

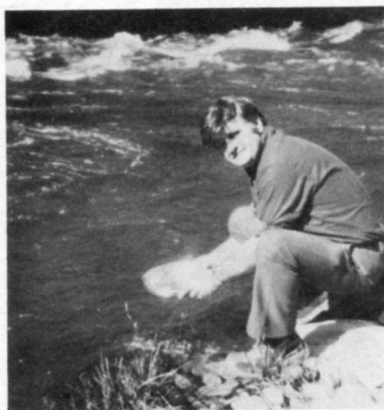
PROFILE

Murray Whimpress

It's not everybody who has to jump into a caravan and leave home when they want to get away from work, but such is the lot of our Country Ambulance Service Superintendents who live "on the premises", and Murray Hartley Whimpress of Berri is one such officer.

Not only does Murray live adjacent to the Ambulance Centre, but that building is built within the Berri Hospital grounds. Although this is convenient in many respects, it can be an interruption to the resident officer's privacy. Well-meaning enquiries are made at the strangest hours. "Is Granny's Subscription still current?", or "Could I go to Adelaide tomorrow in the ambulance with Auntie?", or "Is the ambulance that Dad will be travelling in air-conditioned?", are all questions worrying the persons enquiring, and a resident Ambulance Officer is just the right man in the right place at the right time to give the answer.

The Centre's location on the main Sturt Highway also attracts enquiries from strangers wanting to know directions. Then, of course, the Divisional member calls in to check the roster and say "Good-day".



"Gold fever".

All of the above are genuine and insignificant in themselves and welcomed individually, but nevertheless interrupt the private life of the Service Superintendent. The only real relief from all of these well-meaning people is to "move out".

Murray and Alma have enjoyed caravanning for many years and these days, to escape work, usually head for the Victorian mountains where both can pursue their individual interests.

Murray enjoys all kinds of fishing. The mountain venue is ideal for sorting the trout from the stream. Also coming down the stream could be some gold, and Murray likes "a spot of panning". He admits he has not had as much success gold panning as trout fishing — and even that is not guaranteed.

While Murray is occupied in his two hobbies, Alma takes a brush and pallet and captures some of the mountain scenery on canvas. It isn't hard to imagine how scenic these places can be, and her best efforts adorn the walls of their house and the Berri Centre.

Murray remembers receiving the following verse on a polished piece of mulga when he was 12 and, in common with many people including Mr. D.P. Williams, believes it now to be his basic philosophy.

I expect to pass through this
world but once
Any good, therefore, that I can
do
Or any kindness that I can show
my fellow man
Let me do it now
Let me not defer or neglect it
For I shall not pass this way
again

Murray joined St. John as a Cadet in the Thebarton Division in 1945. They were then meeting behind the old Town Hall on the corner of



Murray Whimpress.

George Street, but later moved to the Air Raid Shelter on the corner of Ashley Street and South Road. He left the Cadets to devote his energies to his apprenticeship as a plumber. Once qualified, he rejoined St. John, this time in the West Torrens Transport Division.

Shortly after, the St. John Council took over the police ambulance duties and some other private ambulances. To cope with the extra work in 1953, St. John employed more Ambulance Officers. Peter Lafsky was another of the new staff who commenced that same day.

In 1958 Murray and Alma decided that Berri was the place to settle and bring up their family and consequently Murray took up his tools of trade again, however, this was to last only five years. In July, 1963, the Berri Ambulance Service decided to employ Murray as its first paid Ambulance Officer. In 1964, he became Divisional Superintendent of the Berri Division — a position he still holds.

With the employment of the second Officer at Berri, Murray saw the opportunity of further doing good for his fellow man by joining the local Rotary Club. This had not been possible prior to this point because of the continuous need to be on call.

Rotary has proved a very valuable form of release from St. John where Murray can still serve, but in a different manner. The Whimpresses



Murray and Alma Whimpress.



This shot requires a lot of explanation: Murray is in a swimming pool fully clothed and wearing a raincoat — you had better ask Murray for details!

have, among other things, enjoyed welcoming into their home exchange students from Sweden and the Phillipines and participated in local projects.

Murray is currently the Rotary Club's Treasurer and has served as Youth Director, both of which entitle him to a position on the Berri Board.

A serious and sincere professional Ambulance Officer, Murray insists on the job being done properly. An inspection of the Centre or either of his ambulances show his meticulous attention to tidiness and cleanliness. His book-keeping is attended to in the same manner. Murray has also a latent sense of humour, which you become more aware of the more you get to know him. He would also be the Region's best ambassador,

always promoting his beloved Riverland with continual comments about the wonderful weather, the happy holidays to be had and the rich red wines.

His professional approach to his work has gained him recognition on the State Vehicle Design Committee, where his practical comments on the early Transit ambulances were accepted and resulted in modifications in the South Australian-produced Mark II.

Not every weekend is spent away from the Centre, and when home, Murray enjoys pottering in the garden, growing his own vegetables, assisting in Rotary projects, and just prior to Christmas, put some of his mechanical expertise to practice making playground equipment for his grandchildren. Murray and Alma's

son Darryl has a son Shannon, whilst daughter Sheryl has a daughter Kate.

The St. John Ambulance Service in South Australia has changed enormously since he first joined the Regular Staff and worked from the old Hindmarsh Ambulance Station above and behind Sykes Furniture Store on the Port Road. In those days, he recalls, a typist/secretary received ambulance calls on three ordinary telephones on a kitchen table. There was no two-way radio, so crews had to ring up when clear. "If you didn't have two pennies, you yelled like hell into the receiver."

Murray knows the service is still not perfect, but believes that by uniting our resources, we can provide an efficient team to give the best service possible to our sick or injured fellow men.

BiTs & PieCES

BITE WORSE THAN HIS BARK

It was a hot day and dressed in shorts, Peter Coombe was carrying a child into the house when the family Border Collie jumped up and bit him. Peter won't say where, but it sure was painful!

SO MUCH FOR PLANNING AHEAD . . .

Country Liaison Officer Lloyd Rogers and Port Augusta Service Supt. Neil Copley visited Leigh Creek recently, and Lloyd (being the cautious type) insisted on taking an additional spare tyre as they were travelling on unsealed roads. Much to their dismay, tyre problems were experienced, alright — the extra spare went flat in the boot!