



Corop News

"The Call of the Brosga"

Issue No. 13 - December, 2004

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Merry Christmas to one and all - may the festive season be a happy and safe period. We look forward to 2005 with hope for world peace and prosperity, and for a productive year for our little community.

On Sunday the 12th December, starting at 6.30, our Christmas in Corop party will be held at the Corop Tennis and Community Centre. Barbeque meat, bread and soft drinks will be supplied and if local children behave, Santa may make an appearance with some treats. Families are asked to bring a salad or sweet to share. We need to know who is coming for catering purposes – in particular the number of children. We hope this year's event is well patronised and names can be left at the store or ring Bill on 54848101.



At the time of publication there is once again water in Lake Cooper. The recent rains brought mixed blessings, with some areas having up to 150mm (6 inches). Aesthetically, water in the lake lifts the feel of the area but still the region looks forward to more consistent rains and better timing of falls. It is unfortunate that once again the harvest is severely impacted upon by harsh weather conditions.

Our 13th edition of the Corop News is a little earlier than usual due to the immediacy of some information. We again ask our readers to consider contributing ideas or articles. Next year we plan to continue the collection of family history; the series of Road from Corop still has to head East and North; and articles on: windmills, shacks and the environment, are just some of what's on offer.

CCAG Update

The adverse weather conditions have curtailed some of the plans of the Action Group. Tree-planting and revegetation at Lake Cooper and the highway have once again been put on hold. The Cemetery Trust has also postponed their tree-planting.

All funds from the Regional Solutions Programme have been spent. Materials to complete some projects have been purchased and working bees will take place after the festive season to finish the town shelter and walking track. The highway beautification maintenance has been handed to the shire but occasional community work will be required.

Tennis and Community Centre

The Shire has recently completed painting the exterior trim and repair to the spouting. Take time to look at our main public building whilst at the Christmas party, it really has come a long way in the past 12 months.

Walking track

Maintenance around the trees and to the track itself is an ongoing project. The planned picnic areas, car-park and entrance to the walking track will be completed early next year and signs will be erected at both ends of the track. Dependent on the official outcome of the de-gazetting of a section of the old road reserve, which for the most part silt in the lake itself, an official entry will be constructed. Vehicular entry will be restricted to adjacent landholders, maintenance crews and emergency services. A new section of track will be laid through the trees, which are actually progressing quite well. Having water in the lake makes a pleasant sunset stroll even better!

Heathcote - Rochester Road

Ongoing discussions and correspondence with the shire, parliamentarians, councillors, Vicroads and other parties have been taking place. The objective is to facilitate an upgrade of the undulating, narrow and treacherous section of the Heathcote to Rochester Road, between Speer Road and north to the bends between Bonn School Road and Howard Road.

Town Shelter

Many people have watched with interest the development of the town shelter. It has been pleasing how the community have contributed a variety of tasks and resources. The stonemasons have commented on the number of cars stopping for people to have a look at the almost completed "settler's cottage".



CCAG members pour the 16 cubic metres of foundations and slab.

Once the slab was poured, Jason Webb and his workers set about recreating the “old” look. Several locals were kept busy carting suitable stone from Seppelts Vineyard. Thank you to Seppelts for their contribution of the materials, workers and a loader - generally at short notice. Local volunteers had to keep in front of the stonemasons to construct and install framework.

The roof-frame was prefabricated by Bob Bartlett and Ian Clark and then transported and perfectly placed with the assistance of Geoff Spencer and his forklift.



Shelter with prefabricated roof in place.

Materials are on hand for furniture, the roof, post and rail fence, car-park and landscaped garden. There are also plans to install an external information sign and several smaller signs that tell of Corop - past and present. The aims of the shelter are: to provide a service for travellers, to entice people to stop and to disseminate information. The number of travellers already stopping would suggest that when completed, the town shelter will bring Corop further recognition.

Corop Cup 2004

This year the Caulfield Cup coincided with the highly prestigious Corop Cup, held on Saturday the 23rd of October. Run at the ski club, patrons were treated to a sumptuous luncheon and free champagne on arrival. The room was decorated for the festivities and thanks to the Tatura Racing Club for their paraphernalia to enhance the “cup spirit.” Thanks to new caretakers, Erica and Daniel, for having the clubrooms ready for the big event.

The MC, Bill Barkla welcomed one and all, in particular this year’s special guest, Mrs Joyce Speers. Many give-aways kept the small but happy crowd entertained for the afternoon, as did the sweeps on the minor event held in Melbourne.



Mrs Joyce Speers and other entrants of the fashions on the field.

Fashions on the field were hotly contested with several ladies wearing magnificent millinery. Glenda Smith and “Perfect Pat” Kennedy were awarded a bottle of local wine for their gorgeous outfits and presentation, and “Speer Boy” Geoff Speer also won a bottle of a local drop.

However, the crowd had assembled to see what has arguably become the largest event on the sporting calendar. The long awaited 2004 Corop Cup was the last event of the afternoon. The field was wide open and the track in excellent condition. Last year’s top-weight, Bold Bobby was interstate and other runners from last year were being spelled. Punting was frenetic just prior to the jump. Stakeholders in Melodious Cate were not present and her form at recent meetings had been somewhat lack-lustre, subsequently, she started as the long-shot. After a clean and even start, by the second turn, Melodious Cate strode to the front, and despite some bold runs on the final straight as Melodious Cate tired, she was never headed. Melodious Cate made history as the first filly to win the cup and joins the big stallion Bold Bobby in the annals of sporting folk-lore.

After such an exciting event, despite the gruelling length, patrons were happy to stay on for dinner and make a big day of the 2004 Corop Cup.

Sources within the industry suggest planning for next year’s cup are underway and trainers are already considering trying for “the big one.” Rumour has it that the Melbourne Cup (1st of Nov) will run their nags on the same day as the thoroughbreds enter the starting barrier in the 2005 Corop Cup. Pencil in the date now to avoid disappointment.



The horses at the barrier for the Corop Cup.

The Road From Corop

In our previous edition we began a series on exploring the local area starting at Corop. Last edition we travelled south towards Heathcote, focusing on areas of interest and tourist attractions. This time we're taking a little journey west as far as Elmore, noting sites of interest along the way and various attractions that are developing in Elmore.

Driving west on the Midland Highway up onto the Mt Camel Range, great views are afforded back across the Corop Wetlands. On the left is Gerry McHarg's Lake Cooper Estate vineyard and soon to open cellar door.

Our first stop heading west along the Midland Highway from Corop is the Corop Cemetery. Turn right into Cemetery Road just over the top of the hill (3.5 kms from Corop PO). Travel a couple of hundred metres and you will come to the cemetery site. The cemetery has many historic graves in it dating back as far as the 1870s. It is set in a peaceful bush setting and not a bad spot to take your thermos or have a picnic in the adjacent bush block. The local Cemetery Trust committee has aimed to preserve much of the native flora, including native grasses. Over the last few years the committee has worked hard to restore the graves and surrounding area. The cemetery trust has erected an information board, created a walking track to identify native plants and constructed a stone memorial wall and seat. Further works will include weed and vermin eradication, and re-vegetation.



The picturesque Corop Cemetery

Back out on the Midland Highway we continue up the road towards the area known as Corop West where flong time residents such as Collins, Neilson, Dutton and Young live. Corop West once had a school, Post Office, dairy, dance hall and two-storey hotel. The area is also known as the Marktree Line. A tree marked by surveyors in 1856 is not only in a direct line between the Melbourne and Echuca GPOs but is exactly 100 miles (160 km) from the Melbourne GPO. This tree still stands and is on your right-hand side where the Marktree Road intersects with the highway. It is identifiable because a tree was cut off to be a living post and now the tree branches out above the 3.6 metres (12 foot) mark. Local resident, Tom Dutton, can point out the sites of where the hotel, school and post office once stood in this once thriving community.

Approximately four kilometres out from Elmore, just before the Elmore field days site on a sweeping left-hand bend, you can take a detour down Burnewang-Bonn Road off to the right. This road heads back into Rochester, following the Campaspe River. It is a lovely drive that includes Burnewang South house (an historic homestead that has had several uses in recent years including as a B&B but is now privately operated). A little further on is Ayson's Reserve on

the Campaspe Weir, which was the original field days site. This is an ideal spot for a picnic, fishing or camping. There is also an old Cobb & Co stopping point/house a couple of kilometres past Ayson's Reserve on the right.



Burnewang Estate

The Elmore Field Days site is quite prominent, with many permanent sheds and structures. It has been an annual event for 41 years and is still entirely organised and operated by local volunteer. The static display site alone is 32 hectares, has its own light-plane airstrip and is used regularly for expos, swap meets and the like. It will be home to the 2007 International Scout Jamboree, possibly bringing over ten thousand visitors into the area – that's a lot of dib-dib-dobs. The field days committee is non-profit and has poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into local charities and projects. Donations totalling \$40 000 have been made to the Aged Care Hostel of Rochester in the last two years.

From the Midland Highway, before crossing the Campaspe River Bridge into Elmore you will notice an olive grove to the left. Operated by John and Lorraine Roulston, Campaspe Grove has public sales most days as indicated by signs at the entrance.



Campaspe Run - Elmore

Continuing into Elmore there are many attractions and places of interest to visit. There is the Miniature Railway which offers rides for children and adults alike, with a playground alongside. This is a great spot for families with young children. Campaspe Run Rural Discovery Centre demonstrates the life of our pioneers, including the Sunshine Harvester developed in Elmore. Various farming equipment and implements, and a cottage depicting how a family would have lived in the 1800s make an interesting display. If you haven't already checked it out, it is a great place to take your visitors and includes interactive displays, live animals, and a sound show.

The road from Corop – continued:

Elmore also has an excellent antique shop which is open on weekends. It features many great pieces to suit all budgets and is well worth a look.

Next door is a new coffee shop called the Gallery Latte. Owned and operated by Jenny Campbell, the cafe caters for small functions and is open from ten till five Monday, Thursday and Friday, and earlier on weekends. Provincial light lunches are Jenny's specialty, with all produce bought locally and prepared on-site. The gallery has a new exhibition every 6-8 weeks.



Elmore Old Wares and Gallery Latte.

The Wine Tasting Shop is open on weekends for free tastings, or by appointment. They are particularly proud of their Parwill Swill, which is proving to be a much admired dessert wine.

The Elmore Bakery is a popular stop for passing traffic and locals. It has a wide selection of breads, quick meals, savoury and sweet foods, as well as providing a very good cappuccino or latte.

A quick meal and a range of takeaway foods are available at the Scamper Inn and BP service station. Local hotels offer a friendly atmosphere to have the typical country counter meal and quiet drink. The recently reopened fish and chip shop provides further choice.

Artist Sharon Hackett is also opening a gallery displaying her own work and will be taking art classes. Comfy Wares has recently opened, offering a broad range of second-hand items and antiques. Parsons Olde Store is a veritable museum and provides the browser and serious collector an impressive range of memorabilia. Collectables on Cardwell offers bric-a-brac and collectables and is also open on weekends.

Due to its size, Elmore can easily be navigated without maps and many historic buildings and places can be observed. The old police station (now a private residence) with its lockup reputed to have accommodated Captain Starlight the notorious bushranger, the water tower, hall, churches, the recently renovated Athaneum Hall are just a few for the history buff.

Over the railway line a house worthy of note is Bevan and Maree McKee's environmentally conscious home, 'the rabbit burrow house', with its hundreds of tonnes of soil and garden on its roof!

Elmore has regained banking services and also has most needs for the everyday shopper, not just the visitor or tourist. We hope you some day soon make the trip to Elmore for pleasure and enjoy some of the delights our region has to offer. On your return to Corop, slow down on the hill and appreciate the vista of the wonderful environment we call home.

DUTTON FAMILY HISTORY

The Life and Times of the Dutton family in Corop West

Tom and Margaret Dutton live in Corop West. Tom's ancestors were one of the first settlers in the area.

In 1849 Tom's great, great, grand-father, Thomas Dutton sailed from England to Australia aboard the ship 'Nelson' with his wife, Francis and their first child. They disembarked in Melbourne. Thomas and his family took up land in Glenroy where Francis(Fanny) and the children resided while Thomas was 'teaming' on the roads. In 1880 they purchased and moved to a property near Wangaratta. Thomas Dutton died in 1887, leaving his wife and sons to carry on the farm. Fanny Dutton died in 1913 having lived to the ripe old age of ninety years.

James Dutton was a fitter and turner by trade. He learnt his trade at Yarraville, Victoria. He travelled around quite a lot in the north east of Victoria looking for suitable land on which to settle. He and his older brother, Thomas, were travelling by road to Nathalia at the time the Kelly bushrangers were captured at Glenrowan. Their horses went lame and this delay held them up for half a day. Had this not happened they would have been in the Glenrowan Hotel the night of the siege and the Kelly's were captured.

James Dutton(Tom's great grand-father) finally selected his land in Corop West on the 11 July 1871, putting a deposit of eighteen pounds on his selection of 320 acres. He was one of the first settlers in the Corop area in the 1870s and most of their children were born here. James's brother, Thomas Henry had also selected land adjacent to this. It was not until 1875 that he and his family permanently resided there. At this time the original house consisted of one room that was nine feet by eighteen feet made out of sapling and bark. By 1878 he had cleared and felled 60 acres on which he grew wheat, had erected fences and constructed a dam. The house was now a two-room weatherboard 24 feet by 12 feet with a log and paling kitchen and store 20 feet by 13 feet. A shed and stable were also constructed. In total James paid 320 pounds for his land by the time he made his last payment in 1884.

James Dutton also went mining in Western Australia, leaving his family to live in Moonee Ponds during his absence. While on the gold fields in the west he invented the dry blower, a machine for separating the gold from the dry sand. They had to use this method because there was no water on the gold fields; it was desert country. Drinking water was carried to the miners on the gold fields by Afghan camel teams and was used for drinking only.

When the easy gold had been won, a lot of the miners left the diggings, leaving about a dozen miners behind. The Afghans told the remaining few that they would not be bringing any more water because it would not pay for them to carry water for such a small number of men. But what the miners did not know was that the Afghan was a man of his word and when he made a statement he did not go back on it. This mistake nearly cost the miners their lives. They stayed on until they only had a gallon of water left. They left the gold fields with one gallon of water between twelve men to travel over a long stretch of arid country. James Dutton being a strong-willed man, was nominated by his eleven mates to carry and ration out the water.

They were attacked by the blacks - they were also suffering from thirst. Fortunately, among the tribe was one who they had given food and tobacco. They got him to understand and explain to the others that the small amount of water that they were carrying would be of no use to them. The

party returned to civilization, badly shaken but without loss of life.

[Extract from Dutton Family History by T.L. Dutton 1975].

James's wife, Sarah Harris was born in Oxford, England and travelled out to Australia in 1854 as a child with her parents. Sarah was sixteen when she first came to Corop and possessing a good voice she freely gave her services at all concerts and social gatherings. She was a great lover of flowers and shrubs and gardening was her hobby right up until her death. She was a staunch member of St Peter's Anglican church attending the first service held in it. In the early days she used to ride horseback from Corop to attend services.

James Dutton died in Elmore in 1922 aged 69 years. His wife, Sarah died in 1938 at Elmore.

James and Sarah Dutton's eldest son, Thomas Isaac Dutton was born in 1877. He married Katie Bennet. Katie used to travel from Elmore in a horse and gig to teach at the Corop West school. They had three sons: James, Leslie and Alfred. Of these, the eldest, James Henry Dutton (born 1906), married Vera Grant. James and Vera were Tom's parents. Their other children were Leonard and Kathlene.

Tom Dutton was born in 1937. He went to school in Runnymede. Tom married Margaret Tangey in 1962. They have remained on the family property in Corop West. They have a son, Paul and two daughters, Tania and Leanne. Tania, Paul and Leanne Dutton started their schooling in Corop but later transferred to Elmore. Paul now works on the farm with his father, but resides in Elmore. Tom and Margaret have six grandchildren. Tom and Marg Dutton have a cropping and sheep (Merino) farm. They experimented with emus and ostriches for five years, but the market for this did not take off as anticipated. They no longer own the land on the north side of the Midland Highway where the main buildings of Corop West were situated but the Dutton family has purchased other land holdings in the area over the years.

Tom recalls the time when his father came to visit them on the farm in his later years. The old house of his parents was still standing, located behind the current residence. Tom's father (James) always insisted on sleeping in the old house. One night after they had all gone to bed, James heard something moving around outside the old house, moaning and groaning. He got up to investigate and as he was walking around the verandah trying to work out what it was, he touched something moist and soft and alive! He flew over to Tom and Marg's house, rushing in the back door, exclaiming, "There's something over there". He was clearly terrified. So Tom went over to the old house to inspect what all the fuss was about. Turns out that it was the old bull that had somehow got through the fence so it was wandering around the garden and the old house! Tom's father was never able to live that one down!

Corop West once had a Post Office, dairy, school, a dance hall and the Marktree Hotel. In 1856 surveyors mapping the area cut off a tree at the twelve foot mark to indicate that it was 100 miles from the GPO in Melbourne and in direct line to the GPO in Echuca. This tree still stands today, adjacent to the Marktree road and Midland Highway. It was near here that the Marktree Hotel once stood (see photo from last edition of Corop News). It was originally two storeys in height, however the second storey was removed in 1923. The hotel was eventually demolished in 1967.

The Dutton family have now been farming in Corop West for five generations and are truly one of our pioneering families.

Life after farming Expo

As farmers in our region move from surviving the drought into recovery, some have exited agriculture and others are doing something different with their farm. Farmers may also be considering their farming future. Adjustment is a normal part of agriculture, just as adjustment or change is a normal part of life. However the impact of the drought and our ageing farmers mean that more than usual are hanging up the cups, harvesting their last crop, drenching their last vealer, shearing their last sheep or pruning their last tree. Each farming family is different and therefore the reasons for adjustment and their future options also differ. However, adjustment is an opportunity for every farmer and it's up to them to make the most of the opportunity. There is life after farming!

Ideally, adjustment involves much thought and planning before actually doing it. "Rural Counsellors often work with farming families through the adjustment maze", said Bev Phelan from GV Agcare "From the beginning when farmers question, do I want to farm, do I need to farm and can I afford not to? Through exploring the future options, planning the pathway and understanding the emotional side of it. Moving on is challenging for farmers as they have a strong sense of identity as a farmer or farming family, and a unique attachment to their farm land and their stock. However, they can move on and I recently heard the saying, there is no such thing as an unhappy ex-dairy farmer".

There are lots of future options for farmers: employment in or out of agriculture; or other uses for their land; learning or retraining; small business. Retiring to the river or going around Australia, are also attractive options. More time for voluntary work, family and pursuing interests. Farmers need to gather information on these options and chat about them with people in the field i.e. agriculture, employment, education and training, small business, retirement, well being and financial security. GV Agcare are holding a 'Life After Farming' Expo for farming families who are somewhere on the adjustment pathway or simply considering it. The expo will have stallholders on all the options.

If you have exited farming recently or are considering exiting in the next couple of years, mark it in your diary now. The expo is at the Ballantyne Centre, Tatura on Wed 1st December and Kyabram Sports and Entertainment Centre, Kyabram on Thursday 2nd December, from 10.30am to 3.00pm, with a light luncheon provided. Also present will be people involved in the process, including rural counsellors, Centrelink and financial planners. Farmers who have successfully adjusted will share their stories with you, Mike Stephens will give you some insight into the adjustment pathway and workshops will be offered. For details or to register, please phone GV Agcare on 5851 3421 (24 hrs).



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Contributions or enquiries should be forwarded to: kenagri@mcmmedia.com.au Corop News, c/- Stevens St, Corop 3559 or PH: (03) 54848205