

INTERVIEW WITH MAREK MALTER (MALENY PHARMACIST)

28TH JANUARY 1999

AT MALENY PHARMACY BY INGA GREEN- ORAL HISTORY WORK FOR THE DOLE



Marek Malter

Q1. WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO MALENY:

We moved to Maleny in August 1986 and took over the pharmacy on the first of September, 1986.

Q2. Where was the pharmacy located then (in 1986):

The pharmacy at that point was located where the Bowerbird (shop) is now. It was owned at that stage by a fellow called (Bob) Robert Hall and his wife Etta ran the business.. He had built that premises, I think, two or three years earlier, prior to that the pharmacy was located one building to the west, a green fibro building. At the time I took over the pharmacy, the green fibro building was occupied by the doctors, before that I think the doctors were located where the ANZ Bank is now and when they(the doctors) moved, I think this is right but it is before my time, I think they(doctors) moved up into the old pharmacy (the green fibro building) and a dentist and a solicitor jointly occupied the premises where the (ANZ) bank is now. The

dentist, I think his name was Myer and the solicitor's name was Scott Bane. Before that again the pharmacy was located in what is now the news-agency and it was half new-agency and half pharmacy. I think that was when it was owned by Wally Burnett and Wally actually built that green fibro building I keep mentioning. He moved his pharmacy into that green building and the news-agency stayed as just a news-agency. That actually is the reason that the pharmacy still has the Lotto Agency, because Wally owned both the pharmacy and the news-agency, and when he shifted his pharmacy he took the casket tickets (licence) historically that's how that occurred.

Q3. What shops and businesses do you remember in Maleny when you moved here:

Well, for a starter, there was no Riverside (Centre) that was an empty set of flood paddocks, which I think Warren Must used to run some cattle on it, just to keep the grass down.

The nearest shop to the creek was the hairdresser, I'm not sure if Ross Mostyn occupied it then, I think he moved in later. I couldn't be one hundred percent sure on that. There was a stationary shop at the back, what is now the shoe shop.

The tyre service was there.

I know for a while Winston Johnson was in the old bakery, which is now the music store and then that became a cafe' run by a french guy called Jacque Ber'sh.

Next door to that is now the ANZ bank and that was where the dental surgery and solicitor were.

The Post Office was on the next corner, which is now a Real Estate.

Supa Value (supermarket) is where Supa Value is (now IGA supermarket)

I can't remember who occupied the house next to the Credit Union, or that is now the Credit Union.

There was no bakeries apart from the one we have now. (WHICH BAKERY-TOP OR BOTTOM?)

Where the pharmacy sight was, was a bakery and when we actually rebuilt the (pharmacy) building, we found the old bakery bricks still out the back, they were rubble. That (the bakery) burnt down I think in the 1930's or 1940's (The community hall burnt down in the 1850's was this the same time?

Then going up the street (WHERE GARY MEYERS IS - WHAT WAS THERE?)

I can't remember what was in Peace of Green. Where Rather Bazaar was, was a handyman shop, Maleny Windows & Repairs, just general handyman type repair outfit. I can't remember what was next to him.

Then there was Kevin Neil (WHAT PROFESSION?)

The Ambulance station and that was about it on that side.

The Maleny Guesthouse was there and the rest was accomodation. (WHAT ABOUT THE BAPTIST CHURCH-now the Naked Vicar?)

On the other side of the street starting at Coral Street, the two bottom houses (now Wild at Heart and Maple 3) were accomodation. Judy Lawrence lived in one of them with her parents, she's still in town, works at Erowal.

Then where you have Henzells (Real Estate) it has been a variety of Real Estates over time.

The childrens shop (Zippetty doo da) was then a gift shop and TAB agency and later became Rainbow Video.

The Drapery and all that, that was all there and the butcher shop.

The Bank was actually where the Food Gallery is now, that was the ANZ Bank when I came to town. Boxsells of course was Boxsells, just a great big brown building, which I think had been there for a long time.

Nagy's was as is.

Once you get past the Pharmacy and Medical Centre, the Newsagent was actually two shops. A news-agency on the eastern side and the western side was, I think, a little furniture shop, a little antique shop for a while. For a while David Erskine-Wyse ran Obi Realty from there. In fact Obi Realty was down on the bottom corner (where the ANZ is now) for a while. He shifted up to half of the newsagent premises and that (the newsagents) has since been completely redone as a newsagent.

The Upfront Club was the Maleny Kitchen.

The Co-op was there when I arrived.

Then there was a hairdresser, which has since become the second half of Darcy's (restaurant) In fact after it was a hairdressers I think it became the AUTO PRO shop, before they built there own premises further up the street.

Darcy's wasn't Darcy's, it was Dambolli's run by Danny Ross and Bo Thompson I think. Highland Court, which is the next bit up from Darcy's now, was a garage and that was run by Charlie De Vono, I think the premises were owned by Carl Michel' and the guy from Solothurn, Albert Murer. That garage didn't have a hoist, they used to still drive the cars up on a wooden ramp on wooden piers and service them from under there.

Next to the garage were the refurbished shops which are still there now, they have had a variety of tenants over time, a Tile shop, the Bookstore's there now, Fish & Chip shop and that's really about where the town finished. There was another little house or something just past that. I think at that stage was owned by David Hackworth, I think Endeavour used to run a second hand clothing shop out of it, but really there was a paddock then Dulcie Sperling's house, then the Police station.

Then there was a gap again, there was a little house which is the Mower's (shop) now and then the corner garage.

It's had a lot of changes since then. I think just before we arrived they put in Bicentennial Lane, before that all the blocks on that street stretched straight across and went almost through to Coral Street. But as a result of that road (Bicentennial Lane) going through, most of the owners donated their little bit of land on the other side of Bicentennial Lane in lieu of paying the road works. The council at that time, (Landsborough Council) I believe Rob Cork was at the time on council, he surveyed the road. Winston Johnson and Frank Geritz were also councillors at the time. That's the reason the community has got that set of gardens where Barung and the replanting is now, because the deal with the council was, they put the road in, they acquired the land and it became public space.

(I think it's great how you remembered the shops, by going up each side of the street-I.G) I learnt that trick off Peg Burnett, if you talk to her, she'll give you the details of what occurred before that. She remembers the bakery, there was a different set of cafes' along the street, run by various little ladies and she's got a much better memory though, because she used to do the Census.

Another man who will know about the main street, he lives in Coral Street and he used to run a radio repair shop in Maleny. (NAME ? -

WHAT ORGANISATIONS WERE/ARE YOU INVOLVED IN: Currently in town I'm involved in Barung Landcare, that's probably it within the town. Over various times, while I've been here, I've been in the Scouts, both P&C's (Primary and High schools ?- Wastebusters, the Co-op, at least I'm still a member of that but I'm not directly involved on an active basis. That's about it.

(When did Barung start?-I.G) It's terrible I can't tell you the exact date it started but I was on the first steering committee. I didn't go to the very first meeting or the second, I got brought along by Mal Thompson from Witta. They wanted to broaden the committee out. The committee that I remember in that very first meeting I went to was at Dean Cameron's place out at Balmoral. There was Mal Thompson, an accountant from Kidaman Creek, Ashley Sewell, Dean Cameron, myself and Bill Hall who was the dental technician, and actually the dentist used to run from the premises behind Ross Mosten's. That was the initial steering committee, that got it off the ground, got it incorporated, took it to the first public meeting for expressions of interest and subsequently (from) which I think the first committee was elected from and I think Bill Hall certainly did, I can't remember who else did. Then I got involved again a couple of years later, they were running meetings out of the Enterprise Centre, which was then I think called "Cedar." I was in it for another year, mainly in - - - they were running a Business Development Committee, because Barung at that early stage realised that if they were going to just stay as a little volunteer organisation they would probably never progress beyond occasional tree plants on corner blocks. That was when it was decided that if we were going to make anything out of it we had to enlarge the self funding and self propelling and that was the reason the nursery was started. Then I dropped out of that for a few years and came back three years ago on the committee and I'm still on it.

HOW DO YOU THINK IT HAS PROGRESSED FROM ITS BEGINNING TO WHAT IT IS NOW?: I think the evidence is all over town, it's great and it's acknowledged as one of the best Landcare groups in the country. I don't think most people realise, but it's incredibly diversified now, it still has it's focus, which is re-vegetation and restoration of land that has become degraded, but it actually acts as a hub for a whole lot of other things, such as Mary River Cod Project, Farm Forestry projects, there's been a major dairy effluent study. Also getting involved in projects such as the BHP project which reforested the entry-way to town, it's been involved with site work over in Western Avenue , Mapleton and I think they've even done some of the threatened species stuff out of there. Barung

itself doesn't do it, but it lends itself to supervise or assist in the application for various project funding. Being involved in things like Work For The Dole, Greening Australia, it lends itself to that, it's a community organisation which can be utilised by the community in many ways, but it's up to the community to utilise it. Barung's not really in a funded or personnel position to do those jobs, but it has the expertise available if others want to use it.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER OF THE MALENY FOLK FESTIVAL: Again I was involved in the very first one it was - - - the very first Folk Festival was set up (in December) as a trial run for the Australian (National) Folk Festival which was going to be the following Easter. The National Folk Festival, as I understood, travelled to a different state or different venue every year and I think it was always at Easter time. They did the trial run in December, at which the stage was a semi-trailer, the only seating was tiered steps leading from the show pavilion. We were involved in a hot chips and rolls stall, we were trying to raise money for the Community Centre to get a piano, that was one of Alison Frew's pet projects, so we got roped into that. Then they had the actual festival, The National Folk Festival in the Easter which, I think was at that stage judged to be the one of the best festivals they had ever had. So they decided to run another one the following Christmas and I must admit I thought, 'no it won't work, three folk festivals in twelve months is just too many.' But it was bigger than the National at Easter and so really I think that third folk festival was the springboard for what has now become the Folk Festival.

WHAT WAS YOUR OPINION WHEN IT MOVED OUT OF MALENY: Well it's mixed. I deeply regretted that it left, I still regret that it's left but I accept that it couldn't stay in the way it was going. I think it was unfortunate, I think for the town it was a commercial loss and I don't know what it was really worth in dollars to the town. I know what it was worth to my business and I've spoken to others in the town. I remember at the time I spoke to one of the ladies who ran a hamburger shop in town and she used to do three months work in two weeks, so that was a huge input and they did go out of their way to use local people, local produce. I would have to estimate that it was probably worth somewhere between two and five million dollars to the town. That's important sort of money because it was from outside of town, it wasn't the community just recycling money, it was fresh money coming in. But I also accept that - - - - the organisers, for whatever their own reasons, they had a certain goal and a certain focus and it became too big. I don't believe the site at the showgrounds was capable of carrying anymore (people) than it ever did in the last - - - in fact I think the last one was too big for that site anyway and I think there was a lack of size control. I know the organisers didn't want it to be elitist and keep it open to as many people as wanted to come. It's interesting to note that the fees to get into it now are \$45- a day which I would hardly see as being open to everyone, but they've got capital issues there of expenditure I think. But I can't help but compare it to Port Fairy Folk Festival which has been going for twenty-three years in Port Fairy, it's owned by the town, totally contained in size. They limit the number of people they sell tickets too, for those that miss out they have free venues about town with acts so day visitors or casual visitors can go and watch a little bit of it and maybe come back the following year. The town just thrives on that festival, it's a hugely important economic event for that town and it stretches over into other parts of the year because Port Fairy's a lovely old historic town and people who would otherwise never have gone there do go and come back for holidays, it's a delightful festival to visit. Port Fairy's in Victoria, just west of Warnambool. So that's a model of how a folk festival can be contained in size, can retain it's lack of elitism, because it's actually cheaper than the Woodford Folk Festival and it has a very broad range of acts, in fact a lot of the acts that are there (Port

Fairy) appear at Woodford. Woodford probably goes a bit broader in it's world music stage but the rest of it's just the same. { the letters in the paper about the Fire Event- I.G} I missed that, I've only heard about them second hand. I must admit I've always enjoyed the Fire Event, this last Folk Festival was the first I've not been to for a variety of factors, mainly family related, so that was the first one that I have missed.

DO YOU KNOW ANY STORIES ABOUT LOCAL LANDMARKS: No I can't really, I can't even remember any hearsay. The bloke to talk to is the fellow who had the wireless repair shop - - Gibson, Bob no, Robert George, lives out on Coral Street, he was related to another chemist who was in town before Wally Burnett. Barker's Pharmacy that used to be in Caloundra - - - John Barker's still there - - he sold up in Caloundra and went over to Dicky Beach more recently, but his father was the chemist in Caloundra years ago and his father was the chemist up here and George, I think, is a cousin or nephew of that original chemist. Wally Burnett would have a great knowledge of the town, he's in his seventies I think, was President of APEX for many years, it was his brother that was married to Peg Burnett, his brother Rickson and Rickson and Peg used to own the pub.

WHAT SOCIAL ACTIVITIES DO YOU REMEMBER IN MALENY WHEN YOU MOVED

HERE: The movies were going but they were in a different format, they were run by Rotary, with an old sixteen millimetre projector. I think the kids got more pleasure out of it than anyone else, because the sound was so terrible, you couldn't hear it, but as long as there was plenty of action I don't think the kids minded. That eventually sort of died away - - -I think videos killed that, until the Film Society started up. Joan Rogers really did all the initial work on that and because they've got thirty-five mill. equipment with good sound, it was then worth going. The movies - - that's become a major feature of the town, it used to be only once a month, it's now virtually fortnightly, the whole year round, plus an Australia Day Film Festival. We've had visitors from all over Australia that just can't believe that a town this size generates that sort of activity.

CAN YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: There's always been the - - -no the dances had finished here I think. Things just occurred, there was always the Maleny Show, the Show Ball, Show Princess, school balls.

WHAT ABOUT NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE AREA: No, apart from a bushfire a couple of years ago, which was around Mount Mellum and down into Glasshouse, I can't remember any really major ones. There's been a couple of nasty accidents - - - the school bus accident a year or so ago (when it lost it's brakes down Landsborough hill) A guy lost his leg coming down that same hill a few years earlier in a motorbike accident. I think there was a kid that fell over the waterfall at Witta, about six or seven years ago. I can't remember any major natural disasters, you'll have to go back further than my history. David Wilson, the vet has mentioned a cyclone to me, he says he can remember as a young man the cyclone that hit the coast and that flooded what is now Kawana Shopping Centre, he can remember the waves breaking over there. Joy McCowan, who lives in Avocado Lane, was relating to me in the shop (pharmacy) late last year how, it must have been in the same era, probably the same cyclone, she had to get to a pharmacy at Maroochydore from Caloundra and she had to go via Nambour, because the road was - - - and all the creeks were covered so she couldn't get there, except by going all the way round.

CAN YOU RELATE ANY FUNNY STORIES OR INCIDENTS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE DISTRICT (CAN BE ANONYMOUS): I'M SURE IF I THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE BUT I CAN'T OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD, NO. {PLEASE ANSWER THE ABOVE QUESTION IF POSSIBLE, THANK YOU}

WHAT ABOUT ANY HARD CASES: (LAUGHS) No, I think I'll skip that one too. Go and have a talk to Harold Brooker, his brother Bert probably remembers just as many too. Harold lives up in Palm Street, I think he's just a tad older than Bert, had his ninetieth birthday last year.

PHOTOGRAPH TO SCAN: It's actually I think taken in the street on V Day. (Victory Day - celebrations when the war was over)

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT MALENY TODAY: I guess I like and always have, is the sense of community, it's not the same community there's people with different different points of view, lots of different points of view and I think that's one of the beauties of it. It's the - - - - that they all get together when it's really needed and they all, eventually, give a little bit here and there and they live side by side. I think it would be terrible if they were all totally uniform and all of one mind, I think it would be exceedingly boring. But I think that's the main thing, there is a good sense of community and there is enough divergency in that community to provide these various things. That's why you get things like Landcare springing up. Why you get M.E.N.A, (Maleny Enterprise Network Association) why you get various co-ops and the Credit Union. You still (however) get the farming community and they all end up working together. I think that's good.

IS THERE ANYTHING IN MALENY YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGE: I'd like a bypass that goes well outside around the town and I would really like - - - - I suppose you can't really stop things but I think the community has the power to contain what's happening. I guess that's easy to say when you live on a normal town block and I can understand that farmer's have got problems with a lot of that but I think there's got to be a way to say, 'well we can preserve that farmland in one form or another and still compensate the people that are on it. I don't think they should have to give it away or become poor relations because they can't dispose their blocks in the way they choose. I think the community should be able to get together and sort out some way of doing that, because I think if we don't we're going to end up looking back on it in twenty-five years as a suburban slum land. Maybe not slum in the form of poor housing or whatever but in that it'll just be another row of tiled or tin roofs spreading as far as the eye can see. Just (like when) you drive down towards the back of Kawana and towards Brisbane now. It's almost continuous roofs out to Burpengary, if you go south of Brisbane it's almost continuous roofs to the Gold Coast. I don't think anyone up here wants that, I don't think any of us came here for that purpose.

HOW WOULD YOU SEE MALENY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS: Well, I think if we can get our act together, maybe they'll have what we have now. If they have I think they will be lucky.

FINALLY IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT YOU FEEL IS IMPORTANT AND WE HAVE OMITTED TO MENTION: No, except to say I think it's great this project has got off the ground, I think it's good the Historical Society has got up and got it going because I think these sort of records although they might appear pithy at

times, give back great insights when you look back, unless you do them now, you won't have them later. It's very similar to looking after the future of Maleny, by doing something about it now is similar to doing something about the history of Maleny and recording it now so that later generations have it.

ON BEHALF OF THE MALENY HISTORY PRESERVATION & RESTORATION SOCIETY I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT.

Thanks to Inga Green for this interview.