



2RPH Signals Newsletter -
September/October 2023



Next steps ahead for the Radio Reading sector



1 - Photo: James Manders, Matt Field, Stafford Sanders, Jon Bisset CAE, Ben Signor, Conrad Browne, Graeme Craig, Elizabeth Macdonald, Jason Gipps, Meg Venning FCPA, Paul Price, John Martin OAM, Barry Melville, Yevette H, Robert Altamore, Jo Curtin & Rachel Rees].

Last month, the Radio Reading sector came together in Naarm/Melbourne for timely conversations about how community broadcasters are evolving to meet the changing needs of people with disabilities in our communities.

Community Broadcasting Foundation, CEO Jo Curtin and Executive Officer Rachel Rees had the pleasure of attending the workshops facilitated by RPH Australia and connecting with the wonderful folks at Radio Reading services from across the country to hear about upcoming developments and initiatives to deepen engagement and increase participation for people with disabilities in our community.

‘The community radio stations that make up the RPH Australia - the Radio Reading Network, are the beating heart of their communities’ says CEO Jo. ‘Radio reading services play a vital role connecting people to the world around them – to news, information and community. Community broadcasting is a valuable and critical asset, and for so many, it’s a lifeline.’

RPH Australia is the peak national body for the Radio Reading Network – dedicated to informing and empowering an estimated 5 million Australians with a print disability. The Radio Reading Network broadcasts over 1730 hours of specialist programming every week.

‘A privilege to connect with people [last week] to hear about what the future holds – and while it’s not my place to reveal all – there are some really exciting developments in disability media in Australia. Watch this space!’ said CEO Jo.

Volunteer profiles: Annie Kiefer AM and Colin Payne



2 - Annie Kiefer AM

Earlier this year longstanding 2RPH volunteer Annie Kiefer was admitted to the General Division of the Order of Australia for “significant service to the community and to women”.

Barry Melville sat down with Annie in earlier this month, and she reflected on her decades of volunteering.

“I’m very passionate about the CWA of NSW, we have many, many wonderful volunteers” Annie said. “We are an association of more than 8,000 strong and I am so proud to be a member...” Annie has been a member for more than 35 years both in rural NSW and Sydney-based branches and until recently, was the NSW Vice President and before that, its Secretary.

Her record of community service with other organisations is also impressive. In recent weeks she has been a judge for the NSW Rural Business Awards but over quite a few years she earned her accolades as President (and previously Vice President) of the National Council of Women.

After living in Sydney for many years Annie moved to Batlow just before the fires. She is on record for saying how in awe she is of the teamwork and camaraderie during the disaster recovery phase in the region, “The CWA were there in the forefront and I was so proud to be a member” Annie said.

“Being a volunteer brings me joy and happiness – all my volunteering brings something special into my life – but one of my favourite things is volunteering at Radio 2RPH.”

Annie warm and engaging disposition shines through in her radio reading which in recent years include the Sydney Morning Herald, The Telegraph, The Australian, The Newcastle Herald and The Illawarra Mercury. Aside from the published news, Annie has many wonderful stories dating back to her teenage years when she moved with her family from Australia to the UK.

Annie’s first job was in Liverpool working for a Mr Harry Epstein in his second-hand furniture business. Downstairs was NEMS (North End Music Stores) owned by Mr Epstein’s son, Brian. It wasn’t too long before she was downstairs taking shorthand, minding the office and Brian’s dog. What followed was a remarkable young life both in Liverpool and London, long and sustained friendships with Paul McCartney, George Harrison and their partners and a life spent following the long and winding road that led to our door.

At Radio 2RPH we congratulate Annie Kiefer AM for her well-deserved recognition and express our gratitude for her contribution to our radio reading service.



3 - Colin Payne

Around the corridors of the station, Colin Payne is renowned for his lofty stature, dry wit, poker-faced repartee and that self-assured presentation style. He has been a stalwart of Radio 2RPH for almost two decades - a former Chair of Board member, announcer-extraordinaire, mentor and all-round audio production guru. Colin has seen (and heard) it all!

John Martin OAM, 2RPH Chair, interviewed Colin for his program "Signals" and spoke of the twists and turns of his career before he was lured to 2RPH by a work colleague and found his true calling at 2RPH.

"I had never been involved in broadcasting until I volunteered at 2 RPH. My background basically was in information technology, which I drifted into at a very early age. I wrote my first computer programme in January 1962."

Colin had left school joined an insurance company and studied to be an actuary, but it soon proved to be a game of numbers. The greater the number of actuaries he met the less he wanted to be one. And at that early stage, despite showing promise in the computing game, Colin made the discovery that "I wasn't as smart as most of the other technologists" so he made a tactical decision to get into management instead, where he stayed until he retired. But that was just the beginning for Colin the radio broadcaster who was lured into the fold by the equally redoubtable Ken Bock.

Colin recalls Ken approaching him in 2005 about volunteering at the station, "I think they'll listen to you. You've got a good voice for radio and a good face for it too!" All references to the visage aside, listen they did, and Colin has attracted dubious comparisons with that other great radio figure with the gift of the golden voice. The insider rumour is that after years of trying to compete, John Laws couldn't hack it anymore and retired.

There was a wide range of roles available for our emergent broadcaster. Colin started with live reading, but soon extended into panel operation and presentation. When he started out it was still in the days before computers were introduced to support production and playout.

"You'd actually spend hours your time shuffling mini discs, CDs, and tape in reel-to-reel tape recorders" Colin reports. "In those days you had to do what they call a tape-changing shift whereas today you just press a button, leave the premises and it plays itself".

Aside from enjoying riding the wave of technology change, Colin served on the Board for a period in the Noughties, including a short period as Chair in the midst of a spot of internal conflict. Colin's contribution to volunteer recruitment has been really significant over the years and has been very active in serving on the committee that set up and ran the auditions process. He continues to leave his mark on service improvements through membership of the Program Advisory Committee and is a leading proponent and mentor for the current move towards screen-based reading.

What is it that motivates Colin to spend so much time working on things for 2RPH?

"Well, selfishly, I actually quite enjoy doing it, but right from the outset, it struck me that this is the sort of service that has a significant value to the target audience". Colin concedes that over the 18 years he has been involved technology has been making more published material available to people who previously had restricted reading capability. "From what I can gather, there is still sufficient audience

pressure out there and the service is regarded as being valuable. So being able to do something which you are pretty confident is going to help people who need it, then what more motivation do you need?

What does Colin say to those contemplating becoming a volunteer at Radio 2RPH?

“If you’re interested then please contact the station and make your interest known and they will arrange for you to come in and have a quick test over and decide where to go from there. It just needs confidence, capability and reading skills”.

You'll find us at www.2rph.org.au¹ or just call us during normal business hours on 02 9518 8811. We are always interested to hear what you our listeners, think of the programmes we present. Your feedback is very much appreciated, be it constructive criticism or any other comments you may have.

You can hear Colin Payne heading up the live reading shift delivering the Sydney Morning Herald on Mondays from 8:45am and reading select articles from Time Magazine on Monday afternoons at 3:30pm.

Discovering the Stories of Glebe Point Road: A brief history of the St Helen's Centre

Local resident, and Glebe historian, Lynn Collingwood, shares her research about the building and precinct in which Radio 2RPH is situated.



¹<http://www.2rph.org.au/>



In 1902 John George Bryen built *St Helen's* next to *Benledi* on Glebe Point Rd. The cottage, which today forms part of St Helens Community Centre, sits within just over five acres granted in 1855 to solicitor Henry Burton Bradley and was part of the Benledi Estate put up for auction in 1900. In November the next year, Bryen bought lots 2 and 3, the land stretching from the main road (his neighbouring property owners John Howard Brown and NSW Legislative Councillor Alexander Kethel) to a lane at the rear bounding Janet Korff's *Orchard Lodge*. By 1908 the numbering of *St Helen's* was fixed as 184 Glebe Point Rd.

John George's father Stephen Josiah Bryen, an architect who trained with George Allen Mansfield, may have designed *St Helen's*. The tower, out of character with the rest of the building, is probably part of the original fabric as the super-structure was fashionable at the time. George Mansfield was responsible for adding one to *Toxteth House*, overwhelming John Verge's Regency design.

In 1911, *St Helen's* was sold to Glebe wholesale butcher Horatio Bartlett who bred fox terriers and, like Bryen, trotting racehorses, some of which he sold in England. Bartlett lived at number 184 with his wife Matilda Harriett née McGarvey until his death at age 79 on 2 February 1927.

Ownership of *St Helen's* then passed to the Bartletts' daughter Bertha Evelyn and her husband Augustus George Thomas, a Wahroonga wholesale butcher. Matilda Bartlett died in 1942, Bertha Thomas in 1953 and her widower three years later.

THE POTTS FAMILY

In 1929 the Thomases sold *St Helen's* to Theodore Kenneth Potts whose medical practice was at *Montrose* 20 Glebe Point Rd. He and his wife Violet Mary gave the former as their home address until May 1932 when it was sold to Elizabeth Lawson and Stella May Clark.

THE CLARK FAMILY

The births of Elizabeth and Stella to William and Jessie Clark were registered in 1881 and 1885. In 1919 the unmarried sisters established Elite Caterers at their mother's house *Walmer* 280 Glebe Point Rd. In June 1932 they transferred their household and business to *St Helen's*. Elite Caterers specialised in wedding cakes and supplying refreshments for large social functions organised by church groups and Freemasons.

The partnership was dissolved in March 1944. Elizabeth died three months later and Stella became the house's sole owner. She survived until 1960. Four years later *St Helen's* was resumed by the Sydney Homeopathic Hospital which had occupied the adjacent building *Benledi* since 1914. Accommodation for nurses was built at the rear.

LOCAL COUNCIL

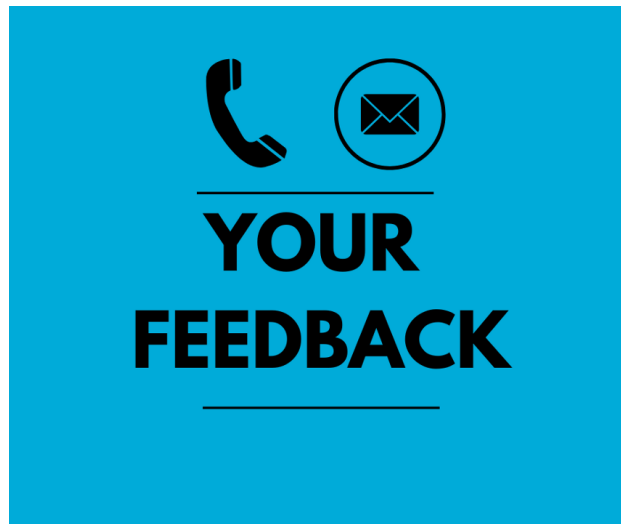
Over objections raised by the Glebe Society, the Sydney Homeopathic Hospital closed in 1989. A homeopathic clinic was subsequently set up at Balmain Hospital.

In 1998 Leichhardt Council transferred to the Central Board of Health its Victoria Alice Lamkin Welfare Centre at 2 Hereford St in exchange for the site. This consolidated Council's holdings to include *Benledi*, *St Helen's*, the nurses' quarters and Glebe Library. A \$500 000 grant was awarded by Health and Community Services to expand *St Helen's* to accommodate Meals on Wheels and radio station 2RPH. The original plans included provision for a lift giving disabled access to the *St Helen's* and *Benledi* upstairs storeys. The nurses' quarters were earmarked for artists' studios and a Glebe Chamber of Commerce office.

The City of Sydney Council has been the site's landlord since 2004. In 2012 work began on transforming the grassed area between *St Helen's* and *Benledi* into a community garden.

Sources: *Dictionary of Sydney*; *Glebe Society Bulletin* 8/1989 and 1/1999; NSW cemetery records; NSW electoral rolls; NSW Land Titles Office online; *Sands Directories*; Sydney Aldermen website; Sydney Homeopathic Hospital *Annual Report* 1914 ; Time Gents website; Trove website.

Listener Feedback



We love to receive feedback and to learn more about our listeners! Simply email info@2rph.org.au² with “Feedback” in the subject line. Or call the station on (02) 9518 8811 during business hours.

We're particularly keen to learn the following:

- How did you hear about 2RPH?
- How long have you been a listener?
- Where do you live and how do you listen? AM, FM, DAB+, streaming, or mobile app?
- Why do you listen to 2RPH? Are there programs you listen to regularly?
- Do you, or someone you care for, live with a print disability?
- Which age bracket are you in?
 - Under 15 years
 - 16-25 years old
 - 26-35 years old
 - 36-45 years old
 - 46-55 years old
 - 56-65 years old
 - 66-75 years old
 - 76-85 years old
 - 85+ years old

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⁴<https://www.2rph.org.au/>