



Altona Laverton Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

February 2018

80 Years since Altona Hospital opened in Sargood Street Altona

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: ALTONA'S VIGOROUS ENTERPRISE.

It was on the 5th February 1938, 80 years ago, that the Altona Community again demonstrated their progressive nature to the power brokers of Victoria by opening their very modern, purpose built Community Hospital on the corner of Queen and Sargood Streets. This was just six years after the establishment of a hospital in temporary, rented premises in Pier Street. This landmark recognised the vision and commitment of Dr Joel, members of the Altona Progress Association and the residents of Altona who saw a need and took action to solve the problem.



Members of the Board of Management of Altona Community (now District) Hospital 1938/39.

The names of all are not known. However, the following can be identified:

BACK ROW: Mr. Ridge, Rev. Watson, Mr. Spade, not known, Mr. Fleming, Mr. Duke, Mr. Nash, Mr. Fiddian.

FRONT ROW: Mrs. Dunlop, Mrs. Roach, Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Payne, Dr. Joel, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Nash, Miss Farrant.

The Melbourne and Local newspapers of the day reported the event with much grandeur and praise. The following article from The Age (Monday 7th February 1938, page 10) highlights the significance of this achievement:

New Building Opened.

In the presence of a large gathering the Altona Community Hospital, a modern brick structure with accommodation for ten in-patients, as well as an out-patients wing, casualty department and staff quarters, was declared open on Saturday by Mr Lemmon, M. L. A. The cost of the building, exclusive of the site, was about £4000.

Dr L. Joel, president of the hospital committee, said the hospital problem was a subject of earnest consideration at present.

Community hospitals, of which the first to be established in Melbourne suburbs was this centre, would enable people to receive hospital attention in their own districts. The scale of contributions at Altona provided for payment of 3d weekly by an adult. Sixpence weekly, paid by a man and his wife, entitled them to obtain hospital attention for sons and daughters up to 18 years of age, as well as themselves.

Contributors entering the hospital as in-patients were charged £2 2/-weekly. The charge to subscribers in midwifery cases was £2.

On behalf of the British Medical Association, Dr Boyd Graham complimented the subscribers upon their plans for self-help. People who could afford to pay for hospital attention did not obtain such service for nothing to the exclusion of people of no means and for whose benefit public hospitals were established.

Preserving Melbourne Hospital.

Mr Lemmon, declaring the hospital open, said the Australian Natives Association had proposed that a chain of intermediate hospitals should be established for the benefit of members of friendly societies. In national insurance the nation, employers and employees were contributors. National insurance would have considerable bearing on the friendly society movement. The accumulated assets of the societies amounted to £6,000,000 and a considerable surplus would be at the disposal of friendly societies. These bodies, to maintain and enlarge their memberships, would doubtless offer additional benefits.

The provision of hospital accommodation by friendly societies, Mr Lemmon continued, was undoubtedly a reasonable benefit for members of those bodies.

"The Age" in a striking cartoon on January 20, had shown the folly of wrecking that splendid institution, the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

The buildings and site, Mr Lemmon suggested, should be offered to the friendly society movement at the cost of the site for an intermediate hospital.

Mr J. J. Liston, chairman of Williamstown Racing Club, on behalf of the club, made a donation to the hospital fund of £100 and on behalf of his wife and himself made a gift to the fund of £25.

The Altona Hospital continued to operate on this site for the next 58 years, expanding both the building and its services during that time. Whilst the funding by subscriptions ceased and the hospital gained funding via the Hospitals and Charities Commission and then the Health Department, it always kept its Community feel and well supported by the community for whom it served and cared.

In 1996 it ceased operating as a hospital but the Altona community fought to keep the building as a key part of the community, and it operates to this day as the Louis Joel Arts & Community Centre, recognising the vision of both Dr Louis Joel and the people of the Altona Community.



Update:

In our previous Newsletter, Number 49 under the heading The Stuber Family, we reproduced information contained in an article published in the Altona Star 28 April 1971. The writer had interviewed Albert Stuber (1904-1981).

It contained a paragraph stating 'Albert Junior remembered a dramatic night when he was netting with his father and brother Rudolph between the Altona and Magazine Piers.

A group of horsemen came galloping from all directions. It was about midnight. Some of them rode into the sea, completely surrounding the boat and net.

It was stated 'They were members of the Australian Light Horse stationed at the powder magazine'

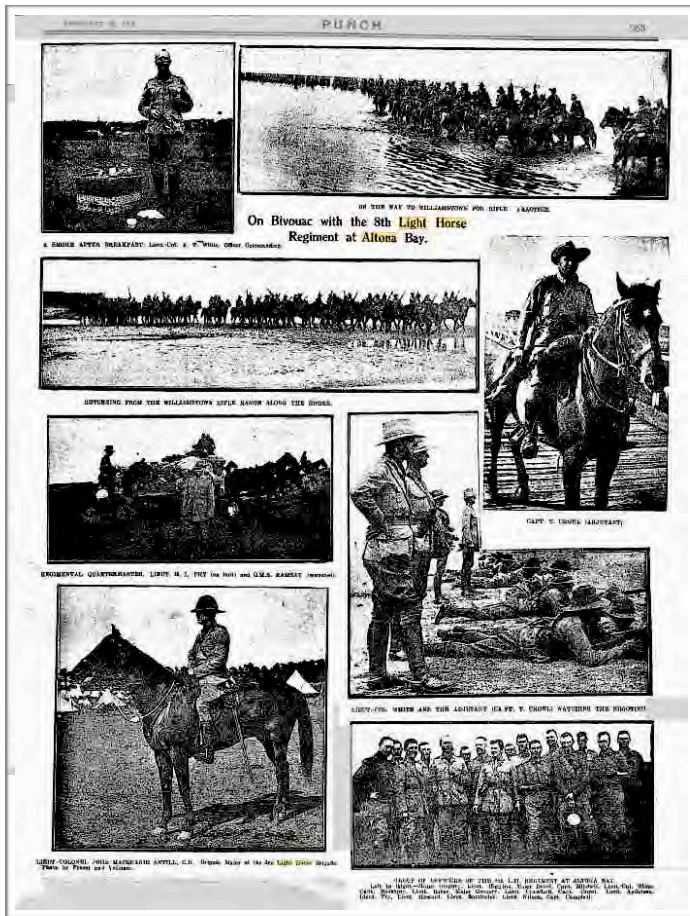
And 'The raid was made because someone had reported that a rendezvous was about to take place with a German submarine which was landing bombs. The raiding party only found a few schnappers and these were taken as evidence. After Albert Stuber senior paid a visit to the Victoria Barracks, he was never bothered again'.

Susan Priestley in her Book - Altona a Long View states, P.145 - 146-**Explosives Reserve** - 'from the outset of war the explosives depot, where Government as well as civil stocks were held, assumed a military significance-A guard detachment from the rifle range training camp was stationed here. They were housed in a rough iron shed close to the shipping jetty, given hard rations and left to fend for themselves.

Their guard duties were generally light but one night they were roused to gallop their horses into the sea to surround a small boat. Word had come that German spies were about to unload bombs, but the boat contained only Albert Stuber, his two sons and a small catch of fish.

The basic details of the event concur, but there is no evidence that the response was by the Australian Light Horse.

The Light Horse were known to have been on bivouac for one or two weeks at Altona in November 1914.



The 8th Australian Light Horse at Altona Bay



A photo spread appeared in the February 25, 1915 edition of Punch Melbourne Magazine depicting members of the 8th Light Horse regiment at Altona Bay.

Pictured above left is one of a two page article in that edition and right above is Lt. Colonel Alexander Henry White the Commanding Officer (Australian War Memorial Collection), this photo also appears in the Melbourne Punch article.

Colonel White was killed in action on August 7 1915, on Gallipoli Peninsula.

Of 300 men with him, 153 died and 80 were wounded.



Left is depicted the Light Horse-'On Bivouac at Altona Bay'

World War One was concerning Australians

On the commencement of War in 1914, the Government pursued an internment policy against, what it at that time perceived as 'enemy aliens' living in Australia and subsequently almost 7000 people were placed in internment camps around Australia for varying periods.

This included many persons of German Heritage.

TRUE OR FALSE NEWS?

The following article copied from Trove, illustrates the tensions of the time:

**EVENING ECHO BALLARAT WEDNESDAY 26 AUGUST
1914 PAGE 4**

GERMAN SPIES AT ALTONA BAY

GERMAN SPIES IN VICTORIA

**TWO CAPTURED
ONE SHOT AT AND WOUNDED**

MELBOURNE, This day,

A sensational incident happened this morning at Altona bay near Williamstown.

A sentry on guard at the ammunition and explosives depot, there noticed two men hanging about in a suspicious manner. He challenged them, but they refused to stop. He then fired, wounding one of the men.

Both were captured. They proved to be Germans. They had in their possession plans of the depot, bay, etc,

This article appears to have appeared in only three country newspapers ,at Ballarat, Ararat and Stawell during the same week in 1914.

If true it certainly would be sensational news for the time, especially if Germans were shot and captured with plans in their possession

It seems likely that this article is not true as it would certainly have appeared in newspapers around Australia if this event occurred.

Altona Football Club

The Altona-Laverton Historical Society congratulates the Altona Football Club as it celebrates 100 years since its formation in 1918. The club owes its existence to a number of Altona business people, at that time, including James Duke and Dick Bloomberg who saw a need and set about establishing the club.

The first Altona FC ground was in a paddock near the corner of Civic Parade & Millers Road Seaholme. Other grounds were Rowden's Paddock (Cherry Lake), and "The Mine Paddock" which was situated near Harrington Square. Most of Altona FC early grounds were roughly marked out paddocks.



James Duke's son George was the first soldier from Altona to return home after WW1 and his battalion's colours of Purple & Gold were adopted by the newly formed Altona Football Club as their guernsey colours. Altona's nickname in the 1930s was "The Sea Dogs". In 1939 Altona changed their Guernseys to Navy Blue with a white "A" on the breast and were known as "The A's". In 1940 Altona struggled to keep a team going due to many players joining the Armed Forces. With 2 games to complete the 1940 W.D.F.L. season, Altona were expelled from the Association due to not fielding a team on 2 occasions. Altona would go into recess from 1941 to 1943. In 1944 a group met at Leo Barnes shop in pier street Altona and formed a committee to resume the football club which would play social matches in 1944. In 1945 Altona entered the Footscray District Football League in B-Grade.



In 1950 Altona did not field a senior team due to the Werribee Shire unwilling to supply a satisfactory playing area; Altona only ran a Under 18 team in C-Grade of the F.D.F.L. In 1951 with a new playing area Altona rejoined the B-Grade of the F.D.F.L. where they won the Premiership Flag. 1952 the F.D.F.L. made it mandatory that there would only be 1 Senior Grade and that all teams must have an Under 18 side. Altona could not raise an Under 18 side so it joined the Werribee Football League and changed their Guernseys back to purple & gold. Altona played in the W.F.L. from 1952 to 1964 and were finalists every year, securing the 1956 &

1964 Premierships.

1965 Altona had two senior sides as well as juniors. Due to the W. F. L. only having one Senior Division, Altona joined the strong Metropolitan Football League with a senior side and had its reserves and juniors in the Werribee Football League. In early 1969, Altona Football Club Committee released a statement that due to lack of support and poor finances Altona would not field a Senior side and only field Juniors in the W.S.F.L.

Former Altona Shire President, Bill Lee had registered the name "Altona City Football Club" with the W. S. F. L. and this would be the start of a new club which would have all the AFC players, same colours and same ground. 1972 Altona City adopted the nickname "The Vikings". This era would be Altona's most successful winning Senior Premierships in 1970, 71, 72, 73, 75 & 76. In 1977 Altona City FC joined the FDFL for 3 seasons. They rejoined the W.S.F.L. in Division 2 winning the 1980 and then the 1987 Premiership flags. Altona City continued in the W. S. F. L. until 1988 when the league merged with the F. D. F. L. In 1991 Altona City won the A2 Division Premiership which elevated them to the A1 Division in 1992.

At Altona's AGM at the end of 1992, it was voted that Altona City would be named Altona Football Club and all records from both clubs be amalgamated. Altona played in the A1 Division until they were relegated back to the A2 Division after the 2003 season. 2004 saw Altona win the A2 Premiership and were successful again in A2 Division in 2005. Altona was then elevated into A1 Division for season 2006.

Premierships Seniors

- **W. D. F. L.** = 1930, 1932
- **W. F. L.** = 1956, 1964
- **F.D.F.L. & W.R.F.L.** = *Div 1* = 2012. *Div 2* = 1947, 1951, 1991, 2004, 2005
- **W.S.F.L.** = 1970,1971,1972,1973,1975,1976,1980,1987

VFL/AFL players

- Charles McDonald - South Melbourne 1924 - 1928
- Ted Sivies - South Melbourne 1924
- Bill Brown - Hawthorn 1926 & 1928
- Kevin Rohleder - St. Kilda 1943
- Noel Rohleder - South Melbourne 1950
- Tom Jones - Carlton 1951 - 1952 and Footscray 1953 - 1954
- Stuart Magee - South Melbourne 1962 - 1968 and Footscray 1968 - 1975
- Geoff Heyme - South Melbourne 1962 - 1963
- Graham Page - South Melbourne 1969
- Robert Saggars - Sydney & North Melbourne 1985 - 1986
- Jayden Post - Richmond 2009 - 2012
- Trent McKenzie (Altona Juniors) - Gold Coast Suns 2011 – 2017, Port Adelaide 2018 -

Next Meeting

Tuesday February 13 at The Homestead 7 p.m.
