

FOREWORD

1984 marks 100 Dinner Meetings of the Hoppers Crossing Apex Club. During 5 years of existence this Club has achieved so much that it presents an incredible challenge to members for the next 5 years.

I am sure that action will continue unabated and that this document will double in size in 5 years time.

I gained great pleasure in compiling this history, reminiscing on some of our great achievements - I hope you enjoy reading it for the same reasons or to learn something about how our Club was formed.

The 1984 Club Handover Dinner, Meeting No. 100, it is with a tinge of disappointment that I will miss this great milestone as I know it will be another tremendous Apex experience.

John Park

THE BEGINNING.

Back in mid 1979 the Werribee Apex Club was experiencing strong growth and activity. With a membership of around 35 they considered that time was right to investigate the possibility of another Club based at Hoppers Crossing.

Hoppers was and still is a rapidly growing suburb of Werribee with a considerably large population of young families with men of Apex age. An Extension Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of experienced Werribee Apexian, Philip Incoll and the Committee set about encouraging prospective members. This was done by publicity in the local press and a leaflet drop to invite young men to attend a public meeting.

This public meeting was held on Wednesday 15th August 1979 at the Hoppers Crossing Tennis Club at Mossfiel Reserve and was attended by several Werribee and Altona Apexians, DG Kevin Carey of Sunshine and Zone Membership and Extension Chairman, Neil Short of Birchip Apex Club. The future seemed unclear with only a handful of prospective members at this meeting, however it was agreed that all would attend the next Werribee Apex Club Dinner Meeting.

At the Werribee Dinner a decision was taken to hold the Foundation Dinner Meeting of the proposed Hoppers Crossing Apex Club at the Bridge Hotel on Monday 10th September 1979.

FOUNDATION DINNER MEETING.

This meeting was attended by prospective members, Graeme Betts, Alan Donnar, Charles Farran, Jim Giddings, Geoff Goodwin, Bruce Homewood, Brian Kay, Vincent Norris and John Park.

Those present were addressed by DG (elect) Jim Donnar of Altona Club, Zone Membership Chairman, Neil Short who again travelled from Birchip, Ken Storey, Werribee Life Member and Werribee President, Bill Belcher.

Following this, Meeting Chairman, Philip Incoll took a motion proposed by myself "that the proposed Apex Club of Hoppers Crossing be formed" - this motion was carried unanimously.

The new members then elected pro-tem officers:

President - John Park
Secretary/Treasurer - Charles Farran

and further decided that the new Club meet on the first and third Mondays of the month at the Bridge Hotel, Werribee. After fellowship that night at Merv Selzer's Westland Toyota, I went home to break the good news to my wife. Due to her

enthusiasm from this time onwards I have gained many opportunities from Apex.

Of the 10 initial members only 5 became Foundation members - the others drifted off not really wanting to be involved except for Bruce Homewood, a young RAAF Technician - Bruce provided us with our- 'first' dinner badges before transferring to Wagga before the Club was Chartered.

You can see from the Foundation Five (see Appendix One), that we had recruited some characters. Only Charlie Farran (ex Mortlake Apexian, and past DG 2), Graeme Morrison (ex Bright, Beechworth, Creswick and Healesville and past DG 3) and myself (ex Swan Hill for 12 months) had any previous Apex experience.

Charlie proved to be the funny man with his casual approach; Graeme quickly proved to be a steadying influence and we have learnt much about Apex from him; whilst in the meantime I found there was more to getting a Club off the ground than at first was apparent. Of our remaining two founders, Jim displayed a small interest at first which has of course developed increasingly to now earn him the title 'Just Briefly' Geoff on the other hand, blatantly told me at the Foundation Dinner, 'I don't think Apex is for me' - look at him now'

From then until Christmas we struggled along- Werribee Club backed off and let us feel our own way. However Philip Incoll and Bill Belcher showed continued good support, Philip so much so that we were not sure if he wasn't really a member of our Club.

In early 1980 we started a slow growth, a couple of new members, Wayne Carson and Colin Tink, who were responsible for several more of our early members. Graeme Morrison brought up the idea of our first service project after he and myself had met with Werribee Shire officials at Woodville Park, then just flat open land.

Philip Incoll and DG Jim Donnar proved to be of great support to the Club and especially to me during this time and we finally reached the stage where we could plan an Inaugural Dinner.

INAUGURAL DINNER MEETING.

Some time after the founding of a proposed Apex Club an inauguration is held to officially mark the beginning of a new Club - the Club then becomes an Apex Club (Unchartered) and should perform as such and follow the Ideals of Apex. This Dinner Meeting thus becomes Dinner Meeting No. One. The Hoppers Crossing Apex Club (proposed), had up to this time had 15 unofficial Dinner Meetings and with 12 members it was considered time to start working towards Charter.

Considerable planning went into the Inaugural Dinner - the Civic Centre was booked (to my knowledge it was the first time a Service Club used it - in those days it could be used once per year by service groups free of charge - now \$150 each time) a caterer was secured and for the first time we planned a Dinner Meeting for the

wives to come to. The 3rd of May 1980 was determined as Zone Board were meeting the following day at Melton - this meant that virtually all of them came to our D.M. No. 1 (I know I had trouble kicking 4 DG's out of my place at 4 a.m.).

About 120 Guests, Apexians and wives attended a great night, including Cr Mick Bloxham, Shire President, National Vice President, Peter Baulche (a former District 10 Apexian) and Zone One President, Paul Earea of the Jardwa-Horsham Club.

At this historic meeting, for the record, I moved:

"That the Hoppers Crossing Apex Club is hereby formed",

"That the Club conform to the Constitution of the Association of Apex Clubs", and

"That the Club shall adopt as its by-laws the model Club By-Laws of the Association of Apex Clubs".

These were carried with acclamation.

ACHIEVING CLUB CHARTER.

Immediately following Dinner Meeting No. One, whilst I was away interstate, the Club, in their wisdom (?), re-elected me as President for a further term and elected the first Board of Directors. Virtually all members of the Club at that stage became Directors and this probably hailed as one of the most significant steps forward that this Club has taken.

Suddenly we all had something to set our sights on, we all had a job to do - the success of the Club depended on all of us working as a team to see that all aspects of Apex were attended to. Our Meeting venue changed to the RSL Club in August 1980 (we were the first Service Club to meet there and it is to this day a good venue).

To become a Chartered Apex Club, it is necessary to make a detailed submission to the relevant Zone Board setting out comprehensive information on members, their attendance, service hours, Club Dinner Meeting Programmes, social activities, involvement in Citizenship and on and on....

At about this time, the Carringbush Apex Club (District 11) which only operated for about 2 or 3 years with a very low membership, surrendered its Charter to Zone One Board. This led to Zone Board instructing us to consider withholding our Charter Application until the Club had achieved 15 members and a firm footing.

By August 1980, the Club activity was going so well that a Charter Submission Document was prepared. Compared with 1984 activity the Club's achievements in this submission would probably look ordinary to our newer members, however it was this firm base that has led to the success of today.

The Submission incorporated the following details:

-18 members with an average age of 31 (Now 33 members and average age of

around 29).

-81% Average Dinner Attendance (Now still around 81%)

-3.4 hours per member average service hours.

- 482 Service hours in first year.

Some of the projects we were involved in then, we still are, and details of how they originated are documented later in this history. However some of the lesser known projects we were involved in at first were:

- Hoppers Crossing newspaper drives in conjunction with Werribee Apex Club;
- Promotion of Apex in the Woodville Park Shopping Centre;
- Run-a-thon from Werribee to Echuca which raised over \$2,000 for the National Service Scheme, The Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, organised by Werribee Apex Club;
- Installation of shelving at the Junior Ladies Hospital Auxiliary Book Swap Shop;
- Painting of shelves at the Werribee Toy Library.

I was proud of the achievements listed in this Charter Document and after travelling to Wendouree with DG Jim Donnar on Sunday, 21st September 1980, to a meeting of the Zone One Board, I was extremely pleased to report to the Club that our Charter Application was unanimously approved.

CHARTER DINNER.

It could have been said that we were quietly confident of this approval as plans were well underway for the Club's Charter Dinner.

This night promised to be the highlight of all of our achievements to date and would mark our 'coming of age' as an Apex Club. The date was set for Saturday 18th November 1980 and the Werribee Sportsmans' Club selected as the most suitable venue to hold an anticipated large gathering of Apexians, wives and guests.

Charter Night arrived and 140 or so people attended, including:

Cr and Mrs Ted Dowling, Shire President
National Vice President, Peter Baulche
Zone President, David Webb,
and DG Grant Fenton, who chaired the meeting,
and visitors from many Apex Clubs both near and far.

The highlight of the night was the presentation to me of Charter Certificate No. 922 by the National Vice President, proclaiming the Apex Club of Hoppers Crossing.

This was followed by the presentation of the following gifts by other District Ten Clubs:

Dinner Gong - Werribee (Sponsor Club).
Minute Book - Williamstown
Fines Tin - Altona
Visitors' Book - Sunshine
Lectern - Melton
Framed Ideals - Bacchus Marsh

Of course, and probably most importantly, 18 new Apexians (listed in Appendix 2) were presented with Certificates of Membership and lapel badges by Past DG Jim Donnar.

This night set the course of the new Club and, to the credit of those members and all new members who have since joined, the enthusiasm to achieve has never abated.

CLUB HIGHLIGHTS.

1. Service

Some of our early service work has already been mentioned. Perhaps the 2 major service achievements have been the Woodville Park Playground Development and the very successful Blue Light Disco Committee.

The Woodville Park Playground now boasts quite a deal of play equipment, thanks to the efforts of Club members, the Werribee Shire Council and financial support from the proceeds of Blue Light Discos. As mentioned earlier, the idea and early plans for the park were the results of Graeme Morrison's involvement and added to this, the ideas and work of four Service Directors, Bob White, Bruce Reid, Jim Giddings and Brian Warnock, the park is really displaying what Apex hands on efforts can achieve.

The first items of equipment, the totem poles, tyre tower and tripod swing were pre-fabricated by members and installed at a working bee in early 1980. This day was one of my proudest in Apex when virtually all of our 15 members turned out to take part in this 'inaugural sod turning'. We even got some good pictures to record the activity.

There is still further work that we can do in this park and I hope that members will continue regular working bees at the park to maintain it as a proud symbol of our efforts to provide a central community asset.

Blue Light Discos now provide entertainment for up to 1500 young people each time, proving that they are a real need in this youthful community. It is important to look back at the formation of the Blue Light Disco Committee by the Hoppers Crossing Apex Club and the Werribee Police.

The idea to hold Discos was introduced to Hoppers Apex by Wayne Carson and

Wayne arranged to have Steve Howse of the Port Melbourne Police as a Guest Speaker at Dinner, Meeting No. 4, 16 June 1980.

Steve outlined the history of the Blue Light Organisation and also described how to form and conduct such discos.

The same meeting saw decisions taken to form a Committee with a view to running such a disco and research venues, costs and ascertain the willingness of the Werribee Police to be involved. The Committee selected was Wayne Carson, Colin Tink and Charles Farran whose early efforts were responsible for this concept.

Peter Gibbons of the Werribee Police was invited to be involved and has been President of the Committee ever since. This, together with his desire to see that Discos are run with the proper control measures has a large influence on their success.

The first Disco was held in the Mossfiel Hall on 13th September 1980 and with only 170 young people in attendance, it was judged to be successful. From there the venue changed to the Hoppers Crossing Special Development School and now to Centenary Hall as the numbers are too large to be catered for anywhere else.

Funds raised from Discos have assisted many, many Werribee area community groups and many Apex youth-related projects.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the involvement we have in Weerama, particularly the Trash and Treasure Market and also the Club's Henley on the D1 concept. Jim Giddings gives us good representation on the Weerama Committee and lately, Bob Metsel as well. The two activities above are big events on the Club's calendar and it is through the initiative of Bruce Reid that they are and will be even more successful Club fund raisers.

The Club is mounting a very impressive service record and many projects have been undertaken - telephone book deliveries, Special School and Day Care Centre working bees, assisting various needy people with house renovations, moving, etc, fund raising for National Service Schemes, bush fire clean-ups followed hotly by, would you believe, a 4 a.m. callout to assist in flood relief works on the Werribee River. Of course the list could go on, however not all projects are listed nor the active Apexians who brought them forward.

I certainly hope this record continues. All members should make sure they gain a variety of service work and involvement. This together with the fact that many hands can do a job quickly and effectively, is where the satisfaction of Apex service lies.

2. Membership

Membership is a vital area to a strong Club and attention to it a must at all times. Our positive attitude to this has lead to a steady growth which has made Hoppers Crossing the largest District Ten Club. Early recruitment was by publicity, word of

mouth to friends and paying visits to interested people. Our 'Bring-a-friend' concept is the most successful and the night with Test Umpire, Rex Whitehead as Guest Speaker, in February 1983, certainly set the pattern which has been highlighted with 13 Inductions this Apex Year.

Membership growth has been steady and increasing year by year. In 1980 we started the year with 5 members, had 18 by Charter, 20 at the start of 1982, and this rose into the 20's in 1983 and now into the 30's - a signal of a very healthy and active Club.

Can we maintain this growth to ensure such a healthy membership in another 5 years?

3. Social

A wide variety of great times have been had and many head-aches make it hard to pick any one out. We've had progressive dinners, 'bad taste' nights (our guys can really cook), theatre-restaurant nights, bowls night, car rallies, cricket matches (against arch rivals, Willi), BBQ's, car rallies and family picnics - they are a very important part of Apex which lead to family involvement and an opportunity to mix which leads to greater self confidence and of course a chance to have a great time.

4. Youth

Probably the most important area for the future of our Club. Hoppers Crossing is a fast growing community with a young population - as a community service group we need to serve their needs. As Zone Youth Chairman in 1981-82, I introduced this concept to the Club and we have had considerable involvement in the youth area including:

- Blue Light Discos;
- support for the Zone One Community Youth Development Programme. One of our own members, Fred De Sylva, attended this Programme last year with Club Sponsorship.
- District 10 Smiggins Hole Project, Des O'Shanassy attended this year's Magic Castle expedition and gained great satisfaction from his involvement in this worthy scheme

In fact, Des' involvement in this field will ensure positive Club participation in the youth area in the future.

5. Public Speaking and Debating

An area which few enjoy and yet provides some of the greatest rewards of Apex. Hoppers have keenly fought to win the District Debating Westgate Shield for some years and we were very proud to be part of a winning team at last.

1993/94 Westgate Shield Winner Hoppers Crossing

Those who debated this year were: Colin Tink, Gary Ryan, Gordon Clarence, John Cavanagh, Bruce Reid and John Park.

Make sure you have a go, sure it is an effort, but you gain plenty of satisfaction and confidence from having a go.

6. Inter-Club Visiting

Members are now realising the benefits of meeting members of other Clubs by visiting their Meetings. Many Clubs supported us as a young developing Club, particularly Altona, and it is now up to us as the force in District Ten to visit the other Clubs and offer them our support. We even enjoy the luxury of travelling in the St Peters' bus on some visits thanks to the 'sobriety' and driving expertise of Andrew Rizzoli. The number of really great friends I have made all around Zone One is due entirely to inter-Club visits I have made.

7. Dinner Notice-

I have a copy of every edition of the Hoppexian that we have ever produced and each year it has served well as the Club's most important communicator.

From my early reporting rags to Colin Tink's style and ultimately to Geoff Goodwin's bi-monthly encyclopaedia (thanks to regular Directors' Reports), the Dinner Notice provides vital information, not just for History purposes, but each edition tells you what is going on (If you read it that is).

The biggest advance in Dinner Notice production was the gaining of sponsorship, so that a formally printed Dinner Notice is mailed to all members and many other Apex Clubs and Zone Board members as well. Jim Giddings was responsible for this and it certainly sets the Hoppexian amongst the best that Apex has to offer.

8. Apex Ladies

Our ladies first got together for a social gathering in 1980 and have had regular monthly get togethers since, from social outings to demonstrations and games nights in members' homes.

The ladies presented us with our first Banner for Club Bannerettes at our first Handover Dinner in 1981.

9. Publicity

This Club has always had a good relationship with the Werribee Banner as the preceding page attests. Not only have we secured new members from this publicity, but the Club's standing in the community has been well enhanced.

Our greatest publicity effort was probably an 8 page supplement to the Banner during the Jubilee Year in 1981, in conjunction with Werribee Apex Club. Bill Belcher and I took one side each of Watton Street and 'sold' advertising space to pay for the supplement. Articles on the achievements of Apex in 50 years and particularly those of the Hoppers Crossing and Werribee Apex Clubs in the local community were featured in

this spread.

10. Conventions

Warrnambool (1980), Horsham (1981), Lorne (1982), and Sunshine (1983)

Hoppers has had good representation at all of these Zone Conventions and if you want to have a great weekend away, this is definitely the way to do it. Zone Conventions are an important way to learn more about Apex but more particularly to have a great social time and meet many friends from all over Zone One. Six or seven hundred people all decked out in fancy dress at one 'do; is pretty hard to toss. You must attend at least one Zone Convention - make it soon and you won't miss another one!

District Conventions, whilst smaller, are also an excellent way to learn about the structure of Apex at a more local level.

Perhaps the greatest way to experience Apex is to attend a National Convention. I have attended Geelong (1981), Perth (1982) and Sydney (1983) where I was a Convention Delegate - one of my greatest opportunities and experiences from Apex. Hoppers Crossing and Werribee Clubs ran the Sunday barbecue at the Geelong Jubilee Convention, feeding more than 1,000 people at Queens Park in Geelong. Those of our members who assisted will remember the opportunity to meet Apexians and families from all over Australia.

Some of the great moments of the Jubilee Convention, that I witnessed, were the presence of the 3 Founders of Apex, John Buchan, Ewen Laird and Langham Proud at the Saturday night Gala Cabaret, and of course, the Convention Opening by HRH Prince Charles.

In addition to Conventions, our Club hosted the May 1983 Zone Board Meeting, providing members the opportunity to billet Apex families from other Clubs.

Apex is 53 years old, Hoppers Crossing Apex Club is only 5 years old. However we have made significant achievements in this short time. Space does not permit the inclusion of all those other things we have achieved (or we would never read it either - I am almost achieving Des Tolstoy status anyway).

I have often said how many opportunities Apex has given me and I am sure several of our Club members will echo the same comment. If you are involved you will realise the opportunities to display initiative, to enjoy yourselves and achieve things you never thought you would do.

Just remember, that there are only 24 hours in a day. If you are too busy, its time to reorganise and set some priorities family first, then work and thereafter what interests you the most.

The next five years are up to you.

APPENDIX ONE: FOUNDATION MEMBERS.

Charles Farran
Jim Giddings
Geoff Goodwin
Graeme Morrison
John Park

APPENDIX TWO: CHARTER MEMBERS

Kerry Bateson
Wayne Carson
Allen Collins
Charles Farran
Jim Giddings
Geoff Goodwin
Bob Guest
Tony House
Remy Ipsa
Peter Kynnersley
Bruce McIntosh
Graeme Morrison
Peter Nelms
John Park
Bruce Reid
Gil Schilling
Colin Tink
Bob White

APPENDIX THREE COMPLETE MEMBER LISTING

Name	Date Inducted	Status
Charles Farran	Foundation Member x	Transfer Albury 05/82
Jim Giddings	Foundation Member x	Active
Geoff Goodwin	Foundation Member x	Active
Graeme Morrison	Foundation Member x	Life Member 13/08/83
John Park	Foundation Member x	Active
Wayne Carson	Inaugural Member i	Resigned 1983
Bob White	Inaugural Member i	Retired 13/08/83
Bob Guest	Inaugural Member i	Transfer Adelaide 12/83
Colin Tink	Inaugural Member i	Active
Allen Collins	Inaugural Member i	Active
Remano Ipsa	Inaugural Member i	Retired 13/08/83
Tony House	Charter Member	Transfer Wagga 1982
Peter Kynnersley	Charter Member	Resigned 1983
Bruce McIntosh	Charter Member	Resigned 1981
Bruce Reid	Charter Member	Active
Peter Nelms	Charter Member	Active
Kerry Bateson	Charter Member	Active
Gil Schilling	Charter Member	Transfer Adelaide 12/83
Rod Lloyd	16/02/81	Active
John Cavanagh	From Southern Peninsula 13/04/81	Active
Peter O'Brien	18/05/81	Transfer Wagga 12/83
John Gilchrist	From Healesville 01/06/81	Transfer 02/84
Rob Whelan	29/08/81	Resigned 1982
Geoff Kendall	03/05/82	Active
Gordon Clarence	07/08/82	Active
Des O'Shanassy	04/10/82	Active
Doug Greig	20/12/82	Active
Hugh McCusker	From Warrnambool 06/04/83	Resigned 1983

Chris Murphy	18/04/83	Active
Brian Warnock	18/04/83	Active
Philip Magee	04/07/83	L.O.A
Bob Metsel	04/07/83	Active
Andrew Rizzoli	04/07/83	Active
Fred De Sylva	13/08/83	L.O.A
Les Reid	13/08/83	Active
Gary Ryan	17/10/83	Resigned 06/84
Ross Crowhurst	07/11/83	Active
Tom McAuliffe	From Murtoa 07/11/83	L.O.A
Gary Pavlides	07/11/83	Active
Leon Cheney	17/12/83	Active
Steve Medcraft	17/12/83	Active
Paul Rogan	17/12/83	Active
'Bows' Arrowsmith	02/04/84	Active
Geoff Byrnes	02/04/84	Active
Bill Dobai	02/04/84	Active
Ken King	02/04/84	Active
Simon Rizzoli	02/04/84	Active
Colin Charles	07/05/84	Active
Trevor Archer	18/06/84	Active
Leon Drummond	18/06/84	Active