



Snippets

from our collection

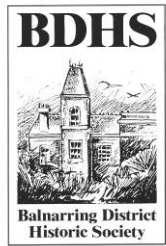
Balnarring and District Historical Society Inc.

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Editor: I. Hackett



Living in the '70s -

'St John's Wood'

(Talking with Peter and Denise Frandsen)

Peter and Denise Frandsen fell in love with 'St John's Wood', the house at Chapel Corner, the first time they saw it. The building, formerly the Roman Catholic Church for the Balnarring area, had been converted to a home after it had been deconsecrated in 1972. A number of features of the original building, which had been built in 1881, had been preserved in the modern home nestled among trees on the site at the corner of Balnarring Road and Bittern-Dromana Road.

In 1976 the Frandsen family had been holidaying at Dromana during the Easter holidays. Easter Monday was wet and windy, not beach weather, and instead of going onto the beach they had gone into Dromana. While looking at the notices in the window of a real estate office, one particular property stood out, the



the house at Chapel Corner

converted church at Chapel

Corner in Balnarring. Intrigued, they organized to see the house and it didn't disappoint. The property became theirs.

Peter, Denise and their four children moved to the Peninsula from Mount Waverley and to a different more countrified life-style. Peter was a shop-

fitter by trade which required him to travel. Denise was busy parenting four young children, the youngest of whom was three years old. Stacey started at “kindy” at Balnarring while her older sister, Kerry, with the two boys, Andrew and Geoffery, attended the Red Hill Consolidated School. Living in a country area was different. Denise recalls looking out through the window on their first night in their new home to be met by darkness. There were no neighbouring lights. She questioned what they had done. But they quickly adjusted and became part of the local community. Denise became involved with parents’ activities at the Red Hill school. She also had her own stall at the monthly Red Hill market where she sold hand-made ginger beer. Their sons started playing cricket with Balnarring’s junior players and rode their bicycles from home to the cricket grounds. Denise shopped at the Balnarring General Store. It was run by Peter and Barbara Lazarus and was the nearest shop for them. When Peter Lazarus added the bottle shop to the side of the store, Peter fitted it out for him.

Their house sat on just under three acres and when Peter and Denise bought it, the land was unfenced, there were not many trees. Privacy became a major factor so they fenced the land and planted trees around the perimeter. of the grounds. There was a tennis court on the property and their garden proved a popular space for social gatherings.



entertaining outdoors



Frandsen children at play in the yard

When Kerry became interested in horse riding they bought a pony and she became a member of the Merricks Saddle Club. When the younger family members also wanted horses of their own the Chapel Corner property

proved too small. After three years the Frandsens decided to sell on 'St John's Wood', the name Denise had given their property. A further factor was its corner position. It was a dangerous corner where two major routes crossed and accidents were common.

Their next home was a property with more acreage in Kentucky Road in Merricks

Peter, a Master Mason, was welcomed into the Balnarring Masonic Lodge. He also became involved with the Red Hill football club when his sons started playing football with Red Hill's junior team. He served as president of the club for seven years then, as his lads graduated to senior football, he became president of the senior club. Peter served in that capacity for another five years including the year 1990 when Red Hill won the Peninsula League Premiership.

Paul Rowson, the Club's young physiotherapist, had opened a practice in Balnarring and had volunteered his services to the football club. He attended two sessions a week, on a Tuesday and Thursday. At the premiership celebrations Peter invited the physiotherapist to join his family at their table and so Paul met Kerry Frandsen, the young woman who would become his wife.

Gradually, as Denise and Peter's children reached adulthood, the Merricks property became too big for them. They sold it and bought land at Red Hill. From there they moved to Mornington. One of their sons settled in Perth and they, too, moved to Western Australia but Denise was homesick for Victoria and the couple returned to the Peninsula. They now live in Safety Beach.

A later owner of Chapel Corner mentioned a rumour that the house was haunted. Peter can attest to that. One night not long after they had moved into the house, he woke to see what he thought was their youngest child passing the bedroom door. He woke Denise who went to check on three-year-old Stacey. The little girl was fast asleep in her bed. Peter was adamant. He had seen the little girl in her long nightie. Denise pointed out that Stacey slept in pyjamas - she did not wear nighties. Peter is positive that he hadn't been dreaming or hallucinating as he saw the girl-ghost a

second time a few nights later. The family believes the figure was the ghost of young Cecilia Cavanagh who had drowned in 1899. Her death had been mourned by the whole Balnarring community. Had a special service for the little girl been held in the church at the time?

A HARLEY RACE DAY VISIT

by John Woolley

A two-day motor cycle race meeting was held on Saturday, September 30 and Sunday, October 1, 1950 at H.M.A.S. Cerberus using the straight roads around the parade ground. for the race track. The meeting was repeated in 1951 and '52 but was discontinued after that. As a young boy, John Woolley was taken to see the races on a special outing with his father.

(This story is as much about a major adventure as it is about Harley Davidson racing bikes.)

As a result of a relationship break-up, I spent the years between five and thirteen at Rosebud with Mother. Father resided at Crib Point.

At the age of eleven or twelve and my brother being three years younger, we were organized to visit Father at Crib Point. This entailed catching the bus at Rosebud to Frankston, then the steam train from Frankston to Crib Point.

This was quite an adventure considering that the furthest I had ventured in those days was to ride my bike with other boys to Dromana to visit Michael Currie whose parents owned a guest house on the Nepean Highway.

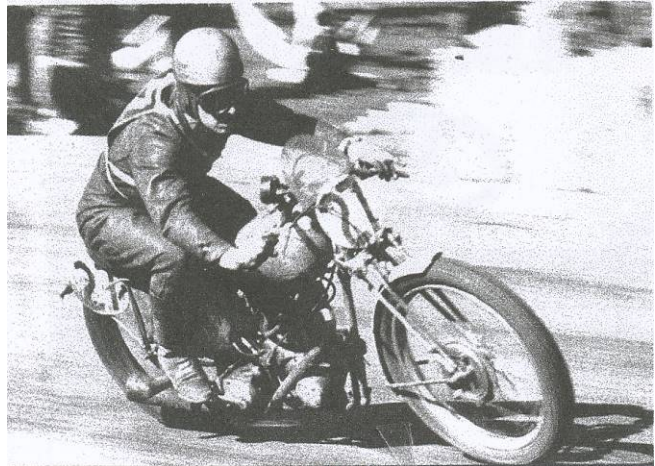
Also, the only times I had ventured further, was in the company of Mother to Melbourne. These trips in some cases required an overnight stay in the Victoria Coffee Palace in Little Collins Street. Considering the above, I lived a quite sheltered life.

On that particular weekend my brother and I were escorted to the bus and sent off to Frankston on our adventure. Interestingly, I learned later on that Father's older brother, Ashton Woolley Jnr, was one of the Stony Point line steam train drivers for some forty years until his retirement in 1943.

On arriving at Crib Point we were met at the station by Father who informed us he was taking us into the Flinders Naval Depot to the motor bike races.

The first impression was the main gate guard in uniform with a gun on his shoulder, checking drivers and passengers. The two Naval Ships figureheads, on either side of the Main Gate 5, was enough for me to question whether it all was such a good idea. Of course, to Father it was all part of our day out experience.

On positioning ourselves near a corner of the track with its straw bales stacked up, I suddenly was shocked into the reality of Harley Davidson bike racing noise. It was something I will never forget. I have often wondered, from then on, whether

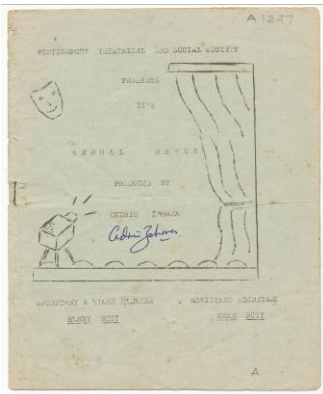


those riders enjoyed it or some liked the punishment. Of course, later, I was to realise just how much riders and spectators respond to the thrill of excessive noise, exhaust fumes, danger and competition. Motor bike racing has never been an experience I needed to repeat after that day although, over the years, a lot of friends have devoted their entire active lives to participating in motor bike racing and to that I congratulate them.

Around that time I had also visited H.M.A.S. Cerberus (the Flinders Naval Depot) with Rosebud State School, when the schools on the Peninsula were bussed to F.N.D. to line the footpaths along the road from the main gate to the police office to wave flags to Prince Phillip on his visit to the Depot. Not sure where the Queen was; as I think back, she may have been visiting horse studs.? Then back on the bus. I remember being in awe of all the uniformed personnel and what seemed to be the formality of everything.

The Harley Davidson Race days at H.M.A.S. Cerbrus should go down in local History as a one of a kind, probably never to be repeated. Although one day, every few years, it would be a spectacular promotion for the Naval Base and its personnel.

WESTERNPORT THEATRICAL AND SOCIAL SOCIETY



One item held in the BDHS archives is a small program for the Westernport Theatrical and Social Society's Annual Revue. The concert was held at the (old) Balnarring Hall in 1952 and featured eight items before the interval and nine items after it. The revue was a mixture of skits and sketches, songs, comedy and musical instrument items. Mary French performed on the violin while Mark Sutherland, a minstrel performer, featured two items on his banjo. Most of the performers were local talent but there were also invited guests well known to a wider audience. Mabel Nelson, star of (radio station) 3DB gave the opening number and Colin Crane also known as Mr Crump of 'Glee Club' fame and the Snowball Minstrels, gave an item. On the program each item is introduced by a four-line verse. It opened with:

We ask you all to laugh with us

And clap if you are able

The music starts; the show is on

It's lovely Melody Mabel.

This was followed by a musical item given by the whole cast, then six more items until interval.

The Interval as announced in the program featured a double-page spread acknowledging sponsorship and the two pages held advertisements for several businesses. These offer an insight into the commercial side of the district in the early 1950s. Jack Glover ran the Beach Store and Café while the general store in Balnarring was a Co-operative. Weston's Stores were at Merricks. They drew attention to a new phone at the Merricks P.O. Dunn's Balnarring Motors offered RACV service, promoted Skoda cars and was an agent for Allis Chalmers tractors.

Mabel Nelson again led into the second half of the entertainment.

The fifth item after the break was a sketch with Meg Kinsella, Allan Begg and Bob Cochrane performing in "Midnight". Its introductory verse was:

Theres' nothing like a friendly ghost

To brighten up the night

So keep your seats and don't rush out

If you should get a fright.

On the program's back page is the conclusion:

*This show is o'er
The curtain's down
And great friends we have seen
So let's all be upstanding
And sing GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.*

GOOD NIGHT

The End.

The back page also carries an advertisement for the next meetings of the Bittern Race Club.

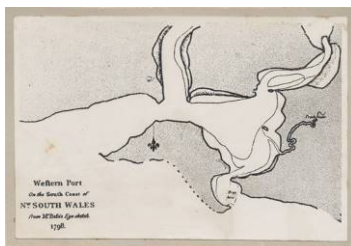
The show was produced by Cedric Zahara. Harry Butt acted as Secretary and Stage manager while his wife, Gwen Butt, was Assistant Secretary. Among those who took part were Dick Cook, the postmaster and his brother-in-law, Jack Scott. Derek Fritch appeared in a couple of sketches as did Meg Kinsella, Mary Robb, Jean Johns, Bob Cochrane, Stan and Evie Maine and Garry Downward.

(The program was among items belonging to Mary Karney (née Robb). She had collected the autographs of most of her fellow performers.)

'WESTERN PORT' V. 'WESTERNPORT'

(from a newspaper cutting in the scrap books of Councillor Lorna Bennetts dated 27/8/1985.)

In the preceding item about the Annual Revue, the group carries the name 'Westernport' in its title, spelled as one word. Today the name is more commonly given as two words, Western Port. This practice was adopted in 1985 and was initiated by the Hastings Historical Society, acting on the advice of the Victorian Place Names Committee



George Bass discovered and named the area Western Port Bay in 1798. In his voyage to find out whether Tasmania was separated from the mainland, the bay was the furthest west he travelled along the Victoria's south coast before turning back.

The change was made in time for the 150th birthday of the State and the Shire's 25th year. A letter was written to Mr Cain, the Victorian State Premier, advising Government departments to adopt the correct spelling when current supplies of maps, plans and other documents were depleted.

HOLIDAYS AT TULUM BEACH

by *Elsie Wishart*

(from an interview with Elsie given when she was in her 103rd year)

Our family came down to Balnarring Beach, Tulum Beach it was then, in an old T-model Ford with lots of luggage on the sides and lots of people inside the car. There were eight of us before we started bringing down the relations. We didn't come to Balnarring. We came to Tulum Beach.



en route to Tulum - at Bittern

There were big sand hills between our house and the beach and the tea-tree was so thick we walked alongside the fence so as not to get lost. Our backyard went onto the beach.

Our grandparents played cards in the kitchen. There was a big long seat and a fairly long table. We learnt cards from the time we were little kids and if we had thrupence (three penny coin) we'd go to the lolly shop and come back with our little bit for the night, much to Grandma's annoyance. We'd have sticky fingers all the time. The lolly shop was at Mrs Stone's shop. It was just a little shed at first and gradually it got bigger. It had a big open floor and everybody used to go round of a night. If you could play the piano, we danced and sang. Everybody went.

We had concerts on the beach too. We would all congregate down there and we'd start. Somebody would sing. My grandfather would give a lot of recitations. That used to annoy us because he wouldn't stop. Later, we'd wander home with torches and a blanket.

Plenty of times we owned the whole beach. Sometimes the scouts had a camp fire. A lady used to sing the Irish song, 'Mavourneen' every night - always the same song. The scouts came for the Christmas holidays and camped on the land next to 'The Nook' (the White's house) but more towards the beach. When they went home they left their tents under our house until the next year.



the White and the Wall children

The houses at Tulum were basic - they kept the rain out. Gus was a fisherman and he did a lot of fishing. He just lived in a little two-roomed



place on the corner of the street. George Mentiplay owned a lot of land just past us. They were very long blocks and he decided to cut his blocks in half. Half of them were lost to the sea (erosion).

Huge trees came down - honeysuckle trees (banksia) and they'd be lying on the beach for ages.

trunks and roots of undermined banksia trees

We learned to swim on kerosene tins, four-gallon tins. When they were empty my father soldered up the holes and they floated. We hung on to those and learned to kick then gradually let go and use your arms. But my father would throw us in anywhere, off a pier, to make us learn to swim. We didn't wear shoes and the sand was really hot so we jumped from (the shade of) one tree to the next. While we were at Tulum we lived in our bathers - get up, put on our bathers, have breakfast and then down to the beach.

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