

# Fight Cancer News

Newsletter of the Fight Cancer Foundation

## John Bennet Mathew Opie AM 4 April 1941 – 20 May 2009

**J**ohn Opie AM, President and Chairman of the Bone Marrow Donor Institute and Fight Cancer Foundation, passed away on Wednesday May 20, 2009 after a short illness.

John was a man larger than life. He was passionate about everything he did in his life, his career, his community work, and most importantly his family and friends.

He was a Chartered Accountant by profession, an astute businessman who seized each new business opportunity to broaden his working career. John was a member of many business organisations and was a director, secretary and chairman of numerous private and public companies. In recent times John was a co-owner of Adammo Fresh and Big Wet Spring Water and several other smaller companies.

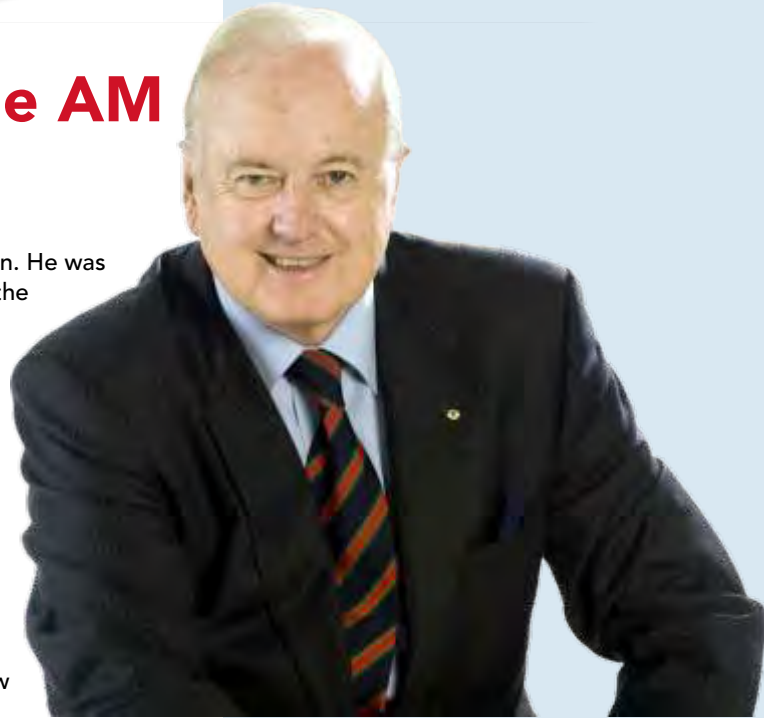
John was the recipient of several community awards, the Tattersalls Annual Award for Enterprise and Achievement, the Rotary International – Paul Harris Fellow, the Waverley Citizen of the Year, the Sir John Reid Community Service Award, the Australia Day Award, the AMP Victorian Community Service Award and he was recognised in 2002 with an Order of Australia for his work with the Bone Marrow Donor Institute.

John's community activities were many and varied including, Treasurer of the RSPCA, Secretary of the Company Directors Association, Secretary of the Arts Access Society, Treasurer of the Productivity Promotion Council of Australia and President and Chairman of the Bone Marrow Donor Institute and Fight Cancer Foundation, which he guided passionately for the past 20 years.

John was a man of vision. He was a founding member of the BMDI established in 1989 by a group of families who had experienced the devastation of having a child with leukaemia. He became chairman and president of the newly formed charity and remained so until his passing. The mission of BMDI was to establish a bone marrow donor registry in Australia. John was the driving force behind this mission and in partnership with the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Red Cross Blood Bank established the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. This was the first great vision, where there was previously little hope, now there is a registry of over 170,000 Australians and access to more than 10 million donors worldwide. More than 8,000 Australian and international patients have since been given a second chance of life.

Under John's visionary leadership, the organisation also established: the Rotary Bone Marrow Research Centre, to search for a cure for leukaemia and other cancers of the blood; The BMDI Cord Blood Bank, one of the most respected Banks in the world, which has over 8,000 cord blood units ready for a life saving transplant, and has so far given a second chance of life to more than 750 young people in Australia and

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## upcoming events

**Pin & Win Competition at the Caulfield Spring Racing Carnival**  
October 10, 14 & 17

Visit [www.fightcancer.org.au](http://www.fightcancer.org.au) or call (03) 9342 7888 for details.

### Red Ball 2009

Friday 13 November  
Crown Palladium Ballroom

For more information go to [www.fightcancer.org.au](http://www.fightcancer.org.au) or call (03) 9342 7888 to book your table.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

BMDI Rotary House, North Melbourne  
Pin & Win Caulfield Spring Racing Carnival  
Red Ball 2009

Fight Cancer Foundation House, Hobart  
Please refer to the back page.

## Inside:

Volunteer of the Year Award

Back on Track Kids Today

The Italian Connection



**Fight Cancer Foundation™**  
*Giving hope. Saving lives.*

## John Opie AM

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overseas, BMDI Rotary House in North Melbourne, Fight Cancer Foundation House in Hobart, caring for patients who need to be near major treatment centres, Cancer support groups and other projects including the Fight Cancer Back on Track program which enables Australian school-aged children living with cancer to continue their education during treatment and recovery and the Fight Cancer Back to Work program, which assists bone marrow and stem cell transplant recipients and their carers to re-enter the workforce, his vision also led to the funding of ovarian cancer research and early detection test development.

John was an inspiration to his fellow Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and the many whose lives he touched. His passion, vision and tireless energy have been the driving force behind the establishment, growth and success of BMDI and Fight Cancer Foundation. John left his fellow Board Members with many challenges on the drawing board and encouraged all who knew him to put something back into the community, because he felt it was so very rewarding.

John's dedication and inspiration provides a lasting legacy of hope and a second chance of life to cancer patients and their families. He will be most sadly missed by us all.

## Cultivating a New Generation of Philanthropy



**F**ight Cancer Foundation is proud to be supported in its work with young people living with cancer by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

Fight Cancer Foundation has been advised of a \$10,000 grant from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation itself and a further \$6,000 from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Youth in Philanthropy program. These will be presented at the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Celebration of Giving event at the Melbourne Town Hall to be held in October.

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is one of Melbourne's longest serving philanthropic organisations, having been established by Melbourne's Lord Mayor of the day Sir John Swanson in 1923. Last year the Foundation celebrated its 85th anniversary of caring for Melbourne's charities.

Each year the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation receives more than 500 applications for funding for charitable agencies providing care and support to people living in need and disadvantage. In 2008, the Foundation distributed \$8 million to health and welfare agencies across Melbourne and Victoria.

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation Youth in Philanthropy program involves a number of Melbourne schools. Each school forms a committee of six students and is allocated \$20,000 in funds from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation to distribute and is provided with three applications for funding from charitable organisations.

The challenge for the student committees is to decide how to allocate their budget of \$20,000 and distribute it to the three charities. Guidance is provided by the group's mentor, a representative of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

The Fight Cancer Foundation applauds this remarkable program for its engagement of a whole new generation of philanthropic thinkers and warmly appreciates the support by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

## Sir John Holland 21 June 1914 – 31 May 2009

**F**rom humble beginnings, Sir John Holland became one of the most respected and admired men in Australia. Sir John had a distinguished military career during WWII. Drawing on the values instilled in him during his military service, Sir John built one of the most highly respected and successful engineering and construction companies in Australia. Courage, initiative, fairness, leadership, along with a commitment to innovation in project delivery, became the tenets of his company, John Holland Engineering.

Sir John made a huge contribution to the building of modern Victoria including the Sidney Myer Music Bowl and the South-Eastern Freeway, amongst other significant projects in Victoria, Canberra, NSW and worldwide.

In 1973, Sir John received a Knighthood from the Queen and in 1988 received the highest national civilian award, Companion of the Order of Australia (AC).

Sir John was often praised for his honesty, trustworthiness and openness. He quietly gave year after year to several charitable organisations without seeking recognition for his work. In 1993 he became patron of the Bone Marrow Donor Institute and later the Fight Cancer Foundation. For many years Sir John chaired the BMDI Annual General Meeting and faithfully attended BMDI functions. He was always available to encourage and inspire us in our life saving work. His support has been immeasurable. Vale Sir John.



## Queen's Birthday Honours

Congratulations to Bernie Lamers AM and Gerry Lamers AM for receiving the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June. Bernie and Gerry were recognised for their support of several charitable foundations most notably for their invaluable and immeasurable contribution to the Bone Marrow Donor Institute.

## St George Supports Back on Track

St George Foundation, long-time supporters of Fight Cancer Foundation, happily present a cheque for \$25,000 for the Back on Track program, which enables primary and secondary school-aged children living with cancer to continue their education and stay in touch with their schools, teachers and peers.

Thank you, St. George.



Gordon Tansey, Regional Executive Melbourne City South, Matt Russell, Branch Manager and St. George's Kelly Lamm with Fight Cancer Foundation director, Sophia Elliott

## Fight Cancer Foundation and the Italian Connection

Newcastle pharmacist Jon Dickson, is a man with a passion for Italian cars. In 2008 Jon joined in the Italian Connection car rally from Sydney to Melbourne as navigator for a fellow Italian car enthusiast. This year in May, Jon drove his own car, a Lancia Fulvia HF 1600cc which he had lovingly restored.



Pharmacist Jon Dickson in his Lancia Fulvia

Jon had been touched by cancer at the age of 13 when he lost his mother. He had learned about our work with the Australian Bone Marrow Registry, and the BMDI Cord Blood Bank and the Rotary Bone Marrow Research Laboratories from our website. Being able to fundraise for the charity of their choice while on the rally, Jon chose the Fight Cancer Foundation.

Armed with Fight Cancer posters and donation tins Jon took every opportunity along the two day rally route to fundraise. Even at the Victory Dinner celebrated at the Abruzzo Club in Carlton Jon was rattling the donation tin.

Jon's efforts raised more than \$3000 for the Fight Cancer Foundation. He came in 4th in the rally, but to us he is Numero Uno!!!

**If you'd like to help sponsor Jon in the 2010 Italian Connection rally, please contact Sophia on 03 9342 8647.**

## New and pre-loved clothes wanted...

Please drop off your donation of clothing between 10am-4pm, Monday – Friday or 9am-1pm on Saturday.

**BMDI Geelong Recycle Shop,**  
203 Pakington St Geelong

**BMDI Drysdale Recycle Shop,**  
Shop 3, 6 High St Drysdale.

## ANZ Staff Afternoon Trivia Tea at BMDI Rotary House

BMDI Rotary House welcomed a group of 12 cheerful and motivated staff members from ANZ head office on June 30. Organised by Shona Titshall (front row, second from right) the group arrived to host an afternoon tea and trivia contest for House residents. But before they got down to the fun part of the afternoon, they rolled up their sleeves and took on the huge job of cleaning the curtains in all the 13 units. The delicious afternoon tea and hilarious trivia contest which followed was enjoyed by the residents and ANZ staff alike. The ANZ staff also donated DVD's, 2 TVs and welcome bags full of groceries for the House. Their generosity and hard work is greatly appreciated.



## Volunteers of the Year Awarded

On May 21 the Fight Cancer Foundation held its annual Volunteer Morning Tea to thank all our selfless and dedicated volunteers, who were presented with certificates of appreciation. Two very special volunteers, Cliff and Betty Benson were presented with the Fight Cancer Foundation's "Volunteer of the Year Award" for outstanding service.

Seventeen years ago in 1992, Cliff and Betty became involved as dedicated volunteers for the Fight Cancer Foundation, then known as the Bone Marrow Donor Institute (BMDI). Cliff had been diagnosed with leukaemia 2 years prior, and they joined the volunteer branch of BMDI to recruit donors and raise funds for the fledgling bone marrow donor register. After Cliff received a successful bone marrow transplant from his sister, Betty and Cliff became even more involved, as they wanted to give back to the community for all they had received. Since that time they have worn many volunteer hats for the Fight Cancer Foundation including, being members of the BMDI Geelong branch, which recruited donors and continues to fundraise; members of the Leukaemia

Family Support Group offering their support to patients and families afflicted with leukaemia; on a weekly basis Betty volunteers at the Recycle Shop in Pakington Street, Geelong, whilst on that same day Cliff travels from Ocean Grove to North Melbourne to volunteer at BMDI Rotary House, an accommodation centre for patients and families from regional Victoria and interstate to stay whilst they undergo often very lengthy treatment for life threatening illnesses. Cliff and Betty also act as part time caretakers for BMDI Rotary House.

"Betty and Cliff are invaluable members of the Fight Cancer Foundation team. They are passionate people who are committed to our mission of giving hope and saving lives. It is a great pleasure to award Betty and Cliff Benson the Fight Cancer Foundation Volunteers of the Year," said Eric Wright, Managing Director of the Fight Cancer Foundation.



Volunteers of the Year Betty & Cliff Benson

## Red Ball 2009 Update



Preparations are in full swing for the Fight Cancer Foundation's major fund raising event – the Red Ball, to be hosted by our Patron Deborra-lee Furness.

Join us on Friday 13 November at the Crown Palladium Ballroom for what will prove to be a glittering night of fabulous entertainment, delicious food and wine, and chance to bid on exclusive auction prizes, all in support of our life saving projects.

To book your tickets for an unforgettable night, call 03 9342 7888.

## Volunteer Morning Tea at BMDI Geelong Recycle Shop

A special morning tea was held for the Geelong BMDI Recycle Shop volunteers on June 23. Several of the shop volunteers had been unable to attend the Fight Cancer Foundation Volunteer morning tea held in May in Melbourne at BMDI Rotary House including two very special volunteers: Rose Nash (centre) and Alma Quarrell (second from left).

Both ladies were retiring after 17 years of dedicated work at the shop. The Fight Cancer Foundation is very grateful to Rose and Alma and all the wonderful volunteers who dedicate their time to help our cause. Also in attendance were FCF Vice President Fay Duncan (back row centre) and Managing Director, Eric Wright (back row left).



## Back on Track Kids TODAY!



Hayden follows his passion



**H**ayden In November 2006, 11 year old Hayden of Wagga Wagga was diagnosed with Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma. A two year treatment program commenced, including a gruelling 6 month intensive course of 'chemo', which left Hayden weak and immune deficient. Slowly but steadily, Hayden went from strength to strength. During his time at Westmead Children's Hospital, Hayden participated in the Fight Cancer Back on Track program which, according to his parents, contributed to Hayden's current

success at school. Since the completion of his treatment and the rebuilding of his immune system, Hayden has not looked back. He has represented his school at the Regional and State level Cross Country finals and is active in a variety of sports including cricket, football, kayaking, snowboarding; but his real passion is fishing.

In 2008 Hayden won the Back on Track Christmas card design competition, which expressed what Christmas meant to him. (See our back page; you can purchase Hayden's Christmas Wishes at designated charity card shops listed on our website).

Hayden is now in remission and looking forward to 2010, when he heads off to high school to begin a new chapter in his short but eventful life.

No doubt his determination and fighting spirit, which helped him overcome his illness, will hold him in good stead for whatever comes his way in the future.

**S**hea It was in September 2005 when 12 year old Shea and his family received the diagnosis of Shea's condition - acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. There was only one course of action. He and his family had to relocate from their home in Tasmania to BMDI Rotary House in North Melbourne to begin a 13 month intensive treatment program at the Royal Children's Hospital. It was a long tough road for Shea and his family. Being away from family and friends was difficult. But they found a caring and supportive environment at the House that helped buoy them along through those challenging days. Shea managed to keep abreast of his school work with the support of our Back on Track program. By doing so, Shea was able to re-enter school with his peers when he returned to Launceston in December 2006.

During his stay in Melbourne Shea became the Fight Cancer Foundation's 'poster boy' and spokesperson for the Fight Cancer Back on Track program.

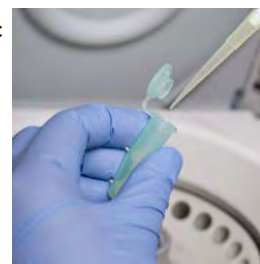
Three years on, Shea is doing well. He and his family have embarked on a new life in country Victoria. He is currently in year 10 and making plans for year 11 and his VCE subjects. Shea hopes to pursue a career in hospital administration. When he is not busy with his studies he loves kicking around the soccer ball with his school mates or working on his newly purchased pre-loved Toyota Supra. With his "L" plate prominently displayed Shea has reached another milestone in his very eventful life.



Three years on, Shea is doing well

## Update on Bone Marrow Research Laboratories

**T**he Bone Marrow Research Laboratories have been awarded a \$52,000 grant from the Joe White Bequest. This grant will allow the Laboratories to purchase equipment to create a state of the art cell and tissue culture work station. The Bone Marrow Research Laboratories are internationally recognised for their work in investigating the mechanisms behind leukaemic disorders. The ultimate goal behind this research is the development of new therapies and working towards a cure.



## Introducing our Ovcare Ambassador



**W**e are delighted to announce that Rebecca Maddern has joined our team as Ovcare Ambassador. Rebecca is passionate about making a difference and will be an

exceptional spokesperson for Ovcare.

Rebecca began her career in radio reading the news reports, and in October 2002, the Seven Melbourne News Director offered her a reporting position with that network. In 2003, she won a Quill Award for the Best TV News Report for her coverage of the fire threat to Omeo that year. Her career in news reporting now involves presenting news updates, regularly travelling to Sydney to present the 4:30 pm news, Sunrise and The Morning Show and reporting for Seven's national public affairs program, "Sunday Night". She is also Melbourne's alternate weekend bulletin presenter.

Working with Rebecca, we can continue to raise awareness of ovarian cancer, and support for our research and the development of new tests for this insidious disease.



## Fight Cancer Foundation House Hobart News

The Fight Cancer Foundation meets a vital need for Tasmanians undergoing treatment at Hobart's hospitals, by providing affordable, comfortable accommodation for patients and families who live outside of Hobart. This November, *Fight Cancer Foundation House Hobart* will celebrate its 1st birthday. To date more than 172 patients and their families have stayed at what is now

considered by many to be 'a home away from home'. Centrally located on Murray Street, the House is a 5 minute walk to the Royal Hobart Hospital and Hobart's central shopping district.

**For more information about the House or if you'd like to become a Fight Cancer Foundation House volunteer, please contact Nicole in Hobart on (03) 6234 4030.**

## Fight Cancer Foundation Christmas Cards 2009

Our range of Christmas cards is ready for sale. In October our cards will be available for purchase at these charity card shops:

### VICTORIA

**Box Hill** – Lions Club Box Hill Combined Charities' Christmas Card Shop – Box Hill Town Hall Hub

**Camberwell** – Camcare – 19 Fairholme Grove

**Ballarat** – Ballarat Combined Charities' Card Shop – 27 Magpie St

**Bendigo** – St Paul's Cathedral Combined Charities' Christmas Card Shop – 8 Myers St.

**Geelong** – Wesley Centre - Geelong Combined Charities Card Shop – 100 Yarra St

**Heidelberg** – Banyule Support & Information Centre – 101 Burgundy St.

**Maryborough** – Maryborough Combined Charities' Card Shop,  
Maryborough Community Information Centre – 91 Nolan St

**Mitcham** – Centre 81 Charities card Shop – 81 Doncaster East Road.

**North Essendon** – Orana Family Services Card Shop Uniting Church – 132 Keilor Road

### TASMANIA

**Hobart** – St David's Cathedral Combined Charities' Christmas Card and Gift Shop – Cnr Murray & Macquarie Streets.

*(Please note card designs will vary at different shops; see our website for more information or ring Maria on 03 9342 7888).*



"Hayden's Christmas Wishes"



For a night you will never forget, volunteer for The Red Ball, November 13 at the Crown Palladium Ballroom. Volunteer jobs will include set up and fundraising opportunities.

**For more information please contact our Volunteer Coordinator on (03) 9342 7888**

## BMDI Rotary House

Situated at 4-12 Blackwood Street in North Melbourne, the House needs 'handy' volunteers. Comprised of 13 self-contained apartments, communal lounge, seminar room, office, gym, computer room and teen games room, the House is a base for interstate and regional Victorian families who are undergoing long term treatment for cancer and need to live near the major treatment hospitals.

To provide this 'home away from home', we are looking for capable volunteers to carry out small maintenance jobs from changing washers to changing light globes.

**For more information, contact Michele on (03) 9320 7400.**

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

### Spring Racing Pin & Win ...and they're off!

Come support the Fight Cancer Foundation by selling Pin & Win badges at the Caulfield Spring Racing Carnival and have a great day out! Dates are listed below.

**Contact our Volunteer Co-ordinator on (03) 9342 7888 for more information.**



**Saturday, October 10**

The Age Caulfield Guineas



**Wednesday, October 14**

Schweppes Thousand Guineas



**Saturday, October 17**

BMW Caulfield Cup

