



Corop News

"The Call of the Brolga"

Issue No. 20 September 2007

CCAG UPDATE

Road upgrades in the Corop region

With the upgrade to the Heathcote-Rochester Road now complete, it is with pride and joy that we are all now able to drive on a much safer and smoother road into Rochester. It is a wonderful indeed to not have that sense of trepidation or wariness on each hill of whether a large truck is going to be coming at you and whether you could safely execute a quick detour into the unsealed shoulders. Our appreciation to the Shire of Campaspe roadworks staff for completing the work and to Vicroads for funding the upgrade.

While we are on roads, it seems that things have gained momentum for Corop as Vicroads have now announced funding of \$422,000 to upgrade the two intersections where the Heathcote-Rochester Road meets the Midland Highway west of Corop.

In addition to this, Vicroads are now also looking to improve the safety of the Midland Highway bend near Neilson's Rd after a number of incidents there over the past few years, as well the bend near Lake Cooper Estate winery. The rough pavement between the two Heathcote-Rochester Road intersections on the Midland Highway will continue to be monitored by Vicroads. Thanks to Trevor Speer, Paul Weller (Member for Rodney) and members of CCAG who have been advocating for these improvements. It's great to see that our concerns are being heard and addressed.

Widening of Midland Highway

Vicroads are currently undertaking road widening and the sealing of shoulders between Elmore and Stanhope. As this process will require the removal of some trees, another 1400 trees have been allocated to the area to offset their removal. Vicroads will organize contractors to plant these trees in consultation with local community groups.

AGM

The Corop Community Action Group held its AGM on the 18th July 2007. The newly elected executive consists of:

- President: Clem Furphy
- Vice-President: Brian Kerlin
- Secretary: Jo Fell
- Treasurer: Bill Fell.

Corop Community Plan Group

The Corop Community Plan Group has decided to hold its monthly meeting in conjunction with the CCAG meeting, now held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend either of these meetings. The Corop Community Plan has recently been revised to update priorities and further streamline the document. (Please contact Mari Q at the Shire if you would like an updated copy).

The current focus is on redeveloping the Community Centre, having now applied for both the Community Water Grant and the Eco-Living Grant.

A draft plan has been prepared, however is still under review. Under the Eco-Living grant criteria we need to demonstrate the environmentally friendly and energy efficiency aspects of the project and how this will benefit the community through education and role modelling. For further information of this project you can contact either Clem Furphy or Carmel Pearson.

Lights on in Corop!

Following an incident last year and request by the Corop Cemetery Trust, the Shire of Campaspe have recently installed new lighting outside the Corop Tennis and Community Centre. This will enable people to return safely to their cars when attending evening meetings and will assist greatly when evening functions are held there. Thanks to Campaspe Shire staff for following through the request.

Storage Shed

CCAG has now purchased and erected a small storage shed on site at the Corop Tennis and Community Centre. A concrete floor will complete the construction.

Heritage Grant

The CCAG have been successful in obtaining a \$500 Heritage Grant from the Shire of Campaspe. This money will be put towards placing photos in acid-free photo albums, appropriate storing of old original photos in archival boxes and for copying of old photos offered to the Corop News editorial team by past and present residents of the area. If funds permit, we may also put money towards the future purchase of a display cabinet for the centre once re-development is complete.

Camel Pearson and Katrina Hall attended the afternoon tea presentation held at the Rochester Town Hall in the refurbished meeting room upstairs. Councillor ?... Williams hosted the event while Councillor Marion Riley presented the cheque and congratulated each group on their successful grant.

Christmas Decorations funds

The Shire of Campaspe has funds available for Corop to use in Christmas decorations or to promote other festivities in the town. Plans so far are to erect banners at the entrances to Corop. If you have any other suggestions please contact Katrina Hall on 5484 8101 or Jo Fell on 5484 8131.

Dinner Dance

The Corop Dinner Dance that was scheduled for June was cancelled due to insufficient numbers. Two issues emerged from this – one was the problem with people not booking their tickets by the RSVP date; the other was regarding feedback from people about the cost of the event. The Dinner Dance cost was \$30/head for a 3 course meal and live music.

While the organising committee recognises that not everyone can afford this, it was felt that the cost was very reasonable and compared very favourably with other similar events held in Rochester and Colbinabbin around that time. The decision was made to out-source the catering to allow CCAG members to relax and enjoy the evening, as distinct from all other social events organised by CCAG.

The event also had the aim of being a fund-raiser for the CCAG. In the past the CCAG has advocated to attract grants or donations to provide social events free of charge, however it is becoming more difficult to attract these funds, especially for ongoing events. In the past such funds have enabled us to provide food and or live music at minimal or mostly no cost to people. It is crucial for CCAG to be able to fundraise to continue the broad ranging work and projects that they have been providing to Corop and surrounding residents.

Melbourne Cup Day in Corop

This year the CCAG will not be holding its Melbourne Cup Day luncheon due to the MC and key organiser, Bill Barkla being unavailable. The plan will be to return to an event every second year in Corop. Colbinabbin are considering running something to alternate with us, but at this stage are unable to confirm if this will proceed this year

Corop Photo competition

Do you like taking photos? Have you recently taken a photo that reflects something of Corop? Then we'd like you to consider entering in our photo competition. The prize-winner will receive \$25 and have their photo used in a Corop 2008 calendar to be issued through the Christmas edition of *Corop News*. The \$25 has been offered by the combined Stanhope, Corop and Girgarre Citizens Advisory Group. There will also be runner-up prizes for second and third. So get out there and start clicking!

(Please forward photos with your name and contact details to Bill Barkla via the Corop Store).

[sketch of camera]

Girgarre Farmers Produce Market

The following article was written by Jan Smith (?convenor of Girgarre Farmers Market):

August 12 saw another very successful market day at Girgarre. The farmers produce market was established two and a half years ago and commenced business with great hopes many people and nine stall holders. From this small beginning the market has steadily grown to the market it is today when forty stalls with an amazing variety of regional produce were in attendance.

Produce like all manner of vegetables from the pumpkins grown amongst the rows of bulbs at our fledgling bulb farm, to the cauliflowers planted by a local farmers son that he attends after school and at weekends and picked the night before, farm fresh oranges, mandarins, and avocados grown up on the Murray, crunchy apples from Kyabram, nuts from Howlong, freshly dug potatoes, free range eggs and last but not least locally grown pork that is a taste delight. This wonderful fresh food is complemented with delicious home made cakes and slices, jams honeys and sauces, olive oil products, emu oil products, lavender products and when you have finished shopping many taste treats are available either for an early lunch or a late breakfast.

As is apparent there is a huge scope for producers to slot into our and other markets and to be able to value add to their own businesses or like wise start growing on a local level the farm fresh produce that the customer so very much desire.

Our local pork producer is a great example of value adding to his product. Not only is he presenting customers with a fresh farm gate product but he is also showing people how to cook and present this product in a quick tasty way for the family – and all at a price that is far in excess of what he can command in the market place, yet a price that is much under supermarket prices.

In our desire to promote local production of fruit and vegetables that people so desire, the market committee is planning to conduct workshops to inform people on how to get going.

Jan Smith.

THE NEILSON FAMILY

Thanks to Herb Neilson for providing the following information about his family.

Herbert Neilson Snr was born in 1892 and came to Corop in the 1920s when his parents William and Suzanne Neilson purchased 900 acres on the old Elmore Road. Herbert Snr managed the farm including the 900 Corriedales. With a neighbour he established a contract shearing team in the property's two-stand shed which he built from local timber he cut himself. The team sheared about 11,000 sheep a year. During this time he married Ethel Salter and together they raised their family of four children - Emily, Jim, Herb and Alan.

As reported in *Stock and Land* 23 October 1980,

Mr Neilson has been shearing since 1908 when his father first shoved a blade in his hand and told him to finish off the last sheep in the shed.

By 1914, aged 22, Mr Neilson was shearing in a 24-stand shed at Willaura Station, NSW, every year, and working on a contract team throughout the shearing season.

"In those days we earned 22 shillings and sixpence for a hundred head shorn and had to pay the cook out of that," Mr Neilson reminisced. "Shears then cost two shillings and sixpence a pair with combs sixpence each. Today you can't buy a handpiece for under \$150 and combs cost \$8 each - it's just amazing." Mr Neilson said.

In later years the cropping and general farm work was shared by Herbert's three sons but he would always be in the shed at shearing time to help out and shear the odd sheep or two each day. Herbert was 92 years old when he used the shears for the last time. He died in 1990 aged 98 acclaimed as Australia's oldest shearer.

The *Bendigo Advertiser* Dec 3, 1979, featured Herbert Neilson Snr in an article entitled "Old-timers breathe life into dying crafts".

One person who still practices a craft more than a hundred years old is keen to keep it going. Herbert Neilson, 87, still shears sheep with hand clippers and he is teaching his son the art.

Herb was the star of the afternoon. After 73 years on the boards, he took up hand clippers first used more

than 100 years ago to shear a cantankerous "kicker" in nine minutes. And then with all the agility of a man half his age, Herb straightened and proceeded to gather the wool.

Herb is teaching his son Herb Jnr, also a shearer, the craft of using hand shears to ensure the art will not die.

He is worried that the words of the immortal "Click Go the Shears" will mean nothing to the next generation of Australians.

Herb Neilson (Jnr) still farms the original property in Corop where he and his wife Dot live today. Herb remembers the skills he developed working alongside his father on the farm. He recalled his father's involvement in the newly formed Corop West CFA where he served as captain until he was 75 years old. Before the CFA came into existence the local Progress Association became the volunteer fire brigade during the summer and resumed normal activities during the winter months.

Looking out over Lake Cooper which has been dry these past 6 years, Herb remembers his father telling him that in 1920 the lake was 12 to 14 feet deep. Some 25 years later Herbert Snr, with other local men, buried hundreds of large codfish which had been stranded as the water receded. Later that year Herbert drove his horse and gig across the dry lakebed to attend a clearing sale.

Today Herb Neilson carries on his father's tradition of blade shearing and is in demand for demonstrations and charity events. "Click Go the Shears" remains a reality today thanks to shearers like Herb Neilson.

Gobarup Players

The Gobarup Players are rehearsing a comedy – "The Last Resort", which will open in Lockington on November 1st.

Local thespians are still laughing after two months of rehearsal, and the show promises to lay them in the aisles. Set in a retirement village, the script is unashamedly ageist, and the cast of ten are busy learning lines, practising songs, and even line dancing.

The show will travel to Colbinabbin, Tatura, Murchison, Elmore, Girgarre, and Rochester, over two weekends. Directed by Clem Furphy, the show features all the usual suspects who have been stalwarts of the Players, some for more than 20 years.

Don't miss it. It's a hoot!

Young People Making a Difference to our Local Environment.

Our thanks to Andrew Pearson, Waterways Vegetation Officer for the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA), for this inspiring article about his recent work involving school children around the district. Andrew's dedication to the environment is well known and he takes great satisfaction in children's growing awareness and concern for the world around them.

Tree plantings have been occurring around the local countryside lately after reasonable winter rains. At Colbinabbin, two Rushworth P-12 College students, Olivia McEvoy and Laura Tait, organized a planting day on the Cornella Creek at the McEvoy farm. With environmental

funding received for the plants, the girls organised the Grades 2 – 6 pupils from the Colbinabbin Primary School to plant over 500 trees along drainage lines of the creek. Ray McEvoy had prepared the ground in advance and there was adequate soil moisture to give the plants a good start.

Species such as Grey Box, Yellow Box and a mixture of Golden, Goldust, Mallee and Varnish wattles were selected for the site. The children enjoyed a barbecue lunch back at the school to celebrate their achievement.

In September Stanhope Primary school children will plant 200 trees at Mansfield Swamp, Corop. This activity is supported by funding from Parks Victoria. Murchison Primary School, funded by the Waranga Land Care Group and Parks Victoria has also chosen September to plant 200 trees around the picnic area at Doctors Swamp, Murchison.

The Regional Environment of Employment Program (REEP) has provided a group of 8 young people aged 16 – 18 years to assist with plantings along the Cornella and Yallagalrah Creeks. Plantings for this project include: 1200 trees on Carl and Dea Brown's land adjoining the Yallagalrah Creek; 2000 trees on Roger and Anne Kemp's land along the Cornella Creek; 1000 trees on Paul and Janice Tait's land along a badly eroded drainage line into the Cornella Creek.

Young people are making a difference to our local environment and their legacy will endure for future generations.

History of the Corop Tennis Club

Corop's first tennis club was formed in Mara's Hotel in January 1912. After the committee was formed they purchased four tennis racquets. The minutes of June 21st 1913 showed a meeting called, "to arrange a settlement of the tournament. Owing to Miss Goldsworth not playing, Mr AH Stewart was left without a partner. Mr W rose on behalf of the players, offered Mr Stewart his pick of the first four ladies who were defeated in the tournament, or Mr H Stevenes would give him his partner (Miss B Welsh) and take one of the four himself. After a good deal of discussion Mr Stewart decided not to play at all (*souce:...*)

The current Corop Tennis clubrooms were built in 1967. Concrete courts in 1979. Had a historical display of club and town.

Corop CFA News

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 12 CCAG Meeting 7.30pm

Feb 16 Greens Lake CFA

A major social event may be held early 2007

Watch your letterbox for further details.

South Campaspe Rural Group

This newsletter was compiled by Carmel Pearson, Jo Fell, Pat Kennedy, Bill Barkla and Katrina Hall. Graphics are provided courtesy of Jo Fell and 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/- Katrina Hall & Bill Barkla 1627 Midland Hwy. Corop or email bbarkla@rochsec.vic.edu.au , or PH: (03) 5484 8101. <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/coropcag/web/index.html>

NOTE: Feedback has always been positive about our efforts and newsletter. After over five years and 19 editions of the *Corop News*, we find with family, work and community commitments the need to once again ask for your support. We would like people to increase the number of written contribution of articles to our valuable community newsletter. Please contact us.