



MOUNT MARY VINEYARD

ABN 73 930 208 106

COLDSTREAM WEST ROAD,
LILYDALE, VICTORIA 3140, AUSTRALIA

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 626, Lilydale, Victoria 3140

Tel: +61 3 9739 1761 Fax: +61 3 9739 0137

A FEW MEMORIES OF THE LILYDALE SQUASH CLUB.

AUGUST 2005

IT IS SAD FOR ME TO RELATE THAT SO MANY OF THOSE ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE WHO SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED AS FOUNDATION MEMBERS OF WHAT BECAME THE LILYDALE SQUASH CLUB ARE NO LONGER WITH US.

THAT WAS FIFTY YEARS AND NO-ONE IS IMMORTAL.

I JOINED THE LILYDALE MEDICAL CLINIC AS A GENERAL PRACTITIONER IN EARLY 1953 AND RETIRED IN THE MIDDLE OF 1982. THERE WERE THREE OTHER PARTNERS. DRS BERNARD OSTBERG, PETER MCMAHON AND RICHARD O'HANLON (NOW DECEASED).

IT WAS A BUSY PRACTICE AND IN THOSE DAYS WE ATTENDED TO MANY HOUSE CALLS, SOMETIMES UP TO 20 IN A DAY.

WE HAD LITTLE TIME FOR SPORTS THAT OCCUPIED A DAY OR EVEN A HALF DAY SUCH AS CRICKET, SOCCER, FOOTBALL OR GOLF.

PETER MCMAHON AND I HAD PLAYED SQUASH IN AN AMATEUR FASHION WHEN IN TRINITY COLLEGE AT THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY AS A WAY OF OBTAINING EXERCISE AND WE SOON FOUND OTHERS KEEN TO BECOME INVOLVED. MEDICAL PARTNERS, BERNARD OSTBERG AND DICK O'HANLON WERE ALSO KEEN, SO WE DECIDED TO TRY AND ESTABLISH A SQUASH CLUB IN LILYDALE AND BUILD A COURT.

THE ODD SHAPED PIECE OF LAND ON WHICH THE BUILDING NOW STANDS THAT NOBODY SEEMED TO WANT, WAS OBTAINED FOR QUITE A REASONABLE PRICE. I CANNOT REMEMBER THE FIGURE.

PLANS WERE DRAWN UP BY ARCHITECT WISTON WIDDOWS FOR A SINGLE COURT, DEBENTURES WERE ISSUED AT FIFTY POUNDS EACH AND ISSUED TO THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD THEM. I DON'T EVER REMEMBER ANY DIVIDENDS AND I STILL HAVE THOSE DEBENTURES AMONG MY SOUVENIRS, SO I COUNT THEM AS DONATIONS.

THEN FIFTY POUNDS WAS QUITE AN AMOUNT - THAT THIS WAS 1954.

A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR COST 10 SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE (HALF A GUINEA IT WAS CALLED) AND A HOME VISIT WAS A GUINEA OR A POUND.

WE ATTENDED WOMEN FOR THEIR PREGNANCIES FOR FIVE POUNDS. THIS INCLUDED MONTHLY VISITS FOR CHECKS WITH WEEKLY VISITS IN THE LAST MONTH, DAILY POST NATAL HOSPITAL VISITS, OFTEN FOR THREE WEEKS AS THIS WAS THE CONSIDERED BEST PRACTICE. IN ADDITION NEARLY EVERY MOTHER OF A MALE CHILD DEMANDED CIRCUMCISION OF THEIR BABY AND THERE WAS A FINAL CHECK AT THE END OF SIX WEEKS. ALL THIS FOR FIVE POUNDS!

THE VERY BEST HARRIS TWEED SPORTS COAT, WHICH SEEMED TO BE THE FASHION THEN COST 5 POUNDS. I REMEMBER GOING DUCK SHOOTING WITH BERNARD OSTBERG, HE ALWAYS WORE HIS SPORTS COAT IN THE SWAMPS. THE POCKETS WERE IDEAL FOR CARTRIDGES, BUT THIS WAS LETHAL IDEA IF ONE HAPPENED TO STEP INTO A HOLE OF AN OLD TREE STUMP AND DISAPPEAR WITH WATER WAS OVER ONE'S HEAD.

I REMEMBER THE CONCERN WITH THE RENDERING OF THE WALLS OF THE COURT. THIS REQUIRED A CRAFTSMAN WITH GREAT SKILL. RON HALL, A LOCAL, WHO SOME TIME LATER RAN THE FIVE WAYS SOIL AND GARDEN SUPPLIES BUSINESS IN MOOROOLBARK, WAS A LOCAL CONCRETER AND PLASTERER, HE EXPERIMENTED WITH VARIOUS MIXES AND ACCOMPLISHED THE JOB IN GREAT FASHION.

DIGGING THE SEPTIC TANK WAS A JOB AND A HALF. THE AREA WAS FULL OF ROCKS AND THE REST WAS CLAY. LUCKILY IT WAS MOSTLY MUDSTONE SO THAT A PICK AND CROWBAR EVENTUALLY BROKE IT UP. THE HOLE WAS TWICE AS BIG AS A GRAVE AND I VERY SOON LEARNT TO SYMPATHISE FOR THOSE GRAVEDIGGERS AT THE LOCAL CEMETERY. IT TOOK BASIL RUSH AND I ALL OF ONE WHOLE WEEK END TO COMPLETE THE JOB.

DURING THE OPERATION PADDY MCKEE APPEARED FREQUENTLY WITH BEER AND WHISKY TO KEEP OUR PECKERS UP. PADDY DEVELOPED THIS FRIENDLY HABIT AT THE LILYDALE HUNT CLUB WHERE HE WAS A VERY ACTIVE MEMBER. I REMEMBER HIS BLACK AND YELLOW DAIMLER CAR FOLLOWING THE HUNT WITH HIS STIRRUP CUPS AND WHISKY TO STRENGTHEN THE RIDERS' SPIRITS.

DIGGING THAT HOLE AND THE DRAINS IN THAT ROTTEN CLAY AND ROCK TOOK ME BACK TO MY BOARDING SCHOOL DAYS IN GEELONG, WHERE WE DUG TRENCHES AND AIR RAID SHELTERS FOR 600 BOARDING STUDENTS AND THE STAFF IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR IN 1940 AND 1941.

ENOUGH MONEY WAS EVENTUALLY RAISED, SOME TOOK OUT MORE DEBENTURES AND BEFORE LONG THE CLUB WAS OPEN FOR PLAY. ARTICLES OF FURNITURE AND KITCHENWARE WERE DONATED TO COMPLETE THE JOB.

MY GENERAL MOTORS REFRIGERATOR WAS STILL IN USE YEARS LATER. I SEEM TO REMEMBER IT HAVING A LOCK FITTED AT A LATER DATE TO KEEP THE BOOZE IN AFTER WE OBTAINED A LIQUOR LICENCE. DRINKING ALCOHOL IN THOSE DAYS WAS MORE OF A SIN THAN IT IS TODAY. THOSE ORIGINAL FRIDGES WERE AMAZING, THEY SEEMED TO GO ON FOR EVER. WE PASSED OURS ON WHEN IT BECAME TOO SMALL FOR OUR GROWING FAMILY.

WHEN THE PLAYING BEGAN, SOME OF OUR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS HAD PREVIOUSLY PLAYED SQUASH AND WERE QUITE GOOD. WHAT THE OTHERS LACKED IN SKILL WAS MADE UP FOR BY THEIR ENTHUSIASM. NO MATTER WHAT THE STANDARD THERE WAS CERTAINLY GREAT ENTHUSIASM.

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE EXHIBITION MATCHES WERE ORGANISED. LINDSAY NICHOLAS AND ANGUS KERR PLAYED SQUASH REGULARLY IN THE CITY AND HAD MANY ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MELBOURNE SQUASH WORLD. THE KHANS OF PAKISTAN WHEN THEY CAME TO AUSTRALIA CAME OUT TO LILYDALE FOR EXHIBITION MATCHES. WE CROWDED THE GALLERY AND WATCHED IN WONDER.

WE QUICKLY LEARNT NOT TO TRY AND HIT THE SKIN OFF THE BALL WITH EVERY SHOT AND THAT THE TRICKY THING TO LEARN WAS THE BOAST IF WE WERE TO GET AHEAD.

MOST PEOPLE HAD THEIR INJURIES TO REMEMBER THEIR EXPERIENCES. CLIVE WINNETT RUPTURED HIS ACHILLES, AND NO DOUBT THERE WERE OTHERS WITH THE SAME INJURY. I REMEMBER RUNNING INTO THE WALL NEAR THE BACK DOOR, KICKING IT WITH MY BIG TOE AND DISLOCATED IN TRYING TO APPLY THE BREAKS. IT DIDN'T LOOK TOO GOOD STICKING OUT AT SUCH A WEIRD ANGLE AND I THOUGHT THE BEST THING TO DO WAS TO SIT DOWN AND WAIT FOR THE DOCTOR.

LUCKILY HE WASN'T FAR AWAY. DICK O'HANLON WAS MY OPPONENT, SO BEFORE ANY PAIN HAD SET IN I HELD MY BREATH WHILE HE REDUCED IT AND WE GOT ON WITH THE GAME. IT WAS A GOOD JOB AS I AM UNABLE NOW TO PICK WHICH BIG TOE IT WAS. THERE IS NO LIMP, NO RESIDUAL DEFORMITY OR ARTHRITIS TO THIS DAY.

THERE WERE SOME TRAGIC EYE INJURIES THAT ARE UNFORTUNATELY PART OF THIS GAME. LUCKILY IN MY TIME, THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLAYER'S TRAGIC SUDDEN DEATH. THIS IS ANOTHER WELL RECOGNISED FEATURE OF THE GAME SQUASH.

SOME OF THOSE THAT MY AGEING BRAIN HAS REMEMBERED PROBABLY APPEAR IN THE HONOUR BOARDS AND FLAGS ON THE WALLS. THEY TELL OF PAST LOSSES AND VICTORIES OF THE PENNANT TEAMS WE FIELDDED. IN THOSE EARLY DAYS THESE WERE DOWN THE LADDER ABOUT AS FAR AS YOU COULD GO, AT ABOUT "D" GRADE. LATER STANDARDS IMPROVED AND SOME VERY GOOD PLAYERS EMERGED WITH HIGHER GRADES OF PENNANT BEING PLAYED.

PENNANT GAMES WERE QUITE SOMETHING. EVERY SECOND WEEK WE TRAVELLED FAR AND WIDE ACROSS THE CITY OF MELBOURNE TO MEET FRIENDLY PEOPLE AND THEIR HOSPITALITY. WE ALWAYS ARRIVED BACK IN LILYDALE IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS AND IT IS A WONDER THAT WE WERE NOT ALL DIVORCED. THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR OF FINISHING ON PRACTICE NIGHTS ON EVERY THURSDAY WASNT MUCH BETTER EITHER.

LET ME MENTION A FEW NAMES OF THOSE EARLY MEMBERS THAT I CAN REMEMBER. THOSE MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK ARE SADLY NO LONGER WITH US.

THERE MAY BE OTHERS WHOSE PASSING HAS ESCAPED MY NOTICE FOR WHOM I APOLOGISE. THERE ARE OTHERS WHOM I REMEMBER BUT REGRETTABLY NOT THEIR NAMES. I CAN STILL SEE THEIR FACES, HEAR THEIR VOICES, THEIR LAUGHTER AND REMEMBER FUNNY EPISODES AND OTHER BRIEF MOMENTS.

WE ALL HAVE OUR GHOSTS OF THE PAST STORED IN OUR MEMORIES.

PETER MCMAHON, DOCTOR.

DICK O'HANLON DOCTOR,

BERNARD OSTBERG. DOCTOR

RAY WOOTTON, DENTIST,

*LEN GEER, DENTIST.

*FRANK BYRNE, NYLEX CABLES

*DOUG PULLYBLANK, MANAGER NYLEX CABLES.

*LEX DAVISON, SHOE MANUFACTURER, RACING CAR DRIVER.

*PETER ROBINSON, HOLDEN DEALER.

*WISTON WIDDOWS, ARCHITECT.

*CLIVE WINNETT, PHARMACIST.

GIL POPE- DETECTIVE IN THE LOCAL C.I.B,

ANDY FRY-DETECTIVE C.I.B.

*ANGUS KERR, MANAGER OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLUB IN MELBOURNE,

*LINDSAY NICHOLAS, GRAZIER.

*BILL RULE, FARMER AND KEEN POLO PLAYER AND HORSEMAN,

DR GRAHAM OGILVIE, PHYSICIST WITH CSIRO,

*BASIL RUSH, SECRETARY OF THE CHILDREN'S WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

*PADDY MCKEE, BUSINESSMAN, WILLIAMSON'S THEATRES.

*SNOWY CASTLES, BUILDER, WHO DID MUCH OF THE BUILDING.

*TOM MITCHELL, DAVID MITCHELL ESTATE.

PETER COFFEY. ALAN COFFEY MOTORS RINGWOOD.

*ALAN COFFEY, (FATHER) ALAN COFFEY MOTORS.

KEN GILSON, ALAN COFFEY MOTORS,

DON HUDSON, RURAL TRACTORS.

JOHN WILSON, AUSTRAL HARDWARE, NOW REECES.

TED HODSON, SOLICITOR.

*ALBERT WHITE, BUSINESSMAN.

PETER RITTER, BUILDER.

GUILLE DE PURY.

I WISH YOU A MEMORABLE EVENING AND HOPE THAT THESE FEW NOTES MAY ADD BACKGROUND TO THE HISTORY OF THE CLUB. INEVITABLY, IT HAS OUT-SURVIVED SO MANY OF THOSE EARLY ENTHUSIASTS. FEW OF US THEN, WOULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT TO BE SO. LONG MAY IT CONTINUE TO PROVIDE WHAT IS A GREAT SPORT, ENCOMPASSING A CAMERADIE OF FUN AND RELAXATION, OF TENSELY FOUGHT BATTLES ON THE COURT AND MANY A LAUGH DURING THE MUCH NEEDED REWARD OF REFRESHMENTS WHEN THE GAMES WERE OVER.

IN WHAT WAS THEN A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN IT FILLED A NEED FOR THIS ASPECT OF LIVING IN HARMONY WITH ONE'S FELLOW BEINGS.

JOHN MIDDLETON.

LILYDALE SQUASH CLUB

Debenture

No 14

VALUE £50

THIS DEBENTURE issued by the Lilydale Squash Club in accordance with the rules of the Club entitles

John W. D. Hildleton
of *Lilydale*

to the privileges of a Foundation Member of the Lilydale Squash Club, and is transferable under the rules of the Club.

Dated the

12

day of

January

1954

B. A. [Signature]

President

[Signature]

Secretary

COPY