

## 1974 - The Beginning of Video.

Excerpts from the diary of Alan Dyall

I was visiting friends by the name of Roger and Brenda Lee who lived at the north end of Grieve Parade, when another mate of mine John Huntley, knocked on their door and asked if I was there. "Come in," said Roger.

I introduced John Huntley a very good mate of mine from APC. He wanted to know if I was interested in coming to a meeting in a shop in Pier Street that loaned out television equipment. "What are you talking about John."

He told us a story that changed "My Life."

He went down to Pier Street to buy a Pizza from a shop that had just open at the pier end of Pier Street. As his Pizza was being cooked he went out side for some fresh air. He noticed another new shop next door. He read the notices on the front window, that said, "Learn how to make TV." Thinking they meant to make a Television Set, he went in for a look while his Pizza was being cooked.

He met a couple named Malcolm and Lassya - they explained that the equipment was sponsored by the Labor Government and had ten of these locations throughout Australia. Melbourne had three, Footscray, Carlton and Altona.

Malcolm went on to explain that if you took the time to learn how to use the equipment, you could take it home and use it at no charge. "What equipment." said John, "Over here," said Mal. There was plenty of TV sets and what looked like tape recorders sitting on tables around the room.

Mal picked up what looked like a reel to reel audio tape but much wider and threaded it into a machine. He picked up a box with a lens in front and with a cable attached to the machine, he pointed it at John for a few seconds. He then put the camera down, re-wound the tape a little and said look at the monitor.

Low and behold there was John on the screen in very clear black and white pictures with him asking questions about what Mal was doing.

Two hours later John went in to pick up his pizza and took it home to Robin Street, where his wife Edith, was not too happy.

Both Roger and I decided to go to the meeting with John. John walked into the shop as if he owned it, there were several people sitting around on beanbags talking.

Mal got the meeting started and they spoke about covering the "Back to Altona" activity that was going to happen in two weeks time. They were short of camera operators, Mal looked at me and asked if I would interested to come down to the shop and learn about the equipment.

I did not have the slightest idea of what he was talking about.

After the meeting he showed me some of the work done by some of the members so far, so I agreed that I would come down and learn how to use the equipment the following day at 10.00AM. (I was a shift worker.)

Mal and Lasha were so late, I nearly drove home, but as I started my van they pulled up behind me, apologizing about being late.

They took me in and got out one of the recorders and asked me if I was familiar with a reel to reel audio tape recorder I said, "I have one at home and did a lot of recording." "Well this machine is exactly the same."

He gave me a tape and showed me how to thread the recorder up. He put a battery in, connected a camera to the recorder and said, "Go to it." This equipment was worth \$1200 all up. I was nervous.

I walked over into the park and saw a sparrow hopping about a park seat, so I pulled the trigger on the camera using the zoom and focus, a little red light inside the viewer came on. All of a sudden every thing went black, so I walked back to the shop and tried to explain it was not my fault. Mal Laughed and put in another battery and said, "go to it."

I went back and finished taping the sparrow, brought it back to Mal and said, "What now Mal." he cabled the recorder up to a monitor, rewind the tape and went into play.

I could not believe what I saw, there was the little sparrow hopping around the park seat like I had seen in the viewer and I could hear it chirping.

I went around and saw John to tell him of my experience, he had an outfit at home from Turtle Video (That is what the shop was called.) and he showed me some shots of Edith playing with their poodle in their lounge room. I could not believe the quality of the picture and sound.

The days went by and I could not think of any useful thing that I could do with this marvelous equipment even though it was free.

Linda was an active member of the Altona Marching Girls Team, so I borrowed the equipment and video taped the girls practicing near the youth club. I was impressed with what I took and I showed the coach who was also impressed.

From that day on my mind has never stopped thinking of things to do with this marvelous equipment.