

DAVID ROBIN RITCHIE SUMMERS OAM (G48-56)

He was born on 2 September 1938 and on leaving the College qualified as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.



He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (FRICS), Life Fellow of the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (LFAIQS), Past President of the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (1984 & 1985) and member of Council for 19 years and Honorary Life Member of the Building Science Forum of Australia.

He has over 40 years experience in quantity surveying including projects in Australia, Hong Kong, UK, Malaysia, Thailand and West Africa, all with Widnell, who are an independently owned international firm of Chartered Quantity Surveyors. He was Senior Partner of the Widnell Australian practice from 1981 until 1996. In addition to his surveying qualifications and experience he has been a visiting lecturer at the University of New South Wales and has delivered a number of conference and seminar papers on building procurement and construction cost control.

In Australia he represented Widnell on numerous major projects including the redevelopment of Parliament House, the redevelopment of Walsh Bay, the redevelopment and restoration of the Queen Victoria Building and Sydney Harbour Casino. He currently carries out a senior management role within the HK office of Widnell and is involved in several commissions including a recent extensive due diligence for MTRC and a research study for Hong Kong Government.

On 26 January 2008 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for "Service to the Construction Industry, particularly in the field of quantity surveying and through leadership of professional bodies".

He has held numerous voluntary positions including National President of The Building Science Forum of Australia, member of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal from 1986 to 1992 and Member of the College of Expert Witnesses.

Subsequent to publishing the above piece, David got in touch to say that he had just received an email from **Peter Hughes (G52-56)**, a good friend of his at Fram. Although they had lost contact since the sixties he got in touch with David to say that he had seen a newspaper article on his OAM (see below) and that he had come across this negative of David with his pet ferret (called Elsie) that he used to keep in a hutch behind the Chapel! I've never heard of anyone keeping pets at the College, let alone a ferret!

The newspaper article appeared in a local paper in Australia in January 2008 and covers his life in Australia. He says the journalist who interviewed him on the telephone put a bit of 'spin' on some of it but the facts are correct.



Australia Day Honours: Our new OAMs

City high flyer loves country life

DRIVING his tractor around 300 acres of 'paradise' on the banks of Boolambayte Creek, David Summers is about as far removed as he can be from the hectic 47-year career he pursued in the construction industry, across several countries.

David and his family have enjoyed their cattle grazing property near Myall Lake since 1973, using it to balance the high flying life of David who—in 2007 alone—made seven trips to Hong Kong.

David Summers, now a familiar face around Bulahdelah, has been awarded a Medal (OAM) in the Order of Australia for service to the construction industry, particularly in the field of quantity surveying and through leadership of professional bodies.

"I've lived in cities all my life," says David, "but I love country life. Boolambayte is just paradise, but often I'll wander into town, to Bulahdelah bowling club or the golf club.

"I just love country people... they're so straight forward and easy to get along with."

It's a far cry from London where David was born and trained as a quantity surveyor. He's especially proud of the fact that his 47-year career was all with the same firm, Widnell Ltd, in which he retains an interest as senior consultant.

After marrying wife Rosie, the Summers spent three exciting years in Africa in the late 1960s, and then, back in London, David was offered an opportunity to go and have a look at Australia.

He came for a month to check it out, and soon after arriving in Sydney caught a ferry across to Manly and liked what he saw.

"I sent a cable there and then to say I was staying. I recall it said something like 'send the missus and kids,'" he chuckles.

David settled into his new position here and awaited the arrival of Rosie and the family six months later. It's a decision they haven't regretted. "We've had a fortunate life," David sums up.

He has travelled extensively

Now a familiar face around Bulahdelah: Boolambayte resident David Summers who has been awarded an OAM for services to the construction industry, particularly quantity surveying.

for work in Europe, Hong Kong and other parts of South East Asia, and although no longer in his role as fulltime principal and partner, he retains his directorship of the company's Hong Kong practice.

"I've been fortunate, too, to always have enjoyed my work, and my association with all the people in the profession."

So what does a quantity surveyor do?

In layman's terms, "We do the pre-estimating and the cost planning for projects, before the specifications stage. We estimate the possible cost of a building or project from the conceptual ideas of the designers."

Then comes the detailed work, including ascertaining and costing every facet of the project, right down to the last nuts and bolts and nails.

Often, the quantity surveyors will stay on the project throughout the construction stage, administering the contract. Large projects, David explains, may engage more than one quantity surveyor. Sydney's Star City Casino, for example, had four firms of quantity surveyors — one working

for the government, one for the lending authority, one for the developer, and one for the contractor.

David's all-time favourite contract, however, was the refurbishment of the landmark Queen Victoria Building in Sydney in the 1980s. "It was fantastic, and our firm enjoyed a very good relationship with the client, a Malaysian firm," he says.

He was also personally involved in the redevelopment of NSW Parliament House in Macquarie Street, Sydney Town Hall, the redevelopment of Walsh Bay, the Capitol Theatre and the GPO in Martin Place.

He also was responsible for the cost planning of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb. This entailed climbing the bridge, "counting every nut and bolt". Closer to home, Widnell Ltd was also involved in costing the new Kempsey jail in its early planning days.

David's abilities were keenly sought after outside his own company as well. He takes great pride in the fact

that he was made a life fellow of the College of Expert Witnesses, Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors. He served as its national president in 1984-85, was NSW Chapter president from 1978 to 1980 and a NSW Chapter councillor from 1974 to 1992.

Another high point in his life was being made a life member of the Building Science Forum of Australia, of which he was national president in 1991-92, after being president of the NSW branch in 1983-84. "To be honoured by one's peers with life membership is particularly rewarding," he says.

David was also a tireless supporter of the Salvation Army's Red

Shield Appeal and served as a member of its professional committee from 1986 to 1992.

A keen sailor all his life, that sport now takes a back seat to life on his rural property, however he continues to lend a hand to organising the regatta at the Falmouth Week celebrations in the UK each August.

David and Rosie have four children, David, Kate, Marc and Jane, and two grandchildren.

They spent a wonderful Australia Day weekend at the Lane Cove family home which they retain for city use, "babysitting and watching the fireworks".

