

REG. LINDSAY STORY PART 2

Dear Friends,

I would like to thank all those people who have contacted me regarding the first instalment of the Reg. Lindsay story. I was thrilled with the amount of interest shown and hope that you will all enjoy this second instalment and once again I appreciate the opportunity to tell my father's story.

With more than 60 albums, a large number of singles, several Gold Records, three Tamworth 'Golden Guitar Awards', four television Gold Logies, an Order of Australia Medal (O.A.M.), innumerable country music awards from Australia and overseas, Reg. Lindsay is a pioneer and a legend of Australian Country Music.

After winning the Tim McNamara Talent Quest at the Sydney Town Hall in 1951, Reg made his first recordings, 78's on the Rodeo label. There wasn't much singing work available so he returned to Adelaide for a short time where he did some shearing and yard-work but soon made a permanent move back to Sydney. He was able to do 2 or 3 singing jobs a week but the money wasn't good so he found a day job with the ABC as a rural broadcaster but was told he would have to give up hillbilly singing, so he gave up the job instead. Reg then found a job in the wool sales division of Goldsbrough Mort and continued singing at night but after a time decided he would do music full-time.

Reg's first radio program was on Radio 2CH in 1952. He took over the morning country music show which was changed to an evening time slot and it was planned to have a live audience in the station's auditorium while the show was broadcast. The station really promoted the new show and on the night of the first broadcast there was a huge audience with many people having to be turned away. After a few months Reg started with Radio 2SM where his program 'The Reg Lindsay Show' was broadcast for many years on a regular Saturday night time slot. Reg was also a part of the weekly live-to-air 'Bonnington's Bunkhouse Show' which was broadcast nationally on Radio 2GB. He was a featured artist on the show for a couple of years, showcasing his magnificent yodelling. Other artists on that show included George Foster as compere, Keith Walsh, Lilly Connors and Neil Williams.

Reg met the very popular McKean Sisters on the Sydney show circuit and they were often billed on the same shows. In 1954 Reg. married Heather, one of the McKean Sisters and their first daughter, Dianne, was born in December, 1955. They appeared on shows around the Sydney area being run by Ted Quigg and later on began organising and running their own shows with the first being held at the Penrith Hall. The show had a long list of entertainers, all well-known still today. The show included Reg, Heather, the McKean Sisters, Slim Dusty, Rick and Thel, Judy Stone and Les Partell and the hall was packed out.

1954 was the year of Reg's first road tour. He was touring as a support artist for the Wilf Carter from Canada but when Carter went home ill, Reg successfully completed the tour with 'The Reg Lindsay show' for twelve weeks.

Around this time, Reg. also began working on the 'Kalang Showboat'. This was a large Manly ferry which had been converted into an auditorium and was the venue for the enormously popular country music concert cruises. Reg's show appeared on the 'Showboat' once a month; the shows were seen by thousands and were always booked out.

Since 1955 Reg had been taking his show out to the rural and surrounding areas of Sydney and now decided to start touring the country with his own show. The first 'Reg Lindsay Show' tour was for one month in January 1956 and was held in the Nabiac Hall which was a small wooden hall in the middle of a paddock with nothing else around. Near opening time there was hardly anybody there, but soon cars and people seemed to come from no-where and by opening time the hall was packed to capacity with people hanging in the windows to watch the show. These month long tours out into the country areas continued, alternating with shows in the Sydney area until 1957, when Reg decided to take the show out onto the road full-time. From then on he took his show and his family out on the road for up to 11 months of the year in cars, caravans, and trailers, travelling thousands of kilometres, sometimes visiting up to an astounding 340 towns annually and showing an incredible six nights a week in halls around the country. That meant a different town every day and in those days you weren't allowed to show on a Sunday, so that was the day off, to take care of everything else that had to be done or to meet up with other showies, or travellers and have a BBQ or go fishing. Reg's second daughter, Sandra, was born in 1960 and was soon touring the country with the family at six weeks of age. Some of the artists who travelled with the shows were Judy Stone, Kevin King, Nev Nicholls and Chad Morgan but there were many more over the years.

The full-time touring shows continued for seven years and on visits back to Sydney, Reg would perform four nights in the city and also make regular album recordings in between. In 1963, Reg toured the showground circuit with the

famous showman, Johnny Foster for 9–10 months with the tent shows. By this time Dianne had been sent back to Sydney to stay with her grandparents so she could attend school, but had been flown back to join her parents on the showgrounds as they didn't like the family to be separated. Correspondence schooling was tried but was not successful and with Sandra soon to reach school age, and a third daughter, Joanne born in September, 1963, it was decided to come off the road and be based in Sydney.

1962 saw Reg. tour part of Papua New Guinea with a small group performing shows for the Red Cross in remote areas. Reg continued to run full country music shows in the Sydney area, many of these at the Parramatta Town Hall and they always had a full line up of artists and played to packed houses.

In the next issue of the ABBA Bulletin I will continue the story of Dad's career including: his successful television shows, his many overseas trips, some of his achievements in the country music industry and of his continuing love of performing county music around Australia.

Best wishes, yours in true country style

Dianne Lindsay