

Norm Jennings

Clarrie Neal

Norm was born in Riverstone on the 14th July 1934, the only son of Gordon (Dave) and Myrtle Jennings. He and his sister Shirley and the family lived in Hamilton Street. on the site where the Jehovah's Witness church is now located.

He attended Riverstone Public School until 1946 and like most boys at the time he never ever wore shoes to school. His nickname at school was 'Steamer', because we believed he was as strong as a steam engine. He remembers the games of marbles, and the cricket games played in the paddock in front of the school, where the pool is now located.

He completed his secondary schooling at Richmond Rural School where he gained his Intermediate Certificate. He was classed as an average scholar at both these schools. Norm has very fond memories of these schooldays and gets a great kick out of meeting his old friends at the school reunions.

Norm has always loved fishing, he recalled fishing with his Dad at South Creek, and their annual holidays at Woy Woy with the Davis family. He still loves to get away to their holiday home at Pacific Palms near Forster to catch the big ones.

Because the mutton board at the meat works in the slack season would only work three days a week, a number of these workers, including Norm's father would supplement their income by working on the farms at Windsor. To get pocket money as a youth Norm would often accompany his father to work these casual days picking corn, potatoes, beans, etc. He said after a day's work he would often jump into the river to have a clean up.

Norm has always loved sport and believed in keeping himself fit, with cricket, cycling and football being favourite sports. He loved wandering through the bush, and aside from filling his pockets with stones to use in his catapult, he loved to ride his bike on the numerous tracks throughout the bush.

He joined the Riverstone Cycle Club in the 1950s when it was reformed by Fred Coulter and enjoyed the road racing events, at one time winning the Hawkesbury Junior championship. He was a good athlete at school and set a record for the high jump at Richmond Rural School that stood for 16 years. He played cricket for several years playing with Vineyard and Oakville and represented the District with the Hawkesbury Colts team.

He also recalled doing his three months Army National Service and CMF Training with mates like Ray Brookes and said it was a good experience, he still appreciates the discipline they endured.

He recalled the days when he gathered mushrooms from the paddocks and sold them on the roadside, and of the days when he and his cousin Alwyn Davis and their fathers went trapping rabbits at Kurrajong. They used to set the traps on Friday night and return to Riverstone on the Saturday morning where they would sell the rabbits at one shilling and six pence a pair.

When Norm left school he started work as an apprentice Fitter and Machinist at the Clyde Engineering plant and attended the Granville Technical College. After completing his apprenticeship he continued on with his engineering studies at Sydney University where he gained his Mechanical Engineering Degree.

Norm's life was to change when he met Nadia Burlati, the daughter of a Rouse Hill poultry farmer. Nadia's father had come out from Tuscany, Italy in 1927, and worked on a sheep station at Merriwa. He returned to Italy five years later to bring out his wife and after a few more years at Merriwa he was able to buy a property at Rouse Hill where he started his poultry farm.

Nadia and Norm were married in 1956 and built their home in Mile End Road Rouse Hill where they raised their three children, Darryl, Garry, and Gina. Norm continued with his studies and to make a living drove a truck out west, carting wheat, oats, etc., for the poultry farms in the Rouse Hill district

It was while driving the truck one day that he made a very interesting observation - that the crops grown by the farmers using chemical fertilisers were not nearly as productive as the crops grown by the poultry farmers in the same region.

In 1969 Norm, armed with his engineering skills and his practical knowledge of poultry farming set out to make an organic fertiliser. It was a fertiliser that would revolutionise the poultry farm and would become world famous.

Many believed Norm was crazy and told him so, but he continued on doing all the research and development himself. He overcame each problem as it arose, he experimented and invented such things as a trough that minimised the amount of water wasted and spilt, thus keeping the manure dry. Norm is now grateful for the 'crazy' comments because they made him more determined than ever to succeed.

After some five years of research and development the system had been perfected. The first plant was built in the paddock behind their house in Mile End Road in 1969 and operated with a staff of four. Norm designed and made all the equipment that was required.

As the product was first being used Nadia had noted some of the comments of the farmers - "it's dynamite" and another "it lifts the plants out of the ground". She chose the name 'Dynamic Lifter' to market the product, a name that has now become world famous.

The following story appeared in an article in the Powerhouse Museum book 'Making It' - The Dynamic Lifter Story.

Norm tells of a farmer in Oberon who bought some Dynamic Lifter from an agency in Lithgow. Five months later the farmer stormed into the agency demanding apologies. "Do you remember the fertiliser you sold me?" he shouted. "Ye-e-e s" replied the agent. "Well I put my merino stud rams in on it and I've lost five of the buggers!"

The agent blanched. Had the stupid sheep eaten the stuff and been poisoned. The farmer continued with "I still can't find the bastards because the grass is so high". Norm said "I'll never forget the feeling I had when the agent told me that story. For a moment, I thought we were going to be sued for everything we've got".

Norm and Nadia are very proud that Dynamic Lifter became a family business with their three children becoming involved. Norm remained in research and development, Nadia in overseas markets and exports, Darryl in engineering, Garry in product knowledge, and Gina became the company promotions officer.

Demand had outstripped production by 1982 and a new plant covering more than 6 acres was built in Withers Road Rouse Hill. The Dynamic Lifter organisation remained a family business until 1995.

Norm sold off his Dynamic Lifter Australian and New Zealand operations in 1995 to Arthur Yates (an Australian Company). He has retained control of his overseas operations in America, Hawaii, India, the Middle East, South East Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

Norm is extremely proud of the fact that Dynamic Lifter has been such a success, and that it has all evolved from the efforts of a lad from Riverstone. He is also very proud of the fact that he has never had to advertise, he has relied on the quality of the product, from the publicity given in magazines and from TV shows such as *Burkes Backyard*.

It is now recognised as a true organic fertiliser with the concept now taught in Universities and Agricultural Colleges throughout the world.

Compiled by Clarrie Neal from articles, photos and information provided by Norm Jennings.

Riverstone 1935

From *Wise's NSW Post Office Commercial Directory 1935* p. 886

BAMBRIDGE, H. store	MOULDS, Mrs, refreshment rooms
BLAIR, Wm. greengrocer	NICHOLSON, J. poultry farmer
BRAY, E. dairyman	O'CONNOR, W. postmaster
CONWAY, Norman. hairdresser	PIKE, P. O. police constable
CORNWELL, Wm. carrier	POWER, J. bootmaker
EAST, Mrs Joseph. Royal Hotel	PYE, J. J. grazier
EDWARDS, Mrs. refreshment rooms	PYE, S. G. orchardist
FISHER, Chas. baker	RICH, Harold G. medical practitioner
FITZGERALD, John. dairyman	RIVERSTONE Meat Co Ltd
FLETCHER, Thomas. teacher, The Vineyard	ROBERTS, - . refreshment rooms
FORD, B. manager NSW Produce Co	ROSENTHALL, Lyle. store
GREENTREE, George. wood merchant	ROUSE, W. C. headmaster
GRIFFEN, E. bootmaker	RUMERY, Thomas & William. farmers
HESSION, William. poultry farmer	TAYLOR Ltd. produce merchants
HIBBARD, William. poultry farmer	VAUGHAN, E. store
KNIGHT, Charles C. store	WARD, H. C. poultry farmer
LANE, George. cycle agent	WHEELER, King. painter
McDONNELL, G. mixed business & radio dealer	WHEELER, Mrs J. boarding house
McKEEVER, Patrick. farmer, The Vineyard	WILLIAMS, H. blacksmith
MARTIN, J. carrier	WOOD, H. E. farmer
MATHEWS, F. poultry farmer	