

Part 6 of Deans Marsh Community Stories, covers the 1990s, when the Community Cottage moved into a container [!], the Surf Coast Shire Council is created and Council begins to play a more active role in Deans Marsh, the Gymkhana becomes the Pioneer Festival, the Hall Curtain is re-imagined and the Hall gets an extensive extension....

The 1990s

Table tennis in the Hall every Tuesday night ¹



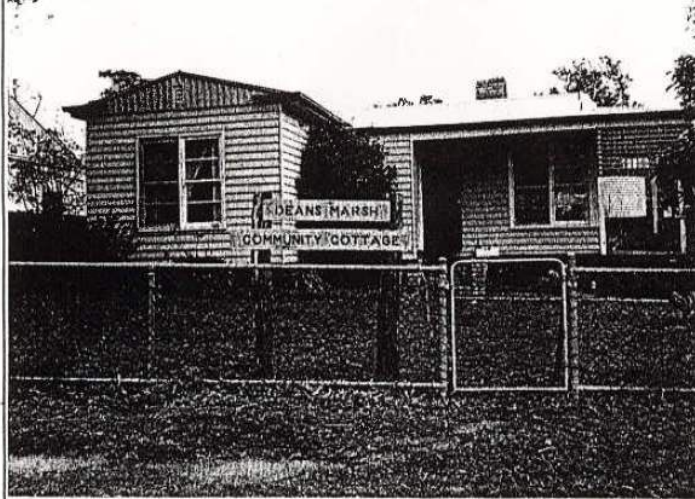
1991-2 Deans Marsh Baseball The Martians: *'Over the [thirty plus] years, many local families were represented in the club: Stewart, Millard, Schroeter, McKenzie, Clissold, Steenholdt, McKenna, Watts, Swayn.... Temporary residents such as Jenkins, Grinter and Schultz were also involved. Eleven players took part in 200 or more games, headed by the legendary Noel 'Chook' Grinter, who appeared in the firsts 415 (out of a possible 416) times from 1973 to 1995. Locals Andrew and Hugh Stewart would be best known of the 200+ group, with six of the other eight emanating from either the Geelong High School staff room or class rooms.[But] When the 1992 end of season function was held at Deans Marsh, a large number of the current players had to be given detailed instructions of how to find the Rec Reserve.'*² Still, as Andrew Stewart reports 'the original Martians won their first Premiership in 1975, played here in town and we won six premierships over time in various grades'.

¹ Email from Richard Gilbert May 29 2020 . This is ongoing in 2022.

² *'The Croaker* vol.7 no.6 p.2 Denis Jenkins article.

1992 Deans Marsh Community Cottage Open Day

Community Cottage provides a focus



Last year Deans Marsh Community Cottage was conceived by a group of dedicated locals.

The idea was to provide services for the townships of Deans Marsh, Birregurra, Winchelsea, Bambra and Barwon Downs.

Through its gestation period, people using its services relied heavily on

the support of a part time co-ordinator.

Since its birth on May 6, when an open day was held, the community cottage has bloomed.

Originally the school residence, the building was handed over to the community by the Deans Marsh Primary School.

The government's Country Education Project scheme granted \$800 to start the ball rolling, providing money for skills

training and common education.

Through the Community Support and Development program, \$8000 was granted to employ a co-ordinator for 10 hours a week.

Co-ordinator, Sally Lowe says since May 6, when the open day was held, the cottage has become a hive of activity.

The cottage is a focal point for the community to meet, learn and exchange information.

Groups using the cottage for monthly or weekly meetings include the play group, the Otway Women's Group, the East Otway Tree Group, The Bible Study Group, and the Deans Marsh Surf Riders Association.

Approximately 120 people rolled up for the open day, providing those with a sensitive pallet the delights of wine, donated by local wineries and cheeses, provided by Bonlac.

Several people combined to spruce up the gardens and erect signs outside the building.

People were asked to make contributions to the funding of the cottage and a raffle was held in conjunction with the open day.

Approximately \$320 was raised of which \$100 was taken at the door.

Apart from meetings, several workshops are conducted to give people in isolated communities creative activities.

A pottery and leather class is held each Wednesday evening giving people self confidence and a point to focus and develop their own initiative.

Ms Lowe said the cot-

tage was still being set up but provided an atmosphere and charm which did not intimidate people the way a classroom could.

"The nice aspect of the building is that it's not an Institute, it has old charm and atmosphere."

Each group is charged a small fee to have the tutorials conducted by local lecturers.

Ms Lowe said the committee of management employed locals because they knew the need of people in the area.

She said if we brought somebody from Melbourne to lecture, people might feel intimidated.

Ms Lowe said the community has become orientated around the community cottage.

Because people contribute time and effort into the cottage my job has become easier," Ms Lowe said.

She said through the work done at the cottage, people are able to gain skills and expand ideas.

Last week a bus tour conducted by the community cottage took people from Winchelsea, Lorne and Deans Marsh to the Victoria Markets in Melbourne.

In another program about to be launched, a coach will be available for people to travel to Melbourne to see "Big River".

Ms Lowe said the trip would be on July 14 costing \$46 per person.

For any information about the Deans Marsh Community Cottage, contact Sally Lowe on (052) 88 8888 on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 8 pm.

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1992 Hall curtain removed from Hall and given to Museum Victoria⁴ and a new curtain begun – again using many community volunteers under the

³ undated unsourced press clipping see Deans Marsh Community Cottage archives

⁴ <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/250818>

auspices of the Community Cottage; the new curtain was completed and hung in November 2000.⁵

59. 1990s **Community created and ran the Deans Marsh Lorne School bus route** until it was taken over by a commercial operation.⁶

1994 The formation of the Surf Coast Shire Council, after the forced amalgamation of the Winchelsea and Barrabool Shires by the Victorian state government, meant that ownership of the Hall and Memorial Park was transferred to the new Council. The period has ushered in a new era for the Deans Marsh community facilities, whereby both local and state governments have made a wide variety of grants available for the development of community projects and facilities. These grants have been extensively used by Deans Marsh people, including for many projects, which are detailed in this Timeline, and include the funding of this research.

As well the SCSC takes an active ownership role in maintaining the Hall and oval facilities – something Deans Marsh has never had the benefit of before.



1998 The Deans Marsh Progress Association [DMPA] papers note an attempt to re-start the Association in 1998 under the auspices of the Deans Marsh Community Cottage, among those involved were Ian Schram and Margaret Stewart.⁷ Led by Kevin Hercus who then ran the Deans Marsh Store, one

⁵ Millard R *Tales of Old Deans Marsh* p.28.

⁶ Wendy Robinson Koss interview January 9 2020

⁷ Documents dated April 1 1998 are stored in DMPA Minutes case held by the community.

early objective was to develop roadside viewing platforms and turnouts so travellers could admire our beautiful hinterland views.⁸

1998 – 9 Deans Marsh Pioneer Festival first transformed from the Gymkhana⁹



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⁸ Refer to Cottage newsletter 1998, Deans Marsh community archives

⁹ Jill Stewart interview January 30 2020

¹⁰ Photographs courtesy of Renee Wigley Deans Marsh Arts Studio

During the 1990s the Deans Marsh Cricket and Tennis Clubs were again very active. Peter Bell, local builder built the Tennis Pavillion in the early 1990s. Peter who was active on the courts, also served as Cricket Club President in this period.¹¹

60. Also in the 1990s the Deans Marsh **Community Cottage** moved out of their premises on Deans Marsh Primary School land and **to the hall** – eventually into new premises, which opened November 25 2000 [see below] but in the meantime the Cottage existed in a container next to the Hall for more than a year while renovations were built.

61. 1999 December 31 Deans Marsh Community Cottage and others organised huge Millennium New Year's Eve party, themed with Roman Columns.¹²

¹¹ Tom Reid interview May 8 2023

¹² Mandy Baker interview July 27 2020