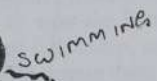




# THE COCOA CLUB



CANOEING



## A HISTORY



ANYONE FOR TENNIS



## FOREWORD

A COCOA CLUB? What an odd name for a club! It produces mental pictures of elderly people in easy chairs, with rugs over their laps while they are being served mugs of hot chocolate drinks.

Nothing could be further from the reality. The COCOA club is a health and fitness club for Seniors. Its members engage in a big variety of healthy activities, some very vigorous. One member 90 years of age went abseiling with the best of them. Yes, if anything can be done the "Cocoa-nuts" will have a go at it. Will they one day attempt Bungee Jumping?

Obviously seniors have always been ready to accept challenges, but not so very long ago they lacked opportunity. The COCOA club not only provided challenges, but also brought together a few score of enthusiastic seniors and welded them into a group of people dedicated to a healthier lifestyle as well as a solid fellowship of devoted friends.

The club is unique. It does not meet weekly, or fortnightly; indeed, it has no regular meetings. It has no club rooms; its members are scattered all over the lower south-west of Western Australia, yet they are bound together by a bond of fellowship, and kept in touch with each other by means of their club newspaper which aims to inspire them.

The general public who have had contact with "Cocoa-nuts" are impressed with their dedication, enthusiasm, devotion to one another, with their care of the environment, for their pursuit of health, happiness and fitness.

How did this dynamic club emerge? This short history of the club's development tells the story.

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## Part 1

### AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Prior to World War 2 the Australian work force consisted almost entirely of males. Women were expected to stay at home and look after families. During the war a shortage of male labour gave females the opportunity to engage in paid employment. After the war many women had no wish to return to domestic duties, and they remained in the work force though there was much prejudice about it, and women were not regarded as men's equals. Women workers (the weaker sex?) were required to retire at the age of 60 while men soldiered on and retired at the age of 65.

Though, at retirement, people had about one quarter of their lives still ahead of them, neither men nor women looked forward with pleasure to the prospect of a lifetime of idleness. Most retirees found that their economic worth has suddenly dropped to zero, and very few folk had an adequate retirement income. In any event, retirement had had nothing to offer them except a life of boredom. It was quite usual to see retired people, looking older than they were, sitting on cane chairs on front verandas watching the passing traffic and waiting for God to call them. Many landladies who made extra money by providing accommodation for retirees, did not want their boarders to sit around the house during the day; many men were told to leave their rooms by 10am and not return until 4pm. Hence it was common to see men, and sometimes women sitting on park benches, or at railway stations, or during colder weather in public libraries.

### A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

In 1945 the Government set up a "National Fitness Council." Its principal function was "The coordination of amateur sport and sport education of young people." In time the Council became the "Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation." This seemed to work well for youngsters, but the question had to be asked, "Why the emphasis on Youth? Why is there no provision for older adults of society who have retired?" It became clear that something would have to be done for the retired folk who having given a lifetime of useful service, were now being discarded like so much old clothing. With the passage of time it became evident that the lifespan of people was increasing and so was the number of "seniors".

Politicians realising that the "grey beards" had voting power, developed a social conscience. The upshot was that the word "Youth" was deleted from the Departments title, and planning began to include the provision of Recreation for Senior Citizens. A Counsel for the Aging set about establishing several recreation clubs offering those traditional games thought to be appropriate for Seniors; Lawn Bowls was popular. croquet, tennis, square dancing, cycling, golf, table tennis, swimming and the like. The Minister for the Aged changed her title to the Minister for Seniors.

The Government did not run the clubs, but provided the organisations of facilities, free meeting places, office assistance, duplicating services and other useful support. Without doubt, these well-organised pursuits became popular and so grew in number. Then, as might be expected, the Government was forced to make it clear that Recreation for Senior's could

not be subsidised indefinitely. If seniors wanted these activities to continue they would have to be managed by the patrons themselves and become self-supporting.

Seniors soon proved they were quite capable of running independent clubs, and to assist them a Seniors Recreation Council was established. The work of the Council was effectual and appreciated. Seniors clubs not only expanded in number but also in the variety of what was provided. The Council became more ambitious by introducing new types of activities that seniors could attempt. Exotic pursuits such as abseiling, orienteering, tai chi, archery, Scottish and even belly dancing!

#### ENTER MAX LIVELY

Seniors were urged to become active and to "Have -A - Go", but found with so many new activities now available to them they had to make a choice, especially as much on offer was not familiar to them. Max Lively, whose surname was appropriate for his calling, came up with an answer.

Max was an officer with the Department of Sport and Recreation. His particular interest was working with the older folk. Many will still remember Max as an energetic man, and excellent organiser and a talented entertainer. He never went anywhere without his old-fashioned concertina. He hit on the idea of running a "camp" in hostel type accommodation, where for six days the campers could engage in a variety of sports, games, exercises, arts, crafts and hobbies. At the camp, Guest speakers gave talks on matters of health and fitness for older adults. The idea was that the campers could enjoy "hands- on" experience of a variety of activities so that they could better make a choice of the club that they would like to join.

There was no question that the camp was so very successful that more were demanded. Max ran five such camps, all hugely popular. The initial aim in time became rather blurred. To be sure, many campers were put in touch with clubs, which catered for their special interests, and they in turn formed their own clubs such as "AIM". Archery-in-Motion. Or "OFFWA". Over Fifty Five Walking Assoc, but it was quite evident that many patrons took advantage of the camps for the sheer joy of them. They wanted to "go camping" as a pleasant activity in its own right.

#### ENTER STAN SINDEN

Before his retirement Stan was a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences, and Chief Examiner for the same disciplines at a College of Advance Education. Stan enjoyed his work and had no wish to leave his post, but like so many others before him, on reaching the age of 65 had no choice to retire.

Then, at that time, he spotted in a local newspaper an advertisement for a Camp for Senior's to be run at a disused Quarantine station on the coast near Albany. He applied for, and was successful in gaining a berth at the camp. It was here that Stan met Max and was immediately impressed by this man's enthusiasm, organising ability, talents and his natural ability to relate to people. After the camp, he wrote to Max thanking him for the camp and stating how thoroughly agreeable the experience was.

Stan was aware that his appreciation of camps reflected the views of many others who had enjoyed them, and in an idle remark he expressed the thought that it might be an acceptable idea for a Seniors Camping Club to be established. It seemed quite certain that such a club, if started would be well supported. Max smiled on the idea but the problem was that Max himself had but a short time to go before he faced his own retirement, and he would not be able to establish a new club in the time remaining to him. So Max, recalling Stan's enthusiasm got in touch with him.

Now Max was a Leader. The task of a Leader is not to do things, but to see they get done. To Stan, Max said, "Your experience has shown you the benefits of camps for seniors, and you are obviously keen to see a Camping Club for older adults. How about you getting such a club started?" Stan's immediate reaction was a firm "NO". Suggesting something is one thing, but actually doing it is quite another. But Max in his own quiet persuasive way promised that there would be plenty of support, and that a sum of money could be found to get the club started.

## PART 2

### GETTING STARTED

Stan allowed himself to be persuaded by Max that a Camper's Club was a feasible proposition. It was with a great deal of trepidation that he agreed to make himself available. It began by looking through the list of those who had already attended camps, and he called for volunteers to sit on an interim group. The response was most encouraging and a committee was formed:

Basil Yaxley in the chair, Stan as Secretary, Joyce Yaxley. Treasurer, Shirley Barnes, Grace Cooper, Brenda Cox, Des and Nora Coyne, Joan Drinkwater, May Farley, Christine Knox, Christina Know, Midge McKay, Gordon New, Olive Plomp, Ken Eastwood representing DSR, and Max Lively ex officio.

Now while a volunteer committee of 14 souls indicated a great deal of enthusiasm, it was Stan's view that a committee of half of that would have been adequate. The bigger the committee, the longer it would take to get anything done. Without doubt a great deal of useful spadework was achieved but it was taking a lot of time. Meetings were taking up too much time and members became fidgety and began to drop away. He himself was inclined to be impatient and after a couple of meetings confined to Max that he could not afford the time to sit and endless meetings. The shrewd Max offered a solution with a small booklet on "How to start your own club", and suggested that he be guided by it and produce a ready-made plan for the Committee's approval. He examined the book and though the directions seemed straightforward in practice, many of them were not.

First...Name the club. Before registration the club must have a name. Thinking of a name was no problem; getting it accepted by a committee was another matter. After a while Stan rang Max and told him the new club would be called COCOA. "COCOA! Did you say COCOA?" That was the expected reaction! He told Max that the name COCOA was an acronym for Carry On Camping - Older Adults. After some thought Max announced that he liked it; and luckily it met with no opposition. So the proposed Club was christened before it was born!

Second.....Produce a constitution. This proved to be rather more difficult. He borrowed a book from some other club and adapted it for COCOA's own use, but it took several meetings before it gained unanimous acceptance by the Committee.

Third.....Apply for registration. A tricky task that seemed so simple. Several documents, as they were completed had to be signed in the presence of a J.P. Luckily one lived a short distance from Stan's home. He was able to see him promptly, witnessed and signed the papers, and he was on his way in less than two minutes. The final document gave trouble. His regular J.P. was away from home for a week and wishing to get the task finished he used the Yellow Pages to locate another. He phoned and the man agreed to see him at 9am the next day. He left home early and got to his house ten minutes before time. A very old man, who could scarcely stand, opened the door and castigated him for arriving too early. "It is just as discourteous being too early as being too late", he spluttered. He was abashed, especially as the man made him sit on his front veranda at one end, while he sat at the other end reading his daily paper. Out of respect for his age (he must have been well over 80) he meekly complied,

When the clock struck nine he invited him inside to his dining room, which also served as his office. After fiddling with bits of paper he asked him whether he was a Christian. Stan pointed out that he was there so that he could sign a document in his presence and that his religion had nothing to do with the matter. The man exploded. "Don't presume to tell me how to do my job," he shouted. He would have walked out but to start the procedure again elsewhere would have been time consuming, and he gathered that before he would witness his signature he required him to swear on the Bible that what he had written was true in every detail. Now a J.P., is not authorised to demand this, but to get the job done he played along to his mood. With his hand on the Book he uttered the words that were dictated. Then when the old fellow shuffled off to find a pen he idly turned over the black covered book and discovered it was a dictionary! If he had drawn his attention to this blunder, he would no doubt have had to repeat the entire procedure, which had already taken almost an hour. He left the matter, as it was, feeling sure that COCOA must be the only club to come into existence as the result of an affidavit sworn on a dictionary!

Getting the final paper signed was not the end of the matter. The completed application for registration of the club finally arrived at the office of the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs who rejected it on the grounds that a commercial firm was using the name "Carry on Camping". Stan would have to obtain the firm's written permission for the use of that name for our club. He wrote to the firm but his appeal was refused. By then the name of COCOA was well known and in use, so to retain the acronym COCOA, he changed it to "Come Out Camping - Older Adults" and it was accepted.

### COCOA IS BORN

The club's birth certificate" ie, its Certificate of Registration was issued on the 17th March 1987. The club was now free to accept applications for membership, and Stan with his usual impatience and the help of Max, organised the club's first General Meeting at which the inaugural committee was to be elected. They met at Noalimba for that purpose.

It was stipulated that a committee of seven was adequate. Only two of the Interim Committee: Grace Cooper and Stan Sinden nominated to sit on the Inaugural Committee. Elected were, Tony Holland President. Stan Sinden Secretary. Albert Davey Treasurer. Grace Cooper, George Cox, Shirley Gliddon and Rae Long.

It was decided that applicants for membership would pay a once-only joining fee of \$3.00 and an annual subscription of \$5.00. Members were to be issued with a membership card bearing a membership number. Stan was able to gain acceptance of two proposals.

- (1) That the club should have a distinctive badge, and members were invited to submit designs for it
- (2) That the club issue to members a regular newsletter to keep them informed of the developing plans for club activities.



### THE CLUB BADGE

They received only 4 or 5 designs. The one selected by the Committee is the one still in use. It displays an energetic couple pacing out. Stan regretted later that he omitted to record the name of the designer, nor did he retain the other designs submitted, as he should have done. The idea of club identification was taken a step further by a proposal that members, when in camp, wear a distinctive T-Shirt bearing the club's name and newly adopted insignia.

At the initial meeting 50 members were enrolled, and by the time they were ready to run the first camp, the membership was about 100.

### COCOA'S FIRST CAMP.

Jurien Bay was the venue chosen for the very first camp. Max Lively desperately wanted this camp to be a triumph because it was, so to speak, the shop window for the new club. So Max decided to take charge of the preparations. He had the experience and the expertise. The new President thought otherwise, and a disagreement followed, resulting in his resignation. A General meeting was called and Mrs Rae Long, (later Hall) was elected as President. Rae, while not being too formal, presided with a firm hand and won the confidence of members.

The camp was a success and membership increased and two more camps followed. One at Rottneest, and one at Esperance. Yes, It appeared that there was a need for a club such as COCOA, but clearly, the future had to be carefully planned.

Not long after this Max arranged for an expert in running Senior's camps in New South Wales, one Colleen Wilson, to come over to the West and conduct a Camp Leadership Training Course. Stan had applied to the Western Australian Family Trust for a grant which was available for a good cause, and had been granted \$600 which was used to send six aspiring Cocoa-nuts to train as camp leaders. Thus the club acquired a team of trained, dedicated leaders who served in the capacity for about five years. Colleen was quite brilliant, and Max ran the course in conjunction with one of his Lifestyle camps at Noalimba, as a result COCOA gained several new members that week including some that were trained by Colleen. Mary Andrews became the Camp Coordinator and for the next five years she and her team brought the Club great credit and Cocoa took a leap forward, so good were they at their job. Stan did not have to worry too much about the camping programme.

1987 Lifestyle Camp & Administration Course Noalimba.  
Max Lively with Colleen Wilson N.S.W. and Graham Edwards, Minister for Sport and Recreation



Early days.  
Camp at Quararup, Albany 1988.  
Rae Long, Marjorie Williams and Grace Cooper (Coopie).

Girls of St Trinians  
Quararup Camp 1988



PART 3

PLANNING THE FUTURE

A year had passed and it became time for them to consider whether or not the club had a future. The question that occurred was this: Max Lively had already run several very successful camps, on the other hand, with voluntary labour, COCOA had run three camps and had demonstrated that they had the talent to manage them, and that camping for older adults was popular. But was a club necessary for that purpose?

It seemed to Stan that if they were going to enrol members in a club and charge a membership fee, they must be able to offer them something special and make them feel that they had something in common with each other by being members. Offering three camps a year seemed to fall short of what should be expected of a club, especially as very few, if any, members would actually attend three camps a year.

He came up with an idea. It came as a result of a letter inviting COCOA members (now affectionately calling themselves "Cocoanuts", to attend the annual "Agrolympics" at Narrogin. There were to be competitions such as tossing the gumboot, flinging the bale of hay, rolling the milk churn etc. It sounded like fun, so he negotiated a concession fee for both the transport and entry to the grounds. He was rather nervous because the whole exercise could have been a disaster – but it was not. On the contrary, they had a good day out, and this gave him the idea of expanding club activities to include more such outings.

At the time, the club Treasurer was Albert Davey, a man who gave Stan great confidence. Between them they made a few plans for club events other than camping, and the committee was happy to endorse them. As a result they developed the belief that there should be some stated policy to guide the club. Something that could be understood and supported by the member's, and that they should expand the range of activities provided.

As a result of these deliberations, Stan drew up a document setting forth what was called the Philosophy of the COCOA Club.

It had three aims:

- 1) To provide older adults who love the outdoors with opportunities to come together to enjoy the company of like- minded persons in the same age group.
- 2) To help older adults maintain both physical and mental health and fitness.
- 3) To conduct camps and other activities so that the aims of 1 & 2 could be achieved.

It was important that the health and fitness should cover mental (intellectual) fitness as well as physical fitness. He deduced that the camp programme would take care of the physical side, and that they could devise outings that would prove to be learning experiences and thus take care of mental fitness. They would aim to run camps maybe six times a year and outings on the other six. So there would be an event every month with camps and outings on alternate months. Mary's team looked after the camping and Stan concentrated on the development of a programme of outings designed to provide pleasant learning experiences.

Our friend and supporter, Max Lively had reached the age of retirement from his post with the D.S.R. In appreciation of his service to the club he was presented with a bicycle so that he could maintain his own fitness, and he was also granted a Certificate of Honorary Life Membership. From time to time Max attended COCOA functions until his death in 1994.

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PART 4

A REVIEW OF COCOA ACTIVITIES

The Camps

We try to run at least four camps a year. Most of them are in the country, but a few are held at locations closer to the city to accommodate those who need to remain close to home. Transport is one of the difficulties, as quite a few of our members have no means of transport, other than public. If the camp is somewhere near a town, which has trains or coaches that visit on a regular basis then the Camp Leaders endeavour to hold a camp there. There are many camps, which are suitable for us, but have no public transport available and so get put on hold.

Camps have been held in the following places in W.A, many of these have been used more than once

Country	Local or nearby
Albany	Araluen
Boyup Brook	Bickley
Busselton	Fairbridge
Denmark	Rottnest
Tone River	Hillarys
Donnelly River	Jarrahdale
Esperance	Mundaring
Pemberton	Nanga
Wellington Mills	Northam
Geraldton	Pt Peron
Kalgoorlie	Pt Walter
Katanning	Rockingham
York	Jurien
Woodman's Point	

## WHAT DO NUTS DO AT CAMP?

They have FUN.FUN.FUN. We know there are many ways to health and fitness, but people won't use them unless they enjoy them. Hence COCOA camps must first and foremost be enjoyable. In camps we laugh, and one can hear continuous laughter somewhere in the camp. They have even been heard to chuckle in their sleep!

An experienced and dedicated camp leader, whose work of planning begins several months before, runs each camp. Different leaders plan their camps in different ways as they are at liberty to do. Their plans will depend on what facilities are available on the premises; the season (summer or winter) and location. (What can be done in a forest can't be done at the seaside, and visa versa.)

Days in camp usually start with gentle exercises before a hearty breakfast. After that the programme starts for the day. It could be a bush or beach walk. Most of the activities are of an energetic type such as canoeing, orienteering, a treasure hunt etc take place in the morning before it gets too warm, and while campers are fresh. In the afternoons after lunch there is likely to be some arts/ craft/ hobby work. One day is usually taken up with an outing to some local tourist attraction. In the evenings, there might be a quiz, fun games or dancing. Sometimes a local guest speaker may come along and no camp goes by without a fun dress up evening and a Grand Concert to end the week. Board games are a hot favourite to end the evenings, and only those who like to retire early do not play.

Many leaders like to have a theme for the camp. "Pirates and Smugglers" might be a good theme for a camp held at a rocky beach. One camp held near an old prison had the theme of "Convicts and their Wenches", and the majority of campers dressed accordingly. Convict arrows, Old time cops, and Wenches in long skirts and mop caps were everywhere. "Down on the Farm" for an Agriculture College. Hawaiian dancers on a beach camp at Rottneest. Campers know in advance what the theme will be and are able to produce costumes appropriate to the entertainment. Op Shops are raided weeks beforehand. Some really clever costumes have been devised. The dress- up- evening is fun for everyone especially as it is usually run in conjunction with a "happy hour".

The Camp Concert is the highlight for the week. On the chosen night the Compare had no trouble in assembling a great range of talented performers who, using makeshift stage props, (again the op shop is raided) between them, provide two hours of quality non-stop performance that would attract an admission charge if performed on a public stage.

Except at barbeques, the campers are not required to prepare or cook food, as the leader will have already engaged a team of reliable caterers. We are fortunate in having the same caterers at most of our camps, and they always look after us, maybe a little too well sometimes! Other camps have resident caterers. Campers are well fed; adequate nourishing meals are provided as well as in between meal snacks. Most of the camps we are asked to do the dishes after meals, and rosters are drawn up to take care of the task, therefore not relying on volunteers.

The club has acquired a quantity of games equipment and other material used in camps. We have had an Electronic keyboard, and a Lathe, all bought with grants that Stan applied for, but the people who operated them have since left the club, and as newer members were not able to use them, they were eventually sold. Storage of this equipment is always a

A few famous people  
attending Albany  
Camp 1990



Convicts &  
Keystone Cops  
Geraldton Camp  
1991

A Wedding in  
Reverse.  
All members of  
COCOA at camp.  
1992





problem, and although we have a Property Officer who is willing to store all our equipment in an empty room or garage, it can prove awkward if the camp leader needs things for camp.

Accommodation in camps varies from basic to luxury. The latter is provided when a camp is held at some boarding college during school holidays, and we are able to occupy student quarters. We might find private rooms, bed lights, heating or air-conditioning, a TV lounge, even a swimming pool. Basic quarters consist of dormitories with double-bunks, though our camp leaders do not allow the upper bunks to be used any more. An inspection of camps is always made beforehand, and if it is not up to our standards then that camp is not used. Quite a lot of the camps are left dirty by previous users and our leaders have to go in early and clean them up in order to get up to our liking. No camp has ever been left dirty by our campers, and we are always invited to go back.

The low cost of a camp includes cost of absolutely everything except the cost of getting there. Depending on the location of the camp, some members travel independently. As stated before, the railway buses are used if possible, but if not, then the camp leader will hire a private coach, and the cost is equally divided between passengers, and is added to the cost of the camp. The leaders have to think of everything, so that the campers can enjoy a trouble-free, worry-free beneficial holiday.

If it had been thought of, and if some members were to write their recollections, we would have been able to produce an exciting record of "Life in a COCOA Camp". For example:- There was an adventure time when, on one of our safaris there was a sudden UN-seasonal deluge, which occurred on a dark night, and campers in various stages of undress had to rescue belongings and move to dry land.

On a happier note, we had two newly wedded Cocoa-nuts who spent their honeymoon at a Cocoa camp. Such an event could scarcely be kept secret, and the Camp Leader, having advance notice of the happy event, arranged to convert a room into a nicely decorated Bridal Suite, complete with flowers and Champagne. It is pointed out here that they were not the first pair to form a romantic partnership within the family of Cocoa-nuts.

We try to run several camps a year, and a few members apply to attend every one of them. Other members might attend only one camp a year. Priority is given to new members if a camp is fully booked, and we always try to include as many men as possible. There are members who have joined the club, not for the camps, but for the other benefits that the club has to offer especially the day outings. More about them next.

Abseiling at Gosnells Quarry. A group of COCOA members in action. 1992



Glider Flying Beverley 1989 with COCOA members.

Fairbridge Camp 1990 Mary Andrews Our 1st camp leader with Monty Mallin at Dwellingup.



## COCOA OUTINGS

We try to run six outings a year so that they alternate with camps. These outings are meant to give pleasure, but also to provide learning experiences. Each follows much the same pattern; a morning visit to a selected place of interest, a very nice sit down lunch; and a visit to another selected place en route in the afternoon.

Our outings are a bit different in that they are not "tourist" attractions. They are "learning" experiences. The learning is incidental and quite informal. There is much going on not far from home, but we are not aware of it. So we need to learn something of the economy, industry, and the work-a-day activities of busy people, the environment, as well as man's attempt to preserve what is left of his historic past. A close look at these things enriches our days and adds brightness to the tapestry of life

As an example. We all enjoy ice creams, but has anyone seen the stuff being made by the tonne, and prepared for sale in the shops? No? Well we managed to get an invitation to see over a great factory and watch the process. Along the way we got some samples of the product as well. On another occasion we enjoyed a conducted tour of the great brewery to see for ourselves how the beer we drink is produced... again with samples!

With a great deal of satisfaction we recall some of the earlier outings. We went down to South Fremantle to see the great power station in operation. It is a most complex operation and every other industry depends on it, yet it requires very little labour. We paid a visit to Kwinana where we were shown over the immense Bulk Grain handling installation. There all sorts of grains produced in Western Australia, were delivered by the truck load, or by train, Graded, cleaned, and bulk laden on to waiting ships which will carry it to a hungry world. And then there was our visit to the Golden Egg farms where we saw millions of eggs being cleaned, graded and packed for distribution and export, and while there we were also given a cooking demonstration, using eggs of course.

Our members are not likely to forget our invitation from Mrs Holmes-a Court (Snr) to visit her stables where pampered horses worth a few million dollars were accommodated in premises far more luxurious than the homes of some humans. That visit also included an inspection of the family's private antique car collection and a display of antique gramophones and music boxes.

Not all our industry is operated for profit. Our members will not forget our visit to the Good Samaritan Industries. In order to give employment to persons with physical handicaps, the Good Sammy's collect tons of used clothing, much of it in very good condition. It is sorted and cleaned; minor repairs are made; it is then distributed to "Good Sammy" stores where it becomes available to bargain hunters, and thus so many folk gain benefit.

We were delighted and inspired by our visit to the Blind Institute and to see just what handicapped people can do as they worked, chiefly with wicker ware, and managed to maintain independence in spite of their disabilities. While we were guests at such enterprises the managers and guides specifically commented that they too received great pleasure in having us as their guests. They remarked that on every occasion they found us to be courteous, well disciplined, and appreciative of the efforts of the guides to make our outings

happy events. They found that that we took an intelligent interest, and asked sensible questions. Well, those were just a few examples of the interest-packed day tours that were added to the rich experiences of membership.

Stan recalled, with pride, that on one occasion, he got in touch with the Spanish Monastery town of New Norcia in order to arrange a visit for the members. The agent who answered his call told him that she had already heard of the COCOA Club, and would be delighted to welcome them.

A few of the outings were by no means highbrow. Indeed some were designed to be no more than adventure. They once went out horse riding. There were two occasions when they went camel riding, and surprisingly, considering the ages of the group, they were well attended. Even more surprisingly there were three outings at which we went gliding aloft in an engineless plane, each glider carrying one passenger. That was a thrilling adventure, but it was capped at another camp, when several members went out hot-air ballooning followed by a champagne breakfast!. More would have liked to take part, but were unable to afford the high cost. Abseiling is another skill tried by campers at camps, and were thrilled when they completed the final drop over the side of a high quarry or cliff. On two occasions we went out into rough seas to watch the annual migration of whales.

We have come to believe that it takes a special type of person to be a Cocoa-nut. The club seems to have attracted just the right kind of person to its ranks. We all enjoy the open air, we delight in challenges. We enjoy the fun, and we have a special kind of relationship with each other and with the club of which we are proud. We support each other, we share in one another's triumphs and losses. We seem to have been able to avoid the petty squabbles that too often occur in many other associations.

Of course, one or two frustration's were inevitable, such as the time the bus carrying members to a function broke down. It was a cold day and while the driver attempted to repair it, we all shivered in the cold air. A replacement was called for, but they were no sooner on their way, when it too broke down. It was a long time before the hot meal, which was waiting for them, was eventually eaten, and with typical Cocoa spirits it was accepted as an unfortunate inconvenience.

Without doubt, these outings were popular in the extreme. So popular that when word spread, many people not interested in camping joined the club in order to get some benefit from the outings. This caused some concern among members who argued that our prime aim was to organise and run camps. The counter-argument was that the primary aim of the club was to foster health and fitness, and that included mental as well as just physical fitness. At that time there were about 600 members, and that a great number who fill the camps also went on the outings. We were not able to run more than six camps a year and we must be able to do something with all the folk who were less agile.



## OTHER CLUB ACTIVITIES

The committee felt that we should not think of reducing the number and variety of experiences we could offer members, on the contrary, we should try to increase them.

A few felt that they could not get away for a week at a time, and were not available except for the weekend. These comments led to what is now something held regularly. "Weekenders" especially for such members although they were open to anyone. The coach would leave the city on Saturday mornings and return on Sunday evening after a 2-day sojourn with overnight lodgings in a motel. One other member organised "wine tours" and would stay in motels near wineries, where enthusiastic wine buffs would partake of a few samples, and return with a few bottles to add to their collections.

Another member proposed that we conduct "safari's. Coach companies would provide transport, accommodation, catering, and all the members would have to do was enjoy the trip.

A Leader was appointed, and they would be the go-between the Coach owner and the members. The first trip was up to Broome in June 1992, and there has been at least one held every two years since. Places visited have been The Red Centre, A Northern Safari to Exmouth & Mt Augustus. The Eastern States. Tasmania. Queensland, and most recently, to Darwin and back. Most of these were accommodated in tents, and some hilarious incidents arose from camping out in the bush. Others have been spent in motels, which proved more comfortable. Many Cocoanuts took advantage of Cruise organised on the "Gemini" which took members overseas for the first time as a group.

## MASS MEETINGS OF COCOA-NUTS

By 1990 the membership had risen considerably. The average attendance at a camp was about 50, which was the capacity of most camp premises. The attendance at an outing was about the same number- about the capacity of a bus. It followed that many members of the club were not meeting many other members. We wanted to create some opportunities for as many of our members to meet and get to know one another. It seemed that we needed to organise some sort of mass meeting.

The first opportunity was at the Annual General Meetings. By law every incorporated club must hold an annual general meeting, and it struck Stan that we should exploit this opportunity to get together as many members as we could. So the AGM had to be much more than a mere business meeting. Obviously such matters as reports to members, the presentation of a financial statement, and the election of a committee had to be accommodated. These matters would not take longer than 45-50 minutes, so that provided enough time for an invited guest speaker to occupy the next 15 minutes or so, by holding forth on some subject which compelled attention. The secret was to choose a speaker with great care; otherwise there was no drawcard to keep the audience alert. We were fortunate in obtaining the services of several brilliant and experienced personalities for our AGM's, and they attracted good audiences.

The meeting plus guest speaker occupied not much more than an hour, so we were able to follow through with a first class sit-down luncheon, which in itself was an inducement to attend the AGM. It was planned so that some of our country members could also attend and

The COCOA Choir at  
Christmas Luncheon  
WA University 1989



Bush Basket Weaving  
Jarrahdale Camp  
1994



Stan Sinden cuts the  
cake. Our 15th  
Birthday Party 2002.



They were happy reunions for all. These meetings attracted as many as 200 members. Many clubs have difficulty in getting members to attend their AGM's as they tend to be boring events. It gladdened Stan, that our meetings, turned out to be the happy get-to-gether's that we wished them to be.

But there needed to be more than one reunion a year, so the second opportunity to bring members together would be a Christmas celebration. We held our very first Christmas dinner in the Grand ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel. It was organised by Max Lively. It was thought that he wanted to impress a number of invited V.I.P 's with the club's sophistication. It was certainly a classy affair. The place was delightfully decorated; the nappery and cutlery were impeccable; the table service was faultless. However, the food, though well presented, was rather light on quantity. It was, as some would say, a "dishes and doilies" meal; that is, it was designed to feast the eyes rather than the stomach. Judging by the food that is demolished at COCOA camps, the Committee felt sure that our members would have preferred a substantial helping of food, and never mind about the starched linen serviettes, and flowers on the table.

When the organising of subsequent festive meals arose in the future, Stan moved the operation to the suburbs where liberal helpings of good quality foods were available at more modest prices.

The next innovation was the introduction of Christmas Carol singing for members to enjoy before the Christmas meal. The COCOA club is not a religious club. It does not support, nor is it supported by any particular religious group. On the other hand, it became apparent that many members support one or another of the Christian denominations and would enjoy some hearty singing. Stan managed to organise an informal Carol service for those who chose to attend, followed by the festive meal.

Not all the guests attended the service before the meal, but a goodly number did. These events managed to bring together about 180 members at first. It later years we discovered St Nicholas Church in Floreat. It has a fine hall at the rear of the church, and as Brian and Pam, our Caterers give us a wonderful Christmas meal, it is now the favourite place to be together.

We then took advantage of the new craze of "Christmas in July" to conduct our third mass meeting. A few English settlers, whose normal Christmas fare consisted of, Roasted meats, plum pudding, mulled wine and the rest, started it. It was hardly appropriate to the tropical heat of an Australian summer. Rather than forgo the traditional meal they moved the feast to the cooler month of July. The COCOA club used this as an excuse to bring together another 200 members for a reunion meal. We varied the venue from year to year.



## PART 5

### BUT THAT IS NOT ALL

#### More Activities

The Committee wanted the club to provide as much benefit and happiness to members as they could devise. Besides the camps, outings, weekender's and safaris, they could sometimes organise some additional treat. Such as the time a visit to the Burswood Casino was organised. Each member started off the evening with \$5.00 gambling money for the purpose. Who won or lost it was not known, but it was fun.

There have been picnics in the park, with maybe only 15-20 people turning up, but they cost nothing and as long as the weather was good they were agreeable to all. One very good picnic has occurred several times, and they started when Dorothy Meiklejohn, who was the President then, invited us to the very first picnic in the park on the top of Wireless Hill in Perth. She had gained permission from the Park Ranger to plant a tiny native tree, and she chose a spot not far from the Wireless Museum. The chance of the tree surviving was remote as it had no reticulated water, or it might have been made into a succulent snack for the park wallabies. But the tree grew tall and strong and now provides good shade. Permission was sought to place a plaque at the foot of it, but this was refused. We know that this particular tree is a COCOA -NUT tree. The last picnic we had up there was in 2000, and a goodly number of us gathered there for a beautiful cold cuts lunch under the trees.

What else has been dreamt up for us Cocoanuts? We had an Arts and Craft exhibition with work created by members. We have some very talented members and work produced was: - Paintings, tapestries, macrame, origami, needlework, gum-nut creations, crochet, knitting, jewellery, artificial flowers, wood turned on the lathe, and more. Much of the skills needed were acquired in the camps following tuition by our craft tutors such as Leoni Hoyle, who could turn her hand to so many different kinds of craft. Esme Best who's skill of China Painting was widely known and sought, and Gerald Young our Master wood craftsman who all gave of their time so freely. Stan, one Christmas, was presented by a wonderful crafted nut-bowl made during the art sessions at one camp.

Another fascinating exhibition occurred when we held a display of antiques. Many folk of our age group have in their possession some very old, intriguing heirlooms, which have immense appeal, but are not normally available for display. For this exhibition our members between them, were able to muster an extraordinary array of wares... pictures, books, documents, photographs, china- ware ornaments, clothing, a huge family bible, utensils, tools, musical instruments, and more. Most of the exhibits were much older than the owners of them.

#### Wine appreciation

Variety is the spice of life, and COCOA offers plenty of variety. On three occasions we arranged wine appreciation courses for members, and they proved very popular. They were led by the then Club Treasurer, Norm Dowling who was also a member of a club for wine connoisseurs. This activity involved visits to some of the leading wineries, where they were

shown the processes by which grapes become wines, and we were helped to an understanding of the qualities by which wines are judged. These inspections included liberal wine tasting so those different vintages could be identified.

During COCOA camps, a little wine is usually served during the happy hour. It was amusing to note a new approach by those who had learned Wine appreciation. They no longer just drank a glass of wine; they first held the glass to the light to examine the colour, then held the glass under the nose to test the aroma, then took a sip to try the taste. That was followed by a judgement such as "Ah, this vintage with a rich ruby colour has a delicate nose and a crisp palate that we expect from the cooler S W region"!

### Community Service

It is gratifying to note the club's prompt response to any appeal for help. The campers have not infrequently taken up a collection for some worthy cause.

During the winter of 1994 the Red Cross desperately needed warm blankets and used a unique plan to raise money "Operation Red Blanket". Various clubs and societies were invited to cooperate by funding the purchase of red blankets at \$100.00 each, and having the blankets laid out on a Sunday in the city streets to form the world's biggest single Red Cross.

A COCOA member, Wendy Gilmour, undertook to organise a contribution from COCOA and succeeded. She gained for the club a certificate, "for sending a message of hope and warmth to those through the giant Red Cross laid out on the streets of Perth."

Another appeal was from the Princess Margaret Hospital call for a large number of calico dolls for them, with the idea of helping young apprehensive patients to understand the purpose of their surgical operations. Our members got busy and produced about 200 dolls for them. On other occasions at camps and on long safaris members have raised money or knitted dolls for The Royal Flying Doctors and for the children of Princess Margaret's hospital.

Yet another appeal came to the club's attention, this time for eye glasses no longer needed. Most people of our age find it necessary to renew spectacles, and then hesitate to throw the old ones away. Well, this appeal called S.O.S (Save old Spectacles) asked us to collect as many once used spectacles as we could. They were cleaned, repaired, adjusted, tested and assessed, then sent to clinics in poorer countries for people who could not otherwise afford to buy them. We supported the cause and collected a large number, and no doubt gave us a lot more space in full drawers.



R F D

### First Aid

An experienced Camp Leader, Wendy Gilmour, herself a qualified First-aid Instructor, put it to the Management Committee, that all Camp Leaders should have some knowledge of First Aid, especially as it had been decided earlier that we would not be taking a Nurse to all camps. The Committee considered the proposal, and decided that while a course in First aid would not be made mandatory, it would be an advantage, and they gave Wendy the green light to start classes. The two 6 hour classes that followed attracted a few members other than Camp Leaders, and they succeeded in gaining certificates in Basic First Aid through the Australian Red Cross.

### "The Bugle"

A bugle, a brass instrument of high pitch, is said to be used mainly at military establishments to convey messages to the troops. Those who hear it recognise what is required by the several tunes used, eg, reveille (time to rise), muster (on parade), cookhouse (meal time), and lights out (bedtime). The word comes from 'buculus' [Lat] a young bullock, as the instrument was made originally from the horn of the animal.

As soon as COCOA began, it was obvious that a means of communication between the Committee of Management and the members was required. Our first newsletter was no more than a double-sided page, and as an ex-army officer, Stan was amused to call his newsletter the "Bugle" because it served the same purpose, ie, to "summon the troops", to whatever function had been arranged for them. With the passages of time, the Bugle expanded to eight double-sided pages, and was able to serve additional purposes by including articles on health and fitness for older adults. Like all COCOA activities it had to contain liberal doses of laugh tonic as well as shots of wisdom in order to inspire members to uphold the club ideals of loyalty and good fellowship. More recently it has included profiles of well-known members so that newer members would know something of Camp Leaders and older members.

### The Cocoa-Nuts Choir

This was a brilliant, but short-lived feature of Club activity. The choir emerged in October 1989. Cocoa-nuts between them in various ways display very much talent. The idea of the club having its own choir came into being after Stan heard two ladies singing in glorious harmony. Could they possibly find a few more singers and form their own choir? He put the idea to the ladies concerned, and as singing was of great interest to them, they attempted to persuade some others to join in. They assembled a total of 7, one of them a pianist, and they met to practice. Wearing long white dresses the choristers made their debut at the Christmas dinner held that year at the University of W A. Stan was very proud of them. Perhaps this thought in mind was uppermost in the minds of members, as although the founding singers are no longer members of Cocoa, a group choir performed at our fifteenth birthday party, which was to be Stan's last meeting with us before his death.

## We Acquire a Computer

In the early days of the club the names and other data about members were recorded in a rather scrappy notebook. As names were listed in alphabetical order, it was too difficult to add new names as required. A while later we applied for and obtained a reduced rate of postage for the Bugle. A condition of the concession was that it had to be tied in bundles in post-code order. This meant that all members had to be arranged in post-code order, and it was a long job as it was done by hand. Having it all in notebooks meant that when members left the club, they were literally "wiped out" with a white out pen. New people coming in were put in on empty lines, which played havoc in the membership numbers. I.e. Stan and Dorrie were number 1 & 2, bit number 3 could have been a member who only joined us in 1999. We had reached the stage where we had to acquire some technology.

Once again Stan went out begging and succeeded and obtained another grant, this time from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation for the sum of \$1100 for the purpose of a computer.

A computer? These gadgets are common enough today; quite young children use them with ease, but fourteen years ago few folk in our age group were familiar with the operation of them. So having got our computer, we had to find someone who could use it. When it was discovered that the then Treasurer, Albert Davey, had once used one, he was instantly appointed to manage it. The computer was delivered to his address and Albert succeeded in producing a programme that provided an accurate print out of membership, and it also produced a roll of stick-on labels with which to post the Bugles.

When Albert retired from his post as Treasurer, he delivered the computer to Stan with some written instructions on how to use it. Up to then Stan had never so much as stood close to one, but he did manage to subdue the beast to do his will for the very limited use they had for it. When he retired, his job was split in two: Pam Medland accepted the role of Secretary, and Brian Magill took on a new post of Registrar. Brian had an understanding of computers. He soon updated a programme for the club, and extended the use to which we put the machine. When he pointed out that the machine had reached the end of its useful life, the Club invested in an up-dated model, which is now serving the club very well. Wendy Gilmour became the new registrar, and later took over the editing of the Bugle after Stan retired, and between the two roles, our computer is used daily.



## PART 6

### COCOA AWARDS

The club and its members over the years have received an impressive number of awards.

#### (a) External Awards.

Some external bodies seeking to encourage the pursuit of excellence, makes awards to clubs deemed to be worthy. The COCOA Club has never sought awards and has never made any application for recognition. We believe that if a club is worthy, its achievements will be readily recognised.

In October 1990, the club was presented with a certificate for Distinguished Services in the provision of Recreational Services for Older Adults. Now one person alone cannot run a club, and although Stan Sinden was written on the certificate, it could just have easily been one of the twenty people who were all busy in different ways working for the benefit of the club. There was an energetic Committee of Management, and a team of twelve enthusiastic Camp Leaders, all of whom were equally responsible for the club's success.

In 1997 our Activities Officer, Dorothy Meiklejohn. Was awarded the "Senior of the Year". She was chosen by the Office of Seniors Interest from an impressive array of finalists. So we are all proud of her.

In 1998 a handsome Certificate for Excellence in Club management was awarded to the COCOA Club.

#### (b) Awards granted by the Club

In October 1990, Stan put it to the Committee that the COCOA Club should independently make recognition of those gallant members who had served the club so well. The Board agreed with this and it was decided to present a maximum of three (it could be fewer) in any one year. Now, as the awards were to be made by the Committee, it was apparent that they could not very well make awards to itself. Hence a few deserving persons still serving on the Committee have not received awards even though they otherwise qualify.

Awards granted by COCOA are: -

Life Membership	Max Lively	1992
	Stan Sinden	1993
	Albert & Nancy Davey	2002
	Dorrie Sinden	2003
Certificates of Appreciation	Mary Andrew	
	Dorrie Sinden	
	Nancy Davey	1995
	Albert Davey	
	Gerald Young	1996

Wendy Gilmour	1997
Allan James	
Stan Sinden	1998
Kath Olsen	1999
Joan Doughty	2000
Brian Magill	2001
Pat Grocott	2002
Bob & Jennifer Eddy	2003
Non member awards	
* John & Aileen Martin	1997
Merv Pearce	
*** Brian & Pam Stretton	2000
Tessa Quillan-Mundin	2003

• non member to receive the award

\*\*\* Honorary awards

The awards are usually presented at the Annual General Meeting, and are accompanied by a citation outlining the distinguished performance, which justifies the Award.

It will be noticed that 4 awards were made to non-members. Most of these are business people whom the club has engaged to perform services. These particular recipients of the Award developed an admiration for the Club and affection for the members, so that they went out of their way to provide far more over and above what the club had reason to expect. Their services to the club have been of immense value.

## SPECIAL CITATION

Dorothy Meiklejohn. Joined COCOA 1987

Dorothy's Award has been a long time coming! The Awards are granted by the Committee of Management, which has a policy that disallows the granting of Awards to its own members. As Dorothy had been a Committee member for many years, she had not been eligible to receive her award for which she has qualified a long time ago. Dorothy had retired from the Committee, but not from active service to it, so it was with great pleasure that the Committee found themselves able to make a presentation.

Dorothy joined the club not long after its formation. She soon immersed herself in the Club's activities and shortly found herself on the Committee, which she has served with distinction for many years. She attended a Camp Leaders Training course after which she ran several camps in addition to her Committee duties.

After the resignation of Mary Andrews, Dorothy was promoted to the post of Camp Coordinator and occupied that office during which she demonstrated tremendous energy and enthusiasm for the work involved.

Dorothy was next elected to be Club President and held the office for 2 years. Following the retirement of Stan who was then responsible for the organisation of day outings, she then took on the extra burden of the outings and became the Club's Activity Officer, a post which she still holds. She retired from the Committee only to make room for the introduction of some new talent, but she remained a coopted member, as her input is very much valued.

In 1998 Dorothy's work came to the notice of the Office of Seniors Interest which conferred on her the distinction of being Western Australia's Senior Citizen of the Year and later an Ambassador for them.

The COCOA Club has every right to be proud of the achievements of Dorothy, and with this Certificate of Appreciation we acknowledge with grateful thanks her tremendously successful contribution to the Club's development over the years.

Stan Sinden  
Club Patron

Betty Clifton  
President

May 2000

The control of the club is in the hands of a Board of Management (The Committee) which is elected annually. The members of the Board are: The President of the club who is normally Chairman of the Committee, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, and 3 other persons. Members of the Board stand for re-election, and some remain working on the Board for a few years. The exception to this is that we have a policy that the President should not hold office for more than two years. The following persons have served (or are serving) the club

## Elected

President	Secretary	Treasurer
Tony Holland Rae Hall Albert Davey Dorothy Meiklejohn Bill Fisher Bevan Larkin Betty Clifton Pat Bridson Cynthia Larkin	Stan Sinden    Pam Medland	Albert Davey Norman Downing   Bill Fisher

The Board, once elected appoints some able persons for particular tasks.

## Appointed

Registrar	Property Officer	Editor of Bugle	Camp Coordinator
Bryan Magill Wendy Gilmour	Bill Fisher Ethel Brown	Stan Sinden Wendy Gilmour	Mary Andrews Dorothy Meiklejohn

In addition Stan Sinden was appointed to be the Club's Patron, an honorary position that requires no particular duties

## Camp Leaders (God Bless Them!)

The Board also appoints these after having demonstrated competency for the tasks involved, and they remain leaders for as long as they are able. Not all Leaders whose names appear on the Honour list below are currently serving or are members now:

Mary Andrews, Joan Doughty, Dorothy Meiklejohn, Wendy Gilmour, Pat Grocott, Shirley Tomelty, Rachel Krasentstein, May Upe, Kath Olsen, Pauline O'Dea, Eileen Sweet, Janet Read, Norma Pile, Cynthia Larkin, and Pat Bridson.  
Allan James, Albert Davey, Monty Mallin, Bevan Larkin.

Also acting as 2 i/c for these Leaders, were those that we could not have managed to run successful camps without.

Val Bryant, Pam French, Pat Gartland, Fay Peskett, Margaret Kane, Frances Laws, Ethel Brown, Peter Hill, George Cox, Bob Eddy, Dennis Wedgner, and others whose names are not recorded but were always there when needed.

It has already been remarked upon that it takes a special type of person to be a Cocoa-nut, and that our club seems to have attracted just the right type of person. The members are all lovable people and Stan was happy to call any one of them his friend. However, this section is not about the consumers of COCOA services, but the providers of them, other than those listed above.

In the days of the club development, Albert Davey was a tireless worker. His wife, Nancy, likewise contributed useful services. Before we had access to a word processor Nancy did the typing for the Bugle, and arranged the layout of the pages to good effect.

Laaden Fletcher had a talent of producing humorous reports in verse. These were recited at camp concerts then made available for publications in the Bugle. Laaden has since a small illustrated book of his work. Another humorist is Grace Tuckwell with her inexhaustible stock of yarns. Amazing Grace would never be at a loss to fill in the gap with fun.

Craft Tutors include the versatile Leoni Hoyle, who always had an abundance of well prepared hobby work for campers. Gerald Young introduced us to the art of woodturning, wanting to provide something special for the menfolk in camp, but the ladies were just as keen to try out this hobby and demonstrated an aptitude equal to that of the men. Gerald also set up wood-burning kit that is still used regularly.

Joan Doughty, the club's exercise instructor, a woman of great self-discipline, and a fine example of the benefits of the fitness programme, 's which she promoted. The tremendously energetic Wendy Gilmour, one of our most experienced Camp leaders strove to reach the highest possible level of the New Horizons stages. She also taught our First Aid classes, and took over the duties of Registrar and Editor of the Bugle after the resignations of Bryan Magill and Stan in these tasks.

Dorothy Meiklejohn, the Camp Coordinator took on the additional duties involved in other events. It was natural that she should be appointed to the post of Activities Officer.

Norm Downing, the club's Treasurer for several years, a remarkable man who could add up a column of figures in his head faster than Stan could press the buttons on his hand held calculator.

Tessa Quinlan-Mundin with the incomparable voice of great range and flute-like qualities, made several welcome vocal contributions to our cultural entertainment.



Bert Boak, an ex boxer who was always on hand for help at camps, and could sing like a bird at our concerts.

Eric Willis. An artist of considerable talent has many of his pictures exhibited. He often donated one of his works to the club, as well as teaching his skill in craft sessions.

Bevan Larkin, a retired clerical officer, gave indispensable services, not only at camps, but especially on the safari's where his build and strength were especially appreciated.

John and Aileen Martin, business people who were engaged by the club to provide transport services, and Brian and Pam Stretton, Caterers, went out of their way to provide far over and above what we expected of them. We could not have done without these people

Lastly the COCOA ladies choir mentioned in Part 4 , whose voices blended in golden harmony must be named. Nora Allen, Joy Downing, Pam French, Shirley Tomelty, Joan Mellowship, Juli Van dijk, with accompanist Dorrie Ende.

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Now we have reached our Sixteenth Birthday. It is doubted that one could remember exactly how many people have at one time or another spent time enjoying themselves at one of our camps. Some have stayed on year after year, although they have grown older as the years pass, they still like to get news of the Club's events through the "Bugle" which has sounded out with clear notes since it's inception. Some found that perhaps it wasn't really what they were looking for, and fell by the wayside. We lost our founder Stan Sinden in 2002, shortly after our 15th birthday. No doubt that as the years pass, and yet another member leaves our presence, the COCOA club will be remembered and remembered for the fun, friendship and comradeship that makes it so special.

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2003

**Please note.**

Stan Sinden started writing this history many years ago. The present Board of Management received it after his death in 2002, and decided to put it into a 3<sup>rd</sup> person as it is written now, and to bring it up to present date events. Only relevant additions have been added to his original writings. W.G

## The History of the COCOA Banner

Approximately 7 years ago, one of our members from Collie celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the Senior Citizens Hall in Collie. A wonderful party was organised by her many Nieces and Nephews who provided a sumptuous meal and a beautiful decorated hall.

Stretched across the stage was a magnificent banner with the following inscription painted on it, "Happy 70<sup>th</sup> Rona". I was very impressed. It certainly conveyed a wonderful birthday greeting to their Aunt.

A few weeks later the banner was used again for another relative who celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. As there were no birthday celebrations for a long time the banner was given to Rona as a keepsake. She held on to it for a year or so, but as it was bulky she decided to get rid of it, if necessary on the local tip.

The year 1997 was fast approaching and the Committee decided that we should celebrate COCOA's 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the Naval Association HQ at Point Peron during the month of May. I was President of the club at the time, and I remembered this banner and it was agreed that I should approach Rona for the use of it. She was so pleased that a home had been found for it, that she donated it to our club, but not only that, she arranged with her Nephew to alter it to read, "Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday COCOA' at no charge to the club.

The Banner was used at our celebration to the applause of all members who attended.

Another 5 years passed and the 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration was arranged to take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2002. It was altered to read Happy 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday for all to see. No doubt it will be used at our 21<sup>st</sup>?

Bevan Larkin

Several members had sent in reports of camps or safari's they had run or attended which Stan had not written in. I include them, and those, which I had printed into later Bugles.

Dear Stan

Here is my little story about an activity, which happened on my first camp as a Leader in Geraldton in 1991, and is still talked about by members who attended it.

As part of the camp activities, I called into Greenhough Village on my way home after a couple of days with Midge McKay in order to arrange a programme. It was my intention to take everyone on a bus trip to view the village and have morning tea there. I was invited by the proprietor to have a cup of coffee, and I told them of my plan, about COCOA, and the forthcoming camp, including the fact that my theme and dress-up was going to be "Prisoners and Pioneers", and that I had written a play called "Who pinched the COCOA", complete with a court scene and trial.

She got quite excited about it, and invited me to bring everyone down in dress, and to hold the play in the Old Court- House there. We duly arrived, mop caps and long skirts on the wenchies. Balls, chains and arrows on the prisoners, in view much to the amazement of other tourists and school children who arrived later on the scene The Judge in his robes conducted the trial as the Police hauled the Prisoner in.

She had asked the Geraldton Newspapers to attend and they took pictures, and she did a video of the proceedings. Later still in convict dress we took the Prisoners and Constabulary down to the old bridge that was built by the convicts. It was while we were at the bridge that some German tourists arrived and thought we were a film company. They too took a video of the whole thing. Photos were taken, and I might add that Monty the Miscreant was duly hung at 8 p.m. the following night back at the camp. Of the 60 odd who attended the camp over 40 were in costume. We also had a great day at Mullewa viewing the wildflowers in season.

Wendy



# ADVERTISER

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1 This is easy...



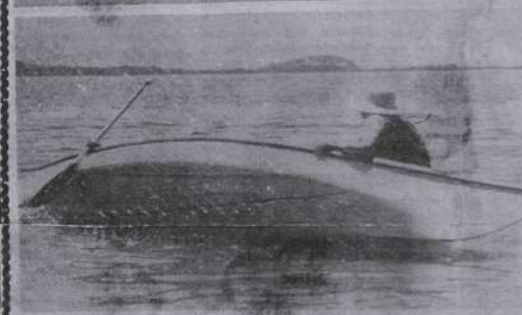
ELVIE Lowes (right) and Kate Read, both from Perth, look quite at home as they go for a paddle in a canoe at Camp Quaranup yesterday.

2 ...er, maybe not...



BUT things start to go horribly wrong...

3 ...oh no!...



... and all thoughts of righting themselves disappear.

4 at least it's nice in



THOUGH the water wasn't too cold after all! Pictures by JOH. MCKINNON.

## Over 50s camp 'a lot of good fun'

THE old adage 'age has no barrier' was put to the test this week during the Department of Sport and Recreation's third annual Over 50s Camp at Quaranup.

More than 90 participants from as far as Perth and Bunbury have joined residents of the Great Southern region to take part in a week long recreation and lifestyle camp.

Camp members, who range in age from 57 to 82, will participate in a variety of activities ranging from tai chi, canoeing, table tennis and aqua aerobics to card games, dancing, sing-a-longs and arts and crafts.

The concept of the lifestyle and recreation camp is to assist people in their later years to adopt a healthy outlook and be more active.

And according to camp co-ordinator Jim McCann 'everyone has a lot of fun in the process'.

Mr McCann said the response to this year's camp had been overwhelming.

He said only 50 people, including staff, attended the 1987 camp but 96 participants were involved in the camp this week.

## Camps I Remember

Up to date I seem to be the only one who has memories of camps they attended or ran. Lets hope I start getting in **your** memories soon!

This one took place at Dunsborough in February 1997. I had been to a Guide camp some years earlier and had discovered how interesting the history of the region was. I therefore decided to use this knowledge for the camp and divided the group up into 4 teams. The Molloy's, The Bussell's, The Turner's and the 4<sup>th</sup> was the family who had built the home just 5 minutes away from the camp. The Dawson's I think

I had several books and pieces of information about the families, and duly appointed the Leader of the team to find out all they could about the Families and their history. I was therefore pleasantly surprised when I was told that they were making up small plays for our happy Hour night. They had raided the Bussleton Op Shops for clothing etc and the whole evening was taken up with the histories of the first settlers in the Augusta / Bussleton area.

All said afterwards that they had really enjoyed getting to know about their family. We even had Aboriginal trackers complete with spears etc.

The rest of the week was taken up with Sand Castle competitions, and a delightful day out visiting Margaret River and its environs. The week ended with a visit to the Archery Park and Mini Golf, plus Glass painting which proved highly popular. A week to remember

### Camping Characters

Those of us who started going to camps from the beginning of the formation of the club would have no difficulty in remembering Old Bert ( Boak ). He was a character indeed coming from the North of England. Tyneside, and had an accent you could cut with a knife. (Remember "When the Boat Come's in"?)

Bert applied for every camp he could and could always be relied upon to have the urn boiling at an early hour for those who wanted a cuppa. He would make sure that the urn was kept full during the day too. An ex boxer with the broken nose to go with it, he was not really a pretty sight, but come the Concert night Bert would be there singing with a sweet tenor voice all the old favourites "Little Drummer Boy" and "It's my Mothers Birthday

Today" He loved to sing and did so often. I can remember that at bush camps he would put himself in charge of chopping wood and stoking the fires. Unfortunately he started to drink quite heavily in later years, and upset a few of the campers by over indulging. As a result of this he was asked to leave the club, and within a short period died. I reckon his heart was broken when he couldn't come to our camps any more.

P.S I have heard that Dennis has not gone back to the UK , but in fact is still living here in Perth. Still as friendly as ever, but not able to remember us.



## SOME COCOA CAMP MEMORIES

The first Cocoa Camp that I ever attended was the last one ever held at Point Perron and the theme was to dress to represent what you were doing in 1942 when the camp opened. I had not long known Richard who was already a member and he talked me into joining and going on the camp too. As I was in my last year of school then I dressed appropriately and as Richard was in the Army he was dressed for the role. It was a wonderful camp where I made many lifelong friends and when the concert came along and Richard was asked to participate in a skit I saw him acting in a way I never expected him to.

Another camp we attended to just before we were married was at the Flax Mill at Boyup Brook. Bob Forrester was in attendance and as usual brought along some of his home made plum brandy. Richard had a few glasses with the boys before the concert and then participated in the choir where he joined in the song You are My Sunshine and sang to me with such love and gusto that there was great amusement amongst the audience.

The Camp we attended at Bunbury at the Cathedral School was highlighted by a group of the boys - Derrick Ray, Richard, Bevan, and I can't remember who else doing the full Monty. It was a real scream but unfortunately I was not able to get any photos as I was working the music. If anyone has any I would be pleased to have them.

We had a very interesting camp at Dunsborough with Wendy who asked us all to put on some sort of information night about the early settlers of Augusta and Busselton. The four groups worked very hard and came up with some really remarkable scenes to depict the lives of the Bussells, Molloy's, Turners and Dixons who settled there. Each group had a different way of presenting the information and the Op shops were scoured for the suitable costumes to illustrate the plays

Another memorable camp was held at Kobeelya Katanning with May in charge. Here the theme was weddings and as I still had my wedding dress Richard and I decided to go as bride and groom. It turned out to be a wonderful moving night to remember. We had parents, bridesmaids, a minister and guests and an aunt and another pregnant bride!! It was a wonderful time and I still treasure the photos and the marriage certificate we received.

We went for a camp at Jurien Bay where we experienced the most beautiful weather but the most freezing cold nights. I shared my room with Sue who had just become a member and we scoured around for old newspapers and anything else we could find to warm us. Sue used to go to bed in about three jumpers, a woolly cap and woolly gloves.

Because of health problems we have not attended many camps in the last few years except for those at Mangles Bay which we have thoroughly enjoyed. We are still able to catch up with members at birthdays, A.G.M.s and other celebrations and sometimes with phone calls. Our times with Cocoa have always been happy ones and we are always grateful for the work the camp leaders and seconds, and Dorothy Meiklejohn put in to make these affairs the success they have always been.

Barbara and Richard Abbott

## Camps I Remember

Joyce Blunsden has sent in this recollection

The camp I remember the most took place in January 1992 at Quaranup Camp at Albany. It was a lovely week and we swam, went for a heritage walk to Possession point with Cliff who was manager then. Kath and Norma ran the camp and we had a cruise on Princess Royal in the harbour. Visited the "Extravaganza centre where we saw all the classic cars, had craft sessions, square dancing, and enjoyed the good weather.

The highlight of the week was "The Wedding". We were all invited and dressed up for the occasion. The Bride, who was very pregnant, was resplendent in White and the Groom had the correct coat and hat, but had forgotten to take off his footy gear, as had his enthusiastic father. The only thing wrong with the whole show was that the sexes were mixed up a bit. Dennis was the Bride, Mavis the Groom, William the Bridesmaid, and the Best man, and Brides Mother also cross-dressed. We all enjoyed the wedding feast with a huge beautiful cake and we laughed until we cried. It is a camp that I cannot forget. Joyce

### Camping Characters

It is a few years since we listened to the vocal strains of one of our ex-members, Tessa Quinlan-Mundin, or for that matter heard her lilting Irish voice or heard her laughter. For Tessa will be remembered for all three of these gifts.

When I first met her at a camp run by Max Lively I wondered how one person could be in so much. She sang, was in numerous skits, and seemed the life and soul of the party. From therein it was natural for her to do all of these things whenever we met at any occasion. She used to come to as many camps as she could

I'm sure her rendering of the Lords Prayer would be sung for Stan if she heard of his passing. She could raise a tear in everyone's eyes when she sang this and I can remember one member crying his eyes out when she sang "I'll take you home again Kathleen"

One was never sure what colour her hair may be when one met her. Blonde, Red, or whatever, but it was her laughing Irish Eyes that would never change. She had to go back to Ireland to look after her family, but whenever she comes back for a holiday you can be sure she contacts somebody and turns up for the next dinner or get-together. She had a friend who sent her the Bugle. I can only hope that this friend is still around



Have since been contacted by Tessa. She sounded great. Maybe some of us will see her again, or meet her for the first time. Anyway. Top of the morning to ye!



## **Eastern States Safari**

**March 1996**

We all set off from Perth. Me, and the other forty four,  
Slept at Norseman overnight, then on to the Nullabor.  
Groping about in the early morn really isn't funny. ...It's still  
Pitch black when you head for the bush with paper and spade for the dunny!

Iron Knob impressive. The folk are getting quite pally,  
We tasted wine and had a good lunch in the old Barossa Valley.  
We were all thrilled by the Air Force's band; the Singer made us scream,  
Then later rain and wind, tents blown down like a horrible dream.

Mopped up. Wrung out. We took off with hearts a-quiver,  
All cheered up we took a ride on a boat on the Murray River.  
A long ride; through Forbes and Parkes, we eventually got through,  
Next day a leisurely day in Dubbo's Western Plains Zoo.

A clear bright night; a warming sun; with not a trace of rain,  
With trepid hearts we rode the Skyway and screamed on the downhill train.  
Saw the Three Sisters, and those lovely mountains clear and blue,  
Then were charmed by an Aussie, the first! Graham, and his didgeridoo.

Camped at Wallacia. Then off to the city. Centrepoin. The music and song  
Good seats, and the thrill of a lifetime for those who saw "Miss Saigon".  
A tour of the Heads. South and North. Round the town, then ferry ride trips  
And ended the day under the Bridge with a cuppa and hot fish 'n chips.

Capital Territory, Canberra. Views from the Mount Pictorial,  
After a pensive tour of the Museum, and National War Memorial.  
Next morning the Embassies and City. Certainly no time to relax,  
We visited Parliament House. Majestic, Hot Air! Income Tax

Lunch in the Mall. A look around. The weather sunny and fine,  
Collected the wagon and headed down south. Pitched camp at Jindabyne.  
A ride on the chairlift was thrilling and most decided to go,  
We huffed and we puffed but saw for our pains a view of Mt Kosciusko.

We bought gifts from the village, took some snaps or just looked  
Some the toboggan did ride, or wrote their postcards aspired  
Had our lunch, fed the ducks by the side of a babbling brook.  
And back to the camp near the lake all nicely tired.

That night after dinner, we certainly didn't go far,  
Some played games, did their washing, then crept out of sight  
We showered and sauna'd, eased our aches, in a warm and bubbling spa,  
Then a restful, peaceful ache free, slumbering night!

Drove for hours through a misty fog. No sign of the sun to be seen,  
Up hills, down the dales. Passed forests and paddocks so green.  
Nearing Melbourne, camp at Dingley. Real luxury. No eating off the knee,  
We've tables and chairs; hot water urn and a coloured TV.

Cosy in our tents, we awoke to the sound of softly falling rain,  
No crying for me. Ahead was a ride on the Puffing Billy train.  
The rhododendron Gardens. Some colourful sights to see,  
Especially finishing off with scones, cream and jam. A lovely Devonshire tea.

Wednesday in Melbourne. Some stayed in the coach for a tour,  
While some rode trams or buses, Shops and Banks were the lure.  
Behind the scenes at the Opera and ballet; All the glitter of costume,  
Production - Dance - Hard work, Design and materials worth a fortune.

Once more westward bound thru' Gelong. Home of that man. Ablett!  
Then on to the Great Ocean road and scenes we'll never forget  
Twelve Apostles. Loch Ard, London Bridge down in seas wild and cruel  
Then camp again. A concert that night at a town called Warnambool.

Stopped briefly in Portland for morning tea; then Mt gambier in the rain,  
The Blue Lake looked a trifle grey, Mother Nature was to blame.  
The long hard ride that followed never seemed to end,  
Till' back again (nearly in) the Murray, down at Tailem Bend.

Saturday bought Coffee and Strudel; in quaint Handorf it was made,  
Later three hours to roam, and lunch in the city of Adelaide.  
The road to Crystal Brook gave us a chance to snooze,  
"Don't swim in the brook", the sign said on the long walk to the loo's!

Now we've crossed our tracks again. The last two days bound for home,  
We've travelled many 1000's of kms this wide brown land to roam  
We've made new friends, seen new sights, in mostly sunny weather,  
Sang some songs; got aches and pains doing Australia together.



Written by Wendy Gilmour April 1996

## Memories of a Camping Trip to the Eastern States

The camp was set up on the Nullabor Plains. The portable loo was set up some distance from the camp. As is my habit I stumbled out of my tent in the wee small hours with the aid of a very feeble torch light tried to find the "thunder box" (a Goldfields expression).

I became totally disorientated, tripped over a bush, fell flat on my face and got a mouthful of the Nullabor. (Slight exaggeration). Being aware of the abundance of snakes on the Plains did nothing for my shattered nerves; However- that experience behind me I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the trip. The companionship I find with COCOA members really does my old heart good.

Reflecting on that experience later I was reminded of a story (true) happening on the Gold- fields years ago. The Night cart pulled up at the Pub one hot day and two old blokes blew their tops. They said to the Driver "What a cheek you've got. Bringing that thing into the main street. It stinks!"

The driver replied, " I know it does. I have just come from your place!"

Grace Tuckwell



## Darwin Safari

A onepage excerpt taken from written accounts by Dot Ross and Jim Freeman.

12<sup>th</sup> august, and 11 excited Cocoanuts, plus Coach Driver Norm and Cook Keith, pulled out of Perth for their trip in The "Year of the Outback"

Camped at Norseman the 1<sup>st</sup> night, then a bush camp on the Nullabor. Eucla, the Bight and Ceduna followed. On to Wirrulla station, and the beautiful Gwalia Ranges, and Coober Pedy where they saw how the residents live underground. Shorts and tops were the order of dress by then.

Red dust and corrugated roads were ahead. They followed the old Ghan camel route to Oodnadatta passing a camel team making a documentary re-enactment of the mail run and camel route, and all fell in love with a baby camel. Norm diverted looking for the Chambers Pillars they got lost! but fortunately found Maryvale homestead, who put them on the right track, which after some difficulty climbing the sand dunes, they found the pillars quite outstanding.

Crossing the Finke River they finally arrived at Alice Springs for two days R & R, visiting the magnificent Panoramic Guth Art Centre among other places. On the road again pulled into Wycliffe roadhouse, then on to the Devil's Marbles and Stuart's memorial. Passing cyclist's on the road to somewhere they reached Mataranka where one can relax away, soaking achy bones in the hot springs among the cabbage palms.

They followed the Stuart Hwy calling in at Katherine Gorge as spectacular as the brochures say, Butterfly Gorge, Douglas hot springs and Darwin at last, for a few days sightseeing and relaxing including watching the sunset from the beach.

On the road again visiting Lichfield, Wangi and Florence Falls. Walked around a lost city before reaching the Victoria River and crossing back over the border.

The Ord River trip took 4 ½ hours viewing crocodiles, bird life and wild horses. Lake Argyles dam holds more water than the Sydney harbour and the irrigation system supplies the plantation gardens for our Rockmelons, Mangoes and Bananas. On to the Bungle Bungles where most walked into Piccaninny, Cathedral and Echidna Gorges. With the temp at 41c and a bumpy road made it hard going- but enjoyable.

On to Halls Creek and the spectacular Wolfe Crater. They came across a lonely Brahman Bull in need of water. He stayed around the camp all night trying to get into the tents. He was christened George the Gentle giant. On to the Tanami Track to the Yuendene Community. A dry Aboriginal community with all mod- cons and a good community spirit. Then back to the Alice and visits to Kings Canyon, Simpson's Gap and the Stanley Chasm. On to Hermannsburg- Namatjira country, where the vehicle was checked for alcohol. Uluru and the Olgas visited, the sunset could be seen from the road and crossing the border again they had their quarantine check before starting the journey across the desert visiting Giles on the way.

The second last night dinner was sausages and roast apples, Norm's speciality. Warburton, and the Tjukayirra road house with ½ litre of petrol to spare and Laverton for the last night. On the road for home tired, but happy after 32 remarkable, wonderful days. Given the chance most of them would do it all again



We had the opportunity to escape the Perth heat by going to Quaranup. At first the bus journey was hot and steamy, but as we progressed south, it became cooler and one could snatch a snooze on the seat. Upon finding our beds in the different buildings of the camp, we could not ignore the magnificent view of the harbour and township of Albany on the opposite side of the water. For the past few days the weather pattern had formed a trough line reaching Albany, accompanied by a chain of thunderstorms. The storms generated huge lightning bolts, turning the view into a veritable sky show. However, it was not all fun; a lightning strike the previous night had put the public telephone out of commission and another storm later in the night, caused power blackout. This had a sequel the following morning at breakfast, when the emergency power plant could not cope with the toaster. Fortunately, power was restored by lunchtime, but the telephone remained dead for the rest of the week, confirming the rumours about the telephone service 'in the bush'.

Fishing from the jetty below the Camp was demonstrated to us the following afternoon. Nothing to it, just bait you hook with a piece of squid provided by the management, throw it in the water and wait for the bite. There were several catches, each accompanied by jubilant calls, but in the end, the most successful was Elaine, who caught many King George Whiting, brought them in the kitchen, where Ivan our chef, cooked them. Many of us enjoyed a delicious fish lunch.

Fishing on the jetty was an adventure with hazards for the unwary fisherman. On the near-by pole was sitting a tern, watching for his chance to snatch a fish from a line still in the water and on the jetty it was Monty, a Labrador pup. Monty acquired a bad habit of grabbing the fish still on the hook and running away with it. Thus there were scenes where a dog was being chased by a fisherman in order to retrieve the wriggling fish from his jaws. After that experience, Monty had to be restrained by the onlookers each time a fish was caught.

On another day we visited the wind farm. From Quaranup we could see the farm as a number of turbines protruding from beyond the hills, spinning in unison. It was only when we arrived there that we saw the enormity of the project. There stood a row of stout, 65m high pylons with a 3 blade turbine (each blade 35m long), mounted on top of it and connected to a generator. Standing below, one could see the blades flexing under the pressure of the wind as the turbine spun, making a swishing noise. The most amazing was the fact that there was nobody minding the place. Keep Out, Don't Touch, 20,000 Volts! warned a sign, only a hidden computer was said to monitor the wind and machines as underground cables carried the current away into the grid.

The dress-up party followed this trip. Wearing a mask of any kind was the only requirement and that allowed imagination run wild. There were some plain ones contrived on the run, while others had been planned. It all began with biscuits, cheese dips and wine, when in charged an agile witch (Wendy), complete with straw broom. A great variety of other masks followed, some concealing faces so well that doubts arose about the real persons behind them.

The night of the concert was again the highlight of the Camp. It was preceded by the usual secret rehearsals in the different nooks of Quaranup and consisted of some 20 items. Recitation, singing, boot scooting, musical instruments, miming and skits were performed. The skit section proved to be popular again and we enjoyed watching the professionally looking surgeon (Don), as he dealt with health problems of two chronic patients (Jennifer and Bob), who plagued his surgery for a number of years.

At the height of our enjoyment, Dorothy promised to take us back to Quaranup in February 2004.

Zan  
17.3.2003

## REPORT OF A CAMP AT THE CATHEDRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, NEAR BUNBURY, 14-19 JULY, 2003

FOR THOSE who had attended previous camps at Bunbury, it was almost with a sense of home-coming that they arrived at the delightful and spacious camp that was to be their spot for the next few days. Joan and Ethel were there to greet them with warm hugs all round and these made up somewhat for the chill and the heavy rain through which every-one had travelled. Comfortable beds in twin bedrooms and spotlessly clean facilities marked the venue as luxury class compared to most of the camps we go to. Still more gratifying was the five-star catering and the concern for everybody's contentment shown by the genial catering staff.

But the campus offers much more than just good accommodation. There were tennis and badminton courts, a lawn which was perfectly suited to group games, and walkways enough to walk your feet off. A recently built environmental studies room provided ideal accommodation, just suited to the social needs of 61 boisterous cocoanuts. In this room, a lively introductory session gave place to the constant, almost deafening, click of Rummyking tiles which continued to the end of the week. Table tennis and pool tables were available in two separate locations.

One of the highlights of any camp is the concert on the final night. But just imagine how a purpose-built auditorium can bring out the latent talents of a bunch of frustrated actors. We've certainly paid dearly at box-offices for less entertaining presentations *by professionals* than we enjoyed on Friday evening, 18 July. There were songs, recitals, jokes and dramatic sketches enough to satisfy the most demanding tastes. How do the campers conjure up such amusing programmes from so few resources and what makes elderly people so willing to "let their hair down" for just a while? Why, it must be the spirit of our club!

Another highlight was the excursion on Wednesday which was a little different from the usual pattern. Some had the opportunity of polishing up their skills at the bowling club whilst others learnt basic skills at the same venue. Yet others preferred a short mystery tour, the main feature of which was the bizarre world of Gnomesville. There, were to be seen a strange and massive gathering of gnomes of many types, each carrying placards bearing curious messages which could only be fully understood by the gnomes themselves.

There was one important feature of this camp that will long remain fondly in the memory of all who attended. That was the fact that no chores were required of the campers who enjoyed the privilege of their rooms being serviced twice during their stay by members of an army of twelve cleaning staff. Tables were laid, the dining-room was swept and the dishes were washed, all as if by magic. Never was there such a camp!

However much fun you've had at camp it's usually good to be going home but, this time, perhaps some of the campers weren't so sure.

A warm tribute is due to Joan and to Ethel whose untiring efforts guaranteed that a jolly good time was had by all. Thank you to them both!

LAADEN FLETCHER,

Laadan

And now dear readers, we have come to the end of our little history book, but not of our glorious club. As I write I received a phone call telling me of the success of another camp held in July 2003 at Bunbury.

May we as a club go forth in friendship and fun long after its founders and early members have gone, but thanks to Stan Sinden, who thought up the idea of recording our History, and myself who took over his idea, You will have this momento to treasure.



## NOW WE ARE SIX

By Laadan Fletcher

"There's nothing much to do today,"  
Old Joe (retired) said,  
"No longer working for my pay,  
I think I'll stay in bed."

For Joe, the springs of life had gone;  
No motivation left,  
He felt his days were nearly done;  
Of "get-up-and-go" he seemed bereft!

This Joe's the one you all must know  
No man's more famed than Old Joe Blow.  
It's Jane Blow too -- forget the gender:  
'Gainst old age blues there's no defender.

Until... Stan Sinden came in sight  
And loudly blew his Bugle  
And said, "We'll form a club tonight  
Although our funds are frugal".

'Twas in the year of 'Eighty-six,  
Department camps expiring,  
Max Lively, once so full of tricks,  
Decided on retiring.

"Before I go, I want to see,"  
Said Max, "One plan of mine continue,  
With oldies keeping fit and free  
In heart and mind and sinew"

That's when the tide commenced its flow;  
The COCOA club began  
And COCOANUTS were seen to grow  
A-flourishing within Stan's plan.

On Albany, on Geraldton  
The Cocomanuts descended;  
At Jurien, at Busselton  
Old friends new friends befriended.

And so it grew from strength to strength,  
The flow of friendship in each bloom,  
And spreading out at greater length  
Some even camped at distant Broome!

The camps have proved there's not a thing  
We oldies can't take on,  
Ballooning, swimming and Rummyking  
Wood burning, turning and badminton!

But who'd believe, at eighty-three,  
A cocoanut would cope,  
A spider speck 'gainst quarry scree  
Suspended by the abseil rope!

As dawn's grey light is softly creeping,  
The campers come, each with a mat.  
Observers who are vigil keeping  
Wonder what on earth they're at.

But Joan is there, a doughty lady,  
Always out to keep them fit.  
John Smith, Gwen Jones and Sean O'Grady,  
Are also there, to benefit.

Strong in mem'ry is the concert;  
Jokes that we should never hear.  
Which was audience (from the onset),  
Which were players, never clear.

At end of day, when lights were low,  
We saw "ourselves as others see us"  
Revealed in candid video  
Convinced it really was not us!

But "let us now praise famous men"  
And women who have led,  
Who planned for what we'd do and when  
And each of us a bed.

And those who harmonized in raucous voices,  
Or bandaged cuts or soothed those bruises,  
Or taught strange skills, with lots of choices,  
Or games to win (though someone loses).



So now it's time for celebration  
And all our glasses raise  
To those who showed such dedication.  
Without reserve we give our praise.

Six years have passed. Our prospect's still  
A flight of upward stairs.  
We'll keep on camping, have our fill,  
And throw away our rocking chairs!

*The poem was presented at the sixth birthday celebration in 1973*

#### SEVENTH BIRTHDAY OF COCOA, FEBRUARY 1994

*In the early years of our club, a camp at the old Rottneest barracks was an almost annual event, so that a feeling of almost proprietary right to the Island began to develop. It would, of course, be hard to find a more wonderful place for Cocoanuts to spend time together and many very close friendships were forged there. So, that was the theme of the following poem by Laadan Fletcher on the occasion of our seventh birthday.*

Tropical island? We'd say "No!"  
when speaking of our dear Rotto.  
Yet, once each year you change your mind  
When Cocoanuts all round you find.

So thinking caps the scholars don  
To solve this strange phenomenon.  
Blowing dust from stacked archives  
They try to find why each Nut thrives.

'Twas back in nineteen-eighty-seven:  
Stan Sinden came, as though from heaven,  
To plant the seedling Cocoa palm  
Containing strange seductive charm,

Which, drawing oldies to enrol,  
Made age like youth; made horse like foal  
So, crying out with lusty voice,  
In seventh year, let's all rejoice.

## ONE DECADE ON

by Laadan Fletcher

Older adults going off camping;  
Can this really be quite true?  
Camping's rough and camping's  
cramping;  
What on earth do they all do?

Who would think of such a notion;  
Making oldies feel they're young?  
Slip, slop, slapping sun block lotion;  
Flinging their fling until its flung!

Stan's the man who made it happen  
Ten full years, so long ago.  
Secretarial Stanley Sinden  
Sowed the seed and saw it grow.

COCOA's proved there's not a thing  
Oldies cannot still attempt:  
B'llooning, scooting, Rummyking  
None from lively life exempt.

Mem'ries stir of camps attended;  
Friendships formed still stay alive.  
After camps were camped and ended  
Thoughts of fun we shared survive.

Camps at Rottnest (reached by ferry),  
Nanga Mills to Jurien Bay,  
Everywhere we've all made merry,  
Cocoonutting through the day.

Fun at Bickley, there abseiling,  
Never was there seen a frown,  
Older adults, never failing,  
One descended up-side-down.

Midnight journeys, 'cross the campus,  
All converging on the loo,  
Greetings shared by passing trampers  
(No "goodnight" from kangaroo!)

Strangest noises ever pouring  
From the night-time dormit'ry  
Tossings, turnings, sighings, snorings:  
What a strange cacophony!

Newtown Barracks is the place  
Rottnest peacocks strut as though  
Each one had a soldier's face  
As 'cross the barrack square they go.

Yearly, COCOA, sure as fate,  
Enters on their private lawn.  
So, the birds retaliate,  
Drop their droppings; shriek at dawn.

At the concerts what a laugh  
Drawn from ev'ry skit and song  
Ev'ry item; ev'ry gaffe,  
Funniest when it all goes wrong!

Singing nuns in habits plastic,  
Raucous songs that make us blush,  
Tricks with balls that seem fantastic,  
Poems that bring a tearful hush.

Many day trips, spent together  
Also feed the COCOA tree.  
Disregarding adverse weather,  
Off we go on touristry!

Visiting the strangest places,  
Eating scones until we burst,  
Singing songs which all disgrace us.  
Coming back's the bit that's worst!

\*\*\*\*\*

Now its time to show our thanks,  
Thanks to those who've served our  
club,  
Fed the joy within our ranks;  
Gave our turning wheel its hub.

So successful this decade;  
We've remained so young and active  
None shall say that we've decayed;  
Nor that we are less attractive!

COCOA starts its adolescence.  
We, alas, though ten years older,  
Toast in champagne's effervescence  
Futures bright and futures bolder!

\*\*\*\*\*

Shadows cast a little shade  
'Cross the page of COCOA's story.  
Stan departs the post he made  
Bugler and Sec all cover'd in glory.

Huge the gap that's left to fill:  
(Chasm's proportion verily awesome)  
All that secretarial skill  
Only matched by appointing a  
foursome!

Dorrie's the one who's held his hand,  
Doing the work and pouring his port,  
Typing the script, obeying command,  
Sharing the sal'ry as truly she ought.

Now may they have good rest and fun -  
More time to camp and more time to  
play.  
Whatever the change that they've now  
begun,  
Fitness and joy be their's all the way!

## NUTTY FUN IN THE FOREST

by Laadan Fletcher

1  
To Donnelly River the Cocoanuts came,  
The ones that were fit and the ones that were lame.  
Housed in their cottages with all modern cons.,  
The ladies in woollens, the gents in long johns.

2  
The greetings were done by the emus and roos  
As birds of all sizes gave their "how-d'you dos!"  
But the warmest of all -with never a sob-  
Were from Pat and Kath and, tallest, from Bob.

3  
Of hot and cold water was never a lack -  
So strongly it flowed it knocked one on her back!  
So freely it gushed all over the floor,  
It cascaded out through the cottage back door.

4  
At two in the morning they're met by a roo  
Whilst making their way for relief in the loo.  
But then they find - with much consternation -  
Another Nut occupies that very same station.

5  
A highlight, was bush-walking led ably by Sally  
Who showed all the magic of hill and of valley -  
Of karri and marri and dark snotty-gobble.  
But the pace, at first brisk, became just a hobble

6  
Encouraged by Riesling and juices and rose',  
The Nuts settled in for an evening of poesy  
But the tone was set in the very first dose  
When they heard what Reginald did with his nose!

7  
The tour was a mystery and Nuts were agog  
'Til at Bunning's they saw how the saw saws a log;  
How the dockers docked and the flitches flitched  
And where edges and pieces for woodchips are pitched.

8  
Then off they all went on the Rainbow Trail;  
No pot of gold they found nor Holy Grail -  
Except for a lunch by the Big Brook Dam  
With sandwiches filled up with cheese (not ham).

9  
The ranger from CALM, dressed aptly in green,  
Told how to keep forests a joy to be seen;  
Of making the landscape remain as a treasure  
In a spirit of caring, and not just for pleasure.

10  
How sad is the day when the Nuts are all leaving  
With sweetness of sorrow at parting they're grieving.  
So back in the city they surely will sigh  
For the roos and the emus and the karri-fringed sky.

### FOOTNOTE

Sally, referred to in Verse 5, was the delightful and charming co-proprietor (with her equally charming and obliging husband Tony). The unfortunate flow of water, referred to in Verse 3, occurred when a tap came adrift in one cottage on the first evening but the problem was quickly rectified by Tony. The poetry evening, referred to in Verse 6, included a great variety of offerings but the first, *Reginald Rose's Nose*, set a remarkable tone as it traced the tragic story of a little boy who compulsively picked his nose. The "mystery" coach tour, referred to in Verse 7, included a visit to Bunning's saw mill at Pemberton, where the complex processes of saw-milling were displayed. The "flitch" is the first strip sawn from the log and the "docker" is the circular saw that cuts across the grain. The almost tame emus and kangaroos which inhabited the village were constant and ever-present companions.

## SPRINGHILL FROLICS

(as presented by Laadan Fletcher at the camp concert in 1999)

We campers assembled -- all twenty-seven --  
at Spring Hill Camp --that earthly heaven.  
The magic number, just three times three times three  
promising joyful harmony

We came in our cars, but some on their feet,  
eager our old friends and new friends to greet;  
welcomed by Brian and welcomed by May  
but welcomed as well by a glorious day.

And soon we were playing at golf, teamed in fours;  
it's fun to be swinging a club out-of-doors.  
But how many balls were lost in the creek  
is something about which we never will speak.

The ladies were puzzled in Hut Number One  
by a porcelain structure which caused them much fun.  
They looked on that fitting with much consternation,  
resolved in the night by a full demonstration.

Craft was crafty, as craft always should,  
with cross-cuts from nuts and cross-cuts from wood,  
some patterned in circles or patterned in stars  
and others all threaded from pin-pricks on cards.

The Cocoanuts went on a trip to the Avon  
to see all the white swans, but never a raven.  
After witnessing all the alpacas at lunch  
T'was time for self-packed sandwiches to munch

We learnt all about the alpacas' ways:  
the ins and the outs of how each behaves:  
orgling\* and spitting, she gives him the works,  
as into his trance he claims all his perks.

One early night, and just one alone,  
when lights were extinguished to many a groan.  
Yet, almost like clockwork, the bright moon arose,  
though many by that time had started their doze.

That food that Bryan had cooked for the tum,  
right from the start, was yummy-yum-yum,  
as needed by Cocoanuts who, every day,  
engage in such strenuous antics and play.

Excitement was rife --though the light was quite dim --  
for competitive sport and high jinks in the gym,  
As diamonds and clubs and spades locked their horns,  
followed by boulet and disk bowls on lawns.

The concert, of course, was a brilliant show.  
As it's only just happening, you'll ask how I know.  
The reason is just that it always is,  
for I've never known one that was only a fizz!

But all would surely have come to naught  
without all the work and all the forethought  
of May and of Bryan and each other member  
who gave us this wonderful camp to remember!

\* "Orgling" is the term used to describe the low, seductive noises emitted by the female alpaca when sexually aroused.