



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society August 2021**

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**John Angus Sandow**  
18 May 1925 – 14 June 2021



John is being featured in this month's Newsletter in recognition of his service to the Hurstville Society. **Murray** and **Lori Heldon** were grateful to be able to attend his funeral on the Gold Coast on 23 June the day before COVID lockdowns started. Eulogies by John's son **Robert Sandow** and **Gaye Heldon** given at this service led by Rev Darren Brunne of the Brisbane New Church are included.

John and his lovely wife Lenore were very active in our society in the 1970s and 80s. John dedicated himself to the care and attention of the church buildings, serving for many years on the Property Trust as the Secretary/Treasurer and was a Director from 1976 to 1994 maintaining his interest even after moving to the Central Coast at the end of 1985.

He supervised the building of the current porch in 1977/8 and the chancel renovations 1984 which included he and Lenore designing and making the Stained Glass windows pictured above. Seeing these every week at our worship services brings an ever present reminder of their loving service. The windows represent the beginning to the end of the Word of the Lord (the Alpha and Omega symbols). The left window shows the four rivers and the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. One river becomes the River of Life in the New Jerusalem city from Revelation with the Tree of Life spanning it's waters. Thank you John and Lenore.

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# Eulogy for John Sandow

by Robert Sandow



Thank you for coming to celebrate Dads life. For those of you that don't know me I am Robert Sandow, John's son.

Duty, decency, reliability, dignity and respect: these are all the qualities that my father held in high esteem and practiced every day during his time on this earth.

Dad was the second eldest of four boys: Brian, my father, John, Don, and Gordon. He was born in Adelaide on 18th May 1925 to Angas and Annie Sandow. He spent all his childhood years around Adelaide and was actively involved in sports and the church where he met my mother, Lenore.

He attended Primary school in Unley SA and Urrbrae Agricultural High School in Netherby, South Australia and looking through his papers I have found certificates for woodwork (1937), Royal Life Saving (1935) which shows some of his areas of interest. Dad played Australian Rules football and was always interested in the AFL games.

He loved motor cars, motor bikes and fiddling mechanically. He could name any car on the road, especially the old ones. I think he inherited this from his father, who was a motor mechanic.

After high school he went to The University of Adelaide and studied Agricultural Science. These studies were interrupted by WW2 when he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force on 19th June 1943. He trained as a fighter pilot in Tiger Moths, Wiraways and Kittyhawks at the RAAF Training School, Deniliquin and rose to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

During this time towards the end of the war he developed severe appendicitis that required an emergency operation that plagued him for the rest of his life. After his discharge he applied for the Airforce Reserve but because of the operation was medically unable to become a pilot again but was accepted as a Meteorological Assistant with the rank of Warrant Officer. This led to his career path for the rest of his working life. In those days the Met Department was part of the Department of Aviation so most of his focus was forecasting for aircraft and flights. These days it has developed into an organisation that services the whole community in many ways.

Although he knew my mother through the church before enlisting things didn't get serious until he returned and they were married in Adelaide in 1948. They had two children, myself in 1949 and my sister Vicki in 1951. Sadly my sister passed away in 1972.

His job meant that he was transferred around the country. From Adelaide he was transferred to Brisbane for a couple of years where I was born. From there we went to Darwin for a couple of years where Vicki was born. Darwin was fairly agricultural back in

the early 50's and we had a house next to the jail at Fanny Bay. My memories of this house are few but I do remember riding my bike on the verandah at all hours and large monitor lizards wandering under the house.

Dad was then transferred back to Adelaide for the next five years before moving to Sydney where we stayed for the next 30 odd years. He also spent a couple of years working in New Guinea leaving Mum to look after us. I remember the trip from Darwin to Adelaide. We went by boat from Darwin to Perth then train from Perth to Adelaide. I remember the ship had a jeep as deck cargo and Vicki and I drove all the way from Darwin to Perth.

He was interested in Mum's interests and was constantly supporting her. When she did art he became President of her Arts Society. When she did pottery he made her a pottery studio, making the pottery wheel and kiln. He became interested in stained glass so he and Mum would do this together. Mum would design the piece and Dad would turn that into reality, often with 'you can't do that, it's too hard or too fine to cut the glass'. You can see some examples of their work here.

They enjoyed travelling making many overseas trips and cruises. They also enjoyed travelling Australia visiting all parts by driving, bus, train and cruises. He was a long term member of the RSL on Mt Tamborine and was the oldest member there.

I remember him as a man who was very organised and lived by the clock. He made a grandfather clock and would religiously wind it every Sunday night. He had a specific time every day for most tasks.

Dad loved his three grand daughters and was very generous helping Jen and I through our lives. He loved all family celebrations where we were all together. I think you will get a sense of that when the photos are shown later. He loved his food and was eager to go out for a meal any time. He often conned me into taking them out saying that there was no food in the house although I knew that was not true.

He had a good memory for numbers. He could recall bank account numbers, credit card numbers, or any number relevant to him. I remember once I took them to a travel agent when they wanted to go on a cruise. This was only a couple of years ago, bearing in mind that he was then in his nineties and he told the travel agent that he was a member of the travel club and was entitled to a discount. She could not find him listed so he recited an eight figure membership number by heart that enabled her to find him. All Mum could say was 'Good Heavens'. Unfortunately that trip did not eventuate.

There are a couple of random things that have stayed with me:

- The first time he let me cut the lawn with a power mower.
- Taking me to motor bike races when I was about 8 years old. I don't think Mum was a fan.
- Taking a day off school and driving to Blackheath in the Blue Mountains to play on the golf course because it had snowed the night before.

- Sitting on his lap and steering the old Holden across the Hay Plains. I was 9 or 10 years old then.
- When my sister and I were told to wait for Dad to come home from work on the footpath outside our house in Adelaide and he turned up in a brand new FC Holden. It was black with a white side flash.
- He painstakingly installed a parquet floor, piece by piece, in the large dining room of our Adelaide house and it ended up looking magnificent.

In his later years he suffered physically but was still mentally sharp. He had operations to correct the appendix operation he had at the end of the war, he had a blood mutation that caused him to take Warfarin for the last 20 odd years.

He had a serious fall at home several years ago where he broke several vertebrae in his back that caused serious mobility problems. He overcame these and had a second fall about 6 weeks ago again breaking more vertebrae in his back. As you can imagine this was extremely painful and it was not easy to watch him deal with this in hospital. He finally succumbed to a stroke in hospital at the age of 96.

It will be difficult to imagine him not being around. We all will miss him dearly and it's strange to think I can't pop around to see him. Dad lived a long and happy life and only succumbed to ill health at the very end. He loved to talk about the old times and I only wish I had listened more.

As we gather here today to remember and commemorate his life, I bid him farewell and mourn the loss of a dignified soul. He brought joy and fulfilment to many and I only wish I can be half the person as he was.

An extremely important part of his and Mum's life was their involvement with the church. Dad had a lot of respect for Gaye Heldon and he always had a big smile when Gaye turned up so I'm happy to ask Gaye to say something about Dad and his life with the church.

Thanks Gaye.

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## **Eulogy for John Sandow**

by Gaye Heldon

It has been the greatest honour to be asked to deliver this Eulogy for John, a man of quiet achievements who has enriched all our lives in so many different ways, as is testament by the friends and family that sit here today to honour him.

After several years in Sydney, then on the Central Coast, the delights of Mt. Tambourine won John and Lenore's hearts in 1995 and have blessed us Queenslanders (born or converted) with their friendship and company ever since. Following the terrible sadness and heartache of losing their daughter and Rob's sister Vicki, a neighbour Mrs Mora Fletcher who was a member of our church in Hurstville, Sydney, gave John and Lenore a book called Heaven and Hell by Emmanuel Swedenborg, which led them to join the General Church of the New Jerusalem (or as is more commonly used, The New Church) . . . and for those that don't know, it espouses a faith in the belief in one God, the



Lord Jesus Christ, with an understanding that the life of religion is to do good in being useful to others. I think I can confidently say that it has been their mainstay ever since, bringing a peace and calm to their lives that has touched us all in one way or another.

Initially, when John and Lenore moved to Mt. Tamborine they would drive each Sunday to church in Brisbane where they helped to build a strong friendship and sense of community within our church membership, both holding office on our voluntary committees for many years. Kevin and Erlinda Attwater and Jack and Johanna Benson, who also lived on the mountain would share the drives to church and both remember well the many happy and interesting doctrinal conversations that ensued on the way up to Rosalie in Brisbane. Jack and Johanna remember too the many visits they made to Sandow's home on the Central Coast, where John crafted beautiful lead light designs including one for the chapel in our Hurstville church\*, and Lenore executed many glorious paintings of the world around them, some of which may well adorn your walls.

In 1995 when Brian and I moved to the Gold Coast from Brisbane, we started a monthly group conversation with the Sandows, Attwaters, Bensons, Rev Les and Bev Sheppard, and later Rev Ian and Margaret Arnold and Rev Darren Brunne – ricocheting between our homes each month and finishing with delicious lunches to which we all contributed. Our subject matter was always a sermon that we all read during the month and then got together to discuss and dissemble the deep and meaningful things we understood, felt, or questioned. It was and is such a wonderful way to strengthen friendships and has continued even intermittently through our lockdowns and occasional separate visits in the last year.

When I asked Ian to give me his thoughts regarding John, he put it so beautifully that I have to use his words in describing the man we knew as our dear friend:

“John was solid in his convictions about the church, and like an oak tree his values and faith in church and family were dependable, offering a strength and refuge under his spreading boughs. John never talked up his achievements and loved to recall his days in the Bureau of Meteorology, particularly during the war years, which fascinated us oldies!!”

For me, I think of John's gentleness and gentlemanliness, always welcoming and full of good cheer, enjoying a glass of red and feasting on any dessert that contained chocolate! Holding up sound family values and commitment, John was a man of enormous warmth and humility and had an innocence of wisdom in his later years that shone through right to his last days. How blessed we are to have even a little of his journey in this world.

\*These windows were created by John and Lenore while they were living in Sydney



Robert and his mother Lenore at funeral

## **Is Your Spiritual Economy in Lock Down?**

by Rev Todd Beiswenger

If you've been paying attention to the Sydney COVID numbers lately you've been seeing a daily pattern: around 100 new cases per day, and around 25 of those are people who are wandering around in the community giving the gift of COVID. It's been this way for a couple weeks now it seems. One way to look at it is that given that greater Sydney has a population of around 5 million people, one hundred cases is basically nothing. Which is true. If one country had an army of 100, and another had an army of 5 million, well, I'm not sure even Gideon would have overcome those odds.

Yet, despite the numerical difference in those that have COVID and those that do not, the reality right now is that 5 million people are being held hostage by 25. It sounds pretty crazy, doesn't it? Think about all of the businesses and schools that are closed, the construction that isn't happening, the tourists that aren't touring... and the amount of activity that just isn't happening because of the actions of such a small, small, nearly insignificant minority is just absolutely staggering.

People, while tired, frustrated and annoyed with these lockdowns, seem to understand the logic of the government. In order to move forward we have to eliminate the virus from society, and that can happen via lock downs and quarantines or ultimately by way of mass vaccination. Essentially it is this: we must eliminate the bad before the "good" of society can resume.

Spiritually, the church teaches the same thing: first cease to do evil, then learn to do good. Yet, in my experience people don't really like to apply this principle to their lives. In fact, when I have brought this teaching up in some conversations, I find that it is as unpopular as liver and onion flavoured ice cream! I think people want to be good, but we also really would like nothing more than to indulge in the evil pleasures of our choice as well. I mean, we've all witnessed this dual track in ourselves: in one moment we're kind and generous, but then later we let a flood of negative energy – the hells – take over and the complaining and catastrophizing begins. We speak bad about our spouse, friend, public figures, then go on about how lousy the government is, how stupid the people are that have differing world views, and in general do whatever we can to bring everybody around us into the dumps as well. Most of this doesn't sound too bad until we're reminded that it's actually spiritual murder, and then, well, it sounds better than physical murder even though it sounds worse than we had originally thought it was.

Why does this happen? Why do we all have this Jekyll and Hyde routine? I'm glad you asked! I think it happens because on one level we do want to be good, and we know the pleasures of being good. It's personally rewarding to help somebody out. It feels good when our generosity is appreciated. Being good gives us a sense of purpose and usefulness. So we want to be good. It's good to be good!

Yet, there's undeniable pleasure in evil as well. I think most people know that watching porn isn't really a good thing, yet there's a reason the pornography industry brings in \$12 billion USD a year and it isn't because people don't enjoy it. I wonder how much money could be made if somebody learned how to simulate other vices... pay \$30/month and we'll tell you that you're the smartest person in the world, smarter than everybody else around no matter what you do or how bad your decisions turn out! And, if you sign up right now, we'll give you three months free of "You are one sexy lady/hunk of burnin' love" as well. (Terms and conditions apply, \$19.99 a month thereafter.)

There's a part of us that knows that we have a problem with certain evils, but for whatever reason we fail to give them up. Perhaps we think, "I'm good most of the time... overall if you put my life on judgment scale it would tip in favour of good!" Probably, hopefully, so. But what I'm thinking about is the massive impact on the "good" of society that 25 a day are having right now. Just as those 25 a day are holding 5 million hostage in Sydney right now, are the few, seemingly small, evils in your life holding the vast storehouse of goodness in your heart hostage? Good *is* happening in your life, but is your spiritual economy suffering as a result of the evils you aren't giving up? The Writings tell us that being a spiritual angel is vastly better than a natural, and a celestial angel is vastly superior to a spiritual angel. Is the celestial highest because it loves and does more good? Maybe. Perhaps the key is it just did a better job of cleaning out the evils in its life.

Look, I can justify my evils as well as anybody. My favourite justification is that the evil I do has minimal impact, if any at all, outside of myself. I do my best to keep my crimes as victimless as possible. Again, that's what I tell myself. However, the Writings are really clear that just like a virus, all evils are contagious. Oh, I just keep my evil in my own house, but the reality is that still has an effect because my grumpiness and contempt can get passed on to those around me. Even if we think we're only poisoning our own soul, the deeper truth is even those kind of evils will harden our own heart, which then dishes out it's coldness to those around us.

No matter what we say, think or do to justify our evils, when we participate in them we are the spiritual equivalent of people who break quarantine and walk around the community infected. Maybe like the government you can buy some goodwill by printing some sort of spiritual money, and people will like you for a while because everybody likes being on the receiving end of good stuff that we didn't have to pay for. But just as we're all getting tired of being locked down, people will actually prefer it if you refrained from your evil pleasure of choice. Whether it's a physical disease or a spiritual one, the principle is the same: first cease to do evil, then learn to do good.

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## **Special Event!**

### **Guest Speaker to Talk About Their Near Death Experience**

At the risk of over-selling it, this NDE account is one of the three most interesting that I've ever heard. If you never attend any of our classes/discussion groups, this is the one you want to attend! Faith Green is an Australian woman who lives in Queensland, and I came in contact with her through a mutual friend. What makes her story so compelling is the depth of it. So many NDE accounts go like this: I was sick, I died, went through a tunnel, saw the light, experienced bliss and then I came back. Meh.

But Faith's story contains a lot more details, part of which is due to the fact that she had two NDEs about 3 days apart. She's open about the fact that she headed to hell first, and admits that she wasn't really a nice person at the time. She talks about the spiritual side of drug addiction, the demons she encountered in her hospital room, how they tried to deceive her, and later about what she sees in heaven including what happens when a baby is aborted or miscarried. There are many life lessons in this story!

The original plan a couple of years ago was for Faith to come and speak to us in person, but she had health issues that prevented that from happening. Since then we've been in the crazy COVID world, and travel to and from Queensland just isn't as easy as it used to be. Instead she's agreed to join us via **Zoom on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30pm**. Do your best to be there! <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8163754711>

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### **August Calendar Notes**

Things being what they are, my plan at this point is to schedule our next class for August 9<sup>th</sup>. In theory it would be a dinner and class, but that really doesn't feel realistic at this point. However, I'm including it on the calendar hoping that it happens. I'm also mindful that we're overdue for a Holy Supper service as well. As such, I'm putting it on the calendar for August 1, but I'm figuring that it will be a virtual service. Once restrictions end, we'll have an in-person Holy Supper service. All that said, just keep an eye on the weekly updates for changes to the calendar.

### **SAVE THE DATE – SAVE THE DATE**

COVID permitting we have planned a **Car Rally and Free Lunch on Sunday October 17**. See June Newsletter or call Owen on 0407 647 280

### **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **Emily Kermond** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Rhonda Hall** (12<sup>th</sup>), **Rebekah Horner** (17<sup>th</sup>), **Larah Walsh** (21<sup>st</sup>), **Ralph Horner** (30<sup>th</sup>)

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