



*Vale*  
**Peter Alfred Magri**

Peter Alfred Magri was born in 1941 on the island of Malta.

In 1941 the main conflicts of the second world war occurred around the Mediterranean. Malta was almost in the centre, and as the British had a naval base in the Grand Harbour, that year Malta was the most heavily bombed place in the world.

Pete was the second child of Alfred and Dorothy Magri. He had an older sister, Maryanne, and two younger brothers. Peter has always been close friends with his sister, except for one time which Maryanne laughs about and which Peter did not.

80, Saint John of God Street, Sliema, on Malta, was a three-storey sandstone building opening straight

onto the street, like all the other houses in that area. Pete had a couple of mates, Freddy and Chico, and a Tarzan-type call down on the street would summon them to get into mischief together. On this particular day they were wagging school and exploring an off-limits bombed-out building when Pete came across a pound note in the rubble. This was major wealth. Pete shouted his two mates to a day at the cinema, and finally arrived home with pockets full of lollies and a tin whistle. Maryanne decided she wanted that whistle, but Pete wouldn't give it up.

So, Maryanne had her revenge by dobbing him in, firstly for wagging school, second for being in the bomb site and thirdly for spending all that money on himself and his mates.

These few years of wagging school and smoking in secret came to an end when Pete was ten. The family left war-ravaged Malta to migrate to Australia on the ship Toscana. The month-long voyage was a great adventure, but Pete's favourite memory was going ashore in Fremantle and tasting his first ever ice-cream.

Pete's father found them somewhere to live in a tiny area of the Dandenong Ranges outside Melbourne called The Patch. After the destroyed city he had come from Pete was in heaven with hills, fruit trees, tall gums, birds, and creeks where he learnt to drop in a line on his way to school and hope for the best.

The family eventually moved closer to the city, and after a few years of high school Pete became an apprentice builder. He rode a motorbike, played Aussie Rules and developed a taste for Aussie beer.

*(continued overleaf)*



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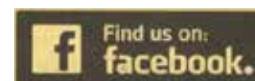
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### ***Peter Alfred Magri - continued***

Perhaps a bit too much of a taste, as it landed him in jail after a night out with his mates. Yet again he had to deal with an extremely irate father who came to bail him out.

After working as a qualified builder for a number of years, Pete met Pat (or Trish) Mitchell. They were married and had four children – David, Chris, Greg and Susan, and, in 1971, moved to live on Norfolk Island, where Pat was a member of the Christian family of Pitcairn descendants. They had many happy years as the children grew up, and good memories of social gatherings with other young Norfolk families.

As Tim has suggested, Chris says that they won the lottery with their Dad.

Chris and David also say that many of their memories are at the kitchen table, with one son, probably Greg, starting to laugh, then another, then a third would join in and then Dad would send them all to their rooms before Greg did himself an injury from not breathing for ten minutes.

Suse says her memories are many and precious, and she knows she was her dad's favourite girl.

Fifty years ago, when Pete and family had been on Norfolk for six years, Pete became partners with Bruce Hutton at Cascade Joinery when it was purchased from Scottie Nagel and John Mullaney. Pete ran the building side and Bruce the joinery. Over the years they employed over twenty people, many of them apprentices, including one of the pall-bearers, and all three Magri boys.

Some of the landmarks built by Pete and Bruce include the Bicentennial centre, the water treatment plant, Forrester Court, the squash courts, and the rebuilt Hotel Norfolk after it was destroyed by fire. Pete built many of the shops, tourist accommodations and Norfolk homes, and together they took over Bounty Lodge, rebuilt the apartments and refurbished the restaurant.

Finally, during a downturn in the economy, Build-a-kit homes employed Pete and others to build homes in Malaysia and Japan. Pete enjoyed working in another culture and with a Norfolk team.

People will probably remember Pete's rattling truck driving through Burnt Pine with his blue heeler dog on the back being followed by a pack of wildly yapping dogs all trying in vain to reach that annoying blue heeler.

The blue heeler, by the way, was named Akira after a man who befriended Pete while he was working in Japan.

As you can imagine, smoko time at the joinery was a time for jokes and stories, most of which are not fit to repeat. But one smoko Akira the dog was lying on the floor licking his genitals. Pete said "Gee I wish I could do that!" to which one of the apprentices said "You had better ask the dog first!"

Thirty years ago, Pete and I found each other, and began a relationship of mutual love and respect. The only person not happy about this was Akira the dog, who made a habit of walking in between us and pushing me firmly out of the way.

At this time too, Pete gave up his happy hour at the Leagues' Club every night. He was home straight from work, and sat with me for exactly two cans of Tooheys. Then it was time to "feed the dog and put the truck away", which actually meant disappearing to the shed, with the dog, for another can or two.

I was completely fooled by this, but a bit of a clue might have been the raft that Pete constructed one year for a Boxing Day race. It was a work of art, constructed entirely from empty beer cans.

Eventually Pete and I were able to take a few European trips together, and whether it was cruising down the Danube or visiting an Irish castle, Pete would always manage to find someone from Malta, or someone whose second cousin twice removed was from Malta, resulting in a session of yarns and a few beverages

One visit was to Malta itself. Pete still had extended family in Malta, but decided not to advertise his visit so that he could show me the sights, and not spend all the time visiting family.

But as we looked for the street where Pete used to live, he found that the street signs were now in Maltese and a bit confusing.

I stopped the only person who came walking along to ask for help.

He looked at Pete and said

"You, you are Peter Magri – I am your cousin Victor!"

Pete was horrified that of a population of half a million people, the first person we saw was one of his relations.

In our almost thirty years together, Pete showed himself to be the hard-working, even-tempered good company that he has always been, a great Dad, grandfather, great-grandfather and a good stepdad. He was a magnet for small children, who copied his grandchildren in calling him "Nannu". Even towards the end when communication became hard, he always had a smile and a "HELL-O" for a baby.

Pete was generous with his time, his talents and his great inner strength. At various times he was a member of the Rugby League judiciary, a long-time handicapper for the golf club, and served for many years on the Norfolk Planning Board. He was an excellent tradesman and a man of great integrity.

But there was always the one percent that stayed the naughty little boy from Malta.

## **Thank You**

The family would like to express very special thank you to the wonderful staff in the aged care department at the Norfolk Island hospital for their wonderful care of dad, to the doctors and nurses, Malcolm at the works Depo, Leonard for the hearse, Shane and the gravediggers, Jodie Williams for the service sheet, the Lions Club for the PA system, Simone James for the music, Hen for her help and to all the wonderful thoughtful people of our great community who sent their condolences and love to each of us, a very big thank you.

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