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Victims of the Disaster - [Print Version](#)

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<i>Henry Bent</i>	<i>Suzanne Fripp</i>
<i>Stephen Black</i>	<i>Alan Fulton</i>
<i>Anthony Brennan</i>	<i>William Gemmell</i>
<i>Alda Brown</i>	<i>Brian Gordon</i>
<i>Margaret Brown</i>	<i>Diane Gosden</i>
<i>Kathy Cain</i>	<i>Beryl Halverson</i>
<i>Mary Carr</i>	<i>Rodney Henderson</i>
<i>Lynette Carter</i>	<i>Cheryl Hutchinson</i>
<i>Jeffrey Charlton</i>	<i>Graeme Johnston</i>
<i>Jill Clayton</i>	<i>Stephen Jones</i>
<i>Amanda Clements</i>	<i>John Jones</i>
<i>Ross Clements</i>	<i>Karen Keen</i>
<i>Phillip Coburn</i>	<i>Bryan Knight</i>
<i>Peter Cormack</i>	<i>Marina Krzysztan</i>
<i>Halwyn Cranfield</i>	<i>Angela Larkin</i>
<i>Peter Cullen</i>	<i>Rosemary Leech</i>
<i>Michael Douwer</i>	<i>Christopher Lopez</i>
<i>Margaret Dunn</i>	<i>Michael Lyons</i>
<i>Carl Dykman</i>	<i>Kenneth Maes</i>
<i>Christopher Ellem</i>	<i>Carolyne Maroney</i>
<i>Deborah Metcalf</i>	<i>Louise Sharp</i>
<i>Marjorie Miles</i>	<i>Amir Simaan</i>
<i>Walter Miles</i>	<i>Denald Simpson</i>
<i>Zarb Mincarelli</i>	<i>Esther Smith</i>
<i>Leslie Mitchell</i>	<i>Julia Sollom</i>
<i>William Morris</i>	<i>Robert Sollom</i>
<i>Campbell Morris</i>	<i>Kevin Spicer</i>
<i>Gladys Murphy</i>	<i>Margaret Spinks</i>
<i>Darcy Murphy</i>	<i>Graham Stewart</i>
<i>Ariette Naggar</i>	<i>Linda Styles</i>
<i>Christopher Parsons</i>	<i>Robert Sulter</i>
<i>David Pearson</i>	<i>Robert Tarrant</i>

Josephine Pearson John Veevers
Bruce Pederson Milton Walker
Jan Post Suzanne Walker
Jill Power Elizabeth Ward
Lynette Prior Rosemary Ward
John Quayle David Watts
Elvie Radford Francis Williams
Vivienne Radnedge Teenie Williams
Marie Ricketts



Miracle's Happen From the Magazine "Who" 18.8.1997

Debbie Woodgate survived the Granville train disaster with terrible injuries, but she recovered beyond all expectations. The young girl could not see the priest, she heard him giving the dead and dying the last rites. He actually climbed in and got near a few bodies, not where I was but close by recalled Debbie Woodgate [nee Skow]. He blessed people and said his prayers. Debbie was a nineteen year old, used to be captain of her school, lay in the dark pinned from the neck down in the wreckage.

She was on her way to work, all she could think about was that she had better hurry up and get out of there and go to work. Debbie hadn't got the clerk's job at the NSW Police headquarters in Sydney, that hot humid morning, January 18 1977. Nine hours after the accident, she was one of the last survivors to be pulled from the mangled carriages of the Granville train disaster.

Eighty three people perished when the 6.09am from Mt Victoria derailed and smashed into Granville's 170 tonne Bold Street Bridge, which crashed on to the train's third and fourth carriages. "I can remember being crushed", said Debbie who had caught the train from Parramatta that morning after leaving her family's Baulkham Hills home. "I thought a plane had dropped on me". When Debbie was finally freed from the dark place that was a carriage and airlifted to hospital, rescuers were amazed at her survival. "The weight of the debris crushed everything from my neck to my

toes" said Debbie.



The impact and the side effects of numerous operations afterwards have left her motor skills dramatically impaired. Her left leg was amputated below the knee and burns from the oxyacetylene torches used in the mammoth rescue operation left permanent scars. Two and a half weeks after the rescue Debbie lapsed into a five month coma and spent a total of fourteen torturous months in intensive care. Four years after the disaster she was awarded a then record payout by the NSW Supreme Court for her injuries.

Therapists, medical practitioners, specialists told her that she would never walk, she would never bear children. Neither the grim medical verdict nor the predictions of her family and friends who told her she would never marry or have children could quench her spirit. Inside she was so angry at all the negativity, she thought how dare they! I am going to show you. In 1989 she met a special education teacher Stephen Woodgate, 40, at a function for her employer Wescap, an advocacy organisation that looks after kids with different problems. Within a year, they were married and planning a family. In 1993, after years of trying to conceive, including a stint on an IVF programme, the couple decided to adopt.

The day they signed the papers to adopt their foster child, Kim, Debbie discovered she was pregnant with Shelby. Debbie decided to perform community service, she has served on the board of "Riding for the Disabled" Helping to set up this organisation she was riding her horse when she fell off and broke her pelvis. It was soon after that she met her husband Stephen. Debbie became heavily involved with " Westcap" which looks after the legal rights for people with intellectual disabilities. Both Stephen and Debbie became involved with A.A.I.S.H [Stephen was CEO] this charity took people out of Rydalmere and placed them in the community.

The Day of The Roses

John Hennessy was sent to Australia from England in 1947 as a World War 11 orphan. He was born in Cheltham, England in 1936, John was ten when he was sent to Australia. He went to Bindoon, a six thousand five hundred hectare property sixty miles north of Perth run by the Christian Brothers. In 1997 John was elected senior vice president of the International Child Migrant Association. This organisation links other child migrant groups throughout the world. A former deputy mayor of Campbelltown, John was active in the area improving the community in which he had made his home.

John was the first person to arrange a Memorial to the Granville Train Disaster victims since the accident occurred in 1977. For the twentieth anniversary he had arranged a church service and had a Memorial Wall made of granite with the names of the people who lost their lives

Medical Review Seminar Lidcombe Hospital - February 15 1977

Important guests at this seminar was Doctor Storey, Chairman of the Health Commission of NSW Dr. Roderick McEwin, Major General Stretton [Director of the Federal Natural Disasters Organisation], Air Vice Marshall Carter [Director of the National Emergency Services College and Civil Defence] and members of other Health Organisations in Australia Dr McEwin expressed on behalf of the Health Commission of NSW their sincere appreciation for the wonderful efforts of all those people who were in any way associated with the rescue and resuscitation operations of the Granville Rail Disaster.

The Police, the Ambulance, the Fire Brigade worked methodically and swiftly and in tireless manner which was described as magnificent. The various emergency teams from the hospitals also were mentioned for their tireless efforts during rescue operations under difficult and often dangerous conditions, as well as their colleagues in the hospitals to which casualties were referred.

Appreciation was also extended to the Department of Main Roads and staff who worked continuously to raise the fallen concrete bridge and to the various voluntary groups and individuals who provided rescue support services. Dr. McEwin went on to say that the Sydney Metropolitan Disaster Medical Programme was tested and found to be of untold value, and congratulated the State Emergency Services who had been of great assistance to the Health Commission in developing the programme, particularly in the staging of simulated disasters.

Doctor McEwin went on to describe the accident and showed slides of the site. It is as follows.

Approximately at 8.10am on January 18 1977 the regular commuter train from Mount Victoria drawn by an electric locomotive was approaching Granville around a gradual curve on the up west track. A short distance before the Bold Street Bridge the locomotive left the track bringing car one into collision with the bridge stanchions and extensively damaging that car. Shortly afterwards the bridge deck collapsed onto cars three and four. Car one was extensively torn open. Car two was relatively unscathed, Car three and four, the rear half of Car three and the front half of Car four crushed beneath the bridge.

Many sight-seers managed to get onto the tracks, they were not police or medical teams, they were not rescuers, these people had to be removed more than once. Many people came to aid the operations. A person called Ron Scootch was a Structural Engineer appeared on the scene, his and others advice was extremely helpful. At 9.30 am Sid Haynes of the Fire Brigade confirmed that there was gas leaking everywhere around the slab. The gas was abundant and was from four pressure cylinders that had been kept on the train and crushed and broken underneath the slab. The mountain trains need heating, it was just bad luck that they had been on the train for this situation.

The operation of blowing the gases out by using all compressors and reversing the air lines. The Fire Brigade provided one of their great fresh air blowers that had a large volume and this was the turning point in ridding the underside of the slab of gas.

During the rescue efforts the heat started to build up under the slab which was creaking and groaning the whole of the time, in fact the slab moved three and a half inches which must have been terrifying for the injured as well as the rescuers. Extra oxygen was pumped under the slab to give some relief to the people who were working. Rescuers hosed themselves down with water, someone brought in bags of ice and stacked them along the "Tunnel" that was used to reach the injured.

Appreciation must be given to the Salvation Army for the provision of comfort, the food that was supplied to all the men and women who worked there. Food was supplied to all workers from all services, volunteers and rail workers. Many of the survivors who still live the horrors of the disaster have a fear of going under bridges and traveling in trains, will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid these things. Twenty six years after the disaster people of Granville still express sorrow and get upset by the memories even if they did not know anyone on the train.

Joe Beecroft - Daily Telegraph 18 February 1998

Joe was 60 years old when the Granville rail disaster struck. He was a

member of the police rescue service, on that day and night and the day that followed, the image of Joe Beecroft was etched forever in our minds. For more than thirty hours, his features drained with exhaustion and fatigue, his face and his overalls blackened by soot and dirt, Joe Beecroft searched for survivors in the horror of that wreckage.

When Joe was asked in the interview "what memory lingers with you most deeply" Joe replied "it is the memory of an old man, an old man whose face I never saw, but the feel of whose hand will stay with me for as long as I live". The old frail voice asked for one last favour. From under the rubble of concrete, from beneath the roof of a railway carriage crushed to within 18 inches of the floor, Joe heard the man say, "Don't worry about me, I'm an old man and I am dying. Go and save those who still have a chance. But before you go, will you hold my hand a moment. Will you hold my hand before I die?"

Joe had been imprisoned by the Japanese for three and half years, the man who was to become the Hero of Granville was already a hero in World War 11. A Japanese guard took a bayonet, slashed open Joe's arm from his wrist to his shoulder, and dragged on his tendons, leaving that arm slightly shorter than the other. Joe's crime? Stealing rice to give his fellow prisoners.

At the age of 79 in February 1998 Joe Beecroft passed away on February 19 1998 Joe was buried with full police honours, they held the service in the Anglican Church in the town of Wallerawang, not far from where he was born.

If there is a heaven, which we trust there is, an old man - hand outstretched - will be there to greet him