

MEET THE MEMBERS

Marie and Bill Robinson of Ringwood East

We are something like gypsies, really. In the nearly 40 years we have lived in this area, we have had three homes: Ringwood East behind Burnt Bridge, Croydon Hills and our current home of Dublin Road in Ringwood East. We left our almost brand new home in Perth in 1971 to take up a 12-month scholarship at Manchester University in the UK, where I was studying for an Advanced Diploma in Education of the Deaf. Now I'm at the point where I need a lot of those skills myself!

We returned to Australia in September, 1972 to commence a new life in Victoria. I started up the Hearing Unit for hearing-impaired boys at Yarra Valley Anglican Grammar School. Marie was appointed at the same school as an Infant teacher and remained there, teaching mainly Prep to Grade 2 for the next 22 years. I held a variety of positions over the years but finished my classroom career at Billanook College, teaching my other loves – English and Drama. As head of Drama for over 12 years, I directed several performances a year, including the annual BIG School Production. These included *The Wizard of Oz*, *Annie*, *Hello Dolly* and *Oklahoma*. My final show was the Australian musical, *Seven Little Australians*, which had an extremely successful season at home, then toured outback Victoria and New South Wales. We played in converted shearing sheds, slept on floors and enjoyed fabulous country hospitality. Lots of fun, fantastic memories – and I got paid!

Theatre has always been a great love of ours, although there is no way you would ever get Marie up on stage. She says she leaves the exhibitionism to me. We are also great readers and, since our retirement, have kept Ringwood Library in business. We combine our love of food and our desire for new experiences with travel to places in Australia and abroad. We tend to judge the success or otherwise of our holidays by the quality of the eating we have done. One of our favourite adventures was a trip to Canada and Alaska – scenery, food, comfort, food ...and food. Our recent European River Cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam stands out as one of our favourite travel experience. Not having to pack and unpack for a fortnight is a huge plus – as is the free wine with meals every day. The quaint European villages and towns provided an endless variety of photo opportunities. I make DVD's of my travel photos and have relished being able to share these with several Armchair travel groups.

Marie is a devoted member of the Ringwood Day VIEW Club and enjoys meeting with the ladies and supporting the Smith Family. She has been on the Committee every year since her retirement – until this year. She said she needed a break, so what did she do? – volunteered to be the collector of monies at the meetings. She spends a lot of time knitting clothes for AIDS babies and recently made a stack of the tiniest garments I have ever seen for the prem babies at Monash. None of our babies were ever that small! I love my garden and spend a lot of time in it. Thankfully, with the easing of water restrictions I have not been bothered so much of late with bucketer's back.

Our family is extremely important to us. Our two daughters and a son, and their families, live reasonably close to us so we see quite a bit of them. I am really thrilled that when we have family get-togethers, we usually have most of eight

grandchildren in attendance. Sometimes it might not be for very long but at least they make the effort. Family birthdays and special days have become the catalyst for our reunions and we always look forward to them. We are quite a crowd now with girlfriends and in-laws thrown in. A bit different from the little group that arrived here in 1971.

With our grandchildren ranging from 27 to 16, I am really looking forward to becoming a great-grandfather. Unfortunately, none of the grandies share my enthusiasm.