

MY RECOLLECTIONS

By Vernon Kelly

The early years of fund raising were a time of particularly enjoyable fellowship. Brenda Koch was the chief motivator and the committee generally met at her residence and also at Earnie de Bruin's home. As some of the more senior members felt their years Brenda met with Jackie, Ernie, Betty, and myself in various homes to plan, followed by a "noggin" or two with Earnie.

Our first dance was in a Church Hall, we had a three piece band and sold about 75 tickets. The catering was done by the ladies of the small committee, as it was then. At a subsequent dance we nearly lynched the Stomping Band that we had engaged, but happily finished the Dance, compensated by the terrific food provided by the ladies.

As support grew, we moved our lunches and the Annual Dance to the Senior Citizens Hall at Ashburton on High Street. We could then employ better bands and caterers. All the setting up, decorations and final clearing up was cheerfully done by the committee and the ladies. For several years we used this venue till Council had other plans for the Hall and we moved to Clayton for the Annual Dance and also for the mid-year Food Fair. This was a great success from the start. Patrons queued up and rushed in as we opened the front door. The Savouries Stall was besieged while others rushed for the Hopper bookings, godambas, lampries, pickles, chutneys, and cakes. Dutch auctions were held for very generously donated gifts e.g. Dolls and Cakes.

The Dances, support for which had climbed, entailed the engagement of professional caterers and well known Dance Bands. Committee members continued to donate prizes and cheerfully arrange, decorate and clear up afterwards. I recall being Santa Claus for a Christmas Dance at Clayton. Never again I averred. Balloon blowing was gut busting till I brought along an Electrolux with home adaptor. These were times of good fellowship for the committee.

Now that after 21 years on Committee Maureen and I have retired from Management and Fund Raising Committees, I shall always remember the happy fellowship we shared in both committees. In management we held often different views or ideas, but there was never acrimony and always eventually a consensus. Our focus was always - The Less Fortunate Burghers in S.L.

The adoption or rather sponsorship of Burgher students by sponsors in Australia got off to a good start with Maurice Forster. The girl I sponsored was no 1 on the list. Maureen and I with our family holidayed in S.L. in '03 and we took the opportunity to meet Diana and her mother, through the kind assistance of Neville Overlunde and wife. We took them out to lunch and had a very happy time getting to know particularly Diana. The progress she has made through the years as evidenced by the regular reports and letters we received made the sponsorship well worthwhile. Like many other sponsored children, Diana will be sponsored to further levels of study, without which knowledge, the future for them is bleak.

(Excerpt from 21st Anniversary Souvenir, Eighty Club Melbourne, Sept- 2003.)