

STEPHEN BELL FRIEND



**FRIEND Stephen Bell 8188 (1963–66) HB
Friend * Grazier Breadalbane; Tudor, For,
Cdt. Rural Engineer 1996 Farmer.**

Born 23 August 1949 Goulburn, NSW
Died 21 September 2019 Goulburn, NSW

Stephen, Stevo to his friends, was the youngest of the four sons of Henry Bell Friend (OB 1930 to 1935) and Ruth Brougham Docker, all of whom attended King's¹. He grew up in a very happy family on 'Ashwell', a property at Gurrundah, west of Goulburn, which produced wool and prime lambs.

His grandfather, Henry Friend Friend, had been a grazier nearby on 'Kelburn'. After Henry's death in November 1949, his wife Elizabeth Vera (nee Bell), in 1954, allowed the property to be proclaimed a fauna sanctuary.

Stevo arrived at Tudor House in 1959 where he met up with David Marsh, who remembers:

'I looked up some photos of those days: cubs and scouts. I remember Stephen being part of both these groups but for reasons unknown he did not appear in these photos. He was very capable, but not in the conventional sense. He was not particularly sporty, he seemed to operate just under the radar. He always had a friendly manner with his ready smile, his characteristic round cheeks and his long-striding, feet-turned-out walk. The workshop was where he excelled.'

Indeed, at King's too, Stephen flew under the radar. He was in Forrest House, not a whiz in the classroom nor a star on the sports field; just a humble cadet and a determined second-rower for the 7ths. He could be found often, in the workshop, making or modifying something.

By 1966, Stevo had had enough of school and left at the end of 5th form to go back to 'Ashwell' and work with his father. During this time, he learnt to fly at the Goulburn Aero Club. His quest for adventure and the unusual took him to the Northern Territory where he worked on 'Benmara' and 'McArthur River' stations as a stockman, mechanic and station pilot. Here, while a passenger in a Hughes helicopter which suffered a ground-resonance event leading to self-destruction, Stephen after being thrown clear, courageously went back and rescued the pilot from amongst the wreckage.

Annie Allwright was the English secretary at 'McArthur River'. They married back in England in 1974 then returned to 'Ashwell', which he managed until it was sold in 2017. His father, Henry, had died in 1997.

Stephen with his inherent ingenuity had, while in the Territory, acquired a multitude of skills and a talent for design, manufacture or modification of anything. He was involved commercially in the manufacture of bull-bars for Subaru vehicles. More astonishingly, he built an aeroplane in his house. Of course, the house had to be modified and he must have had exceptional skills in the field of persuasion to get Annie's approval for that venture. This plane was a Falco 'The Ferrari of the Skies' which took him about five years to complete. It has a wooden structure which Stephen skilfully laminated, shaped and glued into a fast, sophisticated, retractable-undercarriage, aerobatic aircraft. It won several awards.



¹ Timothy Henry (1957 to 1959), David Brougham (1958 to 1960), and Nicholas Macarthur (1959 to 1962).

An 'Ashwell' neighbour, Michael Katz writes:

'Stephen was the rock of Gurrundah. He was loyal, patient and very helpful. Quiet and softly spoken he had sound opinions on almost everything. His reading was wide and deep and he understood the perils of modern life and would ignore any risk to come to help his friends.'

In 2017, well into a long battle with bowel cancer, Stephen and Annie bought a nice house on two acres on the outskirts of Goulburn. It had a large garden for Annie and an in-ground pool, which Stevo immediately filled-in with aggregate (so that one day it could be cleaned out and re-used as a pool). It was lawn when some of the '67ers saw it: with Annie's approval, they moved in for the day, bringing everything including their wives. It was great fellowship and they all know that these very private people thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie. That was in February 2019, attended by King's old-boys Ken Baldry, Tony Emery, David Glasson, Kicka Gordon, David Marsh, Wayne Rabjohns, and Charles Willcocks.

Sadly, on 4 October 2019 Stephen's friends gathered for his funeral at the Craig's Hill Crematorium Chapel, Goulburn.

Contributors:

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