

STEVE looks back . . .

“My first school in 1951 was at Kirkstall (for two terms) before moving to Toolong for the last term. I was then sent to a place called Pura Pura, where I stayed for four years.

On my way back from Pura Pura, I noticed a signpost to a place called Cooramook which was just between Purnim and Grassmere and I thought this would be a good place for the next two years. I put in for it and finished up staying for 12 years – our boys were born there.

A district inspector told me I should apply for a promotion so I applied for Lindenow near Bairnsdale and spent a year there before moving on to Eildon where we stayed for four years. I had to finish some study so we moved to Mt Dandenong where the boys were able to play football and I was able to finish my studies.

Then we headed for Cobden in 1974 when I took over from outgoing principal, Mr Geoff Binder. I promised son Peter that we wouldn't move until he had finished high school – he had finished primary the year before.

I was a principal all my teaching days – first as a one-teacher principal, then as a two-teacher principal, a four-teacher principal and a six-teacher principal until I arrived at Cobden.

At one stage, I was offered a job as a solo cornet with the Royal Australian Air Force Band but my father told me to stick to teaching.

We came from England in 1949 and I did teacher training in Melbourne in 1950 – it was only a one-year course in those days. During my last year in England, I won a scholarship to the Sheffield College of Arts and I spent a term there before we came to Australia.

I have many favourite memories of Cobden – a tremendous staff, the clubs program . . . I vividly remember when Dale Vagg did Jack and the Beanstalk. One of my jobs was to help make props and scenery. In this case I had to make the cow which was operated by two young lads. As part of the deal the cow had to dance on stage. Towards the end, the back half of the cow fell off the stage and dragged the front half with it. The two lads wanted to repeat the incident the next night but I had to say no in case someone got hurt. Mr George Crawford was the giant in the play and caused many pre-schoolers and our own ‘preppies’ to cry when he came out! Each year the children were determined to do a better job than the last one. They usually did!

We had an excellent mothers' club and school council. We also had a very good relationship

CONNECTING COBDEN

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Edition No. 20

July 10th, 2013

BERYL's story

Beryl Woodcock (nee Brittain – yes, the sister of Keith Brittain) began school at Curdievale before moving on to Warrnambool's Jamieson Street Primary School and Warrnambool Technical School.

“I got polio while I was at secondary school so I was away from school for quite a while. When I recovered, I worked at a department store in Warrnambool where I met Steve. My boss and Steve both played in the Warrnambool Band.

We married in Warrnambool at St John's Presbyterian Church on May 8th, 1954 so, proudly, Steve and I have been together for 59 years.

We have three boys – Gary, a computer programmer, lives in Chirnside Park with wife Glynis; Brian, a secondary school teacher, lives in Mitcham with partner Rose; and Peter, a chemist with ESSO, lives in Sale with wife Heather.

Gary has three children – Lori, 30, has two girls, Ayla (4) and Mila (2), and Liahna, 27, has a boy called Cooper who will be 2 this month. Brian has a daughter, Bree who is 27 and a boy of 16 months. Peter has a son Matthew, 24, and a daughter Tegan, 21.

In Cobden, I was a member of Red Cross, delivered meals on wheels and supported under 16 football and cricket. In retirement at St Leonards, I found it a bit hard to settle but I have helped in a daycare centre and I love gardening, patchwork and having our grandchildren stay for holidays. I go to the gym (for older people) three times a week.

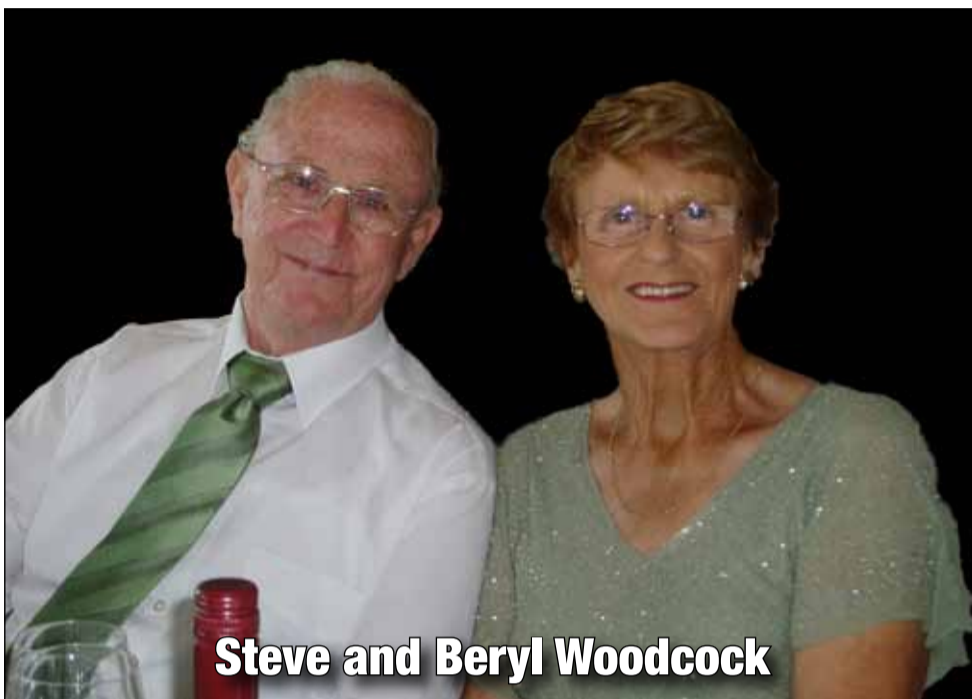
I really enjoyed our trips overseas where I met Steve's relations and saw where he lived as a child.

We watch many English television shows. My favourite music is from Phantom of The Opera.

It is great to hear about the children of Cobden and how they have developed.”

The Woodies

Recently, 'Connecting Cobden' caught up with Steve and Beryl Woodcock and adult sons Gary, Brian, Peter and Peter's wife Heather who all have some wonderful memories of life in Cobden.



Steve and Beryl Woodcock

with the shire and the technical school which allowed our children to use their gym.

At Cobden, I joined the Rotary Club, and was given the secretary's job not long after. Later on, I became heavily involved with student exchange and became the student exchange counsellor. We are still in touch with the first girl from Japan - Mina Kowagowe who is now Mrs Suzuki with two children. Kim Barlow, Natalie Smith and Palma Casonato were some of our outgoing exchange students.

I found there was not much time for anything else when you are a principal although I did finally build a boat for retirement during my last couple of years. I've always enjoyed fishing.

After leaving for St Leonards in 1988, I enjoyed woodwork and began playing Dixieland jazz with a group of fellows around Geelong. We made four CDs!

Beryl, my sister Betty and I returned to England in 1992 for my old secondary school, Penistone's, 600th year anniversary where Betty and I met up with a few old mates. It's hard to believe the grammar school was established in 1392.

A final reflection: I hope that my students would remember me as being fair and just to them. To all those boys who might have spent some time on the bench outside my office, I apologise. I am sure that my punishment was not as severe as you might have imagined.”

COBDEN CALENDAR

- 15th July:** 7.30pm CopRice festival meeting, Heytesbury Room, Civic Centre.
- 19th July:** 6.30pm Combined Service Clubs' Dinner 2013, Golf Club, 5595 1181.
- 22nd July:** 1pm Senior Citizens' Annual General Meeting, 5595 1693.
- 28th July:** 1.30pm Country Music Afternoon at Senior Citizens' Hall. \$5 entry, afternoon tea included, 5595 1693.
- 1st August:** 7.30pm Progressing Cobden AGM, Heytesbury Room, Civic Centre.

AND HOW ABOUT THE SPLINTERS?

Gary

School: Moved into Cobden and went straight into year 12 (HSC) at Camperdown High School. Despite an average performance, I gained a placement at Deakin University which led to a career in information technology.



Mates: Knocked around with Brian (Barney) and Graeme (Crab) Hammond, Mick and John Hinkley and their cousin, Neil (Sarge) Hinkley, who provided the after-dark education.

Cricket: Premiership out at Cobrico with the above-mentioned mates, Colin Rohan, Bazil Hammond, Robert (Rupe) Sumner and Neville Vagg.

Football: Played senior football with some local legends – Barry Kelly, Mick Hunt, Paul McVilly, Billy Askew, David Smith, Hugh Worrall and Phillip (Trapper) Morris, along with a lifelong friend in Gerard (Couchy) Couch.

And that's what kept a teenager occupied in the 1970s – school, cricket, football and late nights, and not necessarily in that order.

A thoroughly enjoyable period of my life was spent growing up in Cobden.

Brian

“My introduction to the welcoming spirit of Cobden came shortly after we arrived during the summer of 1974 when, at the behest of their mother, Mark and Paul Sullivan knocked on our door. Mark and I became great friends so I am thankful to Doreen for making the boys wander up Parrott Street.



I came across words I had never heard when I came to Cobden. We had lived in a number of rural communities but I had never heard of 'nix' meaning nothing, 'oggies' were lollies and 'bolting' to me only meant attaching something with bolts rather than quickly running away.

The four of us – Mark, Paul, my brother Peter and me – got into various levels of strife. One afternoon we were slingshotting small stones on the roof of a nearby house. House-owner, Mr Buckingham, raced into our yard and the four of us 'bolted' like frightened rabbits. We laughed about it until my mother made us apologise. Mr Buckingham was unhappy that we had hit his new car but impressed with Mark's turn of speed.

Football and cricket enabled us to get to know people and I was surprised at how Saturday football was such a significant community event. At the footy I was often referred to as 'Woody's little brother'. I appreciated the coaching and guidance of Kevin Johnston who gave me some part-time work as a trade assistant. I suspect he was very happy I didn't select carpentry as a career.

Cricket was where I felt a strong connection to the community. Playing in the under 16s with Dick Box as coach and in the B grade team,

again with Dick as captain, and playing alongside Evan Savage bowling his leggies. Phil Langley and Jimmy Dalziel were fantastic mentors as were Colin Gaut and Graham Hunter when I was selected in the A grade team.”

Peter

“The highlight of my time in Cobden was growing up with the girl I married and now share the most amazing family with – Heather. We must have walked a thousand kilometres between Mitchell and Stirling streets. Day, night, wind and rain - always without any concern for our safety – although we did have Sarge (Hart) on our side.

Cobden is a very friendly place, and I've made many lifelong friends. We spent a lot of time with the Sullivan boys, occasionally getting into a bit of strife – as you do when you are growing up. Slingshots were a good thing but I best say no more.

I had great times playing under 16 cricket, then with the older brigade who really took me under their wings – the likes of “Hooley” Fagan, Jimmy Dalziel, Kelvin White, Col Gaut, “Bluey” Harrington and Hughie Longmore made hot Saturday afternoons very enjoyable.

Junior footy was great. I didn't get to play in too many finals but the mighty Kangas were the best volleyball outfit ever to set foot inside the Tech school gym.

Weekends (and weeknights) were taken up with footy or cricket. The whole town always got behind the sporting teams.

You could play footy or cricket on the Cobden streets without a traffic worry. I can recall launching my best torpedo in front of Murrhy's newsagency one Saturday evening – it just kept going!



Cobden is still like a magnet as we keep going back to catch up with family, and it's good to see some old faces while we are there.”

Peter's wife, Heather

The daughter of Robert and Gwen Mounsey recalls:

- Spending endless summer days at the local pool.
- The feeling of community spirit at all sporting events they were involved in.
- Meeting the love of her life, Pete ☺
- Heading out to the farm where they could spend all day, just having fun.
- Having her first experience of work – at the Cobden Pharmacy.
- The hot north winds in summer and the constant rain during the winter were not her idea of fun.
- But, now, Heather always looks forward to taking her “two gorgeous kids home to see the wonderful place I grew up in”.

All photos of the Woodies supplied by Gary's daughter Lori Lay.

Connecting Cobden
Registered email: kelvin@swllen.net.au

Don't forget:

STIRLO'S SATURDAY SAUSAGE SIZZLES

Thanks to Stirlo, McQuinn's Plumbing, Cobden Bakery and Oasis Café
Book in your organisation!