

# Jack Keighery – a genial gentleman

**Born in Ballarat on February 9th, 1930, Jack’s early life was spent on “Bolwarrah,” a family farm in the Springbank area, about 20 kilometres east of his birthplace.**

He schooled with the Christian Brothers at St Alipius in Ballarat and the School of Mines junior tech until form 4.

Jack’s first real job was at Taylor and Taylor, a pharmacy where he worked in photo-processing for a couple of years before his sister’s husband Jim McCabe offered him an opportunity “too good to refuse”. He set off for Kennedy’s Creek to join the timber industry.

He worked for McCabe and Trickey for eight years, mostly delivering sawn timber – this was well before the Heytesbury Settlement became a reality.

Jack’s next assignment was with the Settlement Commission at what is now known as Simpson. It was here in 1949 that he met his wife of 58 years, Eileen (Till), who later worked with the commission as a typist clerk.

**He joined the commission as a plant operator and leading hand. Not one to work behind a desk, Jack toiled in the field, clearing, using a ball and chain, windrowing and heaping . . . before taking on a more supervisory and monitoring role as a developmental officer - “keeping an eye on things,” he said.**

He shakes his head in amazement when he recalls the number of near-misses during this heavy clearing work. “How there weren’t fatalities, I just don’t know,” he said.

Jack says he feels disheartened as he drives through the settlement now. “The number of disused dairies is disappointing,” he said. “But farms have had to get bigger, that’s just the nature of things.”

He marvels at the fact that the only sealed road in the area back then was the Cobden-Camperdown Rd. All the others, including the main roads to Warrnambool, Simpson, Timboon and Terang were red gravel.

“In my many years in the old Heytesbury and Otway districts, having travelled thousands of miles delivering sawn timber from Kennedy’s Creek, the improvement in the roads and wooden-planked bridges has been the most important progression,” he said.

In 1966, he and Eileen took up share-farming at Scotts Creek, then

they leased a property from the Pillar family near Cobden before purchasing it outright.

**Twenty-four years later, they left the farm and Jack “fell into” the curator position at Cobden Golf Club in 1989 and spent about ten years improving its course facilities. During that time, he completed a certificate in turf management with the Department of Agriculture at the Ballarat School of Mines . . . returning to its corridors after about 60 years!**

A sportsman from a young age, Jack played baseball in Ballarat and badminton at Simpson where his team won the first-ever pennant. He was the foundation president of Simpson Tennis Club and a foundation committeeman and player of the Simpson Football Club . . . just to get them started.

He only played one season with the Tigers but, at the time, he was 35 and shouldn’t have been playing at all. A badly damaged knee, injured during an earlier career with Cobden had taken its toll! And he’s still carrying the injury.

Jack played about 100 games with the Bombers’ seniors and seconds during the 1950s, winning several reserve 18 best and fairest awards – about the time Jim Hammond and Brian Brown were coaching.

**Taking up golf at the tender age of 37, Jack managed to get his handicap down to seven – after stalling on 16 for quite a while. “I didn’t think I was ever going to get off 16,” he said. “Once I did, things started to happen.”**

An all-rounder, Jack became a keen Cobden pennant bowler when he could no longer play golf.

The genial giant – he was a six foot four inch ruckman in his heyday – has supported for North Melbourne for 75 years and one of his greatest joys was watching them win their first premiership in 1975.

Family-wise, Jack and Eileen have a daughter, Sally, and granddaughter, Orla, 5, who live in Brunswick. Proud of his Irish heritage, Jack recounts that his father ‘hurled’ against an Irish touring side for both Bungaree Hurling Association and, then, for Victoria on the Sydney Cricket Ground. Beating the Internationals both times!



*Jack Keighery loves living in Cobden.*

Cobden? Well, Jack is full of admiration. “It’s hard to imagine another town of similar size providing so many facilities for townspeople and visitors to enjoy. The township is always presented in pristine condition, thanks to the great work of the shire’s Adam Collins.

**“Although I do miss the old Cobden with its quaint shops and verandahs, and its bluestone cobble drains, we still love living here.”**

# Lollipop lady looking after our interests

**Cobden Primary School lollipop lady Sue Ralph seems to be the right person for the job.**

She’s not fazed by wet weather!

Or by suspicious cars hanging around the school!

Not even by a car knocking the stop sign out of her hand!

Sue has been the school crossing supervisor for 31 years – fronting up day and afternoon more than 14,000 times to make the walk across Victoria Street safer for our most prized assets.

Touch wood, her safety record is impeccable with no injuries to report, the biggest near miss occurring a few years ago when an elderly gentleman took out her stop sign. Ironically, the local policeman knew about the incident very quickly because his daughter was at the scene of the ‘crime.’

**Vehicle speed continues to be the biggest frustration for Sue who thinks the reduced speed limit (50kph) along Victoria Street was a positive move. Ideally, she would love to see 40kph flashing school zone lights installed.**

Sue describes the young people she deals with as being very

responsible. “The fact that we train them on their orientation day from kindergarten helps,” she said. “They are very respectful of me and the situation.”

Our vigilant lollipop lady smiles when she recalls the time she reported the suspicious car in the school precinct. “I took the car’s registration number and other details to the local sergeant only to be told it was an unmarked police vehicle working undercover. It was on a mission related to . . . oh, I can’t tell you,” she laughed.

**Sue is easily the longest-serving crossing supervisor in the school’s history. The first was Ron Greagan’s father, Ewen or ‘Hughie’ as he was known, who took on the responsibility after a fatal accident at the old crossing in the early 1970s. Formerly the crossing was closer to the Silvester Street intersection.**

Other supervisors were former policeman Ron ‘Deputy’ Arandt and Frank Roberts who retired to the position after managing the old Lees’ supermarket on the current site of Dr Griffiths’ clinic.

Sue applied to the Heytesbury Shire for the position and started work on September 17th 1984. Of course, she has to have a

thorough knowledge of all the regulations although, she says, it is “largely common sense.”

**“I am not allowed to use an umbrella (even if it’s pouring rain) or a mobile phone, no books or even ear-phones. It’s all about concentrating on the job at hand,” she said.**

Sue is a local person. Her parents Stewart and Mary Hickey farmed on ‘Hillview’, three kilometres east of Cobden on the Simpson road. She and her siblings Geoff and Jenni actually attended Cobden Primary School before moving on to Mercy (formerly St Pats) in Camperdown.

Six generations of the Hickey family have lived in the area with Stewart’s grandfather, John, and his father, James, preceding him. Now, Sue and brother Geoff have children and grandchildren in the Cobden district while Jenni lives in Warrnambool.

After leaving school, Sue worked at Lees’ Supermarket for five years before having her family of four – James (Perth), Vanessa (Darwin), Tania and Lisa – before returning to work as a lollipop lady. She has also cleaned the school for 15 years and the kindergarten for 16 years.

**Does she know the names of all the children she sees every day? “No, but I know their faces. There are too many to know names, and lots of new people in Cobden,” she said. “And, then, there are all those who come in by bus!”**

Sue has time to follow up her own interests. She played tennis as a younger person and now swims at our heated pool and plays badminton in Timboon. She also enjoys Probus, preserving the past at the Dairy Park and assisting in the Health Services op shop.

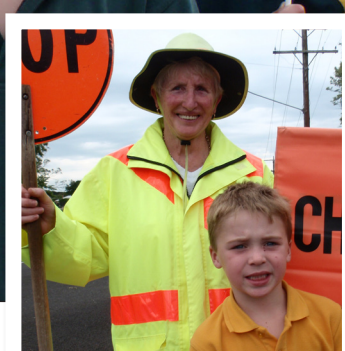
Apart from manicuring her garden, her particular favourite pastimes are following speedway and go-karts where her grandchildren Carly, Blake and Rusty are involved.

A quiet achiever, Sue Ralph is an important member of the Cobden Primary School team. Dependable and reliable are just two words that came to principal Peter Lee’s mind when her name was mentioned.

**Long live the lollipop lady!**



**Grandson Blake Walsh (left), grandniece Emily Hickey, grandnephew Jayden Gass and grandniece Tayla Hickey get into the spirit with their favourite lollipop lady Sue Ralph. Inset: Another grandson Rusty Ponting couldn’t be left out of the action.**



COBDEN CALENDAR
<b>Sunday 15th November:</b> 10.30am Cobden PS Garden Ramble.*
<b>Monday 16th November:</b> 7.30pm Spring Festival debrief.
<b>Thursday 26th November:</b> CBN late night shopping.*
<b>Saturday 28th November:</b> 9.30am Saint Mary’s Church Fete.*
<b>Friday 11th/Saturday 12th December:</b> From 12.30pm Friday, 11am-5pm Saturday, Cobden PS 150 Year Celebration.*
<b>Sunday 20th December:</b> 4pm Christmas-on-Apex Park.*
<b>Sunday 20th December:</b> 7pm Carols by Candlelight, Civic Hall.
*More details on <a href="http://cobden.org.au">cobden.org.au</a> .