

LOOKING BACK TO SEE

Sometimes it is important to 'take stock' and think about our lives: what we've achieved, the memories we cherish and who we love. It is humbling, too, if we are remembered and recognised by our community and peers.



On Monday, 10/11/08, Ian and Joan Kenny were absolutely thrilled, and surprised, when Ian received the 2008 Tourism Minister's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Development. It can be hard to keep a secret on a small island but they had "...no inkling..." that they would be so honoured.

Geoff Gardner's speech, which outlined Ian's involvement over 47 years in Norfolk's tourism industry, touched both of them - "...he'd done his homework" says Ian. The speech outlined the different ventures: tour buses, glass bottom boats, fishing expeditions, and work with the Tourist Board, that the Kennys helped pioneer.

This recognition coincides with Ian and Joan putting together a memoir of their time on the Island. This will be Ian's fourth book, but first collaboration with Joan, and is a way for them to look back on their experiences since moving to Norfolk in 1961. Ian's earlier books: *Fishing Our Way* (1995), *Hooked by the Sea* (1999) and *Whales, Boats and Fish* (2005) concentrated more on his lifelong love of the sea. Their latest book, not yet launched, is *Norfolk Island: Our First 45 Years* which deals with everything from the Pitcairn pilgrimage, Norfolk in the 1960s, and UFOs, to their grandchildren and humorous house signs on the Island.

Ian's health has not been the greatest in the past few years, and he quite courageously and honestly, writes a chapter about the discovery of his illness in 2006 and the difficult days that followed. He reflects on life in general, and is a wonderfully warm, and wise, tale teller.

Being fortunate enough to leaf through an 'advance copy' I really enjoyed his musings and anecdotes and the photos, especially of earlier days, are fascinating. Ian "...hated writing at school", but was encouraged by others to put his thoughts down on paper. He tends to think of headings first and then jots down ideas in any spare moments.

He enjoyed the Tourism Awards, but would like to stress that he and Joan have always been a partnership. He can't remember exactly what he said on the night but he would like to acknowledge Joan's amazing help and support over the years. She "...drove buses, made morning teas, transferred tourists, looked after the kids and came here in the first place".

As we age it becomes more important to try to make sense of our lives, and focus on good times rather than bad. Ian and Joan's book touches on universal themes like coping with illness, and the loss of loved ones, but they end their upcoming memoir

positively. In the final chapter, *Our Island Home*, they talk about what they've enjoyed, and still value, about living here.

Ian, Joan and their children have truly appreciated being part of Norfolk and it seems only right that their contribution to the Island was publicly acknowledged last week. With their latest book they have 'taken stock' and created a unique record of their lives – it will be officially launched next year, and will be another 'must have' for many Norfolkers and visitors.

(Jenny Jauczius)