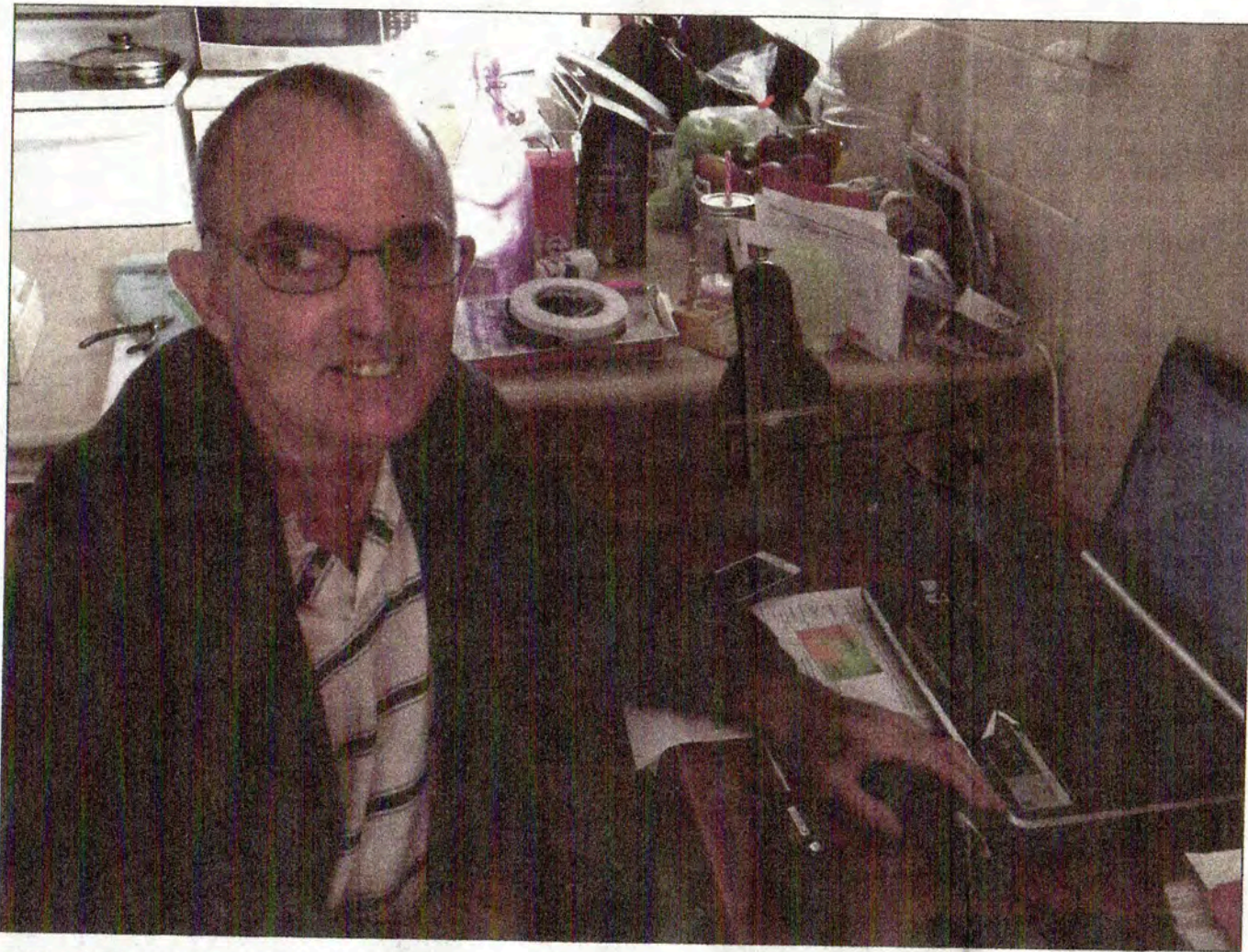


Recovery's helping hand



BUSY LIFE: Despite a raft of health problems Ashtonfield grandfather Steve Fenner has found meaning and value in life through helping others.

Picture by ALAN HARDIE

ALAN HARDIE

Recovering from a stroke, a double lung transplant and heart valve replacement has given pensioner Steve Fenner a desire to help others.

Mr Fenner, 55, still has to attend John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle up to four days a week for rehabilitation.

But the key to his welfare is the opportunity he finds to help others.

The Ashtonfield grandfather is devoted to his principal job: sending out all the emails and other correspondence for the Maitland Suicide Prevention Network.

"I was previously a truck driver and had led a pretty active life," Mr Fenner, 55, said.

"But life changed dramatically after I had a double lung transplant in 2009, a heart valve replacement in February 2011 and a stroke in October [last] year," he said.

"The stroke was particularly bad for me and I have had a great deal of help from others.

"I also suffered from depression, but I began to see the plight of others too.

"And I discovered that by helping other people, I was also helping my own recovery.

"Every situation is what you make of it.

"I particularly value the work I can do for the Maitland Suicide Prevention Network, when I send out correspondence to the various areas with whom they need to be in contact.

"This is a very important network in the Maitland area and we all work as a team here.

"I find that when I focus on others, I have no time to worry about my own problems."

It was through his work with various organisations that Mr Fenner was introduced to another group he says has changed his life: the Maitland Bridge Club.

"A short while ago I was wondering what I would do with all the time on my hands," he said.

"Now it is difficult to find the time to do all the things I want to do."