

MEMBER PROFILE

ALLAN GLENNIE

Profiles of members are in vogue, and it has been suggested that I too give my testimony.

I first began my pilgrimage of life at Hamilton, N.Z., but did not really take to the place, and at the age of six weeks with my parents returned to my ancestral territory of Southland, Otago and Canterbury. I must say that I have never regretted that decision.

My early years were spent on the farm at Beautiful Valley, between Geraldine and Fairlie. I began my education there at Skipton School alongside the Opuha River, with one teacher (who boarded with our family) and about 20 pupils. The old schoolhouse survives, I think as a fishing lodge. I recall the magic of first lessons there like learning to read and print and getting hit on the head with a cricket ball.

Then came the shift into Timaru in the 20s and on to South School and Technical College. Some boyhood highlights there were winning the prize hammer for saw sharpening, the cup for the annual shooting match, a hat trick at the cricket match ruined by the third form victim fluking a single run before being skittled. Also getting the cane when needed to sharpen my responses.

Getting to the serious affairs of life in Timaru I started off as baker's boy with Charles Pateman, Baker, Pastrycook and Hotelier, with whom I might have done well if I had stayed on. Instead I joined the Post and Telegraph Department to engage in 40 years' service in the field of telegraphy and radio communication. That took me to telegraph offices and radio stations in Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, Chatham Islands and finally to Awarua Radio, where I finished up as Manager. After retiring from the Post Office I spent several enjoyable years part time at the Maintenance Branch of the Invercargill Licensing Trust.



I became acquainted with Army life in the Territorials in the Canterbury Regiment and the N.Z. Divisional Signals, but war in September 1939 saw me drafted out of that through being under age and into reserved occupation category. Numbers of my contemporaries of that time ended up as unarmed coastwatchers in the Pacific and many of them never returned home after being dealt with gruesomely by the Japanese.

Fortunately for me my wartime role lay at Chatham Islands Radio where a handful of operators kept the distress watches and reported the weather and shipping movements. My special duties there were to see to the establishment and control of an emergency base and fuel dump for the trans Tasman flying boats which were being used for maritime reconnaissance seeking enemy raiders attacking our shipping. Chatham Islands was a fishing and shooting paradise with herds of crayfish (as I clearly recall) the size of fox terriers, swans, ducks, pigs, weka, fish of all kinds in profusion. I was destined to spend the remaining war years there and also meet my

future wife Margaret "who promised to make my life one long heaven". Let's not expand on that."

After the war we spent 30 years at Awarua Radio and raised our son and three daughters there in the swamp until it was time for secondary school when we moved to Invercargill to live. Marine radio communication, then in its heyday, was an interesting and rewarding vocation. We flattered ourselves that we had an effective hand in the safety of life at sea. We broadcast weather and marine warnings, intercepted countless distress and accident incidents, communicated with shipping around the globe, with the lighthouses expeditions and bases from here to Antarctica.

We copied the London Press broadcasts daily. All that, like the horse and cart, is now outmoded by the fibreoptics and satellites and advanced technology.

In 1967 I joined the Commercial Travellers Club as a decent social venue where there might be congenial company and a decent game of billiards. I found all of that and am still there pursuing the same objectives. Along the way I wasted much time in various activities like fishing, golf, duckshooting, wine-making, beekeeping, bridge, wielding a cue etc. Nowadays it is mostly the Club, growing the Red Kings and tomatoes, brewing the beer and keeping out of the way of my wife Margaret while she looks after her rose bushes.

I believe that those of us who are not obliged to live in some rat race metropolis to make a living are fortunate, and our Club in little old Invercargill is truly "A1 at Lloyds" in management and membership, and long may she remain that way.

CHARLES A. GLENNIE