

## Over the Top?

'Due to the new 'Privacy Act', we are not permitted to print any names in our journal without permission,' began the preamble to a Privacy Act Consent Form which arrived with my latest monthly magazine.

'Below is a consent form for any willing members to sign to allow their names to be printed in our journal,' it continued.

'If consent is given it will be noted on our database for future reference,' it concluded.

The Act referred to above is the Federal 'Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000' which amended the 'Privacy Act 1988' and contained ten National Privacy Principles which came into effect on 21 December 2001. It has taken some time for the ramifications of these NPPs to become widely known.

Extrapolating this down to our little 'Tiger Rag', this means that we can no longer publish those lists of members' names by State—names which were so helpful if you were trying to find a mate from the old days, or indeed just looking at the lists to see who was sharing your interest in the old Tiger Battery.

All this somewhat cheesed me off and started my old grey matter churning over how time was changing the simple, enjoyable things in life.

My parents had always insisted on good manners. My Methodist Church education complemented these principles. Life in the Sergeants' Mess added formal dining protocols whilst a commissioning course drove these and many other genteel traits home with a vengeance.

There was a certain grace about inviting ladies to enter before oneself, of opening car doors for women to enter and alight, and of tipping hats to passing females. At the dinner table, one pulled out chairs for the lady on one's right, poured her drinks and should she need to retire during the meal, escorted her out of the room and back again. When walking with a member of the fairer sex, one always moved on the gutter side to ensure that any splash from passing vehicles covered oneself and spared the lady.

Whilst I never possessed an opera cape which could be flung over offending puddles in the path of a female, there was many a time when my jacket became the overcoat which protected a lightly-dressed woman from the chills of a winter evening.

One never blasphemed within a maiden's hearing, conversation carefully avoided sex, religion and politics, and the discussions on such racist issues as the White Australia policy were relegated to the billiard rooms.

Heck! All this really used to be fun—being a gentleman was a fine attribute.

But now? OK there are jokes about when grass was for mowing, when 'gay' meant happy and when a 'hard drive' was a long day's journey in a car. But hasn't society gone over the top a bit?

Not all that long ago, I pulled out a chair at a dinner night for a mature lady who informed me, 'I am quite capable of seating myself.' The other day I stepped aside to allow a young lady to enter a lift ahead of me only to be given a look which said, 'Dirty old man! You only want to look at my backside and legs.' I opened the rear door of a car for a female to enter and she promptly opened the front door and got in. And now we can't even list our Tiger mates in the newsletter because this is an invasion



of privacy.

Imagine what could happen if one doffed one's hat these days—probably the female would look at the top of your head to see if there was some special sort of tuft sprouting. Doesn't it grate with you blokes when some girl wants to be 'one of the boys' and starts dropping the 'F'-word like it might become extinct if she didn't use it? And the looks one receives if you announce that 'What a gay evening I had at so-and-so's party.'

Gee, one can't even write about the 'chairman' without drawing screams for 'chairperson'; to cite the way 'he' does something causes an avalanche of echoes of 'you mean "he or she"'; and to suggest that 'Australian' citizens like going to such-and-such a place denies the multi-cultural others in our community who are not naturalised from sharing this same opportunity.

I believe we have gone over the top. Call me old-fashioned. Say I live in the past. Tell me that I should move with the times. But . . . think about what I've said and then answer this question honestly: 'After acknowledging and respecting all the rights, privileges and expectations of a person living in our great free country of Australia, has society not gone over the top?'

*Ubique Ed*

[To allow us to come back to the norm of listing members' names, will all readers please complete and return the 'Privacy Act Consent Form' on the last page of this publication, and return immediately?]