

Jubilee Gems



Bringing you memories of the 50 year journey of celebration of the parish of St Joseph's and St Bernadette's.

NOV/DEC 2014 Pitching In—How we've worked together

The parish of Boronia has a wonderful pedigree of helping build its church and schools community. From Day 1, there was an enthusiastic attitude of everyone chipping in to help. This final edition of Jubilee Gems pays tribute to some of the great people and groups that have proudly contributed to where we stand in 2014. The editor is acutely aware that as we cite names we risk leaving out hundreds of others who deserve a mention. But this story of various people's impact calls for examples of individual recognition whilst applauding the power of all our contributors over the years.



Pitching in has often led to lasting friendships, especially in those early days where the school was a hub of social activity where clubs and parent involvement thrived.

People pitched in at times of crisis, bereavement or family support. There are many displays of this but Beth Holohan remembers the time when she came out of hospital from a back operation she was very apprehensive about how she would cope. "When I arrived home we found Loretto Kelly and Glenda Keedle had been in and cleaned up the house and made up the beds. Robin Keedle had mowed the lawns. And many people had dropped off cakes and casseroles."

Loretto Kelly sees the passing of Marlene Papworth and Pauline Lynzaat indelibly etched in her memory. "The women of the parish responded in their generosity with meals, washing, ironing, and child caring. Support came from everywhere. It was all given in a spirit of love and care and hopefully eased the pain of the families concerned." The Grief and Loss Group set up years later by Trish Purchase offered great comfort and emotional support for

participants. Anita Howard and Sister Frances carried on this work in recent years.

Cakes and casseroles have always been a common thread in the community's care for our people. Following funerals, illnesses and other mishaps, families have been moved by the helping hand of the parish bakers. This includes the baking that went into supplies for Fetes and special stalls. To reverberate a common feeling, "St. Joseph's has always been a caring, loving and supportive community."



Sometimes Mother Nature threw in the occasional emergency. Mick Rankin and Phil Johnson regularly got calls in the middle of the night from Father John Cross asking to come and help mop up the floods in the Factory. And there was the mass clean-up the day a mini tornado whipped through western Boronia, ripping many of the trees in the schoolyard to shreds.

Bill Purchase has a great story of can-do attitude with limited resources. In the mid-70s as part of the Fete Committee, Bill and his group realised they had some major deficiencies. "We needed more stalls. 'That's fine, I have five at home' said dentist Maurice White. We only had fifty feet of fairy lights; we need double that. I have a 100 feet at home. Fixed.' said the dentist. 'There is a massive amount of dirt to move for the parking area on the oval. 'I'll fix that,' said the dentist, 'I have a front-end loader at home.' Each stall needs at least one trestle table. We have six but we need another four. 'No problem', said the dentist, 'I'll make another four.' And we all thought how scary it was to go to the dentist!

Before the internet exploded into our lives, we had a parish magazine, jam-packed full of information and goings-on. Produced by an enthusiastic team including Mary Rumney, Peter Bruce, Richard Newbegin and Leo Rooney, The Grapevine was published quarterly for about five years by a dedicated band of volunteers and delivered to about 2000 people then on the Parish Roll.

Thanks to all who contributed to - and warmly received - Jubilee Gems throughout the year. See you in fifty years!



In the young parish days, suitable playing area for any sort of sport was restricted on the parish grounds. An area was set aside for the oval, but it had quite a gradient (one in three) which made it impossible for most organised games. Around 1965-66 road surfacing had commenced in the area. Using his initiative George Dyer (Snr) had a chat with the foremen about having all the dirt they were excavating from the road taken to the oval as fill. Roughly 35,000 yards (32,000 metres) of fill went into the project. Mick Rankin recalls: "George was there for many months over the years, making sure the truck loads of filling were tipped into the right places, and then he would set about levelling it into the wonderful oval we have today." George



The oval with the Factory in the background



was committed. He spent evenings after work, weekends and in the grand scale of things years toiling over the oval. Loreto Kelly said, "He turned a paddock into a sporting arena that was a lasting legacy for the parish". George and wife Betty were heavily involved with many of the sport clubs at St Joseph's.

"Where would we have been without Bingo?"

Along with the fete, up until just a couple of years ago, Bingo was the top revenue earner for the parish. In its heydays, patrons from all over the area – many non-parishioners - would flock to Thursday night Bingo at St Joseph's. For some people this function was more than a way to spend some pocket money on a chance their numbers might come up; it was a social event, a chance to mix in a cheerful atmosphere. For many, this was their social outing for the week.

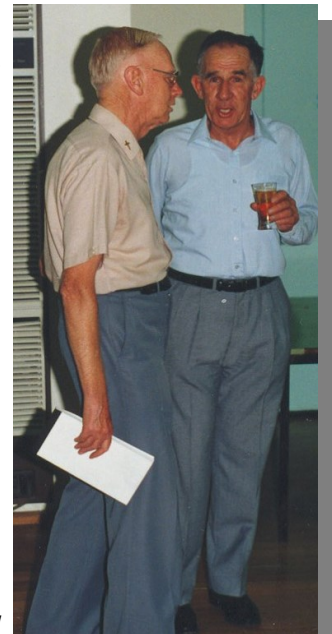
Danny Mason and Michael Potter pondering play

Bingo commenced in the parish in September 1978. With a \$1,300 loan from Parish funds, the committee was able to purchase a second-hand blower and display board - vital apparatus for any bingo operation - and promote the opening. Y and Z-gen, we're talking truly hi-tech here! The blower consisted of a box three feet square with a fan in the bottom, propelling 90 numbered table tennis balls at random throughout the box and sending balls up a tube. The caller would remove one ball at a time and an assistant would verify the number before calling it. The display



board consisted of 90 light globes with 90 swipes on the back. Two people operated the display board, switching on the corresponding light as the caller announced the number. This highly labour-intensive process was replaced by a computer a few years later which needed just one person to do the work of four. This was updated in subsequent years to a more sophisticated and electronic model.

Danny Mason, a salt of the earth contributor to many areas of the parish, recalls the 'fun' with some of the pioneering Bingo equipment. "One night while I was the caller, I couldn't have put the top of the box on securely, and the box moved during the game. All the balls started flying in all directions. Of course, the game had to be replayed." The other challenge for Danny and fellow callers was hearing the right number called and making sure that the correct switch was pushed. Storage concerns, back-breaking cartage of equipment, availability of trestle tables and chairs, shortage of volunteer labour and the odd mouse or two in the kitchen storage area were some of the tests of the early days of Bingo in the parish.



Fred Hillas consulting with Father Crossie

But growth was happening - reflected in having to add an extra urn to the supper table, although even that threw up its share of heartache. Fred Hillas, permit holder and champion co-ordinator over many of the formative years, in 2003 related an unintended consequence of its development. "As the two urns came to the boil they overloaded the power supply and tripped the circuit breakers. The power loss caused us to lose the game's progress scores on our display board." As it was some time before the hall's electric supply was upgraded, Fred and his crew had to resort to boiling the urns in the factory and carrying them full of boiling water into the hall! Ugh.

Prior to iCloud, another cloud sat over the hall on Bingo nights. Peter Asquith, a regular recorder, remembered a time before smoking was banned where he'd come home reeking of cigarette smoke. "And we had the amazing concept where the smoke was so thick - and there was this No Smoking Table."

Bingo patrons recognised the value of multi-tasking. Some played cards between games or read books or magazines. Their 'workspace' was often adorned with lucky charms, fluorescent marker pens and confectionery snakes. Some players marked their tickets with ink so dark it was almost impossible for the poor floor-walkers to read back.



Supper and refreshments was a big part of Boronia Bingo in the early days and people like Tonni Paetzold, Joan Harvey, Kath Vanderkolk and Alice Jago were heavily involved. Of course, the fridge had to be adequately supplied with Father Cross' Pub Squash! A huge band of women – and men - have helped serve supper over the years. And on the Bingo floor itself, a resourceful, reliable band of troopers looked after the games. Overseeing it all were many fine co-ordinators, especially Fred, and more recently, Bob Elliott - the Mister Fix-it for many a parish job - who steered the

ship through a tough period when competitive sways ultimately took its toll. Many people in the parish put in many hours to make Bingo work. Some did it for decades. They deserve medals. Danny Mason echoed the sentiment of many others when he said "I'd hate to think how the school would have survived without the funds raised by Bingo."

Imagine not being able to put food on the table. Or being threatened with utility cut-off notices. Or needing emergency housing. This is where charitable organisations, like the St Vincent de Paul Society, come to the rescue. St Joseph's Boronia Conference of St Vincent de Paul has always been an active, caring group who work at the ever-expanding fringes of our society. They quietly go about their work without seeking credit. Currently there are 10 active and 20 associate members.

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More on groups

Further to last time's feature on groups, here's three other groups that have made an impact on parish life.

PLUTOS (People Living Under Their Own Steam) was a group for singles. It was encouraged to form by Father John Petrusis. Carmel and Wayne McGough were part of it and married as a result of meeting there.

The group formed in 2003 with the inspiration of Fr John Petrusis who had encouraged similar groups in other parishes and independent proposals that came out of several Parish Lenten groups that year. Foundation members were Margaret Hazler, Sahndra Nelson, John Drake and Wayne McGough.

"We looked at many different groups in other parishes," says Wayne, "but decided PLUTOS would cater for people who simply were seeking friendship and wanted to mix socially at dances, restaurants, films, walks and not be the 'one out' amongst a sea of couples or family occasions."

The group quickly grew to about thirty five people and became a strong presence at the 11am mass. Evelyn Maloney joined the group and would eventually lead it until it went into recess in 2012. Wayne's most special memory was meeting Carmel Van Brakel when she joined the group in October 2004 because they eventually married. "We have just celebrated meeting ten years ago."

PLUTOS made its members feel relaxed because it removed some of the pressure of friends and family trying to link up their single family members. Wayne remains impressed by the welcome he got from Father John in 2002 and the sense of community he felt at the dawn mass on that year's Easter Sunday.

Family Groups were originally developed by a parish priest in Sydney to help build and sustain relationships between families in communities where we are often distant physically and emotionally from our extended families, and even our neighbours.

Maureen and Brian Fields started the group in our parish over 20 years ago and facilitated its activities in fine style for many years. Current coordinators are John and Jill Faulkner. "We meet once a month for social activities ranging from a BBQ at someone's home, bush walks, restaurants, games, camping, cinema," says John. "All of these experiences in the fellowship of others with whom relationships grow over time are powerful in establishing networks of support. Church is all about relationships - it is where we learn to recognise God."

Over the journey, of the groups that started, three are still operating healthily. "In FGs families of all shapes, sizes and ages, church-goers and those who don't, come together," says John. Several Family Group have combined for their activities - the most notable of these being the action-packed FG Olympic Day where the 3-legged races and gum boot throwing were highlights.



John showing his prowess at one of the FG Games

Small Church Communities have created an opportunity for members to reflect upon the Gospel in their lives, strengthening faith and community.

The Conference at St Joseph's was formed in 1964. The founding committee members were, Ian Bethune (President), Blake Lawrence (Vice President) Bert Butters, Vin Marshall, Graham Williams, Martin Baum and Bert Hendricks. Since its formation, many wonderful parishioners have felt challenged to show their faith by action to serve the needy. In the "good old days" the assistance was mainly food and clothing but over the last few years with rapidly changing social conditions there's been more an advocacy focus. Food is still the top priority. Vinnies members travel in pairs to visit people in their homes any day of the week. Last year they visited 164 homes in the Boronia/The Basin area, helping over 270 families with \$12,000 in assistance. A far cry from the early days of a couple of calls a week.

Paul Dinon says that "Whilst it is gratifying as Vincentians to see the renewal in people's belief, it is far more beneficial for the people we serve to establish a new footing for the future." Our Vinnies know the bigger picture too. Some Conference members are involved in the South Melbourne and inner city area on a regular basis. Phil Johnson, another long-time Vincentian, does work there. Phil was recently recognised for his services to the Society by the Knox Council.

One of the money savers for the parish are our working bees. Whether it's keeping the grounds tidy or contributing to special projects, working bees have become a cheerful, bonding event over the years. This was epitomised in the summer of 1983 at St Bernadette's where an army of tireless workers restored and rehabilitated what Tony Koster called the 'Rats Nest' in the new school grounds. In recent times, Kees and Nellie Klep have expertly organised a loyal, dedicated team of volunteers who come armed with their hoes and clippers - and not just because of the lavish morning teas, which included many scrumptious plates from Olive Evans over the years!

The parish has some creative types. John Holohan designed St. Joseph's school badge and motto, the parish emblem and several Thanksgiving Appeal brochures. He and Fran O'Brien produced the Stations of the Cross around our church. Fran painted the backgrounds and John carved all the figures. John sacrificed six weeks of work to complete them. He hung them in the church Good Friday morning having

worked throughout the night. The Holohan boys sat one on each side of him to keep him awake during the afternoon ceremony. We recognise all those involved in the promotion and other clever initiatives associated with the Annual Fete and other campaigns. Not to mention those that flock to help out on the day.

A big shout goes out to the many parishioners who do little things that mean a lot. Peter Ryan (amongst others) does money counting every week, mainly with his wife Nola. Peter Jones for years came in and paid the bills at the Parish House. Jenny Folino, who builds and cares for our community in various ways, suggested a while back putting in the candle stand. The stand is a quiet light of prayer and encouragement for many in our community and Jenny maintains the area, monitoring the supply of candles and cleaning away the wax etc. Amazing stalwarts of the parish are Bob and Pat Elliott. They will be hiding under a stone as they read this, but without them the parish would not be what it is today.



Pat Elliott and Terry Eklund gathering groceries for Vinnies

Sister Frances points out: "There are those who do things faithfully, cheerfully and unnoticed so that the rest of the parish think it happens by magic!" The good people who look after the décor for special Mass celebrations. And the altar linen - 'magically' clean. How about some blooming flowers! Thanks to Carmel McGough and the wonderful people she has recruited for flower roster over many years. Of course, Frances has been the backbone of voluminous things that happen in our parish, especially as part of the liturgy team. As she retires from her Pastoral Associate role we wish her all the best for the next stage of her life.

The seniors of our community are a vital part of our story. Thirty years ago Anne Ferguson recognised this and started a mass and luncheon for the seniors of the parish. This initiative continues today on the second Friday of each month under the loving leadership of Yvonne Johnson and Ria Parleviet, who guide a band of volunteers that look after driving and catering.

We need to bottle the wisdom of our community as we go forward into the next fifty years. The parish of St Josephs and St Bernadettes is a remarkable parish. Its people contribute to make things happen in so many ways.



Have we missed anyone? Let's salute all past and present... committee members, organisers, coordinators, those who sing and play our music, fundraisers, lectors, commentators, cleaners, cuppa after Mass and other hospitality, fete helpers, school staff and teachers, priests and nuns, special ministers, all those on rosters, RE teachers, children's liturgy, altar servers, collectors, people who take Communion to those who are housebound, parents and organisers who contributed to the running of sports and other competitions AND the very important people who have not been mentioned but can't all be brought to mind here. **Thank you one and all for the way you've pitched in.**