



# Corop News

## "The Call of the Brolga"

Issue No. 30 February 2012

### This issue features:

- \* Social Gatherings
- \* Mary Grinter remembers
- \* Vale Joyce Speers
- \* Upcoming Events
- \* Colour liftout

## The Corop News

Firstly we need to update our valued readers. Yes it has been some time since we went to print. We as volunteers have all had changes in our personal lives and we have also had some members of the CCAG move away. It has become increasingly difficult to sustain the high standards and indeed content of The Corop News.

The CCAG has also gone through a period of changes and redirections.

Another factor that has led to greater difficulty in the production of our revered newsletter is the lack of contributions from outside our ever-diminishing editorial team.

Therefore after 29 editions - of which we are very proud - over a period of more than 10 years, The Corop News has also had to go through a transitional period.

We will now aim to produce a more condensed format, which will mostly be reporting on events and keeping the local community up to date on what is happening in terms of Corop functions, events and works. However, if you do want to contribute or promote a local event, please contact us.

## CCAG UPDATE

The Corop Community Action Group recently had its first meeting for 2012. We are back working with the Shire of Campaspe after they had an almost two year recess from working with community groups due to internal reviews.

Some of the main foci planned for 2012 include:

- Holding regular social events at the Corop Community Centre
- Maintaining the projects completed over the past 10 years
- A Produce & Preserves Stall
- Revisiting Corop Town Entrances
- Replanting of beds on north side of highway

Since the last edition of the CN we have had several working bees. The cleanup and upgrades around the new community centre continue. We have installed a UV water filtration system and TV antenna, purchased chairs and tables (through grants and donations), cut back trees etc

A very busy working bee was held in November to tidy the highway. Whilst the planting of the Northern side of the highway in Corop took place almost 10 years ago the shrubs mostly survived the drought. However, last year they got 'wet feet' and many loads of dead shrubs were removed.

The Shire has taken greater control of the purchase and installation of Christmas decorations throughout the Shire. After consultation with CCAG members, it was decided to try framed tinsel decorations instead of banners up the east end of Corop, as previous banners have become very damaged by the wind. The Shire also assisted with the purchase of a new Christmas tree and decorations for the new community centre.

The CCAG is holding its meetings at the community centre on the second Monday each month @ 7.30 pm. We always welcome new members.

## CCAG Social Events

### Christmas in Corop

If you were not there you missed a huge night – the first Christmas in Corop held in the upgraded community centre. An early count showed there were over 120 in attendance and more came later.

A great meal was enjoyed and Santa's visit was a memorable one for the younger children in attendance.

Locals, Don McCann and Denis provided music for the event and there were even spontaneous sing-a-longs.

Another highlight was the Colbinabbin Choristers. They gave sensational renditions of many carols and Christmas standards. We thank them for their beautiful music.



The very polished 'Colbo' Choristers entertain 'Coropites'

### Corop Cup 2011

The seventh Corop Cup was a great success. Around sixty locals were in attendance to see three very close 'local races'.  
(continued back page)



Winners of fashions of the Field (L to R): Geoff Speer, Beth Oakley, Carmel Pearson and Denise Acocks and presenter, Mayor Neil Pankhurst

## VALE Mrs Joyce Speers

JOYCE ELIZABETH SPEERS (NEE HILL)

13/7/1916 – 27/9/2012 (Contributor: Kaye Speers)



Mum was the eldest of 10 children born in Bendigo to Alfred John Hill and Mary Ellen Hill (nee Clifford). Her father was a sleeper cutter and they lived at Cohuna in a circus tent until their family grew to beyond three children. A house was purchased at Marong and that is where she grew up. Being the eldest she was a great help to her mother taking care of her brothers and sisters.

When she was eighteen years old in 1934 it was time for her to seek employment and so she came to Corop to work as a domestic helper for William and Emma Speers (nee Wills) at their family farm called 'Omagh'. (Both their ancestors came from Omagh in Ireland.) This was the first time she had been away from her family and she missed them dreadfully but this soon passed as she was treated like one of the family in her new employment. She continually wrote to her parents and always sent part of her wages to them to help out with the raising of her siblings.

She soon learnt about farm life from William and Emma and especially their sons Bill, Cappy, Percy and Vic. Many a trick was played on her like yabbies in her bed and snakes (dead of course) curled up on the back step. She knew which paddocks to take lunches and dinners up to the men because they were named after the previous owners. These were originally Soldier Settler Farms from The First World War that turned out to be too small to be profitable. These were purchased by William's brother Jack and his father John.

William taught Mum to drive in his beloved Buick and after driving from the Corop Police Station (which was situated between where the last school and the Waranga Mallee Channel) to the Colbinabbin turn off she got her licence. A Sunday drive then consisted of driving to the Corop store and buying an ice-cream.

With the approach of World War 2 and after doing his initial training in the Army, Percy decided to enlist and went off the fight for his country. This was a worrying time for his parents and also mum not knowing where he was and being concerned for his safety. By now Mum had come to love him and they wrote to each other weekly. Then she got word that he had two weeks off and that she should arrange the

wedding for 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1944. It took place at St. Pauls in Bendigo with the reception at Favaloras. Their wedding night was at the Crown Hotel and then down to Melbourne on the train the next day for their honeymoon.



*Perc and Joyce reunited*

Mum's family came to 'Omagh' in Corop for holidays and just as she fell in love with Percy, so her sister Jean also fell for his brother Vic. 1944 was a busy year for weddings.

Mum's devotion to her family saw her supporting her new husband by going with him to tennis, football, cricket matches, horse racing and boat regattas that were held on Lake Cooper at as well as clay bird competitions at Colbinabbin. Afternoon teas were always home made and this continued on with my brother Barry and I when we played tennis for Corop. Everyone always looked forward to Pony Club Rallies at Rochester to see what delicacies mum had bought along to share with the other parents.

Being a member of the Corop School Mothers' Club was always important to her. She was also a member of the Presbyterian Ladies Guild.

My brother Barry was born on 28/2/1946 and I came along on 6/12/1947. My memories of growing up in a loving family, on the farm and at Corop are very precious to me. Mum even helped grooming and plaiting my horse's mane when the Agricultural Shows were on. She preferred to work in the kitchen at the Rochester Show when Dad was President than playing the "First Lady". Her life was committed to caring for others, especially her family, Dad's family, six grandchildren and her two great grandchildren.



Her second love was her garden. I would wake up in the morning and hear the scrapping of the shovel chipping out weeds or see her watering one of her favourite plants. Anyone who was interested would get a tour of the garden, the history of each plant or how to care for it. Cuttings would be taken from all the gardens she visited and of course these would thrive. This continued to her garden when they shifted into Rochester.

Cats always played a big part in her life, all sorts all colours. Photos adorned the walls and mantelpieces of her homes. She was even seen to pluck a sparrow that had been caught by an old cat that could not be chewed because of its feathers.

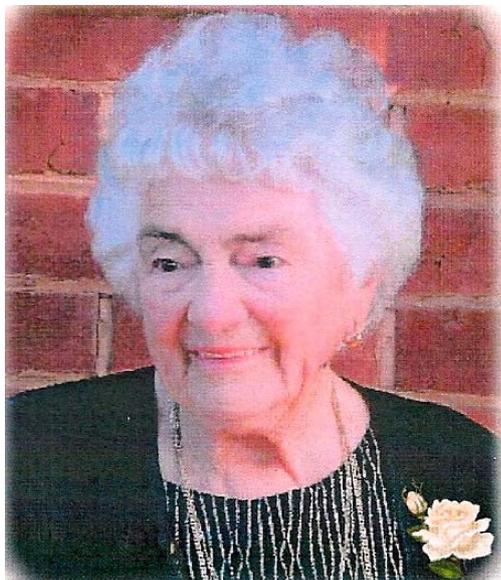
Her grandchildren John, Belinda, Bradley, Hayley, Aaron and Kane were a joy to her and she was always extremely willing to baby sit when the need arose. Although she expected them to follow her rules they of course were "spoilt" and always came home after having their share of her baking goodies. This also was extended with the arrival of her two grandsons Thomas and Nicholas. Birthdays were never forgotten and she delighted in finding the perfect gift for her family members.

Mum always had time to listen and be interested in people's lives. She took great pride in her appearance (I was the one that put her nail polish on when her eyesight failed and helped to pick out which beads would match the outfit she was wearing) and loved attending functions to reminisce about the old times, especially if it was at Corop. She really enjoyed catching up with everyone at the Corop Cups and The Day On The Hill at Lake Cooper Estate. She said it was like going home and always has stories to tell about the history of Corop. She always saw the good in people and never criticise or had a bad word to say about anybody. She appreciated everything people did for her and never wanted to be a burden to anyone.

She was a great lady and will be missed by me, her family, her friends and all who knew her. I hope she has passed on to me her wonderful outlook on life. Our consolation is that she is reunited with Dad and Barry, remembering the wonderful life we had together.

The cards and messages of sympathy and support on her passing really touched me as I know those who knew her felt the same way about her as I did. I thank everyone who made this sad time a little easier for me and her family.

REST IN PEACE!



'Lady Joyce'

## 'My School Days in Corop' by Mary Grinter (nee Ryan)

I was born in Rochester and lived in the Corop district five miles north of the Corop township on the Midland Highway. I lived with my parents Edward and Blanche Ryan, brother John and sister Moira on a farm north of the school. We all went to school at Corop 1021.

I started school at the age of six. Moira and I rode our pony, Topsy, while John rode his bike. Our teacher, Mr Jack Hellwedge taught the eight grades and lived with his wife and children in the teacher's residence on the school property.

Approximately sixteen boys and girls attended the school in various grade levels. I remember one boy in particular, Victor Henry. He was a very kind and friendly boy and I regret not catching up with him before he passed away recently.

Each Monday morning we had a school assembly in the front of the school where we recited the following:

*Hand on Heart –  
I love God and my country  
I honour the flag  
I will serve the King  
I will cheerfully obey my parents and teachers*

After our pledge we all sang God Save the King and then saluted the flag, which was flying in the breeze. Roll call was next, followed by lessons until playtime. More lessons followed until lunchtime, which we ate in the shelter sheds.

The Church of England Minister came to the school quite often to teach religion to those who wished to partake, while 'us' other religions went outside to the shelter shed.

A lady came weekly to teach us to knit. We knitted squares, which were then made into rugs for the soldiers at war.

On the way home from school I used to collect our mail and papers along with those belonging to the neighbours (Taylors, Freemans and my Uncle Jack).

During the summer months there were many thunder storms and strong dusty winds. Mr Hellwedge was kind enough to let us go home early on these days. The winter mornings were very frosty and cold and the open fire in the school did little to warm us up due to it smoking all the time. I believe the smokiness was due to a faulty chimney and because of this Mr Hellwedge would let it die out making our winters at school very cold!

A highlight for me was attending the 'Back to Corop School' in 1971. My husband, Jim and I, together with our children all attended the celebration and met so many friends of years gone by. The children had a great day playing with all the other children and enjoying the entertainment. It was a great way to remember my school days at Corop School.

Congratulations to all whom helped start the Corop social life in the District of Corop.

Sincere Thanks,  
Mary F Grinter, Kyabram.



### Corop Cup (continued)

We were privileged to have Mayor Neil Pankhurst and his wife in attendance and they appeared to enjoy the festivities.

Dapper Geoff Speer kept his Black Caviar record of never being beaten intact, once again winning the male fashions of the field. Classy Carmel Pearson won the female section from Kiwi Beth Oakley and Denise Acocks was awarded Hat of the Day. Many are now wondering if Dapper Geoff will ever be beaten!

However, the day was about the big racing events. There were close finishes in both preliminaries, the Flashing Fillies of Corop and in The Corop Colts.

In one of the tightest finishes in history, beautiful filly Silent Storm held on in a blanket finish in the prestigious Corop Cup.

A great day was enjoyed by all and we look forward to the fun of this year's Corop Cup.

### Movie and Pizza Night

For our first movie and pizza night (Friday 2/9) we viewed the Paul Hogan and Shane Jacobson movie, 'Charlie and Boots'. Those that attended were amazed at the big screen effect from data projector and powered speakers and the pizzas were very much enjoyed.

The next movie night is planned for April and the Australian movie 'Red Dog' will be screened. Don't miss what promises to be a great night.

### Carpet Bowls

The CCAG have borrowed two carpet bowls mats and sets of bowls from the Rushworth Bowls Club. Our first evening did not have many in attendance but was a very enjoyable event and lots of fun.

Alan Edwards shows intense concentration and control. Come and join in the fun in April.



### Upcoming Events and Social Calendar

With the Corop Community Centre now fully functioning, the CCAG is holding social events on the last Friday of most months.

Already there is a broad array of activities on offer and they are listed in the 'upcoming events later in this newsletter.

Due to the increase in functions, it is no longer viable to promote each event with a flyer in the mail run. Therefore, there is a program in this newsletter and is your notification. The list will also be displayed on the community noticeboard near the store in Corop.

### Corop Cemetery Trust

In 2012, the Corop Cemetery trust will continue its restorations of graves that we are unable to locate family members to complete the necessary work.

There are also plans to renew the last section of fence for the entire perimeter. The other sections have all been the focus of working bees over the past ten years.

The cemetery trust advertise their working bees and welcome any assistance.

If you have any enquiries about the cemetery, please phone The Secretary, Denise Acocks Ph: 5484 1070.

### Corop Rural Fire Brigade Update

We have had a busy three months in the Fire Brigade with 10 call outs, with a big thank you to the volunteers that attended "Great Work".

Thank you to the community for being vigilant and well prepared before the Fire Season. Please be aware that fire restrictions remain in force.

Corop Brigade would also like to welcome new members:- Jacquie Freeman, Jade Mirasol, Angela Woods and Todd Heycox.

Corop R.F.B. meet on the first Tuesday each month, and training is on the second Tuesday of the month - All Welcome.

Any enquiries, please call Captain Darren Bloomfield 0417391128.

### Produce & Preserves Stall

Some of the CCAG members have been very busy in the kitchen at the Corop Community Centre. They have been cooking a range of preserves and condiments as a fundraiser.

On Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of March they will be holding a stall at The Corop Shelter - near the store on the Midland Highway. There will also be a range of locally grown produce for sale.

Please get along to the stall and help raise funds for the ongoing range of projects undertaken by the CCAG.

### UPCOMING EVENTS & SOCIAL CALENDAR

- Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup> @ The Corop Shelter on the Midland Highway - Produce & Preserves Stall
  - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March @ 9.30 - Working Bee to tidy tennis courts and surrounds and concrete the Corop Community Centre courtyard. Morning tea provided
  - Friday March 30<sup>th</sup> 6.30 pm - Hit & Giggle tennis and BBQ - BYO tennis gear, meat, drinks and a sweet or salad to share.
  - Friday April 27<sup>th</sup> @ 8.00 pm - Carpet Bowls & supper. Bring a plate to share
  - Friday May 25<sup>th</sup> 7.00 pm - Pizza and film night (Red Dog) - You need to be there on time to order the pizzas! BYO nibbles and drinks
  - Friday June 29<sup>th</sup> @ 6.30 pm - Casseroles with local & music trivia quiz - Bring a casserole and sweet to share
  - Friday July 27<sup>th</sup> @ 7.00 pm - Pie, wine & bonfire. Bring a savoury or sweet pie to share and drinks
  - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September @ the centre, 7.30 pm - CCAG AGM
  - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November - Corop Cup
  - Mid December - Christmas in Corop
- The next Corop News will give the events of the second half of the year.

### Newsletter now online:

- Please note past editions of Corop News are now available on the Corop website: [www.corop.com.au](http://www.corop.com.au)

This newsletter was compiled by: Bill Barkla, Katrina Hall Katherine Weeks and Carmel Pearson. Thanks to those who contributed and to the Rochester Secondary College for its ongoing support in printing this newsletter.

Contributions, enquiries or donations can be forwarded to: Corop News c/- Bill Barkla 1627 Midland Hwy Corop or email [katnbill@hotmail.com](mailto:katnbill@hotmail.com) or PH: (03) 5484 8101.

**VISIT: [www.corop.com.au](http://www.corop.com.au)**

Wed. Oct. 13, 1971

# 500 attend Corop back-to weekend

## —and Clive goes back to childhood

What started as a small thought on the part of the Mothers' Club to celebrate 101 years of schooling at Corop, escalated into a monster and successful Back-to-Corop celebration at the weekend, taken up by all township and district residents, and responded to by some 500 former residents.

However, the back-to-school continued to hold pride of place, and it had the honored place of opening the celebrations.

On Saturday, at the school grounds and before a large crowd, Mr. Jack Freeman called for the raising of the flag and the combined singing of the National Anthem.

Cl. C. Speers, of the Warranga Shire, and who represented one of the oldest pioneer families of the district, performed the official opening celebration.

He said that Corop school continued to exist while others around, such as Corop South, Corop West and Bonn had closed down.

The attendance at Corop had varied from a high of 60 down to as low as seven about 1940.

Some of those now attending the school were of the fifth generation of pioneers.

### Mannequin Parade

Then followed several items of harmony by children of the school.

Later, the feature of the afternoon was a mannequin parade modelled by Corop residents.

Amongst these was a wedding frock 80 years old and a riding outfit of the 1884 era. There were many laughs when two lasses appeared in 1900 style pantaloons and drawers with a trapdoor at the back.

There was also a brown suit brought from Ireland more than 100 years ago, and another, claimed to be 111 years old, with large ostrich feathers decorating the hat. A long black frock of the 1860 era, relieved with a locket known to be 150 years old was another outfit modelled.

There was a modern-day wedding gown and to conclude, a complete wedding group in period style.

Throughout the afternoon the children were treated to ice cream, pony and train rides, and puppet displays, while a show of pets was a source of interest.

The high enthusiasm was maintained on Saturday evening when a barbecue and barn dance was held on the property of Mr. Percy Speers, which overlooks the township and the vast expanse of Lake Cooper.

Here again the attendance far exceeded expectations, and former friendships were renewed and

happenings of the past recalled.

### Church Service

On Sunday morning the celebrations were continued with a combined church service, in which all denominations co-operated.

This was followed by a basket luncheon to give further opportunity of meeting former friends and relatives.

The concluding function was a barbecue during the afternoon at Green's Lake.

This area has recently had some \$27,000 spent on it by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and is now under full development as a picnic and fishing site. In a year or two it should be one of the show places of the State.

### Sidelights

Present at the gatherings was Mr. George Boulton, who was the constable in charge of the Corop police station when it was closed down in the 30s.

Present resident Mr. Bill Taylor's grandfather was the first name in the first ledger opened at what then was the Bank of Victoria at Corop. Both Bill and his son attended the local school.

Hugh Devine, who conducted the Corop - Elmore mail run from 1917 to 1925, was another "old-timer" present.

The last of the seven hotels, which at one time existed at Corop, was burnt down about 1931, and rumor has it that following the depression and the closing down of banks in New South Wales, that some money was stored in the ceiling of this hotel for safe keeping and went up in the blaze—or did it?

One intending "back-to" visitor rang from Melbourne to be booked in at the Corop Hotel, but was taken back when informed there had not been a hotel at Corop for some 40 years.

Talk of the "old grey mare" recalled the incident when a pioneer resident who usually rode into town, had delayed his departure for some time, and when doing so, forgot that this time he had a jinker, mounted the horse and rode home some miles with the jinker trailing behind.

### Famous Tank

Charlie Furphy was pre-

sent. His grandfather invented the Furphy water tank 102 years ago at Corop. He set up his foundry at Shepparton because of the availability of water from the Goulburn. This was his deciding factor, because at that time the townships of Corop and Shepparton were of about equal size.

The huge birthday cake was made by Mrs. Norman Weeks and decorated by Mrs. Ian Johnson. The honor of cutting this was given to Mrs. Walter Brown, one of the oldest residents of the area, and whose mother had lived to 103. Pieces were distributed to all present.

In the days when Corop had a football team, it was coached by the late Rowley Watt, who in the 1920s had been a member of the famous Essendon "mosquito fleet" which won the VFL premiership. At other times Watt also coached Rochester at Colbinabbin.

It was recalled that George Williamson, a blacksmith at Corop, had invented a three-furrow plough, which was regarded as the best in Australia. His brothers conducted a business in Rochester.

The late Henry Stevens was a personality at Corop until a few years ago, and his memory was recalled. He had served in the Boer War, and lived to be 97.

Two of the great pioneers present at the gathering were Jim Stewart (89) and Alf Robins (79). The latter recalled having built many of the homes in the district. Also there was Hector Munro, now 90 years of age.

The motto was acclaimed that if you want to live to a great age then come and live at Corop on the shores of Lake Cooper.

The weekend was a great venture and a great success achieved by the small number of people who today reside at Corop, and are served by the one remaining store conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Rankin.