

★ COOKHOUSE CHATTER ★

Jim Banks, better known as Chappie on the New Zealand show circuit, is the son of the late great show parents Jim and Violet Banks. Chappie was born in 1941 at Ngarawahia NZ and has spent his entire life travelling the NZ show circuits. For a great many years Chappie was a good caterer and operated one of the biggest canteens touring the NZ show circuit. In his time he has operated many different rides and featured as an attraction at shows with his ponies and dog act. Chappie from time to time has toured with Whirling Bros Circus as a sharpshooter and clown. At 76, Chappie and his wife Venus have decided to retire from touring the major show circuit, and just keep their hands in performing at local gala events in their area. On the circuit they have lived in the most luxurious 30 foot custom built caravan, in their retirement they will live on their small

farmlet out the back of Dannevirke.

Gavan Donoghue, of Stratford Victoria, who has been researching a story of an elephant being knocked off a truck passing under a railway bridge, won a state award for his newspaper feature article.

Thank you for a lovely obituary Geof, and many thanks to all the CFAers who sent emails. Neil really enjoyed his years with you all and very much enjoyed the get together every second year. He had loved the circus since he was a child, loved going to the

shows and made sure all the family got to see them too. Thank you all and especially you Geoff, for all the support you gave Neil over the years.
- Anne Brathwaite

A reminder to Circus Fans that Hugh Jackman's new movie *The Greatest Showman* will come to cinemas in December. Inspired by the imagination of P.T. Barnum, *The Greatest Showman* is an original musical that celebrates the birth of show business and tells of a visionary who rose from nothing to create a spectacle that became a worldwide sensation.



★ Fanfare ★

Circus Fans of Australasia Inc.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2017





from the Ringmaster

Welcome circus fans to the November/December issue of Fanfare.

Karen and I wish a very Merry Christmas and prosperous new year to all circus fans, owners, performers and staff.

We are now back in Geelong and, by the time you are reading this, the James Ashton Tent (Victorian members) will have had its Christmas lunch of roast meats, scalloped potatoes, homemade salads, homemade pavlova and Christmas pudding (made by Karen and the Ringmaster) with brandy custard and freshly-whipped

cream. It should be a great day with lots of circus talk and a chance for members to look at some of my huge circus memorabilia collection.

While doing the last leg of our trip through South Australia, we spent three nights in Maitland, where Alan King lives in a nursing home. He really enjoyed the evening meals cooked in our caravan instead of the usual nursing home dinners.

Then in Victor Harbor I had visits to the caravan by CFA members Helen Ramsay (who told me lots of interesting stories about her time

on Bullens, Lennon Bros, Sole Bros and Ashtons) and Phil Stanford, as I wasn't well enough to go and visit them.

It could be an interesting 2018 for our circus owners as they try to find the right towns and cities to play. One owner has told me his plans for 2018.

Planning is well underway for the CFA Convention in San Remo, NSW, in May. I have been advised by a CFA member who has checked the site that it's a great location. Secretary Tom tells me the registration fees are rolling in, plus a

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Ringmaster's report continued

FROM PAGE 2

number of members have advised me they are hoping to be there but must wait a little longer to see whether their personal lives will allow them to attend. I must point out that registration will end three weeks before the convention, because Tom must be able to

advise the camp and Karen how many people will be there for catering purposes. So, as the old adage used by our circuses goes, "BOOK NOW!" This will be the convention not to miss. I would also remind you that all positions will become vacant, so come on guys and girls,

who wants to lead the CFA into the future?

Well circus fans, enjoy time with your families this Christmas and I will see you either under a big top somewhere or in the January/February issue of Fanfare.

Raymond
RINGMASTER

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Welcome to some of our new members



Jake Larkin, Ringmaster of Webers Circus. Award winner at Australian Circus Festival 2017.

Rachel and And Peters, owners of Roundabout Circus, Gosford, The pair will entertain us at the 2018 Convention.



Our youngest new members, triplets born June 6. Proud parents are Yelena West-Dorfliger and husband Lee from Stardust Circus.

Right: Kimberley Dumpleton, Tuggerawong, NSW.



Hooray for Hudson's!

A couple of hours before Hudson's Circus opened in Northam, WA, a storm arrived, thunder, rain, the lot. This was still going when the show began, and the rain continued until after intermission. But it was dry inside. The crowd just kept coming, and they had to keep bringing in extra seats to cope with the numbers which was great. I have never seen such a crowd for a circus here for years.

Goldie opened the show with his humour followed by the hoop lady. Never before have I seen hula done with fire on the hoop! It was magical. Belinda then brought in the ponies in alternating colours, brown, white, brown, white, brown. Beautiful animals.

Goldie then taught about clown cars. Most people do not realise a car can talk and wants to go driving, even with stinky pants driving it. Was an uproar when the car told Goldie it was clown car wee-wee not water he was hit with! Got a victim from the audience to help with the car when it did not want to go. A good match as he was a real clown himself! The silks, macaw and contortion by Lara with the upside down archery rounded out the first half.

The rain was still pouring down, but Shane kindly organised a discount for me to get a picture with the macaws (right). It was only afterwards that I realised that I was wearing a top that perfectly matched their colours!



Second half was opened by Goldie with his humour again. Then came the hula hoops, camels, water buffalo, llamas, camels and trapeze with Goldie in between.

I managed to teach some people sitting near me that you can easily tell that they were llamas and not alpacas by looking at the ears because llamas have banana shaped ears. Of course the kids picked up on it and were going around saying about the "llama banana ears". There was just so much good about the circus and no bad. It is hard this pick the best parts of the show.

What I will remember is that it is the first time I have ever seen real live macaws and water buffalo. Being able to actually have the macaws on

my arms was a highlight. They are very gentle, yet I could feel the strength in their feet. The most surprising thing was how lightweight they are. I have held heavier galahs! But they are so beautiful and well looked after. The animals are all very obviously loved.

The talk around town was that everyone loved the show, and some were heard to be disappointed that they missed out after hearing of the great show. I enjoyed it as much as the circuses I saw as a child in the 1970s where they still had animals like elephants, monkeys and big cats.

This is definitely a circus that is worth revisiting. Everyone was so nice.

Thanks to Shane, Nancy and the troupe for such a great night, and will see you next time around.

- Shirley Cook



Ashton Circus film in the works

A new film chronicling the rich history of the Ashton Circus and its founder, James Henry Ashton, is in the works.

Ashton's – set in the early 1800s – will follow the great success of the Ashton Circus family amidst the hardship of the Gold Mining era.

Founded by James Henry Ashton in the early 1800s, Ashton Circus has travelled all over Australia, bringing joy to many rural communities and big cities for more than 160 years. It's even said that Ned Kelly enjoyed

Ashton's shows on a number of occasions and even enjoyed tea with the performers.

"I approached the Ashton's over four years ago to get their permission to produce the film," says Ashton's producer and director Leonie Kelly.

"The family approved the script before we started production and they are really excited and supportive of everything we're doing."

The film stars Ben Fletcher as James Henry Ashton (pictured

above) and Katie Tullia as Elizabeth Critchley Ashton.

Kelly says she has complete control over the film, but is always open to any suggestions from the Ashton family.

- Matthew Eeles
CinemaAustralia

Ashton's is currently running a crowdfunding campaign to complete production of the film. Almost \$50,000 is needed to produce part two. For more information, visit gofundme.com/48g8k1

Aus Circus Festival awards

As Ringmaster of CFA, I wish to congratulate all winners at this year's Australian Circus Festival. In particular two members of the CFA, firstly a new member Jake Larkin from Weber's Circus on winning two awards - Leading Ringmaster (his trophy pictured right), plus Best Lighting and Sound Tech for 2017.

Well Done.

And Ashley Brophy for his breaking the Guinness Book of Records for wire

walking.

Ashley has been walking the wire since a child and his Russian Cossack Wire Act at The Great Moscow Circus (Edgley/Lennon Venture) was a highlight of that show and in more recent times as himself on Hudson's Circus.

It is my hope that my hip operation will allow me to attend the fourth annual



Australian Circus Festival to represent CFA.

- Raymond Deller



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Vern on Safari

1976, May 25: Let the cats and bears out. Greg Bullen and I took a camel to St Kilda beach. A *Current Affair* did an interview with Ray Stevens while he was riding the camel. Ray was well known for his hit records *Ahab the Arab*, *Guitarzan*, *Everything is Beautiful*. He was very interested in animals and asked me a lot of questions about my work.



Indian Island, Bullen's Lion Safari Rockbank Victoria.

All had lunch at a restaurant opposite the St Kilda Palais.

26: Wayne, Terry and I fixed bear fence where they had been pulling at it. Raymond Dellar visited me at the park; showed him around. Raymond came in while I put cats away. Wayne came to our place for dinner tonight.

30: Greg not in this morning so I was in ticket office. Worked two circuses. Fed bears and put them away. Greg tripped on office step and cut his head, went home.

June 1: Fed bears carrots and bread. Cats were shot at last night in their dens. Vet came out and checked Molly's right front paw, just a graze. All the other cats OK. Police came out. Phill

and I broke up fight in bear compound.

5: Took ute to Melton and got greens, fed hoofed stock. Helped on camel ride. Lion Park admission was 50c and \$1.50, has now gone up to \$1 and \$2.

9: Got petrol at work. Also filled the park vehicles. Two cats got from section 4 into section 3, they started a brawl. Greg and I broke up fight while Phill and Wayne put section 3 cats into den (with great difficulty). Took about half an hour to get them

Two cats got from section 4 into section 3, they started a brawl. Greg and I broke up fight while Phill and Wayne put section 3 cats into den (with great difficulty). Took about half an hour to get them

down the den end of the compound and away from the gate. Had trouble getting the section 4 cats into their den tonight, no trouble with section 3 cats.

12: Cleaned picnic area. Three donkeys got out and into the parking lot. They split up so we had to get them one at a time. I worked two circuses. Car hit a fence pole in section 1, it was stuck on it. Had to tow it off, bumper has a dent. On gate 4 for feeding.

14: Let out cats. Wayne and I boned cat sections. I went to Tuckerbag and got greens for hoofed stock. Did the camel ride while Phill had lunch. Put cats away. Bears did not want to go in dens. Took us 35 minutes to get them in.

Ashley's amazing feat

Life-long wire walker and burns survivor Ashley Brophy smashed through a seven-year-old world record while taking part in the Australian Circus Festival at Stardust Circus in Blacktown on November 16.



Ashley Brophy taping his blisters.

At 6am he began his attempt to break two world records: his own 32-year-old record of 11.566km in 3.5 hours and 15.68km within 24 hours. He also wanted to set a record for the greatest distance in 12 hours.

Brophy walked the 15.68km in eight hours and 26 minutes.

He set a record of 20.02km in 12 hours, which he hopes will stand for many years.

"I had a good feeling that I would be able to break the (24-hour) record," Brophy said.

"I tried to break my own record but in a way I'm glad I didn't, because that's still a longstanding record of 32 years."

The wire is 6.8m high and 17.5m long and it took 897 crossings to break the record. By 2.26pm he had smashed the distance.

"I feel great that I was able to get it done early or earlish," Mr Brophy said.

The previous record was set by Joey Kelly in 2010. But for Mr Brophy the walk was not just about a record, it was about proving to his kids "they can achieve whatever they want in life".

"I had a fire accident 18 months ago," he said. "I had young kids and I wanted to show them that it's not the end of the world, that you still get past a lot."

Last year a generator

caught fire on the circus grounds and while he was trying to put the fire out, a jerry can exploded in his face.

He received second- and third-degree burns to his face, hands and legs. "I was ... lucky with 16 per cent burns on my body, both superficial and full thickness, with no lost body parts or facial scars," he said of the July incident which kept him off the high wire until October last year.

Brophy's achievements will be submitted to Record Holders Republic for official recognition.

-Danielle Jarvis
Blacktown Advocate



STARDUST: Blacktown (November 3-18); Gosford (January 1-21).
GREAT MOSCOW: Singleton (November 15-19); Hamlyn Terrace (November 23-December 10); .
LENNON Bros.: Coonabarabran (November 10-11); Nyngan (14-15); Cobar (17-18); Broken Hill (22-25).
SILVER'S: Mornington (January 3-28). Silver's are performing as part of Santa's Magical Kingdom in Caulfield from November 17-December 23.
WEBER'S: Narrabeen (November 10-26); Merrylands (January 11-21); Shellharbour (January 25-February 4); Kiama (8-18); Nowra (February 22-March 4).
ROYALE: Mount Barker (October 18-22); Waikerie (24-25); Berri (27-29); Robinvale (October 31-November 1); Swan Hill (3-5); Kerang (7-8); Deniliquin (10-12); Shepparton (16-19); Bendigo (22-26).
INFAMOUS: Canberra (November 10-December 17).
ERONI'S CIRCUS: Mansfield (October 20-22); Yea (25); Alexandra (28-29).
HUDSON'S CIRCUS: Northam (November 8-11); Ceduna (17-19); Port Augusta (23-26); Noarlunga (December 29-January 14); Munno Para (18-28).

NEW ZEALAND

ZIRKA CIRCUS: Whangarei (October 27-November 5); Kaitia (9-12); Taipa (14-15); Kaikohe (18-19); Paihia (23-26); Kerikeri (November 30-December 3).
WEBER BROS CIRCUS: Ashburton Domain (October 16-29); Alexandra (October 30-November 12); Invercarill (16-26); Gore (November 29-December 3) Oamaru (4-10).
CIRQUE GRANDE: Petone (October 12-15); Nelson (20-29); Motueka (November 2-5); Westport (10-12); Greymouth (16-19); Hokitika (24-26); Kaiapoi (December 1-3); Rangiora (8-10).

From the secretary

Convention 2018 at San Remo:

Interest has been excellent and it appears that all the on-site accommodation will be booked out soon, so please register as soon as possible. All registrations completed before January 1 will go into a special prize draw. We do have other van parks and motels within 5km available.

We had 60 people at Frankston in 2016 and it appears we will have more next year and we already have some very interesting entertainers and speakers lined up. There will also be some wonderful new DVDs of overseas shows not seen before for those who wish to stay up late at night.

This is a unique opportunity to meet old friends and make a lot of new ones as many of

those already booked in have not been to a convention before and will have many stories to pass on. Everything is at one great venue, just park your car for the whole weekend. If you wish to see more of the beautiful Central Coast, do that before or after the convention and we can provide information for you about things to see, make this a real holiday.

Sunday morning will be the popular auction sale of circus memorabilia and the proceeds from this event goes to subsidise your weekend so if you have any items you would like to donate (get rid of), please send or bring them with you.

One of the most important things to consider is to nominate



for any of the committee positions to take over from May 2018, as without volunteers to take on these enjoyable tasks, this wonderful organisation will cease to exist just when it is growing again. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to call us on (02) 4393 2681.

The best Christmas present you can get it so register for the 2018 CFA Convention, so we hope to hear from you all very soon.

Best wishes to all for the festive season, from Lea and Tom.



Circus City at Sydney Festival

The annual cultural celebration Sydney Festival returns to transform the city from January 6-28.

Circus City returns to Parramatta, creating a central hub for Sydney Festival's circus activity. The Circus Oz show, Model Citizens, is front and centre – a hair-raising performance examining the

Australian suburban dream, through live music, daredevil acrobatics and mind-bending physical feats.

The specially commissioned Backbone from Gravity & Other Myths offers the audience a raw and exhilarating ride to the edges of human strength.

Legs on the Wall also

bounces into Prince Alfred Square with Highly Sprung (above) a colourful, acrobatic, multi-level trampoline display which appears alongside workshops in aerial skills, juggling and flying trapeze for the whole family.

For more information about these and other Sydney Festival events, visit sydneyfestival.org.au

Kelly Bros Circus comes to town

Trevor Kelly, who came to New Zealand from Ireland, is now in his second season of operating his very popular family show, Kelly Bros Circus. He has a nice new big top and his outfit travels on nine vehicles, which include a light, canopied truck, towing his caravan.

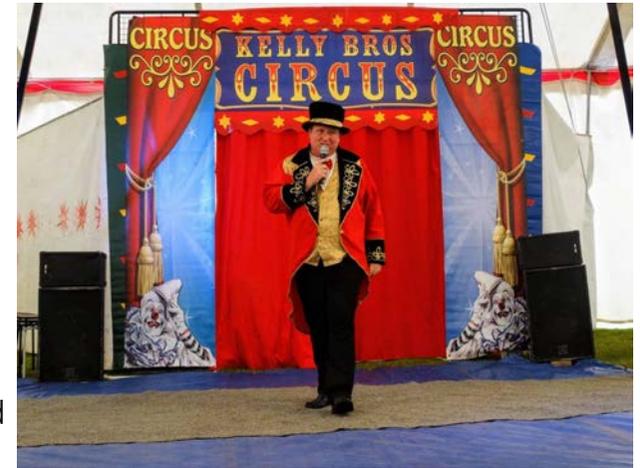
There is a horse float, a ticket trailer, artists' caravan, and flat deck 20-foot tandem trailer with the big top and seats on it.

He has two four-wheel-drive vehicles that tow the units. His seating is all chairs.

The programme lasts for around 60 minutes and features no intermission.

Trevor presents a fast moving show, act after act and the audience goes away very well entertained.

The outside of the show features about eight



Trevor Kelly is the clown in the centre of the above group.

stalls, all provided by the all-new pop-up Gypsy Fair. The entire outfit is very well presented.

- Tony Ratcliffe



Getting Extreme with Circus Phoenix

Circus Phoenix Extreme - remember that name, I feel this show is really going places. The show is owned and run by Phoenix Harrison and Cassandra Gasser. Both of them come from a line of highly respected circus owners and entertainers. Although this show has only been running for a few short months, from what I've seen so far they are destined to carry on the high standard of entertainment their families have done in the past. The show from the outside looks good, very neat and tidy. The only criticism I would offer is that the Big Top needs more lighting over the top to bring it alive and draw the people to. I know they have this on their agenda, but the sooner the better. On the inside the setup is great. Good seating, lighting, music, Ring announcing by Mali De Goey is great and he manages to keep the people involved right throughout the show. The show kicks off with a parade of the performers and gets straight into the action with some flair riding by Ruben Chadwick. Precision at its best by this young man before getting

into the more traditional acts. The hoops with Chantel, I love this light-hearted act, it just seems to make everyone smile and gets them in the mood for things to come. Chelle Hafner on the swinging pole; Kate and Amelia Smith, on double trapeze; Chantel on Russian silks all take care of business in the air and all perform beautifully. Cassandra Gasser has some interludes of illusion assisted by Kate and Amelia that leave the audience scratching their heads in wonder. Comedy is taken care of by Jon Paul and Jefferson. These two are masters of comedy and always get great crowd reaction. Phoenix Harrison thrills the crowd with his Wheel of Steel, gets the crowd jumping and hanging on. Closing the show is the ever popular Globe of Death with Jefferson and Phoenix. These two put on a great performance with the highlight being the



beautiful Cassandra Gasser standing in the globe while the boys ride around at high speed with only inches to spare. This leaves the audience gasping and squirming in their seats. After the show the cast all assemble at the entrance for photos and meet and greet with the audience. There always seems to be a good line up with this activity as they scramble to meet their favourites. What I have seen myself and what I have heard has been nothing but praise for this show. Although it is new it is definitely going places and is a credit to Phoenix and Cassandra, and they must be so pleased to be supported by such a great cast. Well done all of you and good luck. Looking forward to next time, I'm expecting more surprises.

- Chris Cherrie

all those years ago, whenever a circus was showing in their area.

To me, Neil was what you saw is what you got and there was never anything flash about Neil. He was just one of the boys despite his very successful business career and yes one could say Neil was in the money as well, but this would never come from him as you would only have to read between the lines at times. It was also mentioned in the eulogy that Neil had a heart of gold as well, and if anyone he knew was doing it tough and had always had a go in life, more than not something would always find their way with the complements of Neil's kind generosity.

Although Neil was a late comer to the CFA, at a time when one could say that new blood was needed to take us forward as the membership was ageing and when most of the delegates that did attend our bi-annual conventions had fulfilled most of the positions on the executive over the years, Neil wasted no time in being an active member and rose to the top job as Ringmaster in no time, as Neil was a born leader and excelled in that position for a breaking six years or a three term Ringmaster with

consecutive terms that had never been matched before and most likely never will be again. Yes, sure we have had Ringmasters with three terms before, but never consecutive and with many terms being some years apart.

We can all take comfort knowing that Neil did not suffer for a long period of time, despite living with his illness for a couple of years with many ups and downs but living a fairly normal life that enabled Neil and Anne to do many things together such as spending more time with their family as they all live some distance apart, and also Neil and Anne were able to embark on a cruise to Bali early this year as well which they immensely enjoyed.

Neil's beloved wife Anne was



Some mementos celebrating Neil's life. Graeme and Geoff holding one of the many clowns from Neil's collection.

able to nurse Neil at home in his last few weeks to enable him to be surrounded by his family and being in the comfort of his beloved home, rather than being in a hospice or a nursing home which he most likely did not want to be in.

To Anne and all the family, we thank you all so much for all the love and care shown to our very dear friend Neil throughout his illness, and especially to Anne that enabled Neil to be at home to the very end something I know he would have appreciated so much and our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this very difficult time.

- Graeme Kingdon
Circus Fan Bendigo

Neil Brathwaite farewelled



Happier times at the 2014 Murray Bridge Convention. The late Neil Brathwaite (left), along with Circus Fan Graeme Kingdon, CFA founding member Geoff Greaves and Circus Fan Colin Ferrell.

As reported in the last edition of Fanfare as per Geoff Greaves obituary to this extraordinary man and very dear friend, the late Neil Brathwaite was laid to rest at a private funeral service on Friday September 29 on the south coast of NSW, with a Memorial Service to be followed on Friday October 13 in Neil's hometown of Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

Mourners from far and wide gathered at the Anglican Church in the heart of this very small town for the memorial service, to reflect on this man's very colorful life, along with myself and CFA stalwart Geoff Greaves and his wife Robyn.

A very moving tribute was

led by Neil's and Anne's three children - daughter Jen from the Sydney suburb of Manly, and sons Ned from the Melbourne suburb of Kew and Peter from Newcastle.

Neil's lifelong friend and travel companion for many years, David Brown also spoke about their many adventures, as Neil was a highway man and loved doing the big miles in his beloved Holden cars, which were all in the latter years the top of the range V8 Holden Statesman's with plenty of muscle power.

It was no surprise to me to learn that Neil was a very successful businessman, a self-taught businessman and a no nonsense businessman. What I did

not know was Neil's love for the land as he was born on his parents' dairy farm and not only by the age of 20 did Neil own his own farm but had had two dairy farms that he owned that set him and his family up for life.

Anne and Neil were very proud grandparents as well, and the grandchildren each delivered a poem to reflect on their grandfather's life during the service as well. Two traditional Hymns were played also throughout the service *Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven* and *Now thank we all our God*.

Neil's love and passion for the circus was also mentioned in the eulogy, where Neil would always take his family to the show

Vale Hazel Baban

A tribute to Hazel Baban who sadly passed in October after a brief illness.

Hazel had a long connection with the well-known Lennon Bros Circus and both Hazel and Ron Lennon were dear companions for many years.

This photo was taken in 2013 in Hamilton New Zealand at the Circus Fans get-together when both Ronnie and Hazel came over to NZ as Ronnie was a guest speaker at the Mini Convention (Ronnie and Hazel on the left, Vicki and Tony Ratcliffe on the right).

Everyone immensely enjoyed the company of Ronnie and Hazel and Ron outlined his family connection with New Zealand all those years ago when the family was touring with their circus there and spoke with vivid memories of New Zealand. Hazel was a real down to earth person and a real trouper as well in the Circus World. Our thoughts are with Ronnie Lennon and the wider Lennon and Baban families.



Goodbye Leo

It is with much sadness that I report the passing away of a tremendous circus personality and great historic performer Leo St Leon. I met Leo in 1961 when we worked for Wirth's Circus on their tour of New Zealand. I was straight out of school, only 15, and joined Wirths.

Billy Brown, one of the horse grooms, introduced me to Doris Wirth and helped me get a job. My first job was to learn to be a clown and tumble. In Clown Alley I met Leo, Johnny Harsten, Kevin Young and Stan Gill. Leo was a wonderful performer both as a clown and presenting the Revolving Ladder. I pay tribute to Leo



who passed away suddenly at 83. I am very proud to say I have seen a great circus man Leo with Wirths. I am privileged to be able to supply some photos of Leo via another circus icon Robert Perry, who was great mates with Leo. Our condolences to Leo's family.

- Tony Ratcliffe

Big year for Royale

Circus Royale has returned to Victoria, ending their 2017 season in Bendigo on November 26. This circus departed Victoria in early 2016 to make their way to Western Australia for an extensive tour of the Perth suburbs for the remainder of 2016 and 2017 saw Royale's itinerary on a scale that hasn't been seen for many years. They departed Perth early this year and made their way up the west coast to the top end via the mining towns of Tom Price and Mt Newman and making their way down the Centre from Darwin and into South Australia and Victoria.

Plenty of manpower can be found on Royale to accommodate their dauntless itinerary, as it was not unusual for this circus to play two towns per week during the year.

New on the program since their last Victorian visit is Chantal Ward along with partner Marc Matousek performing a very nice duo strap routine. Marc, who is the twin brother of well-known Tim Matousek at Weber's Circus, is also presenting the

fairly new innovation on the Australian circuit, the very effective Cube routine accompanied by Thomas and Paul.

Also new on the lot is Julia Burrey, who has not only put her hand at presenting Royale's Welsh Mountain Ponies, but is also performing the Silks as well and is a very good all rounder indeed.

On a sad note, the Hallmark of Royale for many years "Howell's Performing Holstein Friesian Cows" are no more. The surviving two cows of the regional four Heidi and Daisy have been retired to greener pastures on a farm in the outer suburbs of Perth. The Friesians were introduced by former proprietor Frank Gasser in 2001 when he saw a performance of cows in a European Circus and decided to make this an Australian first which prove to be very popular and one of my many favorites on Royale for years.

The clowning on this circus is still superb with father and son duo Fransisco and



Above: Robin Howell and his lovely parter Kim Wilson on clown alley at Royale's Swan Hill stand in November. Right: Circus Proprietor/Ringmaster Damian Syred (left) along with Royale's icon Robin Howell (right) with Circus Fan Graeme Kingdon.

Chiquino Reyes from South America, with Fransisco now presenting the clowning on this circus for more than five years along with his young family who also performs the juggling on this circus with sons Chiquino and Jonathan, with the Australian audience having seen the boys grow up somewhat adding new tricks to their already very polished routine as they grow older.

Daughter Susana Reyes, a world-renowned contortionist for her legendary bow and arrow act, gave her last performance on Sunday November 5 in Swan Hill after five years with the show. On a nostalgic note a very

emotional Circus Proprietor/Ringmaster Damian Syred bid farewell to Susana with a bouquet of flowers and told the audience he had seen her grow into a very fine lady indeed and that Susana also took out first prize at the 2016 Australian Circus Festival Awards and wished her well in her new endeavors, as Susana is bound for Las Vegas to train with Olga Pikhienkm for the upcoming world championships in Spain.

The Globe of Death still brings the program to a climax and with all eyes on our only female rider Geraldine Fernandez along

with brothers Hugo and Brandon from Mexico undertaking this daredevil feat. Ringmaster Damian

strikes up enough courage to enter the globe along with globe dancer Susana, as two riders go through their paces with a very nervous audience looking on and full credit to Damian and Susana as this is by no means an easy feat I would think. Also Hugo is now presenting Royale's two remaining camels and is taking it all in his stride.

Ringmaster Damian is still presenting Royale's touch of magic assisted by Chantal and Geraldine.



A recently new feature at Royale is where the cast now poses for a photo shoot outside the midway so their patrons can take home more memorable moments of this very fine circus.

Many thanks to the cast and crew that enabled me to present this article for their Swan Hill stand as I would have missed the Fanfare deadline with Royale's end of year season in my hometown of Bendigo.

- Graeme Kingdon