

Ken Newton

Ken Newton was born on the 22nd June 1946 at Nambour Hospital.

The Doctor's surname was Charles and hence that became his second Christian name.

His parents, Bill and Beryl, together with elder brothers Paul and Ron, had just returned to take over the original section of the Farm at Curramore, Maleny so it was a busy time for all. When his Mum on her own wanted to take Ken back to the doctor in Nambour for a check-up, the best solution was to wrap him up well and carry the bundle in a wooden fruit case on the floor next to her in the pre-war Bedford utility they had at the time. Sounds risky, but the roads and the top speed of the utility would not have allowed anything more than 40 KPH.

Ken progressed well in his brother's shadow but he had a penchant for discarding his clothes anywhere, anytime despite the hazards of barbed wire and electric fences, stinging nettles etc. The Cream Truck driver, Bob Davies, on the Curramore run, christened him "Adam". On one occasion, Paul and Ron decided to watch a wedding party from a neighbouring farm drive past, an unusual event in our part of the woods. As the car approached they tried to hide Adam but at the critical moment he stood up and it was the "Full Monty" for all. The car sped by in a cloud of dust, probably the group was not even noticed.

Ken was the only kid of his age in the immediate area so he was constantly trying to keep up with the elder kids as they roamed far and wide. On a particular occasion, they tried everything to lose him and he did finally give up, out of breath to return home very unhappy. When Beryl found him fast asleep curled up in the hot sun apparently exhausted, did his elder brothers cop it! He seemed to have suffered no ill effects. But they sure did!

Bert Brooker's school bus service for the Curramore area was resumed in 1951 and Ken was lucky to have a comfortable start for his first year at Witta School. Beryl had been in Hospital and Ken's Aunt Mabel Newton had handmade some bib and brace shorts with colourful comic characters embroidered on the front. It is funny how something so insignificant comes to mind. He did well at school keeping out of trouble with Ron and Paul unable to recall any particular event or incident.

After passing scholarship in what was year eight, Ken completed Junior at Maleny High School.

Ken had hoped his future would be in agriculture and therefore attended Gatton College for the first year of his Senior Level of education, boarding with his cousins, the Bishops on their farm.

However for some reason there was a change of plan and he came back to Maleny to resume Senior. He excelled in all aspects of his final years at Maleny, being one the four School Prefects selected for the final year.

By this time Ron and Paul had long left the farm and it was his turn to help on the farm which he did very ably even teaching his Dad a few things.

One incident, in 1964 occurred whilst his Dad and Mum were on an overseas trip leaving Paul in charge. Ken had his driver's licence and he asked his elder brother if he take the family car to some Friday night event with his School friends. The next morning Ron found out something had happened to the car.

Ken and Paul inspected the damage which was substantial but not too bad. By this time, Ken was upset and looking very pale and apprehensive of his big brother's reaction. However, absolutely nothing was said between them and this was probably worse than a blow-up or please explain.

With his good pass at senior level in Geometrical drawing and Perspective, Ken quickly got a Cadetship as a Survey Draftsman with Queensland Railway's Brisbane Office in early 1965

Paul too was working in Brisbane and for a time they shared a flat in Highgate Hill. Despite the difference in age they got on reasonably well, attending a few social occasions together, even going on a couple of double dates and some great parties which shall not be detailed here. Well, someone had to look after him but he probably taught Paul a few things.

In 1966, Ken enlisted in an Army Reserve Unit (42nd Railway Squadron, RAE). He told Paul he was inspired by a huge Military Parade through the Brisbane Streets which his big brother had participated in.

Ken was nearly 20 years of age at the time and liable for National Service. He later admitted that he and his Railways mates had organised themselves into Army Reserve Service so that they could defer the possibility of being called up. Ken's birthday date was not drawn in the subsequent ballot draw, but he had committed himself to Army Reserve Service. He would not have minded.

Ken favourite sport was Rugby League which was the main game around Town. He was captain of the Queensland Railways team and they had a good grand finals win with much celebration in one of the City's favourite watering spots.

It was through his love of Rugby League that Ken met and married Judy, thereby radically changing his life and responsibilities into another phase. That is another story.

Vale Ken Newton

22nd June 1946 – 17th July 2013

