

October 2021 Newsletter

Our mission is to provide a supportive and informative environment for people with lung conditions and their carers.

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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 11th November 2021
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Should this meeting need to be cancelled you will be informed by email

From the Editor

After nine weeks of lockdown in the ACT, we are emerging to a time which many may find even more challenging - the time when restrictions on movement are lifted and the vulnerable members of our community will have to make every effort to keep themselves protected. Hopefully, with the excellent vaccination rates we have in the ACT we can all stay safe and well.

Member, **George Watts**, had the right idea escaping the eastern states prior to lockdown restrictions for a road trip to Central and Western Australia. He has sent us some great shots such as this one of the

Western Australian coast near Kalbarri. George informs us that, *'the fit ones can stroll along a boardwalk to get closer to the shoreline'*. He is now safely back in Canberra where he has completed his mandatory two week quarantine.



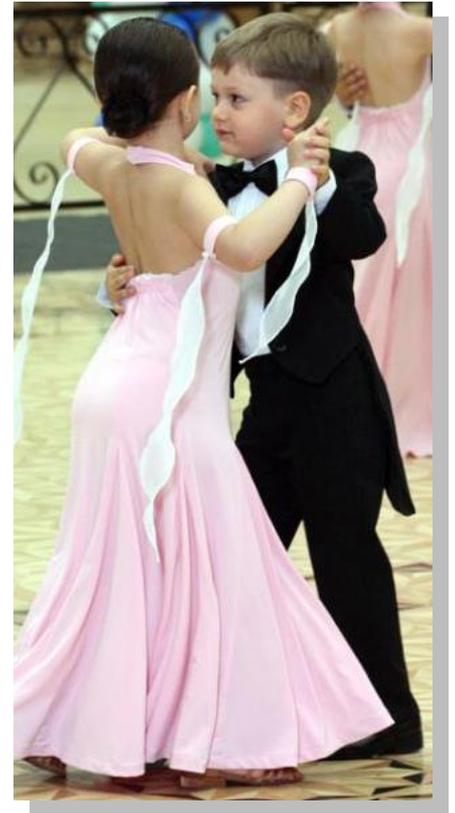
Dancing Days – Chris Moyle

Teenage years were like a new beginning, moving from the country town of McLaren Vale to the bright lights of Adelaide. It was an opportunity to indulge my new passion for ballroom dancing, although moving around on a sometimes slippery floor in high heel shoes took some getting used to.

At the learners' classes and supervised dances young men and women sat facing each other on opposite sides of the room. Announcement of a dance sent some men eagerly running across the floor to find a partner while others took their time, nervously shuffling over. Then there were the dodgers who'd cleverly sneak outside for unauthorised activities such as smoking. A supervisor with a big stick would seek them out and bring them back in to face the music.

Occasionally there was the Ladies' Choice. Women usually waited for an invitation, so it felt strange to ask a man to dance. He could say 'no', which would be most embarrassing.

The barn dance had everyone up dancing, changing partners continuously as we made our way around the big circle. It was here I'd briefly meet John Kerin, an overworked medical student, who later went on to become Professor John Kerin, internationally recognised for his work with IVF (see page 3).



As you can see it is an advantage to start young... and no that isn't Chris on the left.

As the years went by I gained Bronze and Silver medals, danced in formation dances at nightclubs and also in the Elder Park Soundshell at the Adelaide Festival of Arts. They were exciting times.

On Saturday nights I went to the wonderful Wonderland Ballroom. There was an orchestra and they always closed with 'Wonderland by Night', a dreamy slow melody which lent itself to a slow foxtrot, although no-one danced it.

One night a smartly dressed gentleman approached me with hand extended, inviting me to dance. We assumed the dance hold while he smiled and whirled me around and around. Too soon it was over.

'Thanks. I like dancing with tall girls,' he said, and then, 'Shall we finish with the foxtrot?'

Now that it's become foolhardy to wear any kind of heels and I've become less agile, ballroom dancing days are probably over. But it's a glamorous and exciting time to look back on.

John Kerin, 'dancer and Professor' - Chris Moyle

John Kerin would always say, 'All work and no play makes John a dull boy'. On Saturday nights he brought along dancing partner, Kay, an attractive, statuesque woman. Together they usually put in a very good workout on the dance floor.

John later became a physician and a professor of reproductive medicine, publishing hundreds of publications in medical science research, particularly on in vitro fertilization. He spent 16 years in total directing in vitro fertilisation units with the University of Adelaide (1979 – 1986), Los Angeles and other US medical centres. He was a pioneer in IVF and in new techniques of female sterilisation.

While at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide he established the IVF program, and his team produced South Australia's first IVF twins. He helped more than 2,000 parents have babies.

Tragically in January 2006 he died at the age of 61 as a result of an accident on his hobby farm – a man who still had so much more to give.

References: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news10281.html>

John F. Kerin, Wikipedia and www.abc.net.au/news/2006-01-27/ivf-pioneer-killed-in-accident/786658

Thunderstorm Asthma – adapted by Helen Cotter

Thunderstorm asthma can occur suddenly in spring or summer when there is a lot of pollen in the air and the weather is hot, dry, windy and stormy. People with asthma and/or hay fever need to be extra cautious to avoid flare-ups induced by thunderstorm asthma between September and January in Victoria, NSW, ACT and Queensland because it can be very serious (National Asthma Council Australia 2019b).

In 2016, a serious thunderstorm asthma epidemic was triggered in Melbourne when very high pollen counts coincided with adverse meteorological conditions, resulting in 3,365 people presenting at hospital emergency departments over 30 hours, and ten deaths (Thien et. al. 2018).

Following this event, a [thunderstorm asthma forecasting system](#) has been developed to give Victorians early warning of possible epidemic thunderstorm asthma events in pollen season (Victoria State Government 2019). See [Natural environment and health](#).

Taken from: [Chronic respiratory conditions - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) (aihw.gov.au), part of: **Australia's Health 2020**: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/australias-health>

This picture was published in Allergic Living e-magazine <https://www.allergicliving.com/> which also has an article on this topic. It captures an **explosive lightning bolt over Sydney**.

Photo: Australian Land, City, People Scape Photographer <https://www.allergicliving.com/2018/06/07/thunderstorm-asthma-from-when-and-why-it-happens-to-risks-with-pollen-allergies/>



Oxygen Therapy could halt Alzheimer's

Richard White found a fascinating article on this topic in the Financial Review. Here is a summary.

The Research

- An Israeli study has found that placing patients with a mild cognitive impairment in a **hyperbaric chamber**
 - boosts blood flow to the brain
 - improving memory and processing speed

Why blood flow is important

- **Reduced blood flow to the brain** and a decrease in oxygen
 - precedes the onset of dementia
 - the degree of cognitive impairment in Alzheimer's correlates to the level of flow

The Study

- **Six elderly patients**
 - **were given oxygen inside a chamber** for 90 minutes, five days a week, for three months
 - the blood flow in the brain increased by 16 to 23%
 - memory test scores improved by 16.5%
 - attention improved by 6%
 - information processing speed was boosted by 10.3%

Further trials are necessary, but it may well be that therapies - like this one - which help prevent dementia in the first place may be the most effective.

Reference: Financial Review, 11 and 12 September 2021 <https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/health-and-wellness/oxygen-therapy-could-halt-alzheimer-s-20210910-p58qgw>. Note: this publication is behind a paywall.

Another beautiful shot taken by George Watts.

Also at **Kalbarri** - which is located 570 km north of Perth - is the skywalk in the National Park, which George described as '*very spectacular viewing*'.

Editor's Note - If the name Kalbarri is ringing a bell but you are not sure where from, it is probably because you are recalling **Cyclone Seroja** which caused massive damage to the town in April of this year... nothing like the beautiful conditions George encountered.



October 1: International Day of Older Persons – Helen Cotter

In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1 October as the International Day of Older Persons ([resolution 45/106](#)) in response to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century and to promote the development of a society for all ages.

Did you know?

- There are more people aged 60 years and older than children younger than five worldwide.
- Between 1950 and 2010, **life expectancy** rose from 46 to 68 years. In Australia, it is 82.8 years for both men and women.
- Over the next three decades, the **number of older persons worldwide** is expected to more than double, reaching over **1.5 billion people in 2050**, and 80% of them will be living in low and middle income countries. By comparison in 2019, there were only 703 million persons aged 65 or over.
- The increase is expected to be relatively small in Australia and New Zealand (84 per cent).
- By 2050, about one quarter of all Australians will be aged 65 or over. By 2025, there will be more older people than children.

The COVID-19 pandemic may significantly lower older persons' incomes and living standards. At present less than 20% of older persons worldwide receive a pension. In Australia this is around 62%.

Reference: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/income-support-payments-for-older-people>

We need to tackle the negative stereotypes that lead to age discrimination. Older Australians should be recognised for their role in building strong and healthy communities. They make an enormous contribution to our society. For example, Australians aged 65 years and over contribute almost **\$39 billion** each year in **unpaid caring and voluntary work**. If the unpaid contribution of those aged 55 to 64 years is included, that figure rises to \$74.5 billion per year. Increasing paid employment of Australians over 55 years by five per cent would add \$48 billion to the bottom line of our national economy, every year. Be proud to be an older person.

Reference: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-older-australians>
[International Day of Older Persons | United Nations](#)

As the sun sets slowly in the west...

George took this spectacular sunset shot from a purpose built viewing platform in **Geraldton**. In the distance are large container ships waiting to enter the port to take on grain or iron ore.

Editor's Note – Geraldton has a very interesting local museum covering, amongst other things, the maritime history of the west coast. It was here that your editor first learnt of the shipwreck, **Batavia**. Peter FitzSimons' book, *Batavia*, is a very readable narrative about this fascinating story. If you are interested in Australia's history, it is a thoroughly recommended piece of reading.





...and a tip from George, 'Road trains over 53 metres in length aren't easy to pass, especially when you are towing a caravan!' This road train was parked on the road south of **Katherine NT**.



Philip Morris – 'Tobacco Giant'

Maureen Bell sent the Editor an interesting and somewhat alarming article she found at <https://theconversation.com/au> - a summary of which is below.

Diversifying their portfolio into Health Care

Philip Morris has acquired British health-care company **Vectura Group Plc**. Vectura specialises in manufacturing inhalation products such as commonly used **inhalers** (or puffers) and **nebulisers** that help people with asthma and lung disease to breathe.

Why Vectura?

- They will now be profiting from products designed to assist people with lung conditions.
- Nebulisers are commonly prescribed for patients with tobacco-related lung disease.

Why does it matter?

- Many public health organisations, medical professional bodies, universities, individual health professionals and researchers cannot and will not work with tobacco companies or their affiliates.
- Researchers who would have received support from Vectura or used their products to pioneer the next generation of inhaler therapies, will no longer be able to.
- Many doctors will be looking for alternative devices to prescribe for their patients that do not contribute to Philip Morris's or Vectura's profits.

If you wish to read the full article go to: [\[The Link to the Article\]](#)

The Final Word

You will notice throughout the newsletter that there are many **underlined links**. These links will send you to an article with further information on a topic you have been reading about. This of course is only relevant for emailed copies of the newsletter. If you receive your newsletter by post, you may like to **switch to an emailed version**; there are many advantages. To change contact the Editor using the contact details on page 1.