



Altona Laverton Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

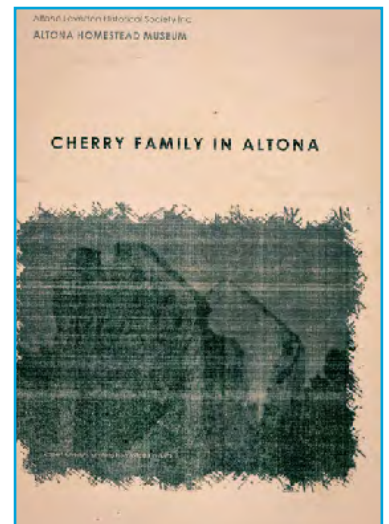
Cherry Lake-Altona

AND THE CHERRY FAMILY



In our Newsletter **Number 52, June 2018**, we mentioned that Altona Laverton Historical Society Archivist, Ann Cassar has been researching the **Cherry Family**, a pioneering family in the Altona area, and this project continues as an ongoing project with any further information still being sought about this family and their former land holdings, a brochure has been prepared showing the currently held information, and any person who considers they may have relevant information or photographs is encouraged to contact the Society.

The area bearing the family name and currently known as Cherry Lake appears in early publications simply as Truganina Swamp or Cherry Swamp.



In the Werribee Shire Banner April 27, 1927 P4, a letter to the Werribee Shire Council from Altona Council stated in part that “the area would be converted to a large artificial lake”, this was seeking to encourage visitors and residents to the area, this received a response that the “proposed lake was a farce”.

The area now controlled by Melbourne Water, formerly known as Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW), indicates that the Truganina Swamp was a terminal swamp with no clearly defined outlet to the Bay, and is fed by the waters of Laverton Creek.

Historically during flood periods when the capacity of the swamp was exceeded waters would spread across local streets and reserves towards Port Phillip Bay, flooding large areas of local developed land, (such an event occurred in January 1963).

The image right, shows an aerial view of general flooding in an area around Civic Parade, Chifley Avenue and Irvington Street

Previously in 1961 it had been realised that the expansion of residential and Industrial activity in the Western Suburbs had begun to put pressure on the drainage system to cope and a drainage scheme was developed by MMBW to improve protection of the area of Cherry Lake, Truganina Swamp and the lower reaches of Kororoit Creek to safeguard existing and future development.



At Cherry Lake the Board installed concrete walls to retain the existing fill, constructed levees along the south and east side of the lake and constructed a concrete channel to carry water flows to Port Phillip Bay.

Now during peak flows, water from the Cherry Main Drain is contained with rising lake levels until it reaches the level of the spillway, to be then discharged at a controlled rate to the bay.

The lake maintains a constant water level and during normal conditions it is probably less than one metre deep.

A higher levee bank was constructed to prevent flood flows from Kororoit Creek entering the lake and breaking overland into Altona, similar flood water restrictions have been put in place at the Truganina Swamp area.

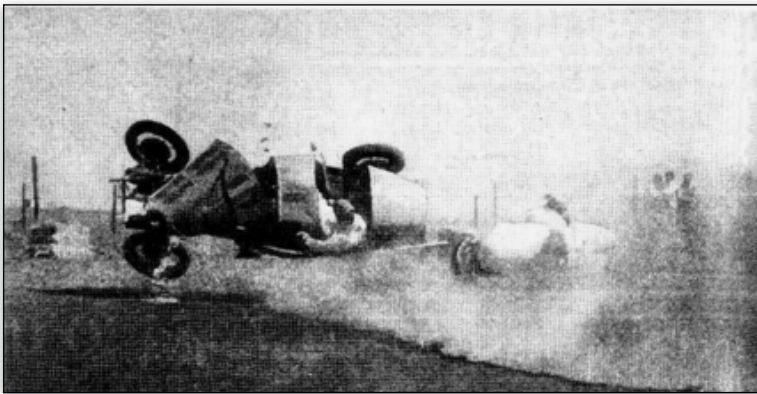
Car and Motor Cycle Racing around Cherry Lake

The Williamstown Chronicle February 19, 1954 reported that £35000 pounds had been spent to open a Speed Track (around the perimeter of Cherry Lake) and that record crowds were expected at Altona.

The Age, Monday, March 8 1954 reported that the inaugural car meeting at Altona Road Race Circuit on that day would have 10 of Australia best drivers competing, this included Jack Brabham - later Sir Jack, (pictured right).



The Age, Monday, March 9 1954 included a spectacular crash at the event in which driver J, Lanham was injured and admitted to Hospital in a serious condition. (Photo Below)



RACE CAR DRIVER DIES AFTER 6-MONTH COMA	
<p>Racing car driver Jack Lanham, who had been unconscious for six months, died in Footscray Hospital on Saturday.</p> <p>Lanham, 38, of Raynes Park rd., Hampton, fractured his skull in a capsize at Altona Speed Circuit on March 8.</p>	<p>He underwent an operation last Wednesday at Royal Melbourne Hospital.</p>

Later news reports indicated that Jack Lanham Died in Hospital after being in a coma for 6 months

There were also reports of the track requiring repair and upgrading, and it is understood that about twelve months later the racing events were transferred to Albert Park circuit where they now continue as the Grand Prix event ,motor cycle races went to Phillip Island.

The site was also used for motor cycle races, and this is confirmed on the Internet by a group titled **Speedway and Road Race History** under an article titled **"Lost Tracks - Melbourne"** and their comments are shown in the image below which includes the front cover of the program for February 21 1954, this was the inaugural meeting.

1954 ALTONA ROAD CIRCUIT

With limited opportunities to race cars and bikes around the Melbourne area in the 1950's, Land was found at Cherry Lake and a 2.3 mile circuit was designed and built.

The inaugural road race meeting was held on the 21st of February 1954, that being a Sunday.

Two champion drivers in Jack Brabham and Stan Jones featured at a meeting, during the tracks life.

The track was rather crude, even for them days, not a lot of attension was paid to spectator and competitor safety.

There were no barriers erected and a lot of large rocks were left lying around the edge of the race track, One death was recorded at the circuit after an accident.

Motor racing was becoming very popular in and around Melbourne, so many saw the potential to hold such meetings.

The government of the day gave permission for racing to go ahead at Albert Park, Also a new track was being built at Phillip Island.

Six meetings in all were held at the Altona circuit with the final one being in May of 1955, Water arrosion problems along with safety concerns saw the land sold off to become a recreational reserve.



Other Activities continue in the Lake Area

The surrounds of Cherry Lake have now become a popular tourist and visitor attraction with various activities now carried out in the area, and there has been a major reduction in the flood exposure to neighbouring areas of Altona and Seaholme.

Groups such as the Friends of Cherry Lake meet regularly to plant native plants and the Lions Club of Altona conducts a popular Craft and Trash and Treasure market monthly on the lake surrounds.



Pictured above is a scene from the Altona Lions Market

A bird hide is available at the Lake , and the Truganina Swamp area adjoins.

THE AREA HAS A LONGSTANDING FOOTBALL HERITAGE

(FACTS AND FOOTBALL TRIVIA)

Football plays an important role in Hobsons Bay and the Western Suburbs



CRICKET SEASON IS ENDING AND FOOTBALL PREPARES TO MAKE AN ENTRY FOR 2019.

Sport, and in particular Australian Rules football has played an important role in the activities of the Western Suburbs especially Hobsons Bay and neighbouring suburbs in Maribyrnong and Wyndham.

Since at least 1886 there has existed the senior football clubs of Footscray (now trading as Western Bulldogs), with Williamstown, 1884 being one of the older Victorian Football Association Clubs still operating plus Werribee, with clubs, such as Yarraville and Sunshine, former VFA clubs that are now disbanded. Footscray and Williamstown and Werribee have enjoyed success at various stages in the VFA, VFL and AFL competitions

From the late 1880s many of the junior football clubs played in local suburban competitions with the team origins being formed from family, street and factory origins and connections, because of the major industrial and trade origins of the area this may indicate the reason for so many clubs that were successfully formed in the general area and continue to operate to the present day.

Team names such as Prince Imperials (Footscray), Alberts, Belgrave, Spottiswoode, Mona South Williamstown and Star indicate locality names and possibly Hotel or Business sponsorship as connections to some of the early junior clubs.

A number of Church competitions were also established 1900s, especially when many young men were returning after service in World War 1.

A number of the Junior clubs in Hobsons Bay have been established since the early 1900s and have also enjoyed success in their local District Leagues at various times, The Footscray District League, now known as the Western Region League, has since establishment been one of the strongest and most successful competitions in the metropolitan area,

Altona Football Club



The Altona Football Club was established in 1918, in a Pier Street Cafe by James Duke, his son George was the first soldier from Altona to return home after WW1 and his battalion colours, of Purple & Gold were adopted by the newly formed Altona Football Club as their guernsey colours. A photo from 1919 appears on the right



The club nickname nick-name in the 1930s was "The Sea Dogs". In 1939 they changed their Guernseys to Navy Blue with a white "A" on the breast and were known as "The A's".

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.

(The team is pictured below at Spotswood Oval)



In 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.

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 - A number of players have gone on to play with senior teams

Spotswood Football Club



The Spotswood Football Club consider their establishment year to be 1927, however there is evidence of a football team playing as *Spottiswood* as early as 1887(Williamstown Chronicle May 7 1887 P3) where an article appears under the heading :



“Today’s Matches” -

Greenwich v Spottiswood. *This match will be played at the ground of the latter.*

The club have in their possession a photograph of a team from 1899, a copy of which was obtained from Australian Glass Manufacturers, who had at least two players depicted in the photo, who went on to become Managers or Directors within their organisation, this photograph is shown on the right.

Some members of this team went on to play in a Premiership winning team in the Footscray and Williamstown District competition in 1907 by which time they are recorded in the newspaper report as “Spotswood”.

After World War one it took all teams some time to re-establish themselves and, a number of smaller Church based competitions were in play, by 1927 local citizens were able to reform the Spotswood Football Club.

In 1927 Mr Jim Castles and several of the local business people arranged a meeting to form a Football Club in the district, Jim worked and lived at the local shopping centre .At the meeting, Jim said “I will make all the arrangements and enter a Team in the Sub District Association but on one condition the club colours must be EMERALD GREEN AND GOLD”The Meeting was held in the Mechanics Hall, Hope Street, Spotswood.



This club as Spotswood played within the VFA Sub District Competition and when initially applying for entry into the FDFL in 1935 were refused entry.

It is recorded that the original club was then disbanded and reformed as the Spotswood Citizens Football Club and were subsequently Division 1 Premiers in 1938.

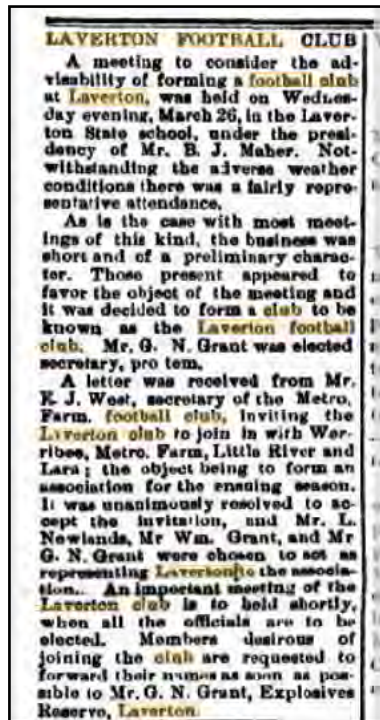
Since that time the club has had success with more than 160 players moving through to play senior football with VFL, VFA and AFL teams, and the A Grade Senior teams have won 16 premierships.



Laverton Magpies Football Club



The current club website indicates their history as beginning in 1924 stating that they joined the Werribee-Lara District Football League together with other clubs, the Irish National Foresters (a Medical Benefits Lodge Organisation), Lara, Little River, Metro Farm and Werribee.



There is however evidence that a Laverton team existed as early as 1913.

A news clipping from the Werribee Banner Thursday, April 3, 1913, page 3, included an article stating that a meeting to form a football club at Laverton was held on March 26, and it was decided to form a club to be known as the Laverton Football Club.

A subsequent entry on April 17, 1913 recorded the notice of the first match to open the season competing against Battery United Football Club of Williamstown, at Laverton.



In 1966 they joined the Western Suburban Football League and later moved to the Footscray District League (now the Western Region Football League)

They were Senior Premiers in 1989.

Womens Football

ALL OF THE CLUBS ARE CURRENTLY FIELDING JUNIOR GIRLS AND WOMEN'S TEAMS WITHIN THE WESTERN REGION LEAGUE



A copy of our recent publication “A Bush Hospital by The Bay” has been forwarded to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation ,and this has been acknowledged by them with thanks and a comment that it will be a valuable addition to their Victorian Branch Library Collection

