

## Len Life PowerPoint Text

1. Cover slide
2. Len was born in London on 17 September 1919, the first surviving child of Ada and James Haynes, who eventually had eight children, five surviving to adulthood. They lived in Notting Hill, London.

Len's father was a painter/decorator. They were poor, so his mother worked to supplement their income. When she worked, Len stayed away from school to look after his younger siblings. He spent quite a bit of time in the British Museum.

3. When he was 13, as a result of his truancy, a magistrate sent Len to the *Bristol Training Ship Formidable* in Portishead. Here Len had an English teacher who gave him a life-long love of English literature, his favourite book being *Lorna Doone*. His teacher communicated a sense of classic literature and place, reading books with local connections and taking the boys to places like Dartmoor and the New Forrest.

Len did well, was dux of the school, learned carpentry and sang, with the school choir in eisteddfods, songs he sang for the rest of his life.

He entered the school in October, 1932, a month after his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, and left in July 1935 at 15 years and nine months. It was more education than he would have otherwise received. His certificate on leaving school lists his training as 'seamanship and general'.

After a very brief stint in the merchant navy, he worked as a messenger in London, then as a caretaker.

4. Len volunteered for the Navy in May 1940 and was appointed to HMS Malaya, operating the Western Mediterranean from Gibraltar to Malta.
5. Len's sister, father and brother, joined the forces. His father had been a POW in WWI.
6. In 20 March 1941, the Malaya was severely damaged by a German torpedo.
7. She made it to New York Naval yard where repairs took 4 months. Len travelled back to England on a leased US coastal cutter, but not before he had spent time at Radio City Music Hall and heard Jussi Bjorling sing at the Metropolitan Opera House –cementing a life-long love of opera.

In September 1941, on his arrival back in England, he undertook training in electronics at the Torpedo Training Schools, attaining the qualification of Seaman Torpedo man

8. And was appointed to the HMS Antelope, also operating from Gibraltar. This was Len's favourite ship.
9. Len recounted how the *Antelope* was charged with preventing a Vichy French passenger ship slipping out of port in North Africa to return to France. The captain asked for volunteers for a landing party and Len and about 11 others volunteered. Their leader was issued with a pistol and the rest of them with cutlasses. They boarded easily and - fortunately - the crew surrendered.
10. In early 1944 Len returned to Portsmouth and attained his Leading Torpedo man certificate
11. He was assigned to the aircraft carrier *HMS Formidable*, leaving from Belfast in May 1944. He thought Formidable, with its 2000+ crew, too big.

12. On 4 May 1945, between Japan and the Philippines, *Formidable* was damaged by a kamikaze, and made it to Sydney by 31 May.
13. It was within the next 26 days in Sydney that he met Sylvia. She worked as a waitress in the evenings in the city. She often invited English servicemen home to meet her English-born parents who liked talking about England. They had a Pianola and a collection of rolls that provided a sing-song in the evenings.

On 27 June *The Formidable* left for Japan as part of the Pacific Fleet. On August 3, a planned strike from the *Formidable* over Okinawa was called off in preparation, it turned out, for the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August. Len didn't talk about the War until he was in his eighties, and even then, he recounted only facts about the ships and the events, never the personal stories. As a younger man, he would say "If you'd seen the man next to you blown into pieces no bigger than sixpence, you wouldn't talk about it either". He did comment, apologetically, in his eighties, that along with the other sailors on the *Formidable*, he had cheered when told the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, because, he said, "We didn't know any better. We were just happy the war would be over".

14. *The Formidable* returned to Sydney as victory was declared, taking part in a Victory Parade on 31 August. In the three weeks that the *Formidable* was in Sydney this second time, Sylvia agreed to marry him.
15. *The Formidable* left Sydney again for the Philippines, bringing POWs back to Sydney on 13 October 1945. He wrote seven letters to Sylvia on this trip.
16. Len chose to demobilise in Sydney. It would be 20 years before he returned to England. He and Sylvia were married at St Matthew's Church Botany on 5 January 1946. After a two week honeymoon at Lake Burrill, they lived with Sylvia's parents, at 98 Banksia St Botany because there was a post-war housing shortage. They occupied the front bedroom for 7 years. Len found work at the Davis Gelatine and rode to work on his bike.
17. Sylvia said he was very patient with babies and young children. When he was home he would spend time entertaining them, or minding them, trying to keep them occupied and happy. He liked to go to the beach on the weekends in summer and was quite a good swimmer.
18. From the time the children were toddlers Len and Sylvia spent his 2 week holiday in Blackheath, hiring the same cabin each year and walking the many trails around Blackheath and Katoomba. It was the only real privacy they had.
19. Len built the kids a cubby house out of a large sisal craft-lined box from the Smith's Box Factory. He marched on Anzac Day, usually joining his brother-in-law Sid with the HMAS Australia contingent.
20. Len and Sylvia bought their home at 24 Livingstone Avenue Botany in March 1953.

Len set about improving, adding, furnishing and renovating the house. He took whatever overtime was available and spent every spare moment working on the house. He built wardrobes, tables and desks. He did the electrical work although he never did the three month course that would have qualified him as an Australian electrician. He was too busy providing for his family. He gradually acquired a very well equipped shed and that's where he was to be found when not at work or asleep. If we needed it, he built it, whether it was a box to house a hobby, a fish tank the size of a small pool, a fence, a room or a garden bed.

21. Len left the Davis Gelatine in 1958 to work at the ICI at Matraville, riding his bike or catching the bus. In 1961, under the ICI 'last on first off' policy, he was made redundant in the credit squeeze. He was distraught. He really liked working for ICI. After 2 weeks unemployment he got a job as a fixed overhead crane driver at General Electrics on Botany Rd Rosebery, obtaining his crane driver's licence. The ICI kept him on their books and held his superannuation. He was able to return there around 1967 and remained there as storeman until he retired in 1984.
22. When the children went to high school, Sylvia took a job at Qantas, making overseas travel possible and in 1966 Len and Sylvia took what was to be the first of many trips to the UK, visiting relatives and touring both the UK and Europe. Even though Len had been opposed to Sylvia taking a job, in later life he described this time as 'the beginning of the good years'. The world was changing, and the additional income meant they had money for things they both regarded as luxuries.
23. Sylvia was a passionate traveller and, until his late sixties, Len was content to go along. They won a trip to Hong Kong on the poker machines, and also visited Singapore, Fiji and Manilla. At the centre of their travel, however, was visiting Len's family in London and Cheltenham. They stayed with Len's sister Cissy or his brother Phil and with Phil's daughter Christine. There are albums and albums of photos of their European trips. Len became a naturalised Australian in 1982.
24. When Jim went to the country to teach, first at Menindee and then Inverell, Len and Sylvia visited him and also visited him in Wales and London.
25. When Jillian and her husband, Jim, moved to Adelaide for work, Len and Sylvia visited at least once a year and later hosted their two granddaughters during the school holidays, taking them on many excursions.
26. Len made them toys that have been used for another 2 generations
27. While in many ways Len was a traditional man of his generation - a proud breadwinner and home fixer - he developed pleasure in cooking late in life, after Sylvia broke her ankle. From then on, he was the primary cook in their household, particularly proud of his amazing scallops, which would be served piled high to delighted grandchildren when they visited. These meals would be followed by long games of cards into the night, when Sylvia would get increasingly silly, and Len would laugh.
28. They hosted Robyn's nephews, his brother Phil from England
29. and many Christmases
30. When Sylvia died unexpectedly in 1993, Len was bowled over, but gradually picked himself up and kept himself busy doing the things Sylvia suggested to him before she died – planting beans and tomatoes every year and maintaining the roses with mulch from the frangipani trees.
31. He took great pleasure in his family's academic accomplishments, in particular in attending Jillian, Katherine, and Robyn's graduation ceremonies. He visited Adelaide several times, notably for Katherine's graduation and wedding
32. and, in 2002 when his niece Sue came from England with her husband Alf. Len really enjoyed having them stay with him. He described Alf as 'my kind of person'.
33. For several years in the 1990s, Len said he wanted to live to see the Sydney Olympics, occurring around the time of his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday. He made it comfortably; Jim and Robyn took him to see several events. Jim got tickets to the final of the soccer and took him in a wheelchair and Len loved it. Jim made a collage of photos of that day. Len often mentioned later that he never

thought he'd live so long after seeing the soccer final at the Olympics - and how pleased he was to have done that.

34. Alison was living in NSW during this time and visited Len often, helping with his computer and talking politics. He was able to travel to Adelaide for his 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
35. Jim shopped for and delivered Len's beer and potatoes and took him shopping every week. One week Jim realised his Dad was shopping in Coles with a tea towel still over his shoulder! Len cooked his own meals using a microwave, a crock-pot and a frypan. Around 2005 Len was persuaded to accept some domiciliary care – a couple of hours of cleaning a week.

He was still travelling into the city by bus to go to the fish market on Sundays until he had a fall that shook him. He agreed to be picked up by the Council bus to go shopping once a week. He didn't much like this and it wasn't long before he accepted the offer of someone to do his shopping for him.

36. In 2005 he requested Meals on Wheels. He still cooked for himself on the weekend and a neighbour sometimes dropped in a meal.

In his last year at home he spent his time in the front enclosed veranda, watching the world go by, listening to his radio and occasionally chatting with neighbours.

In May 2007 he had a fall and ended up in hospital with concussion. After a week in hospital, he went into Sir Joseph Banks Residential Care.

It took him a while to adjust – to the home, the routine, his concussion and the other people. He formed bonds with a number of staff and got into the swing of “therapy” once he realised it was designed to help his mind and muscle coordination. He enjoyed listening to the paper being read each day, telling people about the trips he and Sylvia took – and winning the quizzes. He sent the toy bear he won back to Brigid, his eldest great-grandchild in Adelaide.

37. Jim acted as the primary contact and support, with the help of Robyn. They took Len out every weekend and made sure he had his beer and later his whiskey. All the members of his growing Adelaide and Canberra families came to visit. His sisters and English family wrote to him.
38. His 90<sup>th</sup> birthday was a celebration. His granddaughter Katherine brought her four children to Sydney – the first time Len had seen the twins. They visited Grandad Len again in 2012.
39. In the last two years Len rarely left Sir Joseph Banks. He became frailer but largely adjusted to the routine especially once he had his own room. He had huge respect for his favourite staff – Mary Lou, Kathy, Lynne and Sy ... and he always trusted Amelia to look after his interests. He told his family he had had a good life and, in the last month, that he was ready to die.
40. He passed away, quietly, in his sleep, on 5 June 2013, at 3.30pm.
41. Cover slide