

# GPSG NEWS

## INFORMATION FOR POLIO SURVIVORS IN THE GEELONG REGION AND BEYOND

JULY 2019 EDITION

**Next Meeting:**  
1st July 10:30am

**In The Chair:**  
Sharyn M.

**Meetings are usually held on  
the 1st Monday of every  
month Main Conference  
Room,  
McKellar Centre, Nth Geelong  
(first left past main Reception  
Desk) just before The Hub  
Cafe**

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Happy  
BIRTHDAY!  
to you.

### THIS MONTH

JAN McDONALD 6<sup>TH</sup>  
HEATHER SPALL 8<sup>TH</sup>  
STEWART GUTHRIE 26<sup>TH</sup>  
DARYL SMALL 26<sup>TH</sup>

### Contact Us

**Support Group Coordinator:**  
**Sharyn Matthews**  
Contact: 0435 719 333  
Email:  
sharynmatthews56@gmail.com  
**GPSG Newsletter Editor:**  
**Gary Newton**  
Contact: 0409 239 773  
Email:  
g.newton@inet.net.au

## Convener's Corner

I am finding it much harder to put into words my message this month because of the passing of one of our members, **Mabel Elizabeth Powell** or as most of us called her **May**.

As we are only a small group it is always sad when we lose a member especially someone so well liked as **May** was.

I did not know her for very long as I have not been with the group for as long as most but by attending her funeral I found out she was a lady that was so loved by family and friends it made me think of life and death and how we all will face death one day.

I have attended quite a few funerals in the past because I was once employed by a funeral director to play the hymns at funerals the director did and I got a chance to witness what people would say about their loved ones.

From that time I came to the conclusion that our value of what our life meant is played out by how many people come to the funeral and by what is said. After attending Mays funeral I went away knowing full well that she was very much loved by both family and friends.

The funny story a grandson told about her having a special lolly draw just for the kids and a beautiful granddaughter singing *Danny Boy* showed us all there just how much she meant to everyone.

**Rest in Peace May in the presence of your Savior Jesus** - you will be greatly missed.

On Support Group issues - We will be entertained in July by **Sue Van Every** who has been brave enough to travel to North Korea so that will be very enlightening to hear about her time there.

In August my daughter will present information about her foundation - Peace of Mind.

The foundation helps people who have brain cancer.

As I am also involved in the foundation, I often look out for any new information on trials that doctors are doing in this field. I recently came across a new trial where they were using live Polio Virus to attack the cancer cells in the brain. Some success was found with some patients but not all unfortunately. I found this remarkable to think that something as destructive as polio could actually be used for some good.

I hope everyone is coping with this cold weather and keeping warm and I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting in July.

Cheers,

Sharyn

## From the Editor's Desk

Greetings all and welcome to July 2019 edition of our Newsletter.

And as predicted in last month's newsletter it didn't take long for us all in Victoria to start feeling the cold. In fact the cold set in almost from the moment I wrote the word 'Winter' ...sorry about that!

I was also very sorry to learn that GPSG member, **Mabel Powell** has left us. **Mabel**, a regular at our meetings passed away very peacefully on June 4th. **Sharyn, Winnie** and **Jan** were amongst those who attended **Mabel's funeral** as friends and on behalf of our group. Read more on **May's funeral** on **Page 2**.



Last month's fabulous guest speaker was Feldenkrais expert **Peter Binns** who taught us all lots about gentle exercise. Here's Peter (flat-out like a lizard drinking) on top of the meeting table explaining some of the techniques used in Feldenkrais. Thanks for joining us Peter...most entertaining! Til next month! Cheers Gary

## Member Profile & Farewell:

# Celebrating the Life of Maybel Elizabeth Powell



## 'Next Generation' Initiative...

From Polio Oz News - Winter Edition

**By Jake Malsbury**

Administration Officer, Polio Australia

One of Polio Australia's goals is to reach out to younger, migrant polio survivors as part of our 'Next Generation' initiative.

Paul Cavendish (Clinical Health Educator) and Jake recently commenced this project and are now developing connections with refugee support groups in Melbourne that are possibly working with Australia's 'next generation' of polio survivors who were born overseas.

In terms of refugee immigration in Australia, Victoria is a state that welcomes large numbers of refugees each year. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria has the largest intake of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, with roughly 4,000 refugees settling in the state each year. Organisations like Polio Services Victoria—a post-polio clinic based at St Vin-

cent's Hospital Melbourne—have reported encountering younger polio survivors of refugee background who are living in Melbourne.

Though Polio Australia hopes to work with more Next Generation polio survivors in the future, it is important to note the challenges of identifying refugee polio survivors in this specific context.

Many choose not to disclose their polio-related disability due to concerns that their condition will impact their opportunities in Australia and their ability to secure visas for family.

There have been a number of recent cases in the media highlighting the potential threat. See SBS News, ABC News, and The Guardian. Despite this obstacle, Polio Australia is committed to supporting Australia's diverse polio population and plans to maintain contact with state refugee health networks in order to inform polio survivors who are in the transition-

ing phase of settling in Australia.

To help achieve this, Polio Australia has developed several useful resources including:

- A specific Facebook group page to facilitate peer support and information-exchange between younger polio survivors who are often busy with family and work.
- Polio Australia offers useful fact sheets on health topics related to living with polio.
- A new organisational brochure which better explains Polio Australia's resources and how we fulfill our mission to help polio survivors access appropriate health care and support.

Having listened to, and learned from, the experiences of our more senior polio survivors, Polio Australia decided that reaching out to this younger demographic was a priority. There may still be challenges ahead, but not having quality, accessible information shouldn't be one of them!

## COMING UP at our JULY Meeting

### Sue Van Every

Rotarian | Travel Buff | Talks about North Korea

A Rotarian for over 12 years, travel has always been a big component in Sue's life and continues in retirement. Last year Sue visited Bhutan, Myanmar, Lord Howe Island and had a USA road trip

Through Rotary Club of Drysdale, Sue assisted with building a chicken farm in north east Nepal. An opportunity arose to go on the first Australian Tourist trip to North Korea so Sue and her husband grabbed it.

As Sue says *"Then I had to learn the rules before I arrived in that country. Come on an adventure with me"*.

Be sure to join us at our **July meeting** for an amazing insight and some fascinating stories from her travels to a place not many outsiders get to see - **North Korea**.

## Have Heard About Travellers Aid?

Millions of Australians are living with what have become known as invisible disabilities. This can be any disability that is not immediately obvious and may or may not come with physical impairment. Invisible disabilities include conditions such as MS, Autism, ADHD, mental illnesses, diabetes, chronic pain to name a few.

In addition to the challenges faced by living with the disability itself, many people with invisible disabilities face additional prejudice from others for "not looking disabled". Despite 90% of all disabilities being invisible, those living with invisible disabilities often experience judgment when trying to use accessible facilities. This in turn makes them feel less comfortable in using the facilities they need as they try to participate in their community and avoid social exclusion.

Travellers Aid services are available to anyone with mobility challenges and we encourage anyone who needs assistance or support to reach out and use our services.

Our companion service is a free service available to anyone travelling to, from or within Melbourne, Seymour and the surrounding areas.

If you are travelling to an appointment our trained volunteers provide assistance along

the way. Companions meet travellers at a Travellers Aid site and accompany clients to and from their appointment.

Travellers Aid lounges at Southern Cross and Flinders Street are also available to anyone who may need somewhere to rest, get away from the noise and the hustle and bustle of the station or use our accessible toilets.

Above all else Travellers Aid aims to empower people of all abilities to connect, engage and participate in their community without the fear of discrimination.

Further details available from: TA on Phone: (03) 9670 2072 or on the web: <https://www.travellersaid.org.au/>



### Just Jokin'

*I met a magical fairy yesterday who offered to grant me one wish.*

*I said "I wish to live forever,"*

*"Sorry," said the fairy, "I'm not allowed to grant that particular wish."*

*"Fine," I said, "then I want to die the day after Parliament is filled with honest, hard-working, bipartisan men and women who act only in the people's best interests!"*

*"You crafty bastard," replied the fairy.*

### Customer Feedback: January - March 2019

#### Southern Cross Station

**92%**   
of our customers would recommend our services

**90%**   
of our customers felt always respected while using our services

**84%**   
of customers give Travellers Aid services a 4 star rating

#### Flinders Street Station

**99%**   
of our customers would recommend our services

**98%**   
of our customers felt always respected while using our services

**91%**   
of customers give Travellers Aid services a 4 star rating

## History of Acute Polio

*(continued from last month)*

A United States Army virus commission operating in North Africa during World War II was mystified by the number of young servicemen contracting polio in an area thought to be free of it. Subsequent investigations revealed that there was polio, but it was never recognized in the acute phase. In countries where polio was endemic, they reasoned, there were not more cases because most people acquired immunity in infancy by having a mild form of the disease. In countries where developments in hygiene and sanitation had reduced the occurrence of contagious diseases, by contrast, people no longer acquired immunity naturally in infancy and became vulnerable to the virus when it circulated: hence the periodic epidemics. In other words, epidemic polio was a by-product of the measures taken to control other infectious diseases.

The search for a vaccine was facilitated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, four times President of the United States. Having contracted the disease at the advanced age of 39 in 1921, his personal quest for mobility led him to transform an old spa at Warm Springs, Georgia, into a hydrotherapy center for polio survivors. As his fame and influence grew, so did the organization he had founded: the Warm Springs Foundation expanded into the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (March of Dimes), focusing on development of a vaccine as well as treatment. By the time of FDR's death in 1945, The National Foundation, under the direction of his friend and sometime legal

partner, Basil O'Connor, was an immensely powerful voluntary health organization, funding most significant research into polio in the United States.

The discovery by John Enders and his team of Harvard scientists in 1948 that poliovirus could be cultivated in non-nervous tissue led to a Nobel Prize for the trio and opened the way to the manufacture of a polio vaccine. Jonas E. Salk was the first to take advantage of this breakthrough. Salk's formalin-inactive poliovirus vaccine (IPV) was subjected to the most extensive trial in the history of medicine before it was pronounced "safe, potent, and effective" on the tenth anniversary of FDR's death on April 12, 1955.

Albert B. Sabin's live, attenuated oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) was never tested in that way but was used successfully and on a massive scale in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe in the late 1950s before ousting Salk's IPV as the vaccine of choice in the United States in the early 1960s. The great advantage of OPV was twofold: it was taken orally rather than injected; and by following the oral-fecal route it could provide "herd immunity" (immunity to non-vaccinated people living nearby), not merely individual protection. Arguments over the relative merits of the two vaccines have outlived their developers and continue to this day.

The decade between the end of World War II and the licensing of the Salk vaccine saw ever larger and more frequent waves of epidemics in North America and Europe, characterized by a rise in the average age of those who contracted the disease. Polio could no longer be called infantile paralysis. Improvements in the

**POLIO STILL EXISTS;  
IT'S TOTALLY  
PREVENTABLE.**

#VaccinesWork



medical management of acute poliomyelitis, inspired by Sister Kenny and others, meant a higher survival rate among the more severely disabled, particularly those who depended on ventilators for survival. In the 1950s, the March of Dimes established and funded 16 regional respiratory centers around the United States.

The vaccines effected a dramatic decline in polio after the mid-1950s, and by the end of the decade the March of Dimes was looking for a new cause to support. Between them, IPV and OPV have eradicated the poliovirus from most parts of the world, and after recent initiatives in China and the Indian sub-continent, few places remain inaccessible to the vaccination campaigns mounted by the World Health Organization, Rotary International, and other governmental and non-governmental agencies in their quest to eliminate the disease worldwide by the beginning of the 21st century.

The conquest of polio left survivors of the earlier and highly publicized epidemics of the 1950s stranded like veterans of some forgotten war. The confirmation of post-polio syndrome and the various late effects of polio in the 1980s has to some extent re-awakened interest in a disease which was unique in the sense that – in the words of the medical writer John Rowan Wilson – "its rise and fall took place within a single lifetime."

Tony Gould  
London, England  
Author of *A Summer Plague: Polio and Its Survivors*

**Disclaimer: The aims and objects of the Geelong Polio Support Group is to gather and disseminate information on Post-Polio Syndrome and Late Effects of Polio, to support each other in any way we can. This newsletter is written for interest and information only. Information of a medical nature in this newsletter is not authorised in any way. Please contact a medical professional before adopting or acting upon anything contained herein. The writer of this newsletter accepts no responsibility for the authenticity of services and does not**



**CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME.**

If you have anything you would like to contribute or share with the GPSG community in upcoming issues please contact [g.newton@iinet.net.au](mailto:g.newton@iinet.net.au)