

# ❖ RON WADDINGTON ❖

Ron Waddington was born in Cairns in 1929 and lived there until about age 10 when the family moved to Innisfail and then, in late 1942 as a result of the war, to Dalby. He completed Year 10 (Junior) there just before the family moved to Tamworth where his father was appointed manager of the Penneys store. Ron started work with Penneys as a junior and resumed his interest in competitive swimming, competing successfully in NSW titles. After a transfer to Lismore, he was included in Forbes Carlisle's training schedule in preparation for the 1948 Olympics. Swimming went on the back-burner when job transfers took him from Lismore to Gympie to Mackay and then to Townsville where, as a 21-year-old, he became assistant manager of the Penneys store.



Ron met and courted Sheila in Townsville. They married in 1954 and shortly after moved to Roma where Ron became the youngest Penneys store manager in Queensland. Their first two children, Ken and Susan, were born there before the family moved to Dalby where their youngest, Peter, was born. Ron and Sheila established Dalby Young Fashions, an institution for the women and children of Dalby, the Darling Downs and Western Queensland. For almost 30 years, their commercial and community involvement formed an important part of Dalby's social fabric with Ron involved in Apex, Scouts, the Anglican Church, gardening, the stamp club and various sporting organisations, including as president and patron of Dalby's swimming association.

## THE BUDERIM CONNECTION

Ron and Sheila sold the Dalby business in 1988 and retired to Buderim. They'd purchased a block of land there in 1973, attracted by the climate, the views, proximity to the sea and rich volcanic soil promising rewarding gardening experiences. Establishing an extensive garden consumed much of their early retirement but Ron soon began body-surfing at Mooloolaba early each morning, a regime he maintained almost every day throughout the year for the rest of his life. While the beach and swimming were integral to his lifestyle, he and Sheila shared a love of gardening and were keen golfers, as well as Probus members and avid travellers.

Ron had a real passion for philately. He was a president of the Sunshine Coast Stamp Club and had a particular interest in Queensland stamps pre-federation when the colonies had their own postal systems. His philatelic interests included postal history, with a particular focus on the postal history of South East Queensland. Initially a reluctant computer user, he embraced technology with enthusiasm when he realised its potential for facilitating his philatelic interests. A great organiser and achiever, he was instrumental in arranging a unique B150 postmark commemorating Buderim's 150-year anniversary.

Ron died in 2012. His family recount stories of the very wide range of friends and acquaintances from recent and not-so recent times who remember their father with great affection - people he coached in swimming when they were young, customers who recall his helpfulness, fellow philatelists, people who admired his zest for life and people he met travelling. He had a deep and genuine interest in people and a fantastic memory for people he'd met, and their stories. He had the knack of asking the questions that led to connections with friends and associates. Ron was successful in business and an asset to the community, but the enduring memory of his family and friends is of his innate interest in, and readiness to connect with people.