

JEFF BARLOW: DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF CONTEMPORARY SOMATIC PSYCHOTHERAPY



In 1955 when I finished primary school I was told I would be going to St Albans High School. Because our home was just one block away from where the high school was going to be built I kept looking at this vacant block. Come January 1956 there was still no building and I thought they'll have to work hard to get this school built for us in time. Then we got notification that I would be going to Sunshine for my first year of St Albans High.

In that first year at high school, I have memories of doing lots of other things with other kids rather than just the organised school activities. There were beautiful grounds and gardens, a lovely oval, and a big grandstand. It was such a beautiful environment for the school. It was a pity the school couldn't actually continue there instead of going to empty paddocks in St Albans.

Going to high school was a real positive experience for me, though there was one thing of which I was not proud. The first day I was at the school I was with a couple of friends when I picked a fight with someone from one of the other schools in the area. Normally I didn't start fights, so clearly there was something going on, and I can only think it was some sort of primitive territorial instinct. This guy really flattened me and after that I didn't start any more fights.



Jeff Barlow and classmates, Form 1D, 1956.

Classes were held in a church hall and we had to put up all the partitions and seats every Monday and pull them down again every Friday so the place could be used as a church hall over the weekend.

I can recall we used to walk down to the Sunshine Technical School to do our woodwork classes. It was a huge waste of time. I remember being awful frustrated that we would spend so much time getting there for such a little amount of time in the classroom doing the work and such a lot of time in getting back again. It was frustrating.

I remember we had a number of excursions to H V McKays or Massey Fergusson as it may have been known by then, which I really enjoyed.

Gymnastic display 1956.



St Albans High School's first pyramid structure introduced in 1956.

We used to play hand tennis in the school breaks. I was part of a group that was really competitive. As soon as the bell went we'd all be ready to race down, because we only had about two or three courts that we'd chalked out on the asphalt. We'd run out there excitedly and plant our foot on it and that was ours because we had it first off. Whoever was there first off you'd be able to play a game together. Of course, if you lost you were out and the other people could come on. In a fifteen- or twenty-minute morning or afternoon break you couldn't play unless you got there first. I felt that competitive instinct coming out in me during these games.

Doc Walsh

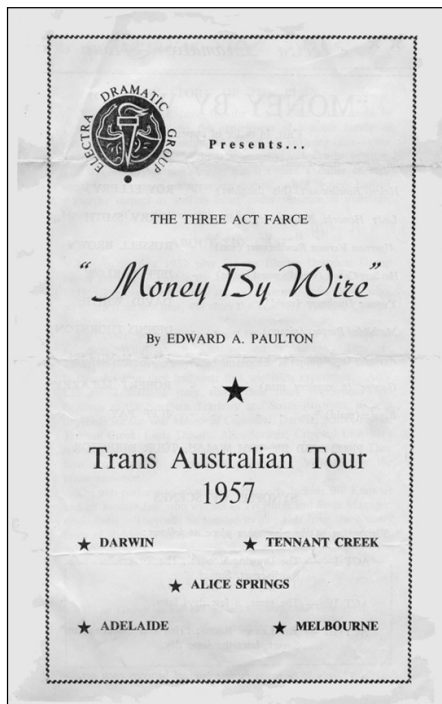
Tom "Doc" Walsh was a very influential person to me. He asked me in that first year whether I might be interested in being part of the touring group of the Electra Drama Club that he was hoping to get going and I expressed some interest. He also was very active in getting the football team and the cricket team going. He got the kids active in training, and I used to be part of the team that trained for football. He formed very close friendships with the kids at school in a way that was more personal than other student-teacher friendships. In wintertime when it was really cold we'd practice football and we'd had our showers and cleaned up afterwards he'd take maybe four, five, or six of us to a milk bar and treat us to hot malted milks before we headed back to St Albans. He'd pay for the drinks, so he was very generous in that way. He wasn't married and didn't have children and I felt that this was his way of taking a fatherly role with young people.

He also set up the sports houses at the school. We ended up with four houses for sports and competitions. He organised the cross country run, which I remember being very excited about because it was the first time I had ever been in a cross country run. Again, I felt very competitive and that competitive instinct kept coming out in me at school in anything to do with athletics.



Doc Walsh and the cricket team, 1956.

The Electra Drama Group



Doc came from Williamstown High School and there was a street there called Electra Street that had a little building that was a drama club or a hall that was used as a drama club. He called it the Electra Drama Group. He had kids from the school performing in plays and I think other kids from the area as well, like a little theatre group as far as I can make out, though that was not part of my personal experience. I think he'd taken the group on one or two trips around various parts of Victoria or Australia. When he joined St Albans High School he had the idea to do this again.

We must have started our rehearsals in first form, as I remember in 1957 when I was in second form he hired an old hall in Footscray and we'd go there to rehearsal for the play. We were mainly twelve- or thirteen-year-olds and there may have been a couple of older people from Williamstown who got involved with it as well. The first play was a farce called Money by Wire. The idea was that we would practice this in 1956 and in the school holidays in '57 and then we would tour this play round Australia, starting through Central Australia to Darwin, and then down the east coast.

Doc got parents involved in fundraising. The idea was that the parents would run a whole lot of social events for their friends and acquaintances. My father got a nine-gallon keg of beer and

held events with raffles and hampers to raise money. That money would be pooled and distributed evenly amongst all the kids in the group and whatever the difference was in the cost of the trip and the fundraising we had to put in ourselves through our pocket money or our family's contribution. We also had to buy a uniform. We had slacks and had to buy shoes, shirt, and a jacket with an emblem on the blazer pocket. It was serious. We had hats, either a little beret or a hat with a little Electra badge on it. (I think it was a little torch.)



Touring with the Drama Group

We toured interstate with the Electra Drama Group. The first trip I went on was in 1957 when we headed off to Adelaide. Tom Walsh had written ahead and got people from the various towns whom he knew and they would arrange billets or sometimes we'd stay in hotels. I don't know how he made the contacts, maybe through churches or something like that. They would arrange a hall and arrange the advertising for the play. When we were in Adelaide I stayed with people in Glenelg, a very upper middle class family. I still have a letter from them that they wrote to my mother, saying the enjoyed having me there. It is that polite, courteous letter that people exchanged in those days.

We put on a performance at the Hindmarsh Hall in Adelaide. After that we went to Alice Springs, then to Tenant Creek, then to Darwin , across to Mt Isa and Townsville, then down to Sydney and back to Melbourne. The following year we did another tour, which went the other way. We went up to Cairns that time, and then down the centre again. I was very fortunate to be able to do two trips and two plays. It was a good experience being away with a group of boys your own age and some older as well.

When we were away we also had some money that had been allocated in the trip costs to which we had contributed to pay for different excursions and things. I remember going to Green Island when we were off Cairns or Townsville. It was all very interesting and we were getting to know how people operated under pressure. When I was in Darwin on the first trip I was with a family and one hot day I was running around in the water and cut my leg very badly on the coral. I'd never been in water where there were rocks and coral before, so I was running around just as I had been at the beaches at Altona and Williamstown. I got a nasty cut and had to be taken to hospital for stitches. All those sort of things happened to people.



Doc Walsh and the Electra Drama touring party. Jeff Barlow is in the back row, third from the right.

It was great doing the productions because the boys learnt about performing different roles; they even used to play the parts of the women. We took all our costumes with us and we all did our own makeup. Before we went away Doc had a professional makeup artist come and show us how to put the makeup on properly. We used to grey our own hair and used wigs. I can still remember Jack McMillan, who was a friend of mine, play the role of a woman in one of the plays. Every now and again people would forget their lines so we'd get prompted.



It was fascinating staying with different families. I got a bit homesick from time to time. You'd be at a loose end sometimes in strange homes where you wouldn't have anything familiar around you, but generally people were very kind, very generous. It added to the trust I had in human beings that people were strongly interested in our wellbeing and wanting to support us to and do what they could to help us have good experiences and safe experiences. They formed very formative experiences on me as a young adolescent. I can remember when we were rehearsing during our first year in the Footscray hall, that kids were starting to smoke. I'd actually had a smoke at home when I was younger but didn't like it; in fact I hated it. Those early experiences turned me off cigarettes for the rest of my life. Although my mother smoked heavily all her life and ended up dying of lung cancer, I was one of the few in the family who didn't smoke. WE had four in the family, the fifth came along many years later when I was an adult. Of the four that grew up together, three smoked.

The tours would take us away for two to three weeks at a time. We had to get additional time off school, so the headmaster, Mr Barker, arranged with the Education Department that we'd get extra time off school. Before we left or after we came back we'd also put the play on for the school. That was good fun because we'd put it on for our parents. I remember taking part in a performance in Footscray at a big hall there. It was a way of helping us feel that we could exercise the various talents that we had in a different forum.

Later, when I was in third or fourth form, we did another very successful school play. Geoff Reed, another teacher, produced that one. Vanda Viti was in it, myself, Switlana Bohudski, and one or two others as the main characters. We won amongst all of the schools in the competition, including the private schools. The adjudicator's comments were written up in the papers.

I think all of us were encouraged to be a bit more outward going. I know I'm inherently a pretty shy person and was pretty much like that through high school. It helped me to come out of that shyness and become a little more extrovert, even though that was on top of an underlying shyness that has continued throughout my life.

Education in Etiquette

The other thing was that Doc used these events as an opportunity to educate kids about the etiquette of social behaviour. That was something that was important for him. He'd bring guest speakers out and we'd gather round one evening and be shown the proper way to use knives and forks and if you had a number of different pieces of cutlery what you would use them for. Then someone else would come and show us how to pack a suitcase so that our clothes weren't just thrown in. He was very keen on that. He took some of us to the Wentworth Hotel in the city, which had silver service. He paid for it all himself. We'd sit at this huge table with starched white linen table cloths and all the silver ware and people serving you in their formal black and white livery. I'd never before had that experience in my life. I think he got a kick out of providing that sort of experience. He also got us written up in the local papers and the Sun or Argos.



Sex Education

At twelve years, the hormones kicked in. I can remember the first time we found a used condom in the grandstand near the school and that caused an interest, because sex was very taboo in those days. I also remember one boy at school who peed in public because he was busting and didn't want to go down to the toilets. He was expelled from school, and I was shocked by the way he was responded to. So we knew that some body parts and functions were not for public display or discussion. I think it was about second form in high school that we were given some sex education. It was called a 'Father and Son' and a 'Mother and Daughter' night. I think it was organised by one of the Protestant churches and they sold literature there as well. I went with my father and my sister went with my mother. I have no recollection of what they actually taught us there but I remember the book that I obtained was called "He and She" and that was very helpful, because I could read that book at home whenever I wanted to. We were fairly ignorant of sex, as an interest in sex was seen as shameful; even after the education sessions I was still fairly ignorant about female anatomy.

My lack of awareness of sex was not due to any religious upbringing. My father was raised as a Catholic but for a number of personal reasons was not religious at all, and my mother was not very religious, so we didn't grow up with a religious background apart from what the schools provided through their religious education sessions in primary and secondary school. You could only opt out of these if you had a letter from your parents. I remember one student from a Catholic background telling me he'd confessed to his priest about masturbating and I just couldn't believe how anyone would actually talk to another human being about something so private. The thought of it was quite shocking to me.

But none of us in those days, as far as I am aware, was overtly sexual with the opposite sex. There was some growing awareness but not really talking about it seriously or acting on it, but the feelings were there. I remember my peer group talking bravado talk but it was only talk.

Marching Activities



I remember Harry Lahy, our French teacher. He was either ex-army or ex-air force and was quite autocratic in his approach; he was not a very approachable person. When the school moved to St Albans they instituted home marching, where the different sport houses would line up for marching practice every day. The idea was to bring some discipline to the kids - maybe we were an unruly lot. We had to learn to march like soldiers, boys and girls. We had marching competitions on sports days to decide who were the best marching groups. We'd do left wheels, right wheels, and all sorts of things. Harry Lahy would get very upset if kids would march out of step or wouldn't take it seriously. He shirted-fronted a boy one day for doing something wrong, which really upset me and got my rage up and I had to control myself. That sort of injustice towards students used to rile me up.

Observing Injustice

I can still remember when I was at the primary school there was a kid who was constantly playing truant. One day the headmaster dragged this kid into class. The headmaster had a huge piece of leather and whipped

him in front of the class, all over the body and over his legs. The kid was lightly dressed in shorts and short-sleeved shirt and was cowering against the blackboard, while we were sitting there watching this. It was such an act of barbarous cruelty. I cannot believe a headmaster would act like that in front of a group of kids. It traumatised me and built up such a rage in me that I wanted to throttle that guy for what he did. Those really strong rageful feelings stayed with me right throughout high school whenever there was any sort of injustice towards other kids at school. I never ever acted those feelings out in any way, but was certainly aware of them.



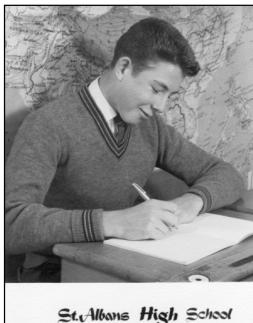
One of our maths teachers at high school threw a blackboard duster at one student who'd made some comment. These dusters had a wooden back and it hit the student on the head and split it open so that blood went everywhere. Those sorts of experiences left an indelible impression on me. On the one hand I've got all these people who provided all these nurturing experiences, including Doc and many other teachers, and those few other incidents at primary and secondary school where I saw this cruelty going on and adults acting in way where they were out of control and doing things that shouldn't be happening in those contexts. Nowadays of course I understand they probably were at their wits end and couldn't cope in those circumstances. I think the principal at the primary school was suffering post traumatic stress disorder from his war experiences.

Despite these observations high school was generally a very pleasant experience for me. I felt it was a place I could begin to expand as a person. I was never very bright academically, although I think if I'd had a different sort of encouragement and support ... Later on I realised that I was actually very intelligent but my results never showed that at school, apart from English, where I did well with a teacher called Jack Clark, I think either in third or fourth form. I later met him again when I was a teacher at Benalla High School and he was the principal. He was very supportive of me in developing a number of programs at the school.



High School and Dress Codes

Whilst we had a fair amount of discipline in the school there was also a fair amount of freedom. I remember when I was in the fourth form - and this probably what led me to be more rebellious when I went to Sunshine High - I had a mock suede brown jacket, which I really liked and used to wear to school, green suede shoes that I'd bought out of the work earnings, and also tight grey trousers. I even went to another school on an exchange trip wearing that gear. The school never picked me out for the way I dressed, or at best one teacher might have said something to me. I've no idea why no-one picked me up. But we did have a school cap, and I did wear my green school cap with my brown suede jacket and my green suede shoes. Later, I worked in Germany for a few years where students don't wear uniforms. When I had German friends come out here and see school uniforms their faces dropped, because the history of Nazi Germany and the German youth movement was all associated with uniforms and so on. Now the students wear casual clothes and when they see what we are doing here with children's uniforms they think it's Nazi Germany all over.



I finished fifth form in 1960. We didn't have sixth form at St Albans that year so we had to go to Sunshine High; there were between four and six of us who went there. I just didn't fit into the new school. At St Albans we'd always been at the top of the school, so it gave us a sense of entitlement, I think, and we were very fortunate in many ways. At Sunshine there was quite an autocratic principal who was quite a stickler for the rules. He insisted on me purchasing the Sunshine High School uniform, even though I was only going to be there nine months to finish off the last year of school. My parents didn't have much money, and though they were willing to buy the uniform I felt on principle that it was unjust, because I had to go to Sunshine High as the Education Department couldn't provide an education for me at St Albans, yet it was at my expense that I had to buy another

uniform so I could fit in with the school. I objected to that on principle.

There was an incident at the school with a Modern History teacher, a young man who was still studying at university. It was February or March in the hot weather and he used to roll up his shirt sleeves. One day he came to class with his sleeves rolled down but he didn't have them buttoned up. When I asked him about this he said the sleeves didn't have any buttons but the principal had told him he was not allowed to have his sleeves rolled up. I again had that feeling of injustice, of dislike for being in an environment where people are ordered around that way and treated as objects just to fit in the rules. It was probably a rebellion from me against some sort of autocratic family upbringing as well.

With regard to the uniform, the principal basically let me continue to attend for a while without the uniform then told me: "You either get the uniform or you can't stay." I told him where to go and left. I spoke with my father and told him I wanted to leave the school. My mother was very distressed, but my father said: "I left school when I was thirteen and you've gone much further than that. You're seventeen, you're old enough to make your own decision." I left school, got a job at Massey Fergusson, and decided to finish my studies at night school.

Work and Evening Classes

I worked at Massey Fergusson, then went to George Kinnear and Sons, the rope works in Ballarat Road Footscray, then Europa Cordage Manufacturers, and then back to Massey Fergusson. Over a two-year period I had three different jobs and finished my sixth year of secondary education at night school. It was pretty hard going. I was going to Footscray Tech as well as George Taylor and Staff in the city. I had studied French to fifth form and tried continuing with French at Taylors, but they had a French teacher who spoke in French all the time and I couldn't understand her so I got disheartened and dropped the subject. I continued to study Australian History there. At Footscray Tech I studied English Expression, English Literature, and Maths.

I'd travel from St Albans to Sunshine or Footscray to work. College classes would start about 6:30 or 7:00 at night until 9:30 or 10:00 'clock. Then you'd get to the Footscray railway station which was freezing cold at night and you'd catch the train to St Albans and walk from the station to home. You'd get back home very late at night. My mother would have a meal for me that she'd kept steaming to keep it warm. You'd go to bed and often get up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning to do homework. I don't know what drove me. I think there was some determination, probably anger at the principal I suppose, to show them I could do it myself without relying on them. That sort of rugged and I think strong individualism has been a part of my life ever since. I have taken alternative courses of action to that most other people in the mainstream would probably do.

Studying at Monash



I applied to do economics at Monash University. I did their entrance exam and knew I had done very badly, so I decided I wouldn't go to university. I phoned the bursar - in those days you could phone directly to such people, it wasn't a big procedure - and said I didn't want to go ahead with my application and explained my situation. After discussion with him I enrolled over the phone to do an Arts degree. Over the next four years I completed my Arts degree and Diploma of Education. I had applied for and got an Education Department studentship, which was great, because it paid my fees, paid me a living allowance and a book allowance.

I was living at home to begin with and then met up with Tony Venes. Tony was much older than me but had come to St Albans High during my fourth year and then went on to University High for Matric and Monash to study medicine. There he met John Coleman from Footscray. Tony had a car and was still living in St Albans, so he and I would collect John at Footscray, drive out to Monash Uni, and then come back again at the end of the day. We did this five days a week. It took us nearly two hours to get there out through St Kilda junction, and the same to get back; it was a terribly long journey.

Jeff Barlow, graduate of Monash University. Then I had an idea. My parents had an old caravan and I asked to borrow that so we could put it in Springvale or Clayton and wouldn't have so far to travel. Frank Banks, who was the manager when I was working at the Keilor Hotel, found us a spot on his brother's

equipment depot in Clayton near the university. We had a cold water tap nearby, free electricity, and didn't have to pay for the caravan site, so it was great. We'd be at uni Monday to Friday for lectures, meals and showers, sleep in the caravan, then come home on Friday evenings. We did that for two terms and then I got married.

Marriage

My wife and I were living in a flat at the back of a place in Clayton. Then her mother helped us get a block of land at Knoxfield and an uncle of mine gave us a good price for building a home. We got a bank loan and were paying off the home for the same amount as we'd been paying for a two-room unit at the back of someone's house. That was probably about 1964, and it worked out very well for us.

I finished the four years at uni and went out teaching. By then my wife had left and taken our little girl, which was quite a traumatic experience for me.

Teaching Career

You had to teach for three years for Education Department after finishing the studentship, otherwise you had to pay back the money they had paid you. I thought that was fair. I was very grateful for that opportunity the government provided. Always, for the whole of my life I've been grateful for that opportunity.

My ex-wife had gone up to Mulwala, just over the border from Yarrawonga. I applied to teach at Benalla and Yarrawonga so I could be close to my daughter.

I got a job teaching at Benalla Technical School, stayed there a year and transferred to the high school. I used to visit my daughter regularly and then my ex-wife moved again and I didn't have any contact with my daughter until years later when I was living in London. She contacted me there and my second wife and I brought her out to stay with us.

Working Overseas

I had moved overseas in 1972 and was working on the continent where my wife and I were running a programme on natural childbirth in Vienna. My daughter was with us in Vienna so she had the experience of coming from the heat of Brisbane, through London, and ending up in the snow of Vienna.

When we initially went overseas my wife and I travelled by the trans-Siberian railway. Our idea was that we would travel via Hong Kong and Japan, get the boat over to Vladivostok, travel the trans-Siberian through to Europe, and when we finished our stint in Europe we'd take the overland route back through Turkey, Asia, India, and South East Asia. But when coming back we had two children then and decided we'd fly back instead.

Moving to London had been a complex trajectory. Growing up in St Albans I had so many nationalities represented in the neighbourhood that you couldn't help but become interested in the wider world. In one year I was one of only four native-English-speaking people in the class; everyone else was from all sorts of European countries. That felt normal to me. On my mother's side of the family I had a Greek-Cypriot uncle, a French uncle, a German uncle, and then also a Polish uncle. My mother's maiden name was Latch. Her father was an Australian soldier who was wounded during the First World War. He married a Scots woman when he was recuperating in Dundee, and then brought her home to Australia.

I was always very interested in other countries. My father had been in the navy during the war and travelled extensively around the world and talked about the different countries he'd visited. I'd learnt French at school, so I had an interest in France. We'd also had teachers from France and other countries at the school. When I was in Benalla I met a teacher who had spent a year in London and I became fascinated with the idea of travelling overseas. With this family background of foreign travel in exotic places I became determined when I was in Benalla that I would go overseas, not as a tourist, but to go and live in a country so I could get to know the culture.

After two years at Benalla I went and taught at Mt Waverley High School for a year and then Bentwood High School for a couple of years. When I was there I saw a job advertised for a teacher of English at the teachers college in Port Moresby, New Guinea. I also saw a job for a teacher of English as a second language in Germany with a British-based company. The German job came through first, so that's the one

I took. It was a one-year contract at Bernkastel-Kues Rheinlan-Pfalz, which is on the Mosel River between Koblenz and Trier. It's a relatively small place of 7,000 people towards the western border of Germany. My wife and I spent the year there. They liked my work, I liked them, and so I signed up for another year. We decided we would stay the second year only if they gave my wife a job because she was a professional in her own right and wanted to work. She got a half-time job and we stayed another year.

The British-based organisation I was working for was very kind. They had scholarships available for the teachers and gave me a scholarship to Manchester University. I wanted to study adult education, so I my Masters at Manchester University was in Adult Education and Community Development. I chose that because they had strong working class roots and it was known as the bastion of working class tradition, where they would take intelligent working class kids and educate them to a high academic level. I really enjoyed that study and met a couple of really inspiring lecturers there, one in particular being Ralph Ruddock.

Introduction to Psychotherapy

I got very interested in personal development programs, and attended a lot of lectures at Manchester, Edinburgh, and London. After that I decided I wanted to train as a therapist. I happened to find this esoteric college run by a Norwegian woman, Gerda Boyasen, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist who'd set up this training program in London. I ended up spending six years there, doing basic training and then advanced training. Then I became one of the teachers there and set up my private practice through her organisation. I used to travel to Germany and France and worked there quite a lot. At that stage we were living in London, a place called Shooters Hill, and eventually we bought a little flat there. We were still following natural childbirth, so both our daughter and our son were born at home with the assistance of midwives.

A few years later we decided to come back to Australia because our daughter was four years of age and about to start primary school and we were interested in her having more contact with the extended family. I gave up all the work I had created there, which was very hard for me to do and a very painful break, but I also didn't want to spend the rest of my life in England or continental Europe. After being away for ten years I started to yearn a bit more for Australia.

Return to Australia

We came back at the end of 1981 and spent a year in Melbourne, finding our roots a bit, getting a base, and then decided to settle at Moora Moora Cooperative, which was a cooperative living community out the back of Healesville. The cooperative was set up by a group of people in the early 'seventies. It's still going now, and I think it is the oldest functioning cooperative that is not run by a religious order of some sort.

We lived on the property in an old home and participated in the community, helping people build their mud brick homes, and participating in the development of the land and looking after nature. It was all alternative building. They had made a decision not to connect to the electricity grid, so people produced their own power as well as pumping their own water from springs and collecting it from the roof.

I enjoyed some of the work there, but they had a lot of committees and everything was done on a democratic basis. We set up our own primary school and educated our kids. There were a couple of primary teachers we employed part time, and the parents were teaching at the school as well. But I'm not a committee person and I felt like a fish out of water. Eventually the pressure got too much for me and I felt I couldn't live there any longer. Eventually my wife and I felt the pressure that we were under in our relationship, if we were going to keep that together we needed to move off the land. We moved over the road onto a ten-acre block of land and a house that had been built in the 1920s. Our kids still went to the cooperative's school and we continued our membership of the cooperative. Even today my ex-wife, as she is now, is involved with a book-reading group that is connected with the co-op. Both our kids did their primary education there. Some years after my wife and I separated I lived on the co-op again, renting homes so I could be near the kids. They lived between their mother's home and mine. When I had to move on because the landlords wanted their home back, I decided to buy a house in Healesville. My son was doing fifth year at high school and we moved out together into that home. He's now finished high school and started his degree at Swinburne, then moved to Melbourne. I still live in Healesville but I'm on my own now.

Somatic Psychotherapy

I'm involved in somatic psychotherapy. In Europe and the United States it is called body psychotherapy. In essence it is a form of psychotherapy that is inclusive of the body. This is strongly based in people's emotional realities and the tension states that develop in the body as a consequence of the life trajectories that people will go through and the necessary tension that will develop as people adapt to life's circumstances. The therapy involves not just working with the psychological or cognitive content but also with emotions and tension states and with body expressions as well. My training started in 1975 and I've now been working in this field for thirty years.

I now run a college called the Australian College of Contemporary Somatic Psychotherapy. I've been teaching in this field since the early 'eighties in Australia with various other people. About eight years ago I decided to set up my own college and get together my own team of teachers. We run it from a small home office and lease the facilities that we need. We have three-year programs in Sydney, Canberra, and Melbourne. We have teachers from all those locations and some teachers, including myself, that travel between locations. The training programs run for three years and the students are all involved in 200 training hours each year. There is a lot of experiential learning as well as academic learning. The students have to be involved in their individual psychotherapy outside of the training program with someone not connected with the college. When they finish their training they get an academic credential, i.e. an academic diploma. Those who want to become psychotherapists then do two years of post-training supervision and at the end of that when they're accepted into the professional association, which is separate from the college, they get a clinical credential, i.e. a clinical diploma.

I also run a part-time private practice, working with individual clients, and do some supervision of both experienced and inexperienced therapists, not just in the field of somatic psychotherapy but also with other therapists who are interested in the sort of direction that I work in. I am very busy. I've got some good staff who are backing me, which is terrific. It's like any job where you are working with people and you are transforming people - it can be fraught with a lot of emotional difficulties from time to time. But that is the sort of work I'm involved in and that is par for the course.

I became interested in setting up a college because I could be my own boss and bring in the teachers that I wanted to, to move the training in the direction that I thought was necessary. I've had enough experience in other committees running training programs where I always had to pander to the conservative bent of certain people. I'm pretty radical in the way I think about life and in particular about the training of psychotherapists. I wanted to pursue that trajectory without having to be fighting for what I wanted to do. I was too old to be fighting, I just wanted to do it. I thought I've got about ten to fifteen years of effective professional life left. If I don't do it now I'll never do it. That's what I did. I work very long hours, I don't get very much money, and whatever money I do get goes back into the business to pay other people. The thing is, I'm passionate about it.



Jeff Barlow receiving Scout Award, 1956.

Other Interests

I'm a great reader. I have a vast library and do a lot of reading. A lot of it you would call professional reading or work reading, but I'm one of those people who finds it difficult to separate work and pleasure, work and leisure, because they are connected for me. A lot of the reading I do is stimulating, not only for me personally because I'm intellectually interested, but it advances my knowledge about people and it's also connected with the work I'm doing. It's got both sides to it.

I've enjoyed overseas travels. Since coming back from Europe in 1982 I've had three trips to Europe, one to the United States, travelled to Japan a couple of times, South East Asia, the Philippines, and New Zealand. When we were overseas my wife and I took time off from work and spent four months in Spain, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia with a cousin of mine and his wife, travelling with a campervan and tent. Then we spent three months backpacking around South America as well, using public transport and staying in very cheap places, some of which charged US\$1 per night per person. While we were in Europe we travelled extensively. We drove through Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, then travelled extensively around Germany, France Holland, Belgium, up into Scandinavia to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Because I had a Greek-Cypriot uncle we also did a trip down to Cypress and caught up with some of my uncle's family, which was nice. I enjoyed that.

Recently I went to India. I got very interested in Indian history and got a book about Ghandi and the struggle for the independence of India from Britain, which is what I'm reading about at present though it is nothing connected with my work.

Nowadays I think my hobby is my work and my work is my hobby; it's all rolled into one. The things I do enjoy are having quiet times with people I'm close to. My ex-wife and I are still good friends and I enjoy the times when we get together for conversation. I very much enjoy the time with my son and my daughter; my daughter is living overseas at present and I don't see much of her. I see my son on a fairly regular basis and enjoy our time together. I enjoy meeting with colleagues and having social time with them, chatting and having a drink.

In the last five years or so I've been very keen to reconnect with St Albans and the high school. I managed to catch up with Andy Kratsis a couple of years ago and through that have been able to make more and more connections with people. I felt there was a significant gap in my life because of that lack of connection.

Working Class Roots

Not too many people in Australia talk about the class system, but there definitely is a class system in Australia and I come from a lower working class background; my father was unskilled in the work he did. We didn't have very much money when I was growing up. My mother provided me with a very strong motivation to get whatever education I could, to go as far as I could in life. I'm very grateful to her for that. My father was happy for me to go as far as I was comfortable; he would have been happy if I'd left school at fifth form, because it didn't really matter to him. It was my mother who did the crying because I wasn't going any further. She was very keen that I move on in life and I felt that as well. I felt I had potential that I wanted to live out and that was facilitated by the support I got from my mother in particular, support I got from significant teachers at school who encouraged me to think about education as a career, Geoff Reed in particular. He was the first one who suggested university, and my response was "What is university?" I didn't even know what a university was at the time. He was the one who also told me about the Education Department studentships.

Through education I moved up into middle class life and then, apart from my family, broke all my working class roots with St Albans and have felt there was this split in me. I have read sociological studies about kids who move from working class to middle class experiencing emotional difficulties in that transition. I certainly experienced that and have always wanted to reconnect with my educational and social roots, not so much with the adults of my time but with the peer group that I was involved with. So I'm very excited at the moment with all the reconnecting I'm doing with the people I know. When I speak with them on the phone or meet with them I feel I'm in a time warp, because I've got memories of them back there and we think we knew each other but we didn't, we only mucked around together at school and we had no idea of what was going on in each other's family lives or where people came from. Maybe we knew the country they came from but nothing about their histories, what the families had been through in Europe during the war. I feel a real hunger to get to know about people's background and what they went through. A number

of people I've met have been very open in sharing their stories, which has been a rich experience for me, and I'm both excited and grateful to have experienced that.



Jeff and Glenda Barlow with their parents at the High School Debutante Ball, 1960.

In my family there was this thing that you had to work for a living. I started selling newspapers when I was eight or nine down at the railway station. Then I was delivering newspapers in the morning for Doug Martello's milk bar; he had a newspaper section as well. I worked at Self Brothers and Goddard, chopping up big blocks of butter into little manageable packets and wrapping them up, pouring sugar out of the big hessian bags into little paper bags, and weighing up potatoes. I used to work every Saturday morning at Stevens Hardware Store, from 8 o'clock to 12:30 or 1:00. When I was about fifteen I would go down to Footscray and deliver telegrams of a Saturday afternoon. I'd ride my bike all over Footscray delivering telegrams. I did that for quite a number of years.

My father was a milkman, but he was also the cleaner at the primary school in St Albans. From the age of about twelve every night after school until about fourth of fifth form I used to work with him. We'd start about 4:30 and finish anywhere between 6:30 and 8:30 at night, depending on the weather.

When I was about fifteen I was trying to earn some money over the school holidays. My father, who had previously worked at Smorgons, knew somebody there who used to select the guys to work. They had this very primitive employment system where the unemployed guys would turn up at the gate to the abattoir and the guy in charge of employment would say "you, you, and you" as he pointed to the men he wanted. Those guys would be in and get work and the others would have to go away. I had to turn up with the others but the employment guy recognised me and picked me. I had that job during the school holidays, firstly packing fillets of beef in big plastic bags and cartons for the export market, then trimming the fat off middle loin chops, standing for 8 to 10 hours a day just trimming bits of fat off lamb chops. It made me determined I wasn't going to do that job for the rest of my life. The stench from the abattoirs was terrible. I had a fair bit of exposure to such working conditions, because an uncle of mine, Dick Spicer, had a business with a five-ton truck where he'd go around the abattoirs collecting sheep and cattle skins. I worked with him a few times as well. It was very dirty and bloody work, where you'd get covered from head to foot with splashes of blood and bloody water as you threw these skins around. It was really dirty stuff.

Out at St Albans I also worked carting hay over various summers. I worked for a contractor who used to take us out to Sydenham, Sunbury, and Riddell. I was about fourteen when I was doing that. I didn't have the strength of the men, so the men would throw the hay up on the back of the truck and I would steer the truck around the paddocks in between where the bails were. I used to get bored and every now and then I'd put my foot down on the throttle and those guys would be falling off the back of the truck and would be screaming abuse at me. One day when a guy nearly hurt himself I realised that I had to be careful. I was doing it as a bit of a joke but what I was doing was quite dangerous.

Before I went to university I needed to get some money rapidly over the summer and the guy I knew at Kinnears said he'd get me a job in the hemp mill. The carding machine in a hemp mill processes these huge rolls of hemp that were brought in from India. The work is very dusty as the machines clawed their way through the vegetable matter and there were clouds of dust in the air. All the other men in that section were migrants most of whom could not speak English. I assimilated myself to them. We started work at 6 o'clock in the evening and finished 6 o'clock in the morning. When we had our breaks I'd go in with my black bread and my knife, my hunk of cheese and hunk of salami, and bit of tomato, so I could sit down with these European guys - there were no women in our section - and in broken English we'd try to converse and eat our rye bread and whatever. After Kinnears and Sons I went to Massey Fergusson.

When I was about seventeen I got a job at the Keilor Hotel. Frank Banks was the guy who ran that with his wife. I did that work for many years. Even when I was full-time at the university I was still working at the pub on Saturday afternoon. Later I got a job working Saturday mornings at Kempthorne Lighting in Clayton. I'd work there in the morning and go to the pub in Keilor in the afternoon.

During the uni holidays I worked in the maintenance department of Kempthorne Lighting. I also worked as a waiter serving wine at private functions, did tutoring of English, and whatever I could to earn a dollar. My father taught me that. At one time he had three jobs on the go: he was doing the school cleaning in the evening, then he'd be up at 1:30 in the morning heading off to deliver the milk, and during the day he was delivering groceries for Self Brothers and Goddard.



Jeff Barlow, 2005

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Jeff Barlow (centre) at 2006 school reunion.



Jeff Barlow (centre) at 2006 school reunion.



Jeff Barlow and classmates at 2006 school reunion.