

KEN FORBES – TRUMPET CAPTAIN

Music was always present in the Forbes family. The whole family sang, danced – or played an instrument.



Ken was inspired to pick up the trumpet after seeing Harry James in an MGM musical. He even swapped a motor-bike for a trumpet when he was 16 years old and went on to study music theory at the Melbourne Conservatorium.

He became a professional fisherman after leaving school – working out of Eden and Port Lincoln, fishing for tuna. His first gigs were at the Eden Fishermen's Club and at country dances working with the Elton Brothers' piano and drums band.

He moved back to Melbourne in 1967, playing at the Cecil Hotel in the city 3 nights a week, and then with Bobby's Four at Palm Lake on Queen's Road 6 nights a week for 4 years.

Ken, with Bobby's Four, played on the PO cruise liner Orcades around the Pacific, and also did a season at the Wrest Point Hotel as they were building the casino. Then back to Melbourne playing various gigs at venues such as St. James' Tavern and Sergio's at Earl's Court.



He left the music business and moved to Darwin, going back to fishing for the next 19 years. The trumpet was never far away – he used to wake up the crew with a fine rendition of reveille. The captive audience never complained – he was, after all, the Captain.

Back on land, he moved to Brisbane and for the next 5 years started sitting in at gigs in venues such as the Manly Hotel and the Storey Bridge Hotel. Getting back into the swing of things, he worked with old mates from Bobby's Four and the fabulous pianist Vince Cenova. Ken then moved to Buderim on the Sunshine Coast, and discovered the "dark side" when he began playing with the Buderim Concert Orchestra.



Ken formed his own quintet, working gigs in the area, and also playing every Friday with the Noosa Rhythm Kings around the Sunshine Coast. They enjoyed playing together so much that even when the band's leader unfortunately died they decided to stay together and continued playing for another 5 years.

After 40 years on the high Cs it was time to come home to Melbourne. Ken and wife Judy settled in Brighton East in April 2000. Ken says he is enjoying playing more and more with a variety of bands in the Melbourne jazz scene – playing different styles ranging from old time dance bands, to Traditional and mainstream bands.

He is a permanent member of the Groovin' Easy Orchestra, and his own Ken Forbes Quintet, and he has once again returned to the "dark side" to play classical concerts with the Preston Symphony Orchestra!

