

Dawn Hill - January 2016



I was born in the city of Adelaide on 2nd April 1938, Patricia Dawn Paturis, to a Greek father and Australian mother of Irish decent - quite a mixture.

My father came out from the Greek Islands at the age of 14, married mum at 19 years of age and in the coming two years my brother was born, then I was born 12 months after him.

We lived in the city where now the bus terminal is situated in Franklin Street and went to school in Sturt Street Practical School - when my grandparents came out from Greece and couldn't speak English we went to Greek school after school to learn Greek - I attended three times a week for seven years until I went to Thebarton Girls Technical School for three years.

My parents shifted to Moonta Bay where dad had a fish and chip shop as he was a chef, he worked very hard and was soon well known for his cooking, especially during summer as the miners from Broken Hill came to spend their Christmas and relax on the beach and fish from the jetty where we all learned to swim.

Once a year the Kadina and Wallaroo swimming club would come and have a regatta with swimming and diving competitions for two days.

At the age of 15 years I started work at the Mareeba Babies Home at Woodville for sick and premature children and there I was offered a position as a dental nurse as it was a European area and the language was difficult for them.

I married a patient at the age of 19 and kept working, at 21 I had a baby boy and later had two girls - we lived in Woodville with his parents for a while, then built our home at Parafield Gardens - it was all vacant land from Gepps Cross to Salisbury, we had big blocks and so my interest in gardening began with fruit trees and especially roses which I still have a soft spot for.

I had an aviary in the yard and kept canaries, finches and golden pheasants.

After ten years of marriage my husband and I parted company, so it was necessary for me to return to work to keep the family together, so I began dental nursing at Elizabeth - it was a new area and a very busy practise - after quite a few years I met my second husband to be, we married and as he lived in Paccadilly, I decided to sell up and live there.

Well, gardening was so different - acidic soil plants were a challenge, but I managed a lovely garden on four terraces, then we decided to go to Tasmania.

We sold and shifted to Sheffield on five acres, so once again had to establish a new garden on different type soil - we had an orchard with all sorts of fruit trees and brambles - we had chooks, ducks and an orphan lamb from the neighbours, a horse we took with us and a collie dog and a cat.

We planted established trees - Golden Elms, Claret Ash, London Plane, Rhododendrons, Camellia, Flowering Apple. Tree Ferns and especially Roses, with a big round area with an arch to enter and a hedge surrounding and lots of bulbs throughout.

Up against the two storey home I had Daphne and Boronia and Hydrangeas, Lavender, Lassiandra and various ferns and a big oval bed of Lupins.

We became friends to a farmer and purchased six sheep, all pregnant and as they had twins we soon had a flock and 'Lamby', my pet soon found play-mates.

The first winter was quite an experience as it snowed for the first time in many years and our horse was prancing over the snow, not having experienced snow before - it was quite a site.

I then began working in Devonport at a school for handicapped and slow learners, we often had them home to see the animals for a day out, we'd have a picnic in the orchard and they'd feed the chickens, ducks and lambs and have rides on the horse - a happy time in my life, but things happened and I left Tasmania in 1993 to return to South Australia to live at Littlehampton with my youngest daughter.

We then decided to shift to Strathalbyn - my granddaughter came along, my son married and had a son, the eldest daughter never married, so I have two grandchildren.

My garden is my relaxation and I have of course many Roses, about 45, with fruit trees, ornamentals and lots of shrubs, bulbs and vines.

I grow vegetables - silverbeet for seven chooks, broccoli for canaries, about 50 odd and Bouganviliars - I have a bit of replacing to do.

I was a founding member of the local Arts and Craft shop and for 11 years made jams, pickles, sauces, biscuits and did knitting.

For two years I have been a member and committee member of the Senior Citizens of Strathalbyn, where we meet every Monday afternoon - some members play cards or play indoor bowls, we organise day trips and speakers and once a month we have a BBQ lunch then play Bingo.

I also belong to a ladies craft club - we meet twice a month and do any sort of craft we have at the time - I mainly do knitting as that keeps me busy all through the year.

To have a break from family I do a bit of house sitting, looking after animals of all kinds and gardens.

I have been a member of the Garden Club for about 17-18 years and look forward each month to our meetings and seeing friends, our well organised outings and interesting guest speakers and especially our raffle and a cuppa.