



JACK BLACK – a legend in his own lifetime

July 21st, 1969, was a day to remember . . . for at least two reasons.

A man named Armstrong walked upon the moon.

Just as importantly, a man named Black walked upon the Cobden mud for the first time.

Yes, local tennis legend Jack Black, his wife Anne, and four children, arrived to take up a 128 acre dairy farm a couple of miles south of town – that was nearly 44 years ago.

Ironically, another Jack Black, the American actor, was born in 1969 but this story is about our laconic hero, a gentle almost-84 year-old who doesn't appear to have a mean bone in his slender body.

He was 40 when he started milking cows here, something that he had shown no interest in doing previously. "My family thought I'd taken leave of my senses," he said.

"We had a few cows on our mixed farm down at Buckley (between Winchelsea and Mt Moriac) but I gave the buckets a wide berth. I was more interested in cropping. In fact, I nearly bought a 900 acre grain farm in Queensland with my brother before I came to Cobden."

Jack doesn't regret coming to Cobden but he does wonder what the future would have held if he'd taken the grain option. "It's a risky business but it can be very profitable," he said.

He says Cobden people have "got it made here. Where else can you park the car and walk to everything you need – the newsagent, the post office, the supermarket, the bank, the chemist?"

"Then, again, the weather could be better – it's too cold most of the time."

After attending Buckley Primary School for eight years and Geelong Technical School for two years, Jack worked on his father's farm before moving with Anne to Winchelsea in 1955. "I did some contracting and leased a cropping property. I was a town cockie," he smiled.

The couple raised their four children in Cobden – Shirley (now

in Cairns), Ian (Tatura), Jenny (a bit further down the Port Campbell road) and Wendy who lives in a place called Useless Loop near Denham, Western Australia. Jack and Anne have eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Jack had been milking for about 24 years when a neighbour - Ron "Pud" Blake – asked him if he wanted to do a bit of mechanical work on his collection of trucks, graders and loaders. "I'd done a bit of 'mechanic-ing' so I decided I might be some use to him.

"After continuing to milk for a while, I found doing two jobs was too hard so, in 1993, I chucked the cows in and concentrated on the service work. About then, I sold 60 acres but I still cut hay and ran a few cows.

"I was probably better at basic mechanical work than anything else. I enjoyed working with "Pud" – he was a good businessman who grabbed opportunities when they arose. I always found the best thing to do was agree with him."

Jack finished with R L Blake Pty Ltd three or four years ago. He's now spending his time caring for Anne whose mobility is restricted, and trying to catch up with all the farming things he hasn't done. "I probably never will (catch up) but I might," he said with his typical grin.

Racquet sports – tennis, badminton and table tennis – have been Jack's passion all his life. He only retired from tennis three years ago after a career lasting about 65 years. But he reckons he could still mix it with most opponents on the court – he even admitted he'd been working on a new backhand because his old one had become a bit "squishy".

The question needs to be asked. Could Jack Black make a comeback to local tennis in 2013-14? "Well, if Gary Oates ever returns my best tennis racquet, you never know" he said.

He actually retired when he was 43 but that didn't last long. "Max Chisholm asked me to play six months later when Jancourt were short . . . so I kept playing.

Jack has been lucky with injury during his sporting career. "The worst injury I suffered was a calf tear when I was playing badminton," he said. "I didn't know if I'd had a stroke or a heart attack – it hurt that much."

After playing high-level tennis in a major association that involved more than a thousand players, Jack said he enjoyed the camaraderie of Cobden tennis. "I've met a lot of nice people over the years.

"My strengths were probably my serve-and-volley and overheads," he said. "I was a basher when I was young but, as I got older, I started to use my brains. I used to live on the net – that's where you win points."

Jack said he had probably won more badminton premierships than

Racquet sports have long been Jack Black's sporting passion



tennis titles. "I've won about six tennis premierships at Cobden but I've been runners-up a fair few times."

At one time, football was an interest for Jack. He admits he was a "terrible footballer who could run and get the odd hit-out but couldn't kick." He did win a premiership with a Modewarre team but he thought he was better to use his speed and muscle in other pursuits. Jack was going to play golf when he retired from tennis but his clubs are still sitting in the shed, never used.

A few more Black morsels

Jack was actually born at Beeac before his family moved to Buckley when he was two. He describes himself as a social drinker, never a smoker, who eats what and when he needs to.

Jack barracks for Geelong and is proud of his family who, he says, have done well without much help from him. He was with the local fire brigade for twenty years.

Unassuming and modest, Jack Black will probably be embarrassed to read this story. He needn't be – because his story is legendary. As John McEnroe would say of Jack's 65 year tennis career, "You can't be serious!"

CUBS ON CAMP

The 1st Cobden Cub Pack recently held a very successful Pack Holiday at the Sherbrook River Guide Camp, near Port Campbell.

The cubs had a great time at the camp with a Viking theme woven into activities throughout the weekend.

Activities included dressing as a Viking (making a Viking hat, sword and shield), crafting a Viking ship and fortress out of cardboard, having a bomb war between Viking crews, a visit to nearby Loch Ard Gorge, a swim at Port Campbell beach, Viking feats of skill (including the obelisk toss, team balancing, bomb toss for accuracy and distance, and the hammer throw), and team block games.

The facilities were great, the weather was very hot and the food prepared by the various camp cooks was terrific. All in all a great weekend was had by all.

— Kim Gratton



1st Cobden Cub Pack leaders Amber Henriksen (back, left) and Kim Gratton with some of the cubs

BY GOLLY, IT'S MOLLY and CLYDE

Hi! I am Molly Kathryn Hutt and I am 12 years-old. I live in Cobden Victoria just up the hill from the town dam and I was born at Timboon Hospital.

After spending all my primary school years at Cobden, I now attend the local Technical School in year 7. I am a very caring person, a good friend and I am confident and persistent at anything I do.

In my family I have a mother named Janine. She is 44 years-old and, in my opinion, she is the best netball player ever. She has won several best and fairest awards and a couple of runners-up trophies. She also plays in a basketball team with me.

I also have a father named Brendan but everyone calls him 'Big Fella.' He is the same age as Mum and he is a trainer at the Cobden Footy Club. He is pretty good at what he does and he loves a can or two. Dad and I are pretty good mates.

I have an older brother named Jack - he is an outstanding football player and he is also a really good cricket player. Jack is 15 and, as a teenager, he gets quite annoying and mean but he is a pretty good brother.

Last, but not least, my little darling brother Joe. He is a little mad-man and we both get along quite well. Joe is 9 years-old and everyone calls him 'Smoking Joe' because when he was 18 months old he fell in the fire and burnt his hand. If not 'Smoking Joe', he gets 'Hutty' just like Jack and Dad.

In the animal category I have a dog named Jess and she is 5 years-old. She is one of the cutest dogs ever!

I have lots of friends, some from when I was in kinder and some I just met recently. I met many different people at my first day of secondary school - the likes of Maddi, Rachael and Kelsey. I had a couple of good mates at my primary school who have gone to a different school.

At Cobden Tech, my group co-ordinator is Tim Horan and he is pretty awesome! My favourite subject is PE, because it is a subject where you can get active and play sports with your mates. I also enjoy music, because you learn new instruments. All the other

subjects such as maths and humanities I enjoy because you learn new things.

My neighbourhood is a quiet street. It is full of houses owned by the elderly, plus two paddocks full of sheep. All up our street are new houses, old houses, lots of beautiful trees and numerous animals. There are hardly any kids in my street so I do tend to get a little lonely!

Some of my future ambitions would be to continue playing netball . . . even with a team like the Melbourne Vixens. Other than that, I would love to be a member of the police force. Ever since I was little, I loved walking around playing with guns and playing 'cops and robbers'.

Meet Miss Molly Hutt



COBDEN CALENDAR

April	
13th	9.30am, Stirlo's bbq - Cobden Air Strip Committee.
15th	7.30pm, Spring festival meeting. Heytesbury Room.
16th	6.45am, Cobden Business Network breakfast meeting at Cobden Golf Club.
20th	9.30am, Stirlo's bbq - Cobrico Hall Committee.
27th	9.30am, Stirlo's bbq - Cobden Quota Club.