

## Memories of SeniorNet (North Shore)

by Malcolm Bailey

My earliest memories of SeniorNet were at the first meeting I attended at the Community Hall in Northcote. About 30-40 people attended including the then secretary Joan Davidson and Graham Fox, the architect who designed the North Shore Hospital, who became a good friend. I don't remember the date.

SeniorNet rented a small room alongside the community hall which barely had room for five desks and chairs together with an instructor's white board. It was very cramped. We had five obsolescent IBM compatible PCs given to us by Telecom who helped fund the start of SeniorNet. I was one of the first lecturers and ran an introduction to PCs course.

As membership grew we expanded to rent a room in the St John Ambulance centre in Shea Terrace not far from North Shore Hospital. Graham Fox organized the facilities of the new room. We moved into the new facilities but I don't remember the date.

The late Eric Cammell became chairman for two years. He and I discussed the job of chairman and we each decided two years was long enough to be in the job. I forget the name of the man who took over from Eric and who died after about nine months. Eric took the job back until the AGM.

The AGM was held each August and in August 1999 I stood, and was elected, as Chairman. The committee persuaded committee member Wendy (I don't remember her surname) to organise a web page which she agreed to give a six month try as she knew nothing about web pages. She did a magnificent job and managed the web page for several years thereafter. Ron Boon became treasurer for many years and did an excellent job. Bob Fletcher became vice chairman and started the newsletter. This was very successful and he kept it going for over 12 years.

During my first year as chairman Ron Boon and I were able to put together a request for \$7,000 to the ASB Trust to purchase a projector and in the second year we were able to get a grant of \$24,000 to replace all our PCs and buy a digital camera.

In late 1999 there was much publicity about the year 2000 and the threat from older computer system software which had allowed only for two digits 00-99 to record the year. I knew all about this. As a systems analyst with Air New Zealand in 1966 I had designed their first computer system for payroll which would calculate the date of 2000 as 0000 and all pay calculations would be incorrect. (in those 1960s computers memory was expensive and programs had to keep memory usage low. No programmer in the 1960s gave a thought to what would happen in 40 years time.) In the event I only heard of one example of a computer system malfunctioning in 2000 and that was in Scotland!

In 2001 I handed over at the AGM to Bob Fletcher as chairman and Bob continued as newsletter editor and chairman for ten years! By that time I no longer attended SeniorNet meetings but kept up my membership until last year.

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