**Alfred Charles Boddy as remembered by David Boddy.**

Mary has asked me to write my memories of Granddad many times but is probably good that I have resisted. Its only now that I have approach a similar age to the age he was when I knew him, that I have a much greater appreciation for what did and what he was.

Granddad was a people person. He loved meeting people who seemed like strangers to me and telling them all about himself (and me) and learning about them. He was proud of how well he carried his age. He was always keen to share his knowledge of his early days in Newcastle, his work, his schooling. As a kid, for me, it went in one ear and out the other. I so wish I had taken more notice of the stories he told. I will try and recall some, but later.

I should first set the scene of life with Granddad at Fennell Bay. In early childhood I lost my mother to polio and not long after my younger brother to leukemia. Thus Granddad, who had lost his wife Lily, was living with Dad and me at 15 Elizabeth Street Fennell Bay. So Grandad was in his 70s when I first remember him and as I grew to be a teenager he was aging into his 80s.

Fennell Bay didn’t have that many houses back in 1952. You could walk across the paddock to the post office or to where the Aunties lived in Lake Road. (The “Aunties” were Granddad’s unmarried sisters, Ethel and May Boddy, who were retired photographers). In fact, Dad, or maybe it was Grandad, owned the land thru to Lake Road where the Aunties lived. Fennell Bay grew with new roads and many Housing Commission houses being built, and the land Dad owned was sub-divided and sold.

In the early 1950s, milk was still delivered by a milk tanker that put the milk into billy cans left out for the milk. The iceman delivered blocks of ice for ‘ice chests’ (pre-refrigerators). Sewerage didn’t exist. The “Sano man” came weekly to take away the cans. The streets were gravel (no tar) with open drains.

I can remember as probably a 5-year-old, sitting on the front veranda in the evenings with Granddad, watching lightning storms come across the lake. Grandad had a rocking chair on the front veranda and he would sit and cuddle me as we watched the lightning and listened for the thunder. I appreciate this even more now I am a grandfather and can look and feel affection for my grandchildren which he clearly displayed to me.

Granddad would tell anyone who would listen that he had 12 Grandchildren. He seemed to know everyone’s birthday and he used to send 10 shillings to every one on their birthday. 10 shillings was significant in early 1950s, less so as the years went by.

Granddad was apparently once a Freemason. He had a funny apron in one of his cupboards which I didn’t understand. He once went to a lodge meeting with a neighbour, Jack Bush, and took his funny apron.

Grandad cooked all our meals. He preferred to use a primus and a pressure cooker on the back veranda rather than the oven and hot plates in the kitchen, which I think annoyed my Dad. He went to great efforts to cook things I liked but looking back, I was difficult. I can remember him sorting through a stew to remove the things I didn’t like. (I think it was carrots at the time).

Granddad was deeply religious, reading the bible daily and saying prayers. He was proud of his status at Maitland Road Baptist church. He was the ‘Senior Elder’ there and while he attended the newly formed Baptist church at Toronto, he was reluctant to give up his status at Maitland Road Baptist. He eventually did when travelling to town became difficult.

Granddad loved train travel, especially taking the ‘Flyer’ to Sydney where we would visit his eldest daughter, Aunty Mildred. We used to have booked seats and we would check the luggage in with the porter who would return it at the other end.

I can remember standing in the street with many other waiting to spot the first Russian satellite (Sputnik) travelling across the sky. Grandad marvelled that in his lifetime, things had gone from the Wright Brothers’ first flight to things orbiting the earth. Horses to cars. He told me stories about delivering bread with a horse and cart and the intelligence and personality of the horse that he worked with.

Granddad could drive a car, no problem, but as he got into his 80’s he probably should not have been driving. He had a few little scrapes but Dad always dismissed that as a problem.

Granddad on many occasions tried to give me his treasure/keepsakes (his gold watch, his wedding ring, his binoculars), but I always refused them. He was trying to make the point that he would not be there forever but I always refused. I expected he would live to be over 100. There was nothing wrong with him!!

It was ultimately strokes that got him. He battled quite a few in my memory. Early strokes robbed him of movement of his right arm. He then set out to teach himself to write with his left hand after the first stroke. He did very well considering everything. His left-handed writing after a stroke is better than my current handwriting. Granddad used to exchange written letters with Mildred pretty much every week and in later years I used to have to read them to him.

Granddad was very much the historian. He could talk at length about tall ships in Newcastle. He knew varieties of ship – schooners, clippers, yawls – and each sail on a specific mast had a name. He knew where the railway used to run and where the various pits and collieries were around Newcastle.

I can never remember him losing his temper or saying a harsh word about anyone. The most frustrated I ever saw him was when I was supposed to hold onto an asbestos strip while he nailed it in place. I let it go for some reason and it snapped in half. Grandads only word was “botheration”.

He was proud of the fact that his father (Alfred Boddy, one of Newcastle very early photographers) had gone out on a rescue boat after the ship the Adolph had run aground on the bar at Newcastle. His Dad’s photographs were key to a later court case about salvage rights and his Dad’s pic showed that ‘someone’ had been the first to attach a rope for salvage purposes. Granddad had a couple of items salvaged from the Adolph that he was very proud of. A chest of drawers and a deck bench (like a park bench)

Granddad always spoke fondly of Lily his wife whom I never knew. He used to torment Aunty May and Aunty Ethel by mispronouncing some words which had been an in-joke between him and Lily. He used to share that with me after his sisters had left. (Picturesque was pronounced picture-skew ). He knew lots of poetry and ditties none of which I can remember today.

In the late 50s, TV arrived and we spent many hours watching a lot of trashy rubbish (probably because that’s what I wanted to watch). We loved World Championship Wrestling!!

Granddad believed Sunday was sacred in that church should be attended and business was a no-no. I can remember the paper lady trying to collect on a Sunday and Grandad telling her to come back during the week.

Granddad was always so proud of anything I did.

Looking back now, he declined very quickly. As he became less able to look after himself, Dad and I got nursing help to look after him but I clearly remember the day when the nurse told Dad and me that he needed care we weren’t able to give him. Granddad went first to Carey Bay Nursing Home and later to Booragul Aged Care.

He died there in 1968 aged 89.