurra. He was transferred to Perth after a couple of years in the Kimberley's to work as paymaster for the Main Roads. He had to visit the various camps and saw a great deal of the north of WA. He returned to WAIT and completed a course on computers. Armed with his qualifications he went to work for Cadburys in Birmingham, England.

He met Mandy Gould when she was in Australia on a working holiday and they married in 1981. She returned to England with him and their son Daniel who was only six months old, and they settled in Henley-in-Arden which is in the middle of England. Daniel was born in Perth in 1985, and

Amy in England in 1987. I went to England with Terese to attend Amy's christening. Not long after that, Philip and Mandy returned, with their children, to WA.

They bought a house at Ocean Reef and Philip now manages the Advantage Supermarket at Joondalup where he uses his computer skills. Mandy's parents, Geoff and Rosa Gould visit them from England every couple of years. Geoff and I have become good friends as we have something in common to talk about. Geoff has a very good wartime record in flying Wellington Bombers for the RAF in the Middle East along with a mixed squadron with some Australians attached. I always look forward to their visits. Mandy and Philip's two children go to the Ocean Reef Primary School.

A Story From Philip

When I was a youngster Dad used to take me with him on a few business trips around the State and I recall many interesting places and people. When he set up Western Livestock he was pretty busy and holidays were few and far between as a family. However I vividly recall one holiday when we went to Hangover Bay, which is south of Cervantes on the coast north of Perth.

I was about twelve when Dad, Jimmy Boyd, Jimmy's son Jim and I went to Hangover Bay. The settlement consisted of a line of old shacks built of anything handy and it was mainly used by farmers for fishing and relaxing, and by crayfishermen. We stayed in a shack belonging to Jimmy Milner, the Yericoin Shire President.

The day before we went fishing one time, Dad got a 10 gallon drum and filled it with old crayfish heads, fish remains, bran, oil and anything else to hand, and put it on the wood stove. After a short time, the stench from this brew drove everyone, except dad, out of the shack. He stayed to make sure the "burley brew" was going to be good enough to attract any fish for miles around.

Next morning, we stepped out the back door onto the beach to fish. First, Dad threw the burley into the ocean, and after a few minutes the sea was jumping with fish. The order went out to take the fishing net out from the beach, around the fish and back to the shore, encircling the fish. My first reaction was to look for the boat, but then I was informed, "Just swim out, it's not hard." The great supervisor strikes again. So off I go with the net in tow. About halfway around I looked back to see Dad jumping up and down on the beach, waving his arms and shouting something I couldn't hear. This went on for a minute or two and finally I heard, "You dopey bastard, come inside the buoy, not around it, we'll lose all the fish."

At that point, I was struggling to pull the bloody fishing net out fifty yards from the beach, not to mention the fact that Dad had just thrown in enough burley to attract every fish, and possibly shark, to me. I shouted to him that I was not particularly enjoying the swim and that if he could do better, he had better get in there and show me how to do it. A lot of muttering from the beach and I finally got to shore. We all pulled in the net and we had a great haul of sea mullet.

Every night we would get the generator going and play cards. Dad would pair up with Jim Snr and young Jim would partner me. Euka was the game, and the night of the great fish haul, Jimmy Jnr and I hatched a plan to beat the old blokes and pay them back. The only table in the shack was covered in a multi-coloured lino. Young Jim and I worked out that if we used red for hearts, black for clubs, green for spades etc., we would be able to tell each other what suit his partner was strong in. All we had to do when it was our turn to call, was to place a finger on the appropriate colour on the lino.

Game after game we beat the oldies. They knew something was up as young Jim would call seven hearts with only one heart in his hand and I would win the hand with my seven hearts. They were looking for mirrors behind us, and at every move we made. Eventually, they threw down their cards and "refused to play with a pair of cheats".

This was one of many memorable trips away with Dad Others like marroning at Waroona Dam and sailing around Rottnest and Garden Islands were all equally exciting, but what sticks out in my memory is the infectious laughter that always came with Dad on holidays.