

Time.

Description



Peter Hogg photographed in 2013 inspecting the workings of the T&G clock, taken from the book "Warrnambool: This is Home".

[box] This column is normally reserved for comment on local issues, but occasionally it will also be used for short thoughts about every day life. This is one of those occasions. [/box]

SHORT THOUGHTS – Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T [/dropcap>he sudden passing of Warrnambool watch repairer **Peter Hogg** was a shock, not because I knew Peter well, but because I didn't.

Instead, Peter represented to me all that we love about living in a small city like Warrnambool – and I am sure it is the same for Portland, Camperdown, Terang, Koroit and all of the other towns that make up south-west Victoria – where certain names and certain families have been a part of the community for so long that you feel like you know them all.

The Hogg family was like that. For more than 40 years they ran one of several jewellery stores in the main street of Liebig St and, for the past 15 years, Peter was responsible for maintaining the iconic T&G clock on the corner of Liebig and Lava streets.

When the clock stopped, for whatever reason, it would be Peter who would be called to climb up the stairs, across the rooftop and into the clocktower to check the mechanism.

Even in these days of digital and mobile devices, everyone knows when the T&G clock is “off” and feels a strange sense of unease until it is working again, as if the timepiece is the quietly beating heart of the city: as long as it’s still going, we’re doing okay.

As the keeper of the clock, Peter was an important part of all of our lives, even if we didn’t know it.

It was for this reason that I contacted Peter in early 2013 to ask if he would be photographed inside the T&G clocktower for a small book of 30 Warrnambool icons – the known and the less well-known – and he readily agreed.

The photo shoot for *Warrnambool: This is Home* gave me a casual connection to Peter where we later felt comfortable having a conversation if we bumped into each other “down the street”, which is where Warrnambool does a large portion of its casual socialising.



A scene from the Bette Midler concert in Los Angeles earlier this year, with concert goers holding up their mobile phone lights during a rendition of *The Rose*.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] S [dropcap]trangely enough, one of our last – if not our last – such conversations was about how we were starting to lose people from our generation: the one's who passed through school together in the late 70s and early 80s at either CBC, St Anne's, Warrnambool High School, North Tech and Caramut Road, as they were then known.

We were entering an age, we lamented, where health problems did not always “get better” and we really needed to remember that old cliché about pursuing your dreams and grabbing hold of life.

Many of the people we profile for *Bluestone Magazine* are doing just that, which is why their stories resonate with so many.

And I may have even told Peter, but then again, I may not have, that *I* was going to do just that by flying 13,000km to see Bette Midler in concert in Los Angeles to celebrate my 50th birthday.

I felt embarrassed telling people that I was going to spend my savings travelling across the world to see a concert, but such has been my life-long admiration of Bette Midler, that the first thing my old high school teacher **Allan Scarfe** asked me after not seeing each other for more than 25 years was: “Do you still love Bette?”

I had to do it, and I did and it was worth it, really worth it.

And now Peter, the time-keeper, the person who sustained Warrnambool's quietly beating heart, is gone and I am acutely aware of just how important that journey was.

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