



Corop News

"The Call of the Brolga"

Issue No. 22 December 2007

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It's hard to believe another year has passed and Christmas is upon us again. Corop has had its highs and lows, including the late autumn rains that gave such a promising start for farmers, only to be faced with yet another dry spring and summer.

We have had our road into Rochester fixed up and have been advised of other road upgrades; The Day on the Hill at Lake Cooper has become a very popular event for both locals and visitors alike.

Our annual Christmas Party on Sunday December 16th was another resounding success. It is fantastic that despite the difficulties and hectic lifestyles . . . and the cold evening, we can still come together to share good cheer.

Thank you to all concerned but in particular Trevor "The BBQ King" and his assistant, John and Dashing Denise for overseeing the event.

Santa visited and distributed lollies, gifts and icypoles to the local children . . . and some bigger 'kids' as well!



Lake Cooper

Once again we highly recommend our readership to visit Lake Cooper if at all possible. The changes being caused by the ever-present wind are amazing.



The dunes building on a stand of Cassuarinas

On the north-east side there are massive sand drifts covering several acres and over a metre deep. Unfortunately, many of our trees are being submerged and the walking track cannot be seen for some distance.

The bed of the lake itself appears to be almost totally "cleaned" of sand and silt and there appears to be less severe dust storms – although those that have been in the path of the incessant cloud for the past five or six years may disagree.

One can only hope that the next major change is the refilling of the lake with fresh water!

Corop Photo Competition

Congratulations to Renee Fraser for her first prize in the inaugural *Corop News* Photo Competition. Her photo (below) features in the calendar that goes to residents on the mail run and our mail-out to past residents. Renee will receive \$25 courtesy of the combined Stanhope, Corop and Girgarre Citizens Advisory Group. Liz Fraser and Barry Carter will also receive cash prizes for their entries. (See centre pages for more detail.)



Renee's winning photo – "Hay Bales"

The calendar has been produced with the generous support from Justin Cleary at the Rochester Caltex.



A brief history of the Gobarup Players

Gobarup Players is the 'brain child' of Clem Furphy who had performed in drama groups in Melbourne.

The Gobarup Players was formed by a group of totally inexperienced actors – apart from Clem (and Liz who had done a bit at school!). In 1986, after a conversation Clem had in the pub with Mick Morgan, it was decided that the footy club would support a play which was 'Dimboola'.

Clem, Marg Hoelter, Ray Chiswell and Liz Fraser had already performed in a skit the year before at a concert in the Colbo Hall - so I guess you could say that they were the 'founding members'.

The show was so successful and we had so much fun that we decided to continue on but we needed a name and so at a meeting, after tossing around lots of ideas, Marg Hoelter came up with "Gobarup", which was a place between Rushworth and Colbo. As the cast at the time came from both towns, we agreed this was a great idea and the rest is history!!

There have been so many 'actors' who have come and gone over the years. Eighty-two have taken the stage in all and that's not counting backstage crew and musicians!

The group takes the show 'on the road' charging a fee and 'hiring' ourselves out. The organisations who have booked Gobarup Players, do so as a fundraiser. We have performed in Colbo, Rushworth, Stanhope, Gargarre, Rochester, Lockington, Goornong, Elmore, Murchison and Tatura over the years.



Matt Barkla and Florrie Bickley strut their stuff

In the early years all the organisations who hired the group would cater and we used to have wonderful three course meals but in later years the nights became BYO Picnic basket type functions. However, the cast-members are always provided with food backstage.

In the beginning the group would rehearse in the Colbinabbin Scout Hall – a building which became run down over the years through lack of use and break-ins. Occasionally a bird's nest would drop from a hole in the ceiling and it was freezing in there, despite the little fan heaters that we used to bring from home to try and keep us warm. Still, it was a place

to meet and to build sets and paint them. We also have rehearsed in the Colbinabbin Gun Club, which is now the preschool, the Primary School, the Corop Tennis Club and now the supper room in the Colbo Hall.

After the first "Dimboola" we needed a stage for the Colbinabbin performances and so one was 'expertly' made from packing cases, which were bolted together and was quite versatile. For some performances we could have the stage set up like a models' catwalk and at other times as a normal stage.

The plays the group perform are usually musical-comedies, as these seem to be very popular with the audiences. We have staged a couple of melodramas and even though the audiences enjoyed them, they didn't seem to be as popular.

Dimboola was performed twice due to popular demand and we are constantly asked to 'do it again'. This caused some discussion with casting the second time as the bridesmaid in the first Dimboola wanted to be the bridesmaid again but ten years later it didn't seem to work, Clem had to find a way to tell her that she was now 'too old!!' - so she became the 'mother of the groom'. The groom by the way played the same role both times! Clem also played his character of Horrie (a drunken guest) both times – but then you can't put an age on a 'drunk' can you?

The wonderful thing about Gobarup Players is that it has brought together people from all walks of life, and some great and life-long friendships have formed through the group.

The main reason we keep coming back for more is that we genuinely enjoy the camaraderie and the fact that we can get up on a stage, have a ball and bring some light entertainment to so many. It's just so rewarding to 'take a bow' and see so many smiling and laughing faces in the audiences.

Shows we have performed:

- 1986 - Dimboola
- 1987 – And the Villian was a Lady
- 1988 – On Our Selection
- 1989 – The Fair, The Fearless and the Frightful
- 1990 – Robin the Hood
- 1991 – East Lynne
- 1992 – Ma Bakers Tonic
- 1993 – Dinkum Assorted
- 1994 – The Club
- 1995 – Rome Sweet Rome
- 1997 – Oodnadatta
- 1998 – Dimboola
- 1999 – Phantom of the Music Hall
- 2000 – The True Blue Aussie Review
- 2002 – Uncle Jack
- 2003 – Shenanigan's Wake
- 2005 – Opportunity Knocks
- 2007 - The Last Resort



The first Dimboola, with Clem Furphy in full flight

Heathcote Wine & Food Festival

The 6th Heathcote Wine and Food Festival was held in early October this year and again presented an enormous variety with many new exhibitors of fine food and wine. The festival is a great day out as long as you remember to take the sunscreen, a hat and lots of room for tastings! There were stalls plying their wares made from fresh local or district produce which included hand-made chocolates, delectable biscuits and cakes, puddings and sauces, mustards and other condiments, cheeses, spices, meats, olive oils and jams...all totally delicious and all included in the cooking demonstrations which were held throughout the weekend.



Pat and John Kennedy of Kennedy Vintners

Lunchtime fare was well catered for with Spanish paellas, Turkish pastries, gourmet sausages, Belgian waffles and a variety of ice-creams. How could you resist? Of course the main focus centred on the Heathcote winegrowers vintages which reflect the best of Heathcote and district geology and climate. Corop was well represented by local vineyards including Mt Burrumboot, Lake Cooper Estate and first-timer exhibitors at the festival, Kennedy Vintners. It was difficult to choose a favourite among so many great wines.



“Stumpy” Branson with daughters Matilda and Miranda

A Day on the Hill 2007

The third annual Day on the Hill was held at Lake Cooper Estate on October 21st with around 620 adults and lots of children travelling from near and far for a most enjoyable day.

Once again the Corop Community Action Group did an amazing job with the BBQ impressing customers with the wide range of quality food – the homemade condiments were particularly popular.

The hot weather (yes 36 degrees!) created a high demand for soft drinks – so the Corop Fire Brigade had a sell-out day – not to mention the beer stand! Smoothies and iced coffees were also in demand!

“Madllips” got the crowd to their feet with some great movers and groovers strutting their stuff. Norm from Malibu Groove was also a crowd pleaser, playing lots of favourites.

Jenny and Mick got young and old involved in bocce games with some great prizes supplied by stallholders.

Manny the clown intrigued the children (and adults) with his magic shows, face painting and balloon creations.



Manny working the “magic”

Along with all that, visitors were treated to a great range of Lake Cooper Estate Wines. 2006 vintage releases included Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, the popular Unwooded Chardonnay and first release Verdelho and Cabernet Merlot. The Sparkling Shiraz refreshed many palates – it is a great summer wine and is a great accompaniment to barbecues and Christmas dinners!

Lake Cooper Estate is becoming a popular function venue, hosting the first wedding on Nov 3rd and numerous Christmas Parties during December.

Locals are invited to welcome in the New Year at Lake Cooper Estate on Dec 31st 8pm – 1am. BYO basket supper with drinks available at bar prices. Geraldine will have the music playing (as usual). Children are most welcome – they love the open spaces around the winery.



Manager Don Risstrom served many ‘tastings’ on the day

VALE: Vic & Jean Speers
Iris Elmi Patricia (Pat) Tarjan

Corop residents were shocked and saddened to hear that Vic and Jean Speers, together with Jean's sisters Iris and Pat, had died as the result of a car accident on 7th December 2007.

Vic Speers was born in Corop and with his wife Jean, raised their family of two sons and three daughters on their farm on the Midland Highway, Corop, now Lake Cooper Estate.

Vic and Jean were involved in local community activities during their many years in Corop and will be well remembered by many of our newsletter readership.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to the bereaved families.

To our dear friend, Joyce Speers, we offer our heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss of her three sisters and brother in law.



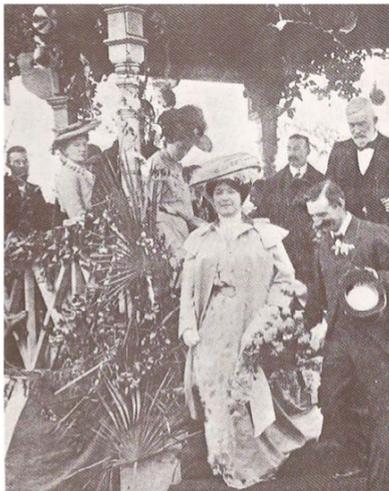
Vic and Jean Speers

Family History - The Taylors

Arthur Taylor arrived in Australia in 1838 at the age of two. He grew up in Melbourne attending Scotch College and Melbourne University and in 1886 founded Camberwell Grammar School. In the late 1880s the Taylors moved to Lilydale and developed a dairy farm, market garden and orchards. Arthur was very civic minded in Lilydale as a Shire Councillor, Organist and Choir Master and so associated with the David Mitchell family and their daughter, Dame Nellie Melba.

Arthur Taylor escorts Dame Nellie Melba at the Lilydale Rotunda in 1902

(Source: By Their Deeds, I V Hansen)



The Mitchells owned land at Colbinabbin and the Taylors decided to follow them there. Rupert and LB (Jack) Taylor selected their land in 1908. Two years later their parents, Arthur and Alice and sister Kitty joined them. Arthur continued as an organist at St Paul's Church of England, Corop, but otherwise lived a very quiet life at Lake Cooper. He enjoyed his garden and some of the trees he planted are still alive.



Kitty Taylor and Alida Rathjen at the Colbinabbin PO

Jack joined the Army in 1914 and served in France where he was awarded the Military Medal for Bravery.

15-11-1914

8th Light Horse Regiment Trooper Leslie Taylor Berkusie. 12-11-1914 Trooper Taylor gallantly volunteered and rode in under exceptional heavy fire at close range to try and rescue two wounded comrades. He was wounded himself in doing so. I consider his action very brave as there were no stretcher bearers available. He volunteered and accompanied Sgt. Bowman who consequently dragged him out to safety.

At one time the family ran the Lake Cooper Post Office with an office and telephone built onto the side of the house. Kitty used to collect the mail for Lake Cooper from Miss Rathjen's Colbinabbin Post Office.

Rupert married Heather Burge of Wanalta in 1919 at St Peter's church, Elmore. The reception was at the Victoria Hotel. They had two daughters, June born 1920 and Cynthia born 1930. Rupert was a councillor on the Shire of Waranga for sixteen years. He served two terms as President.

Cynthia Taylor married Harry Branson in 1952 and they lived in the Branson house which was moved from the other side of the hill onto Taylor land. They had three children, Katherine and Elizabeth (twins) born 1953 and Andrew born 1964.

Andrew and his wife Cathy live in the house today with their three daughters, where they have established a vineyard and winery. One of their very successful wines is called Uncle Jack's Petit Verdot, so the Taylor name still lives on.

Wedding of Rupert and Heather Taylor; attended by Kitty Taylor and Galloway Stewart.



Corop Store – A Vital Service

Where would we be without the Corop Store? Have you ever thought what it would be like not to be able to get that necessity in a hurry, some fuel when almost empty, or not to have a local postal service or the facility to pay bills?

The Corop Store is a very important part of our community network. It's a meeting place, a supplier of sustenance after working hard or when on the run, a service in many ways.

Lyn and Alan took over the Corop Store in 2000, just when the drought hit hard, the lake dried and the GST was introduced. An important part of the store's income has been severely curtailed due to fewer skiers and harder times for rural communities in general, just like most other businesses in country Victoria.

Please support this vital service to our community.



Lyn Linford and Alan Edwards handle the Christmas rush

Tomato Industry in Corop – Bob Bartlett

My first recollection of tomato growing was in the late 1940s when I was about six. The Wilemans grew tomatoes - probably about 1.5 acres - in a small paddock on Skew Bridge Rd next to the channel. There were three acres in the paddock then. Trestle tables were set up under the willows there and the tomatoes were hand sorted. In those days all work was done by hand or using horses. The beds were formed and tomatoes cultivated using implements pulled by the horse.

Most tomatoes were sold to Cohns in Bendigo for tomato sauce and a few to local shops. I believe Cohns would deliver empty cases and pick up the full ones once a week. Some of the growers were Wilemans, Stewarts, Primer (he lived in Colbinabbin beside the creek and grew where Avards house is now), Selarus and Jacobsons (they lived on Wanalta Corop Rd where Pikes currently farm). Once the horse died out, tomato growing stopped in this area and was moved to Bendigo.

Alan Cox and I (Bob Bartlett) were the first to grow processing tomatoes in the Corop-Colbinabbin area followed by S Rosaia, M Pappis, R Cochs, J Ryan and C Debcic.



Harvesting tomatoes circa 1973 with a team of 17 workers and taking off up to 60 ton per day

I first grew seven acres of hand picked tomatoes at Strathallan in 1964, these were all hand grown using lots of

shovel work. I purchased my first tomato machine in 1973. There were 16 people working on these and they were very hard to drive as there was only one wheel at the front. If you drove through a drain the front wheel was likely to lift off the ground and the whole machine would rear up like a horse.

Henry Jones from IXL and KY Fruit Company had tomatoes grown for his Melbourne factory in the area. The crop was almost overtaken by weeds and was difficult to harvest using the machine.

Most of the varieties were table tomatoes and did not machine harvest too well. The average yield was about 13 ton to the acre.

Everyone had their share of flood-water, with the bins floating away one year and swans nesting in them in another. Snakes in syphon pipes were always an attention getter.

They were hard years but good years.

Growing Processing Tomatoes Today

Tomato growing is now very different from when Bob started. Today 23 growers produce about the same tonnage as 71 growers did in the 1994/95 season. Improved tomato varieties have raised the yield from 32 to 80 tonne to the hectare (from 13 to 32 tonne to the acre). Processing tomatoes are no longer hand picked into buckets or bins but rather machine-harvested into bulk bins with the capacity of 12 tonne. Great savings in water use have been made through the implementation of sub surface trickle irrigation. This method of irrigation is now controlled via computer, which eliminates the close contact with snakes while starting and moving syphon pipes.



Modern harvesting with a team of four workers can take off up to 500 tonne in a day

On the down side, most tomatoes are now grown for multi-national processors and with the average age of tomato growers increasing who knows how much longer we will have the luxury of our own Australian grown and processed tomatoes on our supermarket shelves.

South Campaspe Rural Group

On Friday 19th October a group of ten women from the South Campaspe Rural Group had a wonderful bus trip with a group Afghani, Iraqi, and Sudanese women and their children, to the Little Saigon Market in Footscray and the Werribee Open Range Zoo. We met at 8am at The Cutting Edge, a Uniting Church Group in Shepparton, one of whose focus is helping newly arrived families settle into life in Australia.

We had an interesting time at the market learning about and tasting different fruit and vegetables. Everyone was so friendly and ever willing to help the Aussies who were struggling with knowledge of some of the produce. Many of us came away with exciting recipes from this experience.

Then it was back on the bus and off to the Open Range Zoo. The highlight of this part of the trip was the faces of the children as they recognized the African animals and shouted out their names in delight.

We were soon back on board and enjoyed our trip home with Middle Eastern music and Sudanese singing to entertain us. We had a busy but rewarding day.

Over the past two years we have had the opportunity to get to know some of these newly arrived families through meetings in Shepparton and at Denise & David Acock's farm at Rochester. The Cultural Kitchen was one program run by The Cutting Edge, it involved a group of women who each brought ingredients, recipes, utensils or cooked dishes to talk about and share.

It was a lovely opportunity to learn about the interesting cultures these women have left behind and to help them to understand a bit more about our food and way of life. At the end of the program we attended the book launch where we each received a book of recipes and photos as a memento of the successful event.



Carmel Pearson enjoys the Cutting Edge experience

Grand Final Day

A number of locals and family enjoyed an excellent day at Lake Cooper Estate for the AFL Grand Final.

Ever the consummate and congenial hosts, Gerry and Geraldine hired a large screen TV to enhance the viewing of Geelong's annihilation of Port Adelaide.

For those not interested in the game - or those who lost interest - there was plenty of food and drink on hand and an opportunity to chat.

After the game was officially over, Gerry conducted some skills sessions and competitions. The talent scouts weren't present but some of the younger folk showed ability in the handball and goal kicking competitions. Geraldine had plenty of prizes to give and if the number of awards picked up is any indication, Brayden Kerlin could be one to watch in the future.

For a small community it is great that we have opportunities such as this to get together - thanks Gerry and Geraldine.



Bill Barkla shows a big follow-through in the handball

Corop CFA News

Summer is once again here. The Brigade would like to remind residents of Corop and surrounding areas to be very careful when mowing grass and using power tools outside. It is the driest it has been for years and the conditions for fire are very favorable. There is plenty of dry grass and other combustible materials about.

The Brigade prepared for summer by taking part in a Group Exercise off Tait-Hamilton Road, Rushworth. Approximately 40 acres of private forest was burnt. It was a very good exercise in that it gave some of our newer brigade members the opportunity to experience a real fire under controlled conditions and to work as part of a larger team. Seven brigades turned up for the Group Exercise.

At a recent Brigade Management meeting, it was decided to appoint Darren Bloomfield as Training Officer.

There is a new roster out for the Sunday testing of the tanker for Jan 2008 till July 2008. Some people have extra shifts and I would like to thank them for doing this. Remember it is important the Truck is tested. There was a recent grass fire at Lockington where a fire-truck had not been tested for some weeks, and when the fire started they were unable to get their truck started as it had a flat battery.

By testing the fire-truck on a Sunday we ensure that it is working correctly and is able to be turned out to fires reasonably quickly

The Corop Brigade would like to wish all a Happy and Safe Festive Season.

Garry Newman (Secretary)

New Year's Eve

at



*Come along and welcome in the New Year at
Lake Cooper Estate - Dec 31st, 8pm - 1am*

BYO Basket Supper

Drinks at bar prices.

RSVP Geraldine 0407354138

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Year's Eve - see above promotion

Feb CCAG Meeting 8.00pm

April - Corop Classic - Golf day on Lake Cooper

Watch your letterbox for further details.

NB- yes this is Issue 22 not 21(despite our mistake on the last edition).

This newsletter was compiled by Carmel Pearson, Jo Fell, Pat Kennedy, Bill Barkla and Katrina Hall. 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/- Bill Barkla 1627 Midland Hwy Corop or email bbarkla@rochsec.vic.edu.au or PH: (03) 5484 8101.