

the 2019 midyear gathering

countrynetwork

HOBART



March 29 - April 1



Welcome to 2019.

As the years race by we are left with that question whenever we look in the mirror, “where did that young man go?” It only seemed like yesterday he was here right where I’m standing now.

And so it also goes with our National Gatherings. So much planning to ensure the camaraderie is shared and enjoyed by all in attendance. Then “poof”, in the blink of an eye it’s over. But just the same as our own lives, we are left with happy memories and the foundations of new friendships. Make no mistake, whilst the differing locations might offer interesting and varied appeal, the real value in Country Network’s National Gatherings is the camaraderie and friendships.

Hobart offers yet another opportunity to join with fellow members and experience this camaraderie and friendship. Secure your place in this exciting event. Bookings close March 1st.

Any singles wanting to attend and share a twin room but unsure with whom to share, please just proceed with your booking and you will be allocated a room mate.

Booking form on pages 11 - 12.

A warm welcome to our new members

Diego F	Albury	NSW
Richard T	Coonabarbran	NSW
Andrew W	Coonabarbran	NSW
Stephen E	Skipton	Vic
Glen S	Newport	Vic
Bob P	Carlisle River	Vic
Marvin B	Claremont	WA
Reno R	Albury	NSW
David M	Albury	NSW
John W	Musk	Vic
Rob C	Musk	Vic.
David P	Shoalwater	WA.
David S	Highland Park	Qld
Bill R	Jindera	NSW
Cyril C	Bowning	NSW
Richard S	Cootamundra	NSW

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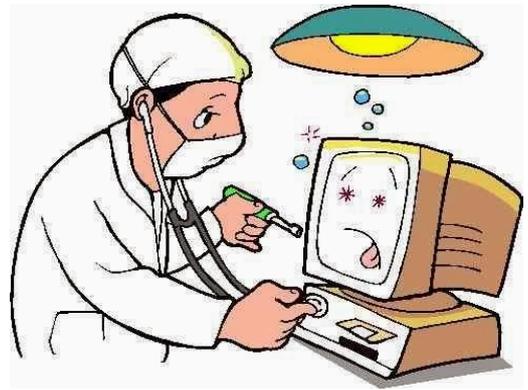
Country Network Website

Believe it or not, our website is progressing, thanks to the hard work, (most of it very frustrating) constant nagging and persistence of our webmaster Rob Sims. Please know, Rob is not a programmer but has become very good at nagging to ensure we are progressing. Our progression is still slow as your new developers Dy-Com unravel the many problems, but at least we've moved on to two steps forward, once step back; a vast improvement from the previous one step forward, two steps back.

A recent update of our membership database program uncovered a compatibility issue, which rendered many features 'out of order'. Tempted to throw his hands in the air in defeat, Rob took a deep breath and got back to nagging.

We continue to ask for members' patience as we continue to work through this necessary development process, especially at times when the website is down due to important programming changes. We will get there in the end and it will be all ok. If it is not ok, it is not the end.

If any member is unable to log-in and having any troubles with the on-line log-in assistance, please do not hesitate to contact to Rob and he'll be able to promptly and efficiently assist you. Just don't forget to say 'please' and 'thanks' as he is but a mere volunteer undertaking a challenging role given the current circumstances.



Your Profile and Contact Details

listed in our Membership List, to ensure its accuracy and includes all and only that information you want available to fellow members. Members can make changes via their online profile or can request changes by contacting the Registrar, Neil Warner.

All members are reminded they are to have at least one contact method (mobile phone, p.o.box, email, etc) available to fellow members.

And maybe you might like to add a profile photo so we can all see how handsome you are. It always helps to put a face to a name.

We ask all members to periodically check their online profile and/or contact details

Apology

Apology to Brett of Parkes whose phone number was omitted during the membership database changeover this time last year. His phone number has now been reinstated.

CN Support Roles

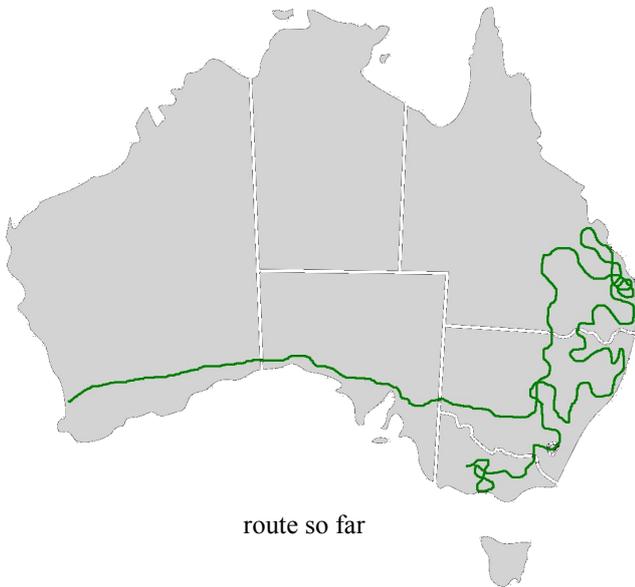
If you'd like to assist in any area of Country Network, we'd be so glad for your assistance. Every little bit helps. You don't have to be "the man in charge" of a whole area, but you can just give a little of your time to that man who is. It can also be a lot of fun as well as very rewarding being part of "the team".

- ◆ **Assist with the planning of our national gatherings.**
by making arrangements for a dinner or an excursion
- ◆ **Assist with the production of our newsletter.**
by being a roving reporter and providing an article or two.
- ◆ **Assist with the distribution of our newsletter.**
by just doing one of the mailouts in the year.
- ◆ **Assist with our new website administration.**
by asking our webmaster how you can help.
- ◆ **Assist with promotion and publicity.**
by asking any committee member how you can help.
- ◆ **Assist with organising events in your local area.**
by chatting with our events coordinator about your ideas.
- ◆ **Assist with networking with fellow social groups.**
by chatting with administrators of fellow social groups.
- ◆ **Assist with networking with community health groups.**
by chatting with such groups how we can assist.



More hands make light work

Contact any committee member now and ask how you can help make this organisation grow.



Our own CN Grey Nomads

Popular CN Life Members Cliff and Richard are living the dream in their “Hootchie” Motorhome, zigzagging the countryside visiting family and fellow CN friends, spreading cheer wherever they roam. Give them a hoy and maybe they can drop in for a cuppa.

Although technically, to be a grey nomad you need hair! May your continued travels be joyous and safe.

Doing your own travels? Please let us know as our members do enjoy reading what others are up to.

editor@countrynetwork.com.au



Country Network Social Events

The majority of members do not have convenient access to attend some of the monthly social events around the country. These events are not organised by Country Network per se, and not all are even Country Network events. This doesn't matter. What does matter is that men are getting together on a regular basis over a coffee and/or a meal and enjoying some camaraderie, as well as being able to talk about all matters with like-minded men.

These events didn't pop up from nowhere. They were formed on the initiative of a local - or group of locals, who persisted to make them happen.

If

- ◆ **You would like greater social opportunities for gay men in your region.**
- ◆ **You want to help make a difference.**
- ◆ **Then contact Charlie's Angels who will help you make it happen (or at least try)**

Charlie can assist you with ideas, planning and spreading the word - including having Country Network advertising in local media outlets. All Charlie needs is a local with enough initiative and enthusiasm to try and make it happen.

Contact Charlie at events@countrynetwork.com.au or 0417 102 587



what's happening out there?

Rainbow on The Plains Festival (Hay) - 29th - 30th March 2019

Rainbow on the Plains is a festival of fun, support, inclusion and celebration of our local and visiting lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex communities, their friends and families. We celebrate with a street parade, family fair day and Mardi Gras party, alongside various community events. More info: haymardigras.com.au

Tropical Fruits (Lismore) Easter Party - date to be confirmed

Held on the Easter long weekend, our Easter Party is the biggest little party you have ever been to! As the first party after all the excitement of New Year, Easter is a chance for the fruity family to get together for an uplifting electro-house, slightly hands-in-the-air euphoric groove-thang!

Tickets to the Easter party are available at the door. More info: tropicalfruits.org.au

Border Pride Fair Day - Albury - May 19 2019

QEII Square, Dean St, Albury. 10am - 3pm.

Noosa Rainbow River Festival - 1st to 3rd of March 2019

The SpringOUT Festival is Canberra's premier LGBT+ cultural festival which affirms pride, joy, dignity and identity of Canberra's LGBT+ community through events of celebration

Feast on The Foreshore - Adelaide - March 17 2019

The annual Feast on the Foreshore is a free family-friendly event that celebrates our LGBTIQ community! There is always lots to see and do. Be a part of the infamous dog competitions, grab some friends and join in the tug-of-war hosted by the super fit Firefighters from the MFS! Be enveloped by the delicious tastes of local food vendors and be tempted by the wares at the artisan stalls.

More info: feast.org.au

Free Movie Event - Pomona Qld - February 21, 2019 10:30am

A warm invitation to LGBTI seniors and friends for a screening of an original 1928 gay themed silent movie. Majestic Theatre, 3 Factory St, Pomona. RSVP essential Feb 18th. David 0419 879 025 or email david.mack@ozcare.org.au

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Hobart Midyear Gathering - March 29 - April 1, 2019

Come and join fellow members for this marvelous weekend of camaraderie whilst exploring the hidden secrets of this historical, majestic city. Bookings close March 1.

More Events?

If you think we're missing some important events then make sure we don't miss any again by letting us know of future events in your region and around the country.

Email: editor@countrynetwork.com.au



The State of Handsome Men

SOHM - Monthly Events

1st Monday: Geelong Dinner
1st Wed: West Gippsland Dinner
2nd Wed: Bois for Brekky - Mornington
2nd Sunday: Enriks Blackburn Brunch
3rd Sunday: Geelong District Luncheon
Last Tuesday: Village Green Lunch.

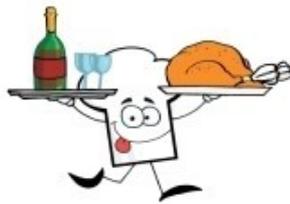
Moe BBQ

Phil from Moe is opening up his house once again for a relaxed Saturday BBQ Lunch.

Saturday February 16th

BYO Drinks and Meat and a dessert or salad to share. Also BYO chairs.

RSVP and details: Roger 0400 308 687 or Charlie 0417 102 587



You are cordially invited
to
Mal and Neil's House in The Hills
for an



autumn leaves gala luncheon

- ◆ **When?** Sunday, March 24th, 2019 at High Noon Sharp to Late Arvo
- ◆ **Where?** 24 Pinnocks Rd, Emerald
- ◆ **Why?** To Feast with Old Friends and New Friends
- ◆ **What?** Gourmet luncheon provided Mrs. Bucket style. BYO drinks
- ◆ **Who?** You and gaggles of other handsome, butch men

RSVP (essential) by March 20 on (03)59682268 or ecosh@bigpond.net.au

Gold Prospecting Trip

Join us for a trip to the Victorian Golden Triangle as we fossick for gold. Or just join us for a lazy few days of sitting around doing nothing but relaxing with friends.

Maldon Caravan Park (subject to availability)
Monday February 18th - Thursday Feb 21st.
Various accommodation options from sharing a cabin, caravan or tent.

Detectors available (courtesy of Kerin) although a Miner's Right is required through the Vic gov. Can be purchased online for \$24.20 and valid for 10 years
To express your interest or for more info contact Kerin on 0478 229 730

Albury - Wodonga Region

Those members who are fortunate to live in an area where there are monthly dinners or lunches know the value they bring to members by providing social opportunities and the building of friendships.

So it is great to see the members in the Albury - Wodonga region starting up such monthly get-togethers.

They're gathering at the Albury Golf Club Sunday Feb 3rd, 12:00 noon for lunch, and from there will formulate their plans to create a monthly get-together.

Well done guys.

For more info contact either Peter or Reno.





More and more social groups and Fair event organisers are turning to Facebook as their “website” and source of information and networking. Country Network is not planning (at this point in time) on heading exclusively down that path but we do need to keep up with (or at least try) the latest social networking. Hence we will continue to promote Country Network through Facebook and promote Facebook to our members.

Bernie’s doing a great job in keeping our FB Closed Group and Public Page vibrant and active. He’s always on the lookout for more contributions.

We’re also looking for feedback to ensure we’re meeting what our members want from our Facebook Group.

Our CN FB Closed Group is another great way in which members can network and interact with one another.

If you would like to join in this part of CN social networking or you have any questions or concerns, please contact Bernie:

2019 AGM - Dates Announced

The intended location for the 2019 was the Albury - Wodonga Region. Thanks to the locals for researching some suitable venues, finally settling on

The Blazing Stump Motel

Wodonga

The motel is very well appointed with a variety of accommodation options. It comes with swimming pool, bbq facilities, restaurants, bars and even a sauna.



WODONGA / ●●●●●

The motel is gay owned and run. The owners are aware of Country Network and of our aims and objectives. Hence, we were offered an amazing deal, well below their standard rates they would otherwise fill their rooms on the weekend we are attending.

Friday October 4th - Tuesday October 8th, 2019

We’ve also had a recent influx of new members in the region so it’s great timing for Country Network to be making its way to the Albury - Wodonga region later this year.

Stay tuned for further news, including the booking form which will be available to be completed online - another first for Country Network



Last October, about a dozen CN members attended the

Coming Back Out Ball

Inspired to celebrate our senior members of the LGBTI community and to recognise their fight through more difficult times as they paved the way for many of the freedoms and rights we have today.

Here we see a few of our handsome members on their way to the ball. A very shady bunch if you ask me, resembling a group of mafia hitmen than princes off to the ball!

Seen here are Bob, Rob, Richard. Then behind, Frank, Mal and Roger.

Thanks Daryl for the photo.

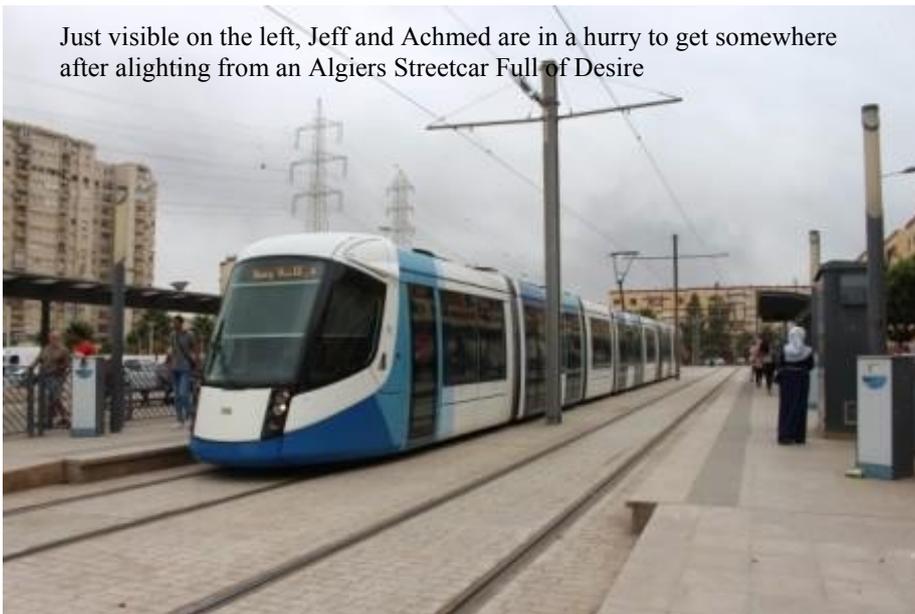


UNDER THE RADAR IN NORTH AFRICA – Part 2 (Part 1 was in December's newsletter)

The day after our intriguing encounter with that very odd man in Tunis we were subjected to the most unbelievable chaos at Tunis Airport as we travelled on to Algeria and the ancient and very attractive city of Constantine. We had booked into the Ibis hotel which we soon discovered was the only place in town where we could drink beer. It has a large bar with a small veranda that overlooks a very Tuscan landscape and makes it a very pleasant drinking environment. However we soon twigged that the veranda appears to be a haven where gay men can meet and drink in relative safety. We got into a few multi-lingual conversations with some lovely guys but the atmosphere was not really relaxed so we felt that we should continue to float just under the radar.

After Constantine our next tram system was in the completely forgettable town of Sétif and the system after that was Ouargla, an oil rich oasis deep in the Sahara Desert. There is absolutely nothing in Ouargla that could interest any Westerners, other than anthropologists, archaeologists and tram enthusiasts. It is the one place where we failed to find a beer and we could not even find a café or restaurant in which we would have felt comfortable eating the fare on offer. We decided to buy one of those beautiful French sticks that people in North Africa seem to carry around all the time but we could not find a patisserie. Jamal, a huge man (well over six foot tall and nearly as wide) who spoke very good English, saw that we had a problem and offered his help. He not only led us to a patisserie (hidden deep in a back alley) but actually bought a French stick for us and would accept no payment. As we ravenously devoured this beautiful bread he asked about our trip to Ouargla and, when he heard about our hotel (which left a fair bit to be desired) he invited us to move into his apartment with him for the night. We have no doubt about what he had in mind but, whilst he was a lovely and generous man, his pure physical presence was so overwhelming that it is most unlikely that we would have been able to pay the rental in a way that he wanted. Quite sad really as we think he was very lonely.

From Ouargla we moved on to the capital city of Algiers where we were able to rise above the radar. We were riding on a crowded tram when Jeff became aware that a young man was staring at him continuously. Next time Jeff looked up he found that said young man was holding his phone about six inches from Jeff's face with gay porn in clear view on the screen! How subtle can you get! He introduced himself as Achmed and quickly



Just visible on the left, Jeff and Achmed are in a hurry to get somewhere after alighting from an Algiers Streetcar Full of Desire

accepted our invitation to come back to our hotel room though he had to be persuaded that Gary was an integral part of the deal as his interests clearly lay with seniority. He claimed to be twenty one years old but we both estimated him to be five or six years older than that. Whatever his age he provided a pleasant interlude on a drizzly, overcast afternoon and we enjoyed the opportunity to come out from under the radar once again!

Leaving Algiers we took a comfortable, but very slow, train to Oran where we had a lot of trouble finding our hotel because Mr Google insists that it is right

next to the railway station whereas it is in fact, one and a half kilometres distant from there! We finally found the hotel, with a great deal of help from some wonderfully friendly local people, booked in and realised that we needed a beer. Luck was with us and we stumbled across a fantastic bar called Le Vendôme, which not only served a delightful locally brewed beverage called Albrait, but reminded us of bars in Vic in the days of 6 o'clock closing. Hedi, a quite attractive man in his late thirties, started to talk to Jeff but, because of the noise in the place and the layout of the tables, it was very difficult to include Gary in the conversation and Hedi assumed that Gary must be very timid. (CN members who have met Gary will no doubt be astonished that anyone could believe that about him) *Continued page 8*



Continued from page 7.....

Hedi told us that he a policeman and we assumed that he was just another friendly Algerian welcoming visitors to his country and that no decision was necessary about keeping under the radar. We returned Le Vendôme the following night to find that Hedi was not there but Ramon, a skinny but quite attractive thirty plus year old who had been part of Hedi's group the night before, was there and was displaying an interest in Jeff which was difficult to ignore. There was no possibility of accommodating Ramon as our Hotel has a concierge who sits at the front desk and vets all arrivals and departures right through the night so we had to bid him a fond, if unfulfilled, farewell.

By the following night we had moved on to Morocco and were surprised to receive a text message from Hedi that started with the words "Hello dears" and ended by encouraging Jeff to look after his friend "The Timid". Hmm! Had we inadvertently sidestepped a honey trap laid by ambitious Algerian police officers? We were well beyond the reach of the long arm of the Algerian police so we replied in kind, told Hedi that we had left Algeria and thought that would be the end of it. However three weeks later we received another "Hello Dears" text with more references to The Timid and this time we responded in kind telling Hedi that we would not be returning to Algeria but that we might be visiting southern Europe in a couple of years and if he wanted to catch up with us there he would be welcome. He seemed very excited at the thought of that but we took it no further. All very intriguing!

In Casablanca we could not find a Rick's Bar but we did find Good Friends, a bar popular with locals and only a short stagger from our AirBnB. The Oz stubby holders we carried with us quickly proved to be great ice breakers with the other patrons and on our second night there we struck up a conversation with Ahmed, a very nice man in his early forties who spoke very good English. Ahmed challenged us to taste the culinary specialty of Good Friends and shortly afterwards a tagine was set before us containing what looked like meat balls in a rich sauce. We proceeded cautiously and found the meat fairly bland and with a slimy, gristly texture which was not at all pleasant. After a couple of nibbles we gave up and Ahmed told us that we had just eatenroll of drums..... bull's penis! Sorry Mr Bull. Your sacrifice was in vain!

Before this epicurean detour we were getting very strong vibes that we had more in common with Ahmed than a mutual interest in food and were somewhat surprised when he started talking about his young wife and their baby son due to arrive in December. However he seemed very anxious to keep in touch with us and continues to do so by Whatsapp Messenger. We get the impression that the expected baby son is much more important to him than his young wife and, as with Hedi, we remain intrigued by the situation.

With hindsight our Under the Radar strategy may have been overkill. Two men travelling together in North Africa is probably more unusual than we realised and we must have stuck out like a beacon to other gay men whereas we are used to not making any impression at all in our own culture. Anyway we had a marvellous and memorable time and met some lovely people.

Just for the record both Ahmed from Casablanca and Hedi from Oran contacted us just before Christmas and are expressing interest in meeting up again somehow. We will keep you abreast of developments!

Jeff Gill & Gary Davey



THE MOST PERFECT MUSICAL DRAMA contd....

My parents and some of my friends from Melbourne still think I'm crazy moving to the country, but I really believe that deep down they really are envious. And although I didn't know anyone in Ballarat before I moved, it always takes a few months to meet new people anywhere. As each month goes by, I'm making more efforts to socialise, but retaining my privacy when I wish. Luckily (or unluckily!), I am not subjected to people suddenly dropping by, as you definitely need a map to visit me or clear phone directions.

Well - now you know something about me and my lifestyle!

Since joining The Country Network last August, I have been contacted by two interstate members passing through Ballarat, but because they both rang at the very last minute, just as I was going out, I was unfortunately not able to meet them. I mentioned to both of them that I lived out of town, but, if they ever came this way again, to phone the night before, or even a few hours earlier. My advice to all members would be not to leave contact with any others members to the very last moment. It doesn't personally worry me at all - it was simply a shame to pass up the opportunity to meet two very pleasant - sounding people.

One idea by Tony of Noosa (October 1991) appealed to me - to have a sort of "Whats On" diary for various areas. For instance, the two members who recently phoned me would have been able to learn that, in this area alone, there have been three bush or country dances in the last two months. Each attracts crowds of up to two hundred people. Also any TCN member driving through by car might like to know that the Bendigo Radio Station 3CCC-FM has a gay program every Friday night 10pm-midnight (FM 103.9). In this same way, if I am able to travel to Maroochydore for the 1992 A.G.M., it would be nice to know of any other similar programs I could listen to along the way.

I know the matter is now closed, but I enjoyed considerably reading the various correspondence stemming from Rob of South Melbourne's letter in the magazine (please don't ever call it a newsletter!). I think that by not having lived in the country for the past few years he has forgotten what life can be like here, and in the process missed the whole point of the existence of TCN. If I want to read saucy magazines, I can buy Outrage!, and his comment about the A.G.M. and Constitution is naive when a committee is dealing with public monies - particularly under the strict laws of this state for clubs and organisations. All in all I'm sure that deepdown he may be just a very charming and mischievous stirrer who is terribly homesick for the country, and wants an invitation back!

As a city person who has deliberately moved from a large city to an isolated acreage outside what is still essentially a very large country town, and being still quite content here after just on eighteen months living by myself, I know what the 19th century American poet Longfellow meant when he said "The country is lyric, - the town dramatic. When mingled they make the most perfect musical drama".

Many thanks for a most enjoyable membership to date.

Robert - Ballarat (Vic).

EARLY DAYS by DAVID (Dubbo)

Our Co-Ordinator thinks it is time to write about the beginnings of The Country Network. I find that I have forgotten a lot of the details, especially who was at the various meetings. Also, only a few of the early members remain in the Network. I welcome any member who can correct what I have written. As I am no archivist by nature, I kept none of the records after Richard B., now of Coff's Harbour, took over as Co-Ordinator.

EARLY DAYS contd....

My need for something like the Network arose when I moved from Sydney to Dubbo in 1976. When I was 18 I had worked on a farm near Dubbo and ever since I had wanted to return. I took the opportunity of a work transfer to move, with my family, and none of us have any regrets; in fact, I do not know anywhere else I would prefer to live at my stage of life. As a newcomer to the country I found it very difficult to make contact with any gays.

The first step for the Network was an advertisement in the monthly Campaign about April 1977. This was done after consulting my wife, because the ad contained our home address and telephone number. It was exciting as from time to time complete strangers would write or phone or knock on the door. Among the first were Geoff and David, then from Mendooran, not far away. As the year progressed, there were ten or twelve of us and we were invited as a group to a Christmas party hosted by John at Cudal, NSW. Apparently John had held Christmas parties for some years and the catering was done by two friends of his.

That Christmas party in 1977 was marvellous with country boys from all over the place. Among them was Keith, now of Bowning. He was an old friend of John and has been a stalwart of the Network ever since. Also there was a nice guy from Canberra called Flossie! He was the life of the party, but I have not heard of him again. Does anyone know Flossie?

On the Sunday morning there was breakfast and an informal meeting at which the basic structure of the Network was proposed. Geoff and David offered to hold a get-together at their Mendooran property on the Australia Day weekend, 1978.

That weekend duly came and brought together a lot of new members, including Jack & Reg of Dalby, Qld, and Tom & Mick from Liverpool, NSW. That weekend was such a success that another was held at Easter, with more new members.

Through 1978 the Network grew and Keith felt there should be an annual dinner. I think he made the arrangements and we booked into a very suitable guest-house in Katoomba in spring 1978. We went out to a good restaurant for dinner. I remember that it was very cold out of doors, but the guest-house had a fantastic heated swimming pool. Stuart & Eric now living in Vic, were there, and Don, now of Bomaderry, another Don from Armidale, and Eric, now living at Eccleston. I wish I could remember everyone who was there. At the meeting it was decided that the Network should be more than an informal group and a constitution was asked for - (what labours that has led to). Don D. was elected as the first deputy Co-Ordinator (with David as the Co-ordinator. Ed).

So the first annual meeting was a success. Then we were again invited to the 1978 Cudal Christmas party and I think we returned to Cudal again at Easter, 1979. All the time there were new members, including Owen, our auditor some years later, and the late John Woods, who worked hard for the Network and proposed Wentworth Falls for the 1979 annual meeting. I remember that as a rather noisy meeting with increased attendance. Among the new faces was Rodney, now in S.A. and Richard H. who was elected the next deputy co-ordinator. On Sunday the weather turned against us and we were entertained in David G's house.

The third annual meeting, in 1980, was held at the same motel in Wentworth Falls. Herb, of Darwin, came to this meeting and John & Bill from Queanbeyan, and Henry from Maclean, and John G. came from Charleville on his motor bike, and there were many others. This year the weather was fine and David G. helped us with a barbecue lunch in a Fairy Glade in the bush.

In these years there were parties at private homes, lots of letter writing and plenty of visitors coming through Dubbo. The Villagers formed at Liverpool and they put on special dances for us. A lot was happening and this climaxed for me at the next annual meeting.

continued...

A BIG THANK YOU TO ROBERT OF GOSFORD N.S.W. FOR TYPING ALMOST ALL OF THIS MAG.

EARLY DAYS by DAVID (Dubbo) contd...

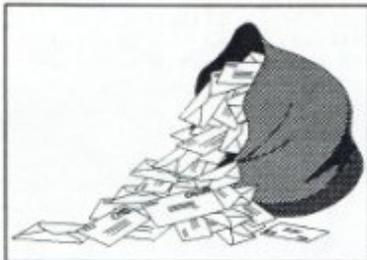
John & Bill hosted the fourth annual meeting in Canberra in 1981 and with the help of Club 19 provided a wonderful weekend. It was a holiday weekend and Club 19 gave us a super barbecue beside the Murrumbidgee River on Sunday, followed by an excellent multi-course evening meal under a marquee at the home of one of the members (Bob). Of course, this splendid weekend was only the beginning of John & Bill's contribution to the Network. That meeting elected Richard B. as the next Co-Ordinator. He then lived in the Blue Mountains and had friends and helpers nearby. I was pleased to hand everything over to Richard, a few months later I left my employment and I have not worked much since.

Well, the Network survived its first years and each Co-Ordinator has contributed something different. Now, with the fifth Co-Ordinator elected at the 14th annual meeting, the operation has become a real team effort. The newsletter has become a magazine, better than ever before. Membership has increased and is spread further across our continent. From time to time it has been asked whether we should accept members from New Zealand or Papua New Guinea. What should we do to involve and increase our female membership? Has anything improved for gay isolated in rural areas?

I find it easier to think about the future than the past. So I apologise for the incompleteness of my memories. I failed to mention the area contacts, who have done a great deal for the Network from the early years (when?) and still do. I thank them and many others who have helped in all sorts of ways. The Network became very personal to me and even my family. I know that most of my friends have been made directly or indirectly through the Network. I feel that I have been very fortunate.

David - Dubbo

MAILBAG



TRAVELLERS BEWARE !!!

Western Australia could be a danger to your health and well being. Network members would find they would be made most welcome by **friendly, courteous and helpful** people, almost to the point of embarrassment. During my short stay "over there" Ted & Steve and Barry let me see as much of their capital and its highlights as possible. Chris tried to make a big show by having the "Australind" to Bunbury demolish a forklift vehicle. I'm not sure about George, he may have been trying to get me lost in Kalbarri National Park, but I did get out safely. They even arranged for my flight home to be delayed 24 hours, but I finally got away. However I have a strange feeling that I would like to return, maybe I had better see my psychiatrist.

I really did have a good time, it felt like being a member of a family, not an organisation. I know the only way I can repay them, to show the same consideration to any member of the Network who comes this way.

Gay regards, Bill - Newcastle

A.C.O.N. RURAL OUTREACH

The AIDS Council of NSW has developed a Rural Outreach program which they have asked me to tell you about. The first peer education training workshop went well with gay men from as far away as Broken Hill and the North Coast participating. The aim is to bring accurate information about safe sex to rural areas. The next workshop will be in late March. For details please phone NIK ANDRONIS on (02) 283.3222

MAILBAG contd...

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Firstly I'd like to take this opportunity of wishing all Network members the very best for 1992 and I look forward to putting more faces to names during the course of the year.

Many thanks to all those members who rushed paying their membership renewals, the volume received to date has been very heartening, however I feel I must apologise to those who included letters with their renewals, I will try and reply to you as time permits, but obviously with the volume of renewals and new membership applications to process, time has been limited. To make matter worse my business has been flat out (I guess given the current economic climate, I shouldn't complain) but one bright note has been having the pleasure of having temporarily our esteemed Co-Ordinator (Peter) working in our office to help with the overload (strangely enough he didn't seem keen on talking about TCN matters, he seemed more interested in earning his keep, so to speak).

Robert - Gosford

TITBITS FROM THE TABLOIDS

Hot Pants for Thrill Seeker

PERTH

A young man is recovering in hospital after having his underpants "welded" to his skin when he urinated on the power cable of an electric train. The Perth man, 21, whose name has not been realised, suffered a 25,000-volt shock when he and a friend climbed on the roof of a train to "surf" it into the city in the early hours of New Year's Day.

Police said the men had travelled inside the train from port city of Fremantle to a station about one kilometre from Perth's city centre. But they had decided to spice up the ride and, avoiding security staff, climbed up onto the roof.

The dangerous ride took a bizarre twist when one of the men decided to relieve himself from the roof. He got the shock of his life when he accidentally hit the overhead cable.

Westrail spokesman Paul Byrne said officials were amazed the man was still alive. "To get 25,000 volts through you and live to talk about is quite something. He should by himself a lottery ticket." Mr Byrne said the two men climbed down from the train themselves at the city station, the injured man telling station staff that he had been burned.

Bronte Boys or Belles?

SYDNEY.

Can anyone offer an answer as to why 20 men were recently spotted running around Bronte Park dressed in a formidable array of women's clothing?

The group was enjoying a game of soccer - but why the lacy knickers, bras and stockings?

Others in the team modelled a stunning arrangement of short skirts and tops for the large crowd that gathered to witness the crazy stunt.

We await your answer gals, whoops, guys!

the 2019 midyear gathering



March 29 - April 1



Your details:

Name(s): (1) (2)

(3) (4)

Email / Mail address:
 (Your booking confirmation and any other relevant correspondence will be sent to this address.)

1. Accommodation: Ibis Styles Hotel 173 Macquarrie Street, Hobart, Tasmania T:(03)6289 4500

Date In: Date Out:
 (additional nights are available at the same special rate, subject to availability)

	No. of nights	No. of people	p/p p/n	Total
Standard Room Single	..... x	1	x \$130	= \$
Standard Room Twin	..... x	.....	x \$ 65	= \$
Standard Room Double	..... x	.....	x \$ 65	= \$
Total Accommodation				\$

If sharing with someone not on this booking form, or you would like to be assigned a room mate, complete below
 I have arranged to share withor I agree to be assigned a room mate(s).
Shared accommodation cannot be finalised until all other occupants have booked.
Guests sharing where there are differing number of nights, remaining guest(s) may incur additional charges.



ibis Styles Hobart is Tasmania's largest hotel centrally located in the vibrant Hobart CBD. The hotel comprises 11 floors of 296 rooms, a fitness centre, indoor swimming pool, limited basement parking and restaurant featuring Asian street food with a cheeky modern twist. This playfully designed hotel is centrally located and just a short walk from the famous Salamanca market.

2. Friday March 29th:

	No. of people	Total
Traditional "Meet and Greet" from 6pm	..... x	\$ 25 = \$

Brunswick Hotel. 67 Liverpool St Hobart. Established in 1827, The Brunswick is a vibrant cbd hotel with history and character; sort of like a lot of our members, so it's a suitable match. Canapes with drinks at the bar.



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turn over for more exciting options....



3. Saturday March 30th:

					\$\$\$
08:00am	Breakfast. stroll on down to Salamanca Place and make your choice.				own cost
10:00am	Historical Walking Tour. Meet for self-guided walking tour of historical Battery Point. maps included, approximately 1.5hrs circuit walk.				free
12:30pm	Lunch. Back at Salamanca. Lunch from the markets or the many restaurants				own cost
03:00pm	Meeting. Back at the Ibis where members can discuss CN matters				free
05:30pm	Dinner.	No. of people			
	Wrest Point Casino Buffet dinner. x \$ 35 p/p = \$				
	(own taxi transport)				

4. Sunday March 31st:

		No. of people			\$\$\$
07:30am	Breakfast. Your choice of in-house or nearby cafes.				own cost
09:00am	Hobart Tour. x \$ 35 p/p = \$				
	Includes: Hobart Botanical Gardens - self guided walk. Optional guided motorised transport at the gardens, subject to availability (see below) Mt.Wellington. Enjoy spectacular views over the city and The Derwent River. Lunch (own cost) on the balcony of the Waterfront Hotel, Bellerive. Derwent River Boat Cruise. Drop off Hobart wharf area approximately 4:30pm.				
	Gardens Motorised transport (optional)..... x \$ 10 p/p = \$				
06:30pm	Dinner. Your choice of in-house or nearby restaurants.				own cost

5. Total Cost:



1. Accommodation	\$
2. Friday	\$
3. Saturday	\$
4. Sunday	\$
	Total Cost
	\$

6. Payment: please tick the appropriate box ABN 58 403 175 652

Direct Deposit date paid/...../.....

Credit Card (Mastercard or Visa only)

Card Number Expiry:/..... CSV

Name on the card Amount: \$.....

Cheque or Money Order (payable to country network and attached with this application)

ANZ Bank: Country Network
Account No.: 477 937 562
BSB: 015 881

7. Special dietary requirements

Please list below any special dietary requirements:

8. Reply: Please return completed forms to:

Neil Warner 24 Pinnocks Rd, Emerald, Vic 3782 or E: secretary@countrynetwork.com.au

Closing date for bookings: 2nd March, 2019.

Come and join in all the camaraderie and fun as we visit the Apple Isle

