

# ...THE... .....NEWS BULLETIN.....

For information of ex-Radium Hill Community and families

Official Organ of the Radium Hill Historical Association Inc.

February 2021

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## Hello There,

Well, 2021 saw the sixtieth year since the closure of the Radium Hill uranium mine. A sad time for the hundreds of people who lived and worked there.

Many folk have been in touch this past year from around the world, with news, advice, and best wishes. Thanks to all of you.

It has been a mixed year, comprising the good and the not so good.

Entry to our old town of Radium Hill and cemetery, via the “old track” through both Tikalina and Maldorky stations is still restricted. Hopefully this state of affairs will change in the not too distant future.

The past support which we have received from our many supporters has been greatly appreciated.

From your Committee, pleasant reading, keep in touch via letter, phone call, email, or guest book comment on our web site.

Best wishes to you and yours,

Kevin Kakoschke  
Feb. 2021.

## BIRTHS

**They say that 40 is the old age of youth and that 60 is the youth of old age.** Where do you fit in?

What a year 1961 was at the A.I.M. Hospital, the last year that babies were born in Radium Hill including;

Kym Pudler, Atillio Scopel, Paul Bertocchi, Steven Westover, Pier Scalet, Brian Ford, Cynthia Wade, Michael Clayton, Kathryn Lawrie, and Graham Paull.

**Gee, how time flies.  
Happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday to you all.**

Graham Paull, who at number 117, was the last babe born at the A.I.M. Hospital before the Mine closed and Sheryl Carss was the first born in 1953, just after the Mine was opened.

Most of these babes are now Grandparents would you believe.

Some of our friends have reached the ripe old age of 90 years or more including;

Murray Stock, Norman Gilberthorpe, [both 95] Frank Laurison, Flo Mansfield, Edith Babinskas, Jack Ballenger, Neil Gobbett.



“leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs”



## OBITUARIES

Regina Leifheit  
Gilbert Sheehan  
Hans Reppenhagen

## RADIUM HILL ACCESS UPDATE

During 2020, representatives from the Radium Hill Historical Association have continued discussions regarding access to the Radium Hill townsite and cemetery with key government stakeholders including the Department of Energy and Mining and Primary Industries SA. Unfortunately, as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic this discussion process has slowed.

In terms of the parameters of limited access, the RHHA strives only to include former residents and associated families. It does not support or promote open or public access.

The Association is negotiating limited access to the townsite and cemetery sites as per a defined and developed access agreement. This is where access is defined as limited to specific times, dates of the year. This proposed agreement would define all parameters for access to suit all key stakeholders including pastoral leaseholders Tikalina and Maldorky.

At the January 2020 meeting with DEM and PIRSA, an offer was presented to supply recent drone film of the Radium Hill site. This film could be used for display purposes at the Radium Hill Heritage Museum located within the Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre, Peterborough.

Representatives from the Radium Hill Historical Association look forward to continue collaborative discussions with all stakeholders to reach a suitable access outcome to the Radium Hill site.

Many thanks to Evan Lloyd, Brian and Geoff Tattersall for their continued involvement to resolve this matter.

## LIST OF OUR ASSOCIATIONS ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 1990

Built the Radium Hill Heritage Museum, located in Peterborough, to depict the birth, life, death and legacies of Radium Hill, Australia's first uranium mine.

Wrote the book "We Were Radium Hill" and produced the 19 min. video "The Way We Were".  
Posted out a newsletter "The Radio Activity" to up to 460 former residents, each year since 1990.

Conducted three Radium Hill Reunions in Adelaide for those folk who couldn't make it to the Radium Hill Reunions.



Inside 'The Radium Hill Heritage Museum' at Peterborough.

### Mine

1. Identified 49 different minerals occurring in the mine area.
2. Identified 157 plant species occurring in the Radium Hill area.
3. Identified 132 bird species sighted in the Radium Hill area.
4. Had the MINES DEPT. fence off a dangerous area near Whip shaft.



The Headframe at night all lit up like a giant Xmas tree.

### Town

1. Constructed a BBQ shed.
2. Constructed a shower shed.
3. Constructed a sheltered "Beer garden" area.
4. Erected 18 "then and Now" historic photographic plaques around the former townsite.
5. Manufactured and installed 81 house number and family occupiers, (man, wife and children) and the years that they were resident at that address in the townsite.
6. Reroofed two rooms in the Catholic Church ruins.
7. Had the Townsite Heritage listed in 2017.
8. Conducted many Easter Reunions since the first in 1991 when over 400 attended.
9. Conducted "Ghost Town Cabarets" at Easter each year.
10. Built the AJ Smith memorial cairn in honour of the discoverer of uranium at Radium Hill.
11. Built 4 long-drop dunnies in the camp area.
12. Rehabilitated 9 holes of the original 18 hole golfcourse
13. Conducted an ongoing noxious cactus grubbing campaign since 1990.
14. Constructed BRIMK Crossing and road repairs

### Cemetery

1. Identified the twelve original graves in the cemetery, names, DOB, DOD, age, cause of

death, and home address of each for the SA Dept of Mines.

2. Made and installed names plaque for each grave.
3. Refenced the cemetery grounds. Designed, fabricated and installed the cemetery entrance portal.
4. Built the cemetery monument and installed a plaque of the original burials.
5. Planted 16 gum trees within the cemetery borders and watered them 4 times a year.
6. Had the Cemetery Heritage listed in 2017.
7. Interred the ashes of 24 former residents in the Cemetery, complete with name plaque.
8. Conducted numerous ANZAC commemoration services at Easter each year in remembrance of the 367 former residents who had served in the armed forces of their country.



A crowd in the weed free Cemetery.

Fourteen ex-Radium Hill residents have registered their wish for their ashes to be interred in the Cemetery when their time comes. Hopefully their desire will be carried out.

A big thank you to all those who have helped over the years.

### ‘Youngsters’ Get Together

Janet Lindo (nee Pengilly) from NSW met up with Michael Phillips, Maria Drazil, and Desi Utting (nee Scholten) here in Adelaide for chat over coffee.

I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall. The stories they told about the headmasters, Humphreys, Raymond, Bonner, and other teachers, plus the antics of the wayward students, would make your hair curl.

### DROUGHT TO RAIN

What a year 2020 was. The drought lasted right up until September.

The winds they blew, the dust that flew, soon to settle from the skies, onto the roof tops where it showed.

Dam were all dry and the rain water tanks were empty. The surrounding stations had destocked by about half. The lambs had been abandoned by their mothers. You see, animals can't live just eating dirt. Most houses in the region had desalination plants even to supply drinking water.

But things changed in mid-September and it rained, water from the skies instead of dust. You beauty!

Wia Werra had 56 mms and Tickalina had 65mms. Radium Hill would have received a similar amount.

But there were problems! The roads became impassable and the rain washed all the dust off the roofs into the rain water tanks, but as a result, the water in the tanks was now muddy and unfit to drink. So, to overcome the problem they still kept their desalination plants running in order to get their clean drinking water.

The countryside soon took on a tinge of green.

In mid-October, the heaven's opened up again and poured about 70mm of rain over the countryside around Radium Hill and surrounding Stations.

The feed in the paddocks just took off.

The sheep thought Xmas had come early.

The Cemetery trees at Radium Hill received a new lease of life.

Unfortunately, it was too late for the Sturts Desert Pea flowers.

### MISS RADIUM HILL

We have received a photo of a Labour Day Parade in Broken Hill in 1958, where ‘Miss Radium Hill’ (Pam Morrison) was representing Radium Hill as a participant in the ‘Miss Australia Quest’ which Australia wide, raised money for Spastic Associations throughout Australia; it was the Woodville Spastic Association.

It was a year filled with many happy occasions and she was supported by a most wonderful committee at Radium Hill and on the day of the Broken Hill parade they were there in full force to support her.

Pam remembers at the time she received much applause and ‘wolf whistles’ which today would horrify the feminists in our society. By the way she loved it!



Pam Morrison in The Miss Australia Quest parade in Broken Hill.

### SNIPETS

Early Childhood Memories by Raylene Williams. 6 yrs old to 11 yrs old at Radium Hill.

School Days.

Head Masters – Mr Humphreys, Raymond and Mr Bonner.

Two buildings was all we had. One for Cooking, Sewing, Laundry.

The other had 2 rooms which we were divided into age groups and at least 4 classes were taught all at once, quite an achievement for the teachers.

Looking back enjoyed that way of teaching and learning. I am a stronger person for it.

SPORTS was my strongest achievement. One of the fastest Runners and Bike Riders. Won lots of trophies..

Wooden Desk with Ink Well. I had beautiful long auburn coloured hair, which was always in pig tails - this particular day my hair was being pulled backwards by Sandra Dumont to whom was sitting behind me and she put my hair into the Ink Well. Try and explain that to my Mother who was furious when I got home, there's all this Ink running down my back. (I'll say no more) ho-hum

### **Entertainment.**

The Drive In Picture Theatre.

My Dad (Darby Williams) showed people through the gate in their cars where to park and hook up to a speaker. There was a lady who was the gate keeper for the walk-ins, there they would sit on the wooden planks in front of the Canteen. On top of the Canteen was where Kevin Kakoschke and Neil Gobbett would operate the movies for all to watch.

The morning after the shows Dad, Mum, Marlene, Raylene Williams, we would front up at 7.30 am and pick up all the rubbish scattered around on the ground, then rake all the gravel level.

On one particular Sunday morning Marlene and I had to clean all of

the drive-in theatre by ourselves.

There was a group of us whom decided the day before why not pack a lunch and ride our bikes out to the Olary Creek for a picnic - all agreed.

BUT Marlene and I weren't given the day off - instead were told you both will start at 7 am if you want to go. We Did It- and we also had enough energy to accomplish and enjoy the big bike ride. Sure, did enjoy our packed lunch.

TWINS were born.

The most beautiful occasion was when the Kakoschke twins were born. Kevin and June (parents) - (Kevin being my first cousin). My sister and I on occasions were allowed to take the twins (Karen and Debra) for a walk in the pram around Radium Hill. It was a delight to watch the little darlings grow up. And look at them now!! Wow what an adventure, throughout their lives to still be constantly in touch with my cousins.

OLD HUGGER.

To a small child – me, Old Hugger looked scary riding his horse into town. It was told to me he would ride into town about once a month to buy food.

REUNION at Radium Hill.

It sure was a delight having bush camps and to be entertained on the Easter Weekends.

Thank you to whom I came into contact with and shared old memories together.

Thanks for sharing your memories Raylene.

### **MUSEUM AT PETERBOROUGH**

Due the COVID-19 VIRUS, all Museums were closed in 2020, ours included. However, later in the year they were allowed to be opened again. Although visitor

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numbers were down, they liked what they saw.

I received a phone call from a chap in Pt. Lincoln who had visited the Museum and his description of what he saw was, 'brilliant....., I never knew so many organisations existed there'.

The video which we produced about Radium Hill, titled **'The Way We Were'** will be screened on request to Shirley Dearlove.

Yes, the Museum is well worth a visit as it is one of the few museums in Australia that depicts the birth, life, death and legacies of a town.

### **CLOSING DOWN**

In October 1961, the fateful announcement was made that the Radium Hill uranium mine would close in December, 1961.

**'WHAT! They can't do that, where will we go', was echoed around the town.** [Plus a few swear words].

The workers were found jobs all over Australia.

The Mines Dept. here in Adelaide was just starting their seismic exploration programme, looking for oil and gas and took on many former Radium Hill workers.

Kalgoorlie and surrounding mining areas in Western Australia and Mt. Isa in Queensland became the new home for many.

The last family to leave their home ,No.113 in the Townsite,'Wog Alley', in Dec. 1961, was Barry and Sylvia Kakoschke with their one month old daughter, Helen



who was born in the Broken Hill Hospital.

Those women who were about to have their first baby were not allowed to have it in the doctorless A.I.M. Hospital at Radium Hill in case things went wrong.

A fair number of babes were born in Adelaide and other towns because of this ruling.

## **DON'T FORGET**

**The reunion at Glandore Community Centre, Naldera St, Glandore, on Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, holiday long weekend.**

**The Reunion hours will be from 1.30pm. till 4.00pm.**

**Sign the visitors when you arrive including address and phone number.**

**Many Radium Hill items will be on display from or more sixty years ago.**

**Wear your name tag, it will help bring back memories.**

A **special display** will be of uranium bearing products, possibly the best private collection in Australia. Items in this display have been collected over many, many years.

Of special interest in this display will be a smoke detector which has an element called **Americium 241**, a product of uranium as its sensor.

**Bring along your special Radium Hill item for display.**

**Put it in your diary now.**

**Looking forward to catching up with you there.**

- **Please contact June, our secretary if you, change your address**
- 
- **change phone number**
- 
- **know any ex-Radium Hill resident who has passed away**
- 
- **or has celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

**Have your say**

Write a comment in the guest book section of our web site. View it at

[www.radiumhill.org.au](http://www.radiumhill.org.au)

You may like to write an item that may be suitable for inclusion in the next newsletter Feb., 2022. Email [kevJune@bigpond.com](mailto:kevJune@bigpond.com)

If you have any artefacts that may be suitable for displaying in the Museum please let us know, call or email (see front page for full contact details).



The Radium Hill Committee 2021  
(L to R) Lynda Sisson, June Kakoschke, Kevin Kakoschke, Evan Lloyd, Margot Binkowski, Phill Huddy, Barry Kakoschke, Sylvia Kakoschke, Lois Harvie, Rodney Lawrence, Pam Barratt, Sandra Dumont, front Jim Krecu and Wolfgang Felleger.  
(absent Kieran McCosker and Michael Phillips),