



Corop News

“The Call of the Brolga”

Issue No. 12 September 2004.

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CCAG UPDATE

The winter months have been busy ones for members of the CCAG. The Corop enhancement project is nearing completion, hence a fair amount of activity on several fronts has been required.

Town Shelter

As many of you may have noticed construction has begun on the building of a town shelter in Corop, on the east side of the store. After a few months awaiting approval of the plans through VICROADS and the Shire, CCAG members were able to start work on the foundations for the building. The shelter will be made out of local stone and will be undertaken by stonemason, Jason Webb. Jason was also responsible for the construction of the memorial wall and seat at the Corop Cemetery.

The stone shelter has been designed to give the appearance of an old abandoned building but one that will blend into the landscape. The open window and door-frames aim to provide views of the surrounding countryside. Later stages of the project will include landscaping around the shelter, and an information board with a map of the area and local features.



Pouring the slab for the town shelter

Along the Track

The finishing touches to the walking track on the east side of Lake Cooper have not been completed due to a delay with the de-gazetting of what was once a road reserve, but has now fallen away due to the erosion around the banks of the lake. The track is awaiting signs, a car-park and picnic areas. Two large red-gum picnic benches and several bench seats have been donated. These will be installed at the start of the track (Lake Road) and at a midway point.

There are plans for further revegetation. However, the drought conditions have slowed progress. Signs for either end of the walking track are currently being organised.

Highway Beautification

The Campaspe Shire has officially taken over responsibility for the tree plantation on the north side of the highway. The Shire will be responsible for mowing and maintaining the area. CCAG will replant the shrubs that have died. A sign made by Narine Signs in Rochester, stating 'Corop Community Action Group Project 2001' has now been erected.

VICROADS

VICROADS have cleared some of the poplar trees away from the highway on the South-West side of the bridge as they were encroaching on the shoulder of the highway. As their first attempt at this left quite a mess, CCAG requested that they return to tidy it up. VICROADS obliged, returning a second time but found it a challenging job to do manually. Any further work here probably requires an excavator to complete.

A letter has been sent to VICROADS by the CCAG stating our concerns over the safety of the road between Corop and Rochester (Heathcote-Rochester Road), in particular the part where the road narrows. VICROADS has responded stating that although they agree it is a problem it would not meet any of the current criteria to attract funding. CCAG also asked Mawson's Quarry to express their concerns to VICROADS, which they have done. The group now plans to write to our local member on the issue.

Corop Tennis and Community Centre

Work has continued on upgrading the tennis and community centre. A concrete path has been laid, mats have been purchased for inside and outside the door. The Shire is in the process of repairing the spouting.

Christmas Decorations

CCAG was successful in its submission to the Campaspe Shire to purchase Christmas decorations for the town. Under Policy 56 the shire provides up to \$1500 (dollar for dollar) for Christmas decorations, promotional material etc. A sub-committee has plans to purchase various Christmas lights and decorations for the town and community centre. The feasibility of street banners is still being explored. Policy 51 is a \$750 grant towards community special events. The CCAG has nominated its Corop Cup Day and Christmas party functions as special community events.

Street signs

New street signs have been installed to replace those vandalised/stolen from Stevens Street and what was formerly known as Tennis Court Road. The CCAG endeavoured to have the latter reverted back to Church Street but to no avail. We were informed that a lengthy consultation process must be undertaken. The irony is the shire has inadvertently renamed the street Tennis Court.

Shire Community Discussion

The Council Discussion held at Corop on the afternoon of 27th July gave residents an opportunity to raise matters of concern. Most issues received an immediate response with a few awaiting further consideration by the council. The CCAG is pleased to host this session annually and appreciates the opportunity to meet with councillors in an informal setting.

Major Working Bees

Please keep either or both dates of October 3rd and 10th in mind for working bees on the Lake Cooper Walking Track and the highway project. Tasks will include: weed control around young trees; replanting of trees; erection and establishment of picnic areas and information boards; and development of car-parks. Please support us to finish these projects in readiness for the official openings some time later this year. A flyer with more information will appear in mailboxes closer to the dates.



The Corop Cup

The tradition continues . . . well we plan to run the Corop Cup on the 16th of October. Final acceptances will soon close for the event and another strong field is expected. Bold Bobby after his fast-finishing win last year is still being spelled and the highly fancied filly, Perfect Pat has other events to attend this year, therefore the cup is sure to be another exciting and closely fought tussle.

The local milliners, dressmakers and tailors will be inundated for outfits for the day so get organised. Fashions of the field, won by Robyn Ryan last year, will again be a highlight.

The day drew a crowd of approximately 60 last year and with lots of activities, give-aways and competition demand was high to make the Corop Cup an annual social event.

Further information of this great day will be displayed at the Corop and Colbinabbin Stores and be in mailboxes soon . . . don't miss this year's Cup!

Collins' Family History

The following family history has been prepared by John Collins, from Corop West. Thanks to John for his contribution.

Our farm is on the Midland Highway, on the way to Elmore, about seven kilometres from Corop. The area is generally referred to a Corop West. It is not marked on any map, but it would start around our farm and finish somewhere the other side of Collins Road.

I have lived all my life on the farm, except for a short period after Carolyn and I were married, when we lived in Elmore. Our children, Aaron and Abbey are the fourth generation of Collins' to have lived in the Corop area.

Simon Collins (my great grandfather) sailed from Cornwall to the Bendigo Goldfields to find his fortune, but alas did not find it. After marrying Elizabeth Smith they farmed in the Nhill area for a while before retiring in Geelong.

My grandfather, Albert Pryor and his wife, Eleanor (nee Jackson) farmed in the Campbell's Forest area up until 1923. They then moved to the property in Corop West on the road that now bears the Collins name. My grandparents had ten surviving children: Albert, Leslie, Ron, Gladys, Bill, Jean, Betty, Frank and Doug (also a child that died in infancy). They lived in the original farm house (no longer standing) on the property that now belongs to the Micheal family.

My father (Albert) purchased the house property in 1950 from Mr W Harris, which he had previously rented. Then in 1964 he was able to purchase "Mark Tree Line" (see below). During the 1930s my father played both football and cricket for Corop along with his brothers. I remember him telling me that at one time the cricket team was comprised of two families – the Collins and the Lucas families.

Along with these sports my father was also a keen shooter and fisherman, with numerous trips away along the Darling River. He also had a life long association and friendship with the Speers family and the Johnson family, where Dad would often be found on a Sunday morning.

My mother, Lillian, was born in Finley (NSW) where the Read family had a farm before moving to "The Gums" – a farm on the west side of Elmore.

My grandparents and Uncle Frank (who died in a car accident) are buried in the Corop cemetery, while my parents are buried in the Elmore cemetery.

I was born in Elmore and went to the primary school in Corop. The school had eleven children and one teacher. I then attended Rochester High School.

What's the Mark Tree Line?

On the Midland Highway heading towards Elmore, after the sweeping right hand bend near our house, you will come across Mark Tree Road. At the intersection of the Midland Highway and Mark Tree Road there is a large tree. This has special significance to my family and Corop West.

Apparently during the mid 1800s when the Corop West area was opened up, this tree was used as a survey marker. It is said that this tree lies exactly due north of the Melbourne GPO, hence the origin of the name of the road – Mark Tree road.

The property on the north side of the highway, past Mark Tree Road, is referred to by the locals as “Mark Tree Line”. It was originally part of the Dutton family estate, however now belongs to our family. Just over the fence from the “Mark Tree” there was a double storey hotel. The building was dismantled during the sixties. Legend has it that Ned Kelly stayed here with the aim of robbing the Corop Bank (none of which can be verified). About a hundred metres up the hill, to the right, there was a post office and further down the road there was a school.

John Collins.

Corop Cemetery Trust

The Cemetery Trust was delighted to receive a phone call from Dr Sharman Stone M.P. congratulating the Trust on our successful application for the second round of Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2004. The Trust had applied for funding of \$3,620 to purchase a generator, lawn mover and brush-cutter. When documentation is received these items will be purchased. This equipment will be available for other volunteer groups to use and the generator will be of particular value to the local Fire Brigade when assisting at night-time incidents.

The planting of understorey trees in the rear bushland block at the Cemetery is planned for the Spring. We hope that soaking rains have occurred by then to give the seedling stock, that has been raised under a grant from the Department of Sustainability, ideal conditions to establish.

A working bee will be organized for this planting project possibly in conjunction with the annual “Wildflower Walk”. The date will be well publicised.

Remember when a Sunday drive was a regular family outing? It was a great way to relax and enjoy the local haunts, drop in on relatives and friends or settle down for a quiet picnic in a favourite spot. Recent travels around the local neighbourhood have revealed many interesting places to go things to see and people to meet. Perhaps its time to revive the practice and make some time in our busy lives to take the road from Corop and see what lies beyond.

Over the next few issues of Corop News we'll explore the roads from Corop and let you know what we find. We will try to mention the range of possibilities but will be relying on our readers to tell us about places to include in future editions. So please send us your contributions.

The Road from Corop

Travelling south from Corop Township along the **Lake Cooper Road** gives us a clear view of the dry bed of **Lake Cooper** that has now been without water for most of the last two years. Gone are the flocks of waterbirds, the hopeful anglers and the lakeside campers. The shallow lakebed is exposed, bereft of its former life, waiting for the water which one day will come down the Cornella Creek from the Mount Camel Range. Glimpses of new life can be seen on the eastern shores where plantations of trees and shrubs have defied the dry conditions and flourished against the odds.



Lake Cooper (2003) when it had some water for a short time.

Out through the vines bordering **Lucas Road** and left on to the **Heathcote Rochester Road** we see the dramatic changes in the landscape. The rolling paddocks of former years have been replaced by kilometres of vineyards. Patches of tomatoes and some traditional crops are also a feature. It is pleasing to note the areas of revegetation on the top slopes of the Mt. Camel Range. It is well worth a stop at the **Cellar Doors** of Mount Burrumboot Estate and Whistling Eagle to sample a drop of the local wines and perhaps make a purchase or two. These wines are renowned for their excellence - a tribute to the rich volcanic soil in which they are grown.

If you have remembered to pack the thermos and goodies for a tea break it might be time to head for the **Cornella State Forest**, to the Left off Tait Hamilton Rd. This State forest is around 300 hectares in size and has many large, old habitat trees on site. These tree hollows are home to Squirrel Gliders and Tuans (Feathered-Tailed Phascogale). Here we enter Box Iron Bark Country with magnificent specimens of the black-barked Red Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) and the white-barked Yellow Gum/White Ironbarks (*E. leucoxylon*).

Continuing south on the **Heathcote Rochester Rd** we come to **Butler Court** and **Moss Valley Deer Park** nestled in a natural bush setting amongst deer and native flora and fauna. Sweeping views of **Mt Ida National Park** and Cornella State Forest form a magnificent backdrop to this tranquil setting. Hosts Phyllis and Irwin Goerke offer Bed and Breakfast accommodation in spacious and comfortable surroundings. This fully self-contained facility offers two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a large living-dinning area with kitchenette, making it a very comfortable family retreat.



Moss Valley deer.

Travelling on towards **Lady's Pass** we note the magnificent old River Red Gums on both sides of the road. Then we turn left at the **Northern Highway** and travel a short distance to the **Mount Ida Lavender Farm** in **Stoddart Rd.** The gardens display many fragrant varieties of Lavender. Quality lavender products are made from the oil and flowers grown at Mt. Ida and a range of beautifully packaged products are for sale. The tearoom provides a choice of light refreshments and has extensive garden views.

If time permits we may travel on to **Heathcote**, which offers a wide range of food options and other attractions. On the homeward journey a few places of interest are well worth a visit. A left turn at the **Tait Hamilton Rd** takes us past **Chinamens Bend Vineyard** to the top of the **Mt. Camel Range**. From this vantage point spectacular views to the east and west delight the traveller.



View from Chinamens Bend

The road continues down to **Toolleen Township** which was an important link between Melbourne and Echuca and Bendigo and Beechworth following the discovery of gold at Rushworth in the 1800's. Toolleen also marks the beginning of The Gold and Ironbark Trail. The **Plough Inn** built in 1873, is now the Toolleen Hotel. The **Nature Reserve/Walking Track** opposite the hotel is worth a visit as it features numerous regionally rare species that flower abundantly in the Spring.



The Toolleen Hotel

Turning right onto the **Northern Highway** at Toolleen we travel on to the **Rushworth Bendigo Rd** and travel approx 10 kilometres down the road to the entry to the **Runnymede Flora Reserve**. This reserve is one of the few examples of Low Rise Grassy Woodland in the area. Covering 250 hectares the Runnymede Reserve is an excellent example of the vegetation along the **Mount Camel Range** prior to European settlement. In springtime Clustered Everlastings Daisies, Sticky Everlasting Daisies, Gold Dust Wattles and Golden Wattles put on a vivid yellow display. Numerous lily species, native grasses, yam daisies and bluebells provide a rich and colourful understorey. Birds, reptiles and mammals thrive in the environment.

We take the option of leaving the reserve by Three Chain Road. This stretch of road is listed as highly significant for its road side vegetation. Moving on through farmland we return to the Rochester Heathcote Road and head back to Corop.

Throughout the day we stop from time to time at the historical plaques which have been erected by the Colbinabbin and District Historical Society.

Colbinabbin and surrounds and the Elmore District will be included in this segment in future newsletters.

Crime Stoppers

Putting the finger on . . . criminal damage

Many people are concerned about criminal damage in their community. It is extremely disappointing to see trees and shrubs on nature strips or in parkland, broken off or pulled out.

It is equally upsetting to visit a public toilet and find a hand-basin smashed from its brackets or broken off a wall. Private motor vehicles sometimes have external rear-vision mirrors broken from the mounting. Public rubbish bins are targeted when someone sets fire to the contents. Phone booths and bus shelters also attract attention from those who smash glass. Street signs get damaged or stolen. And then there is the problem of vandalism in the form of graffiti, usually sprayed in public places or on private property.

What is the cost of criminal damage?

The cost to the community cannot be calculated. For Local Government, annual repair costs can be enormous, and all borne by the ratepayers. For some police districts, criminal damage incidents dominate local crime statistics. Police resources are diverted to attend to incidents which should never have occurred. Commercial tourist operators hate criminal damage because it works against all

efforts to encourage visitors and tourists to a district. Who wants to visit an area where it appears that people don't value property?

People who enjoy visiting a tourist area talk about it to friends. People who visit and find lots of damage are even more likely to tell others.

What are the causes of criminal damage?

This lack of respect for the property of others is complex. Books have been written on the subject, so this little brochure can't hope to explain why criminal damage occurs.

However, if the community works as a team on the issue of criminal damage, we can do something about it.

When does criminal damage happen?

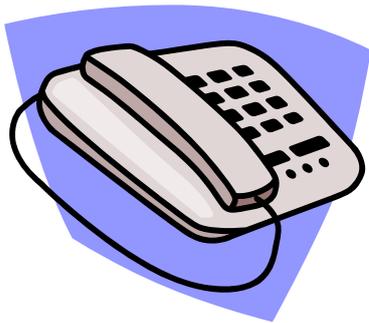
For obvious reasons, most criminal damage occurs at night. Those involved must know that their actions are unlawful, and certainly don't want to be seen in the act of destroying property. Sometimes vandalism occurs in daylight, if the vandal is confident that he can't be seen.

What should you do if you see vandals destroying property?

If the action is happening right now, and if you have a mobile phone, the best action is to **call local police as quickly as possible**. If available, police will try to attend immediately. If you know that your local station is not staffed 24 hours, please call 000.

Meanwhile try to note the appearance of the culprits, and if they use a vehicle you should note its registration number, make, model and colour. Any other clues should be noted, such as the direction in which they headed.

Be careful. If the vandals see you telephoning, they may direct their aggression towards you.



If you don't have a mobile, or don't want to be seen phoning, what should you do?

This is where Crime Stoppers can help. Crime Stoppers is also valuable in circumstances where you feel that you cannot be openly associated with the case, by revealing that you have reported the offenders.

You should carefully note all the details. The specific location; the time of day or night; and exactly what you saw, including descriptions of those involved, are most important.

At your first opportunity call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Will your identity be protected?

Certainly. YOU DO NOT have to give your name when phoning Crime Stoppers. The caller telephone number is NOT revealed on the Crime Stoppers telephones. Crime Stoppers does NOT tape calls. Crime Stoppers does NOT trace calls. Crime Stoppers is only interested in your information, not your identity.

What happens then?

Staff at Crime Stoppers write an incident report using your information. The report is sent to local police for follow up and investigation. Crime Stoppers will be advised later whether the information helped police make an arrest and lay charges.

Stamping out criminal damage requires a team effort. Are you prepared to help your community?

This newsletter was compiled by Carmel Pearson, Pat Kennedy, Bill Barkla and Katrina Hall. Graphics are provided courtesy of Katherine Weeks. Thanks to everyone who contributed articles and photos and to the Rochester Secondary College for its ongoing support in reproducing this newsletter.

Contributions or enquiries should be forwarded to: Corop News, c/- Stevens St, Corop 3559 or PH: (03)54848205

VALE

REGINALD MARA

15th April 1903 – 3rd February 2005

We were saddened to learn of Mr Reg Mara's death in early February.

Reg Mara was born on the 15th of April 1903 at the Corop Hotel, which was owned by his parents, Patrick and Ellen Mara. He attended the local school and throughout his long life he retained happy memories of his boyhood years spent in Corop.

Chats with Reg about those early times were always interesting and enjoyable. He had a wonderful memory and a great talent for describing the people and events of those early times. Reg's recollections have contributed greatly to our understanding and appreciation of that part of Corop's early history.

Reg left Corop when he was 14 years old to take up an apprenticeship with a grocer in Newmarket, Melbourne. After army service he took a position with Coles, where he stayed until his retirement at sixty-five. Within a short time Reg was asked to return for a brief stint and finally retired from his part-time position at the age of eighty-six.

Reg Mara was a gentle, unassuming man. It was a pleasure to know him and spend time with him. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.