

History of The Basin

Chapter 8

Voluntary Organisations

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Summary

This chapter details the history of the voluntary organisations that have operated in The Basin.

The Basin Progress Association was formed in 1926 and has had an enormous influence in development of The Basin. Originally formed to represent the interests of The Basin residents, in 2008, it still monitors events for major impacts on The Basin, but its major role is to manage and maintain The Basin Progress Hall for use by the local community.

The Basin Children’s Hospital Auxiliary was formed in 1930 and until its closure in 1973, it is estimated that the Auxiliary raised over \$10,000 for the hospital.

The Basin Red Cross was formed in 1938 and until its closure in 1984, it had raised money for the first ambulance in the hills, provided numerous blood donations and assisted in many emergencies.

The Basin Theatre Group was officially formed in 1957, but began productions in 1954 with Edna Chandler as the driving force. The company first held productions in The Basin Progress Hall, then a small building called “The Hut” in Doongalla Road. In 1973, a new building was constructed on donated land in Doongalla Road and this building was extended in 1989.

The Basin Elderly Citizens Club began operation in 1965 as The Basin Pensioners Association, and was formed to look after the social and welfare needs of elderly residents in The Basin area. The Association operated from the Progress Hall until Knox Council constructed Club Rooms on The Triangle in late 1972.

The Basin Community House began in 1987 as the idea of two local women who saw a need to organise a program of activities and services to help meet some of the leisure, educational and social needs of the community.

The Basin Junior Field Naturalist’ Club was formed in 1983 by Ray and Jan Brown to satisfy the high level of interest in natural history amongst children in the local community.

The Basin Neighbourhood Watch scheme was formed in 1986 and in 2008 is still functioning but with reduced zone coverage.

The Rotary Club of The Basin was formed in 1990 and has become an active community based service club participating in a diverse range of projects.

The Basin Progress Association

Formation

In 1926, The Basin was progress conscious. A new Primary School had been built, Smith's Store was in operation, many new estates were opening and the population was growing. Concern was felt by many of the residents, old and new, that the sanctity of "His Majesty's Mail" was in jeopardy because of the insecurity of the "Loose Bag" then used between Bayswater Post Office and the receiving Post Office, the home of Mrs. A. M. Dickson in Mountain Highway. Wreford Chandler, then a junior teacher at The Basin Primary School, spent many afternoons carting around a petition calling on the Postmaster General to establish a full Post Office at The Basin.

In May of that year, hundreds of residents from an area bounded by One Tree Hill, to the limit of housing in the area, Hazel Dell, the Dandenong Creek, Colchester Road, Albert Avenue and Forest Road (roughly the area from which pupils came to The Basin Primary School) met at The Basin Primary School to prepare the petition for presentation to the Postmaster General.

At that meeting, Mr. Frank Goodwin suggested that the enthusiasm generated should be continued in the formation of a Progress Association. The suggestion was enthusiastically received by all present. A resolution was passed that "One month from date ... a meeting be held to consider the inauguration of a Progress Association for The Basin".

Accordingly, at another meeting one month later in June 1926, The Basin Progress Association was duly inaugurated. The first President was

"Paw Response"

The roll call at Progress Association meetings during winter months was not always high, but it reached an all time low when a dog was called in to make up a quorum. It is believed there was a "paw" response to most votes taken that night.

Mr. Frank Goodwin, Mr. Wreford Chandler was Secretary and Mr Bob Dobson Treasurer. No membership fee was fixed at first but members present contributed a few pence for stationary and postage.

In September 1926, meetings were moved from the Primary School to the Vestry of the Methodist Church and meetings continued to be held there until the Progress Hall was completed in 1931.

A constitution was prepared in various stages but the final constitution was not implemented until a loan was raised from the Commercial Banking Company in 1929 to help finance construction of the Progress Hall. The Bank Manager insisted that a valid constitution was a requirement of the loan, so he offered a draft which was implemented. The guarantors for the loan were Mr. H. Beaumont, Mr. R.B. Smith, Mr. Kirkman, Mrs Dickson and Mr. Ankers.

When the Progress Hall was built, it was not possible to have the land title in the name of the Association so 3 members of the Association acted as "trustees" and the title was in their names. A trust deed signed by all trustees stated that the trustees held the land on behalf of the Association and that the Hall was owned by residents of The Basin. The number and names

Distinguished Resident

Edna Chandler

In 1954, Mrs. Fergus Chandler returned to The Basin with her husband Fergus to live. Her in-laws had an outstanding record of service to the community, but Edna was to gain renown in her own right by exploring and developing previously untapped talent in The Basin. As Director-Producer of the Theatre Group she has guided this organisation from a modest beginning to a highly successful and self-sufficient unit. It did not happen by chance, as Edna, with previous formal training and experience with various amateur theatrical organisations knew what was required.

Nevertheless her efforts have been wider still than this. As President, she was a leading light in the establishment of The Basin Kindergarten, a feat which was accomplished in the remarkable span of only 2 years. It is notable that it was also during Edna's term as President of The Health Centre Committee, that the centre was actually built.

Edna pays high tribute to her husband Fergus for his untiring assistance in the running of the Theatre Group. In fact this interest became almost a way of life for Fergus and Edna. Those connected with The Theatre know how long and hard they have worked to make the Company so successful. Edna has won many awards for directing and producing shows over the past 35 years. These include three Moomba awards, two Kyneton Festival awards, and awards from the Ballarat Festival and the Victorian Drama League Festival.

The Basin Progress Association

trustees has changed over the years and the title and trust deed updated accordingly.

In 1944, a meeting was held, and a document signed declaring “that all Progress Association books and records prior to that date were lost and that no documentary information was available” (or words to that affect).

Early Entertainment

R.B. Smith, who opened the first store in The Basin in 1924, added a barn to the rear of his store in 1926. In the same year, the Basin Progress Association was formed and shortly after members decided to build a hall for their meetings and social functions. Smith provided the barn rent free to the Progress Association for both entertainment and to raise funds for construction of The Basin Progress Hall. The barn was cleared of produce on Saturday afternoons, cleaned ready for the Saturday night dances and members restored it to its original conditions on Sunday mornings. Weather

Hall Repairs

Over the Christmas period of 1961, the Progress Hall Committee installed a new floor in the hall.

In January 1962, the day after completing the floor, a major bushfire broke out and the hall was used as a base for the fire fighting operations. Imagine the dismay of the Committee when they came back the next day and found a 3 yards square by one yard high pile of ice in the centre of the floor!

permitting, dances were weekly from 8pm to 11.45 pm and the charge for admittance was 1 shilling or donation. Mr. Smith donated milk and tea for suppers and some novelty dance prizes. Crockery etc was provided by members and ladies brought a plate.

Later, dance music was provided by a player piano (pianola) delivered to Mr Smith’s barn which was later transferred to the Progress Hall on completion of the first stage. Ballroom dancing was the order of the day (old time and mod-



queen_competition.jpg

Entrants in The Queen Competition held in 1929 to raise funds for building The Basin Progress Hall.

L-R Edna Greenwell, Dorothy Thompson, Eileen Clarke, ? Blakey, Mrs Dewar.

The Basin Progress Association

<i>The Basin Progress Association Honour Role</i>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
1926	Frank Goodwin	Wreford Chandler	Bob Dobson
1927 - 1928	R. B. Smith	Wreford Chandler	Bob Dobson
1929	R. B. Smith	Reg Kirkman	Bob Dobson
1930 - 1931	R. B. Smith	Reg Kirkman	Mrs. Dickson
1932 - 1933	R. B. Smith	Reg Kirkman	Mrs. Dickson
1934	Jack Parr	Reg Kirkman	Mrs. Dickson
1935 - 1938	R. B. Smith	Reg Kirkman	Mrs. Dickson
1939	Bert Chandler		
1944	Bert Chandler	E. Mortiboy	B. Puddy
1945 - 1949	E. Mortiboy	B. Puddy	B. Puddy
1950	J. Chandler	Mrs. Moran	Mrs. Moran
1951	J. Chandler	F. Eaves	A. Cooper
1952	Bill Wright	J. Chandler	A. Cooper
1953	Bill Wright	Guy Turner	A. Cooper
1954 - 1956	Mr. A. Petrie	Guy Turner	A. Cooper
1957	Mr. A. Petrie	N. Thomson	A. Cooper
1958	Mr. Dobson	N. Thomson	A. Cooper
1959	Guy Turner	Mrs. G. Turner	A. Cooper
1960	Guy Turner	Mrs. G. Turner	A. Cooper
1961	Mr. A. Petrie	Mrs. Petrie	A. Cooper
1962	Bill. Wright	Ron Ikin	Mrs. R. Ikin
1963	Bill Wright	Mrs. R. McGuigan	Mr. R. Evans
1964 - 1966	Bill Wright	Mrs. R. McGuigan	Mr. H. Domelow
1967	Bill Wright	Mrs. E.V. Beasley	Mrs. L. Tweedale
1968 - 1969	Bill Wright	Mrs. R. Robinson	Mrs. L. Tweedale
1970 - 1972	Kevin Gale	Mrs. R. Robinson	Mrs. L. Tweedale
1973	Kevin Gale	Mrs. R. Robinson	Sue Trotter
1974	Roy Ritchie	Mrs. J. Stewart	Mr. J. Hannon
1975	Roy Ritchie	Mrs. H. Swanson	Mr. J. Hannon
1975 - 1979	Roy Ritchie	Mrs. H. Swanson	Mr. J. Hannon
1980	Roy Ritchie	Mrs. H. Swanson	Mrs. Stancombe
1981	Roy Ritchie		Sue Trotter
1982	Roy Ritchie		Sue Trotter
1983	Clive Rust		Sue Trotter
1984 - 1992	Clive Rust		
1993 - 1998	Graham Goudie	Linda Dickson	Graham Linaker
1999 - 2004	Alan Dickson	Linda Dickson	Graham Linaker

The Basin Progress Association

ern) with novelty dances included. Fancy dress balls were also held.

During this time a social committee was formed and retained after the successful Queen Competition (see page 3).

As a result of an inspection by the Department of Health dances were stopped in the barn and they were moved to the Boronia Progress Hall and were held there fortnightly until The Basin Progress Hall was completed. Private cars and trucks provided free transport from The Basin to these functions.

During the 1930's, very successful and well attended dances were held in the new Progress Hall. People came from as far afield as Footscray because of the excellent dance floor. During 1935 and for a time afterwards, folk danced to the music of Mr. Hector Carricks orchestra. On less important occasions and in the years when attendances were small, Mrs. Hingham (piano) and occasionally Mr. Mat Ferguson (concertina) provided the music.

In the 1930's the Progress Association ran "Carols by Candlelight" at Como for many years.

At the end of World War II, The Basin Progress Association, Red Cross and members of the community extended a very warm "Welcome Home" to local members of the fighting services.

The Basin Progress Hall

After being in operation for a short while The Basin Progress Association members decided to build a hall for their meetings and social functions. Two sites for the hall were considered, one near the Primary School and the present site. A ballot was held to decide the site, and as we know, the present site won the vote.

The site was purchased from Mr. R. B. Smith at a reduced rate.

In 1929, to help raise funds for building the hall, a Queen Competition was held. Competitors included Edna Greenwell, Dorothy Thompson, Eileen Clarke, ? Blakey, Mrs Dewar, Miss Eileen Clarke, Miss May Dickson, Miss Lil. Ferguson, Nancy Harris and Doris Langdon. Miss Eileen Clarke (later Mrs. Eileen Turner) was the winner. The "Crowning Ceremony" was held on the vacant site for the hall. As far as is known she still holds the title as no other competition has been held. See photo in page 2.

Sufficient money was raised from this and other functions to enable a bank loan to be ob-

tained. The hall, built almost entirely by voluntary labour, commenced in 1929 and was erected in two stages. The first stage was officially opened by Sir George Knox in 1931. An honorarium was paid to Mr Bill Ankers who drew up the plans and directed operations. This first stage did not include a stage, kitchen or toilets.

Stage two of the hall building occurred around 1940, when a stage and a kitchen were added. The kitchen then was more or less an annexe to the stage and partly exposed to the weather.

Towards the late 1950's the hall fell into disrepair. This was mainly due to it being rented out at very low prices and consequently there was little money to spend on its upkeep. It was suggested that the Shire be asked to take over running of the hall from the Progress Association, but this did not receive support. Changes in management took place and the trustees of the hall decided to strictly supervise functions, particularly when a permit to serve alcohol was obtained. Rents were made more realistic, and the Progress Association commenced a monthly cabaret, which raised hundreds of pounds over the next few years. The cabaret took on various themes - but one night during the football season league jumpers were sported and in a spot of frivolity one woman "shirt fronted" another.

During this time around 3,000 pounds was spent on improvements. These included the addition of a foyer and toilet block in 1963, modernising the stage in 1964, a new kitchen in 1966, new floor and ceiling, exterior painting and indoor decorations.

Shortly after the 1968 bushfires in the Dandengong's there was some criticism of the Progress Hall and its bad condition at a Ferntree Gully Shire meeting. Reporters from the "Knox News" newspaper decided to investigate the "bad condition" of the hall and found the opposite to be the case. At the time of their visit a dance was in progress and in their newspaper the next week under a photograph of the hall, a caption read "Does this hall look very bad". The report stated that:

"This was the happy scene at The Basin Progress Hall last Saturday night. It is tastefully decorated and well lit. Everyone appears to be enjoying themselves. The hall is a functional asset for the people of The Basin. A property in good repair around which social life of the area is centred".

Life Membership

For a person to be eligible for Life Membership of The Basin Progress Association, they must have given outstanding service in the interests of the Association, or extensive assistance in some other capacity.

The Basin Progress Hall was originally owned and run by the people of The Basin, having vested management to The Basin Progress Association. Up to 2004, the hall was the only one in the City of Knox that is not privately owned or run by the Council. In 1950, a move was made to have the Shire take over the hall, but this never eventuated.

All monies received through rental were used to keep the hall at a high standard. With a high annual turnover, it was indeed a valuable asset for the people, being utilised on a permanent and casual booking basis and occupied most days of the week.

Over the years, the Progress Hall has been a centre of The Basin community life, serving as a meeting place for organisations, a venue for indoor sport and a convenient place to hold dances, family celebrations, and theatrical productions. Almost all local organisations owe their inception to plans made, and money raised, in the hall. The hall's "finest hour" came during the bush fires of 1962 when it was available around the clock for the use by fire fighters and people in distress.

Closure

In the few years leading up to 2002, income from use of The Basin Progress Hall dropped dramatically and major capital works were required to maintain the standard of the Hall. The Progress Association were having difficulty managing the hall. As an experiment, The Basin Community House managed the hall for about a year with some council support. They improved many facets of the hall and increased its usage. However, they were unable to raise enough funds for the required capital works.

In 2004, The Progress Hall and land were sold to The City of Knox for \$1 and The Basin Progress Association was disbanded.

In 2005, The City of Knox upgraded the hall kitchen and in 2007 new toilets were added and the exterior repaired and repainted.

Role

Services such as electricity, water, and garbage

collection have been the subjects of constant pressure on the authorities by the Progress Association. Other improvements sought have been better roads and drainage, footpaths, street lights, traffic signs, road name changes, parking facilities, bicycle tracks, bus services, telephone, mail services, doctors and police facilities.

The public toilets erected in 1967 in The Basin were the result of pressure from the Progress Association. The toilets are on land purchased by the Council from the Salvation Army.

Dobson Creek was named after an approach to the Progress Association from the Dandenong Valley Authority in 1967. Originally known as Blind Creek, the Progress Association suggested Dobson Creek and it was accepted.

As early as 1952, the idea of severance from the Shire of Ferntree Gully was discussed, members being of the opinion that such a step was in the best interests of The Basin.

It was at Progress Association meetings that The Basin Rural Fire Brigade and the Pre-School Centre had their inception. Members of Parliament, Councillors, candidates for Council and speakers on topical subjects have addressed Progress Association meetings at various times. Public meetings have been called to inform local residents more fully on issues affecting them, to present appeals for worthy causes and to allow the airing of grievances. Over the years, there have been many contentious issues where public meetings were called and large numbers of people attended.

The Progress Association stands as a local interest group to voice opinions of residents of The Basin whenever matters arise which may affect their community or quality of life.

Notable Issues

The Basin Name Change

At the second meeting of the the newly inaugurated Basin Progress Association in July 1926 at The Basin Primary School, it was suggested that the name "The Basin" might be changed to something more in keeping with the grandeur of the Dandenong Ranges. It was found for the meeting, that the kerosene lamp at the school was dry. Wreford Chandler provided a radio battery equipped with a small globe to make a storm lantern. The battery had been charged by a generator running off a water wheel in the Dandenong Creek at "Trewell", the home of Harry Chandler.

The Basin Progress Association

This was the only time a public meeting in The Basin was lit by power generated from the Dandenong Creek.

A motion was put, supported by Guest House proprietors and some who had weekend cottages to let, to change the name of the district because of its “ludicrous nature”.

The motion was opposed by the Chandlers and Dobsons, pioneer families for whom the name had its roots in family traditions. Those favouring the name claimed it had “distinction”. The names of “Eurimbla”, “Echo Valley”, “Eigenia”, “Veronica”, “Lower Sassafras” and “South Sassafras” were suggested. The motion was lost by a narrow margin.

Rating System Change

In early 1960’s, the Progress Association called a public meeting to discuss changing the rating system from NAV to Site rating. The debate continued late into the night with discussion becoming so heated that blows were exchanged. The meeting voted narrowly in favour of NAV. The rating system was later changed to site rating.

The Triangle

The area of land known as “The Triangle” is the land bounded by Forest Road, Mountain Highway and Church Street. It was subdivided in the early 1920’s as part of Chandler’s Hill Estate and a few homes and shops were built on the allotments created. The Progress Association fought for many years to have this area declared and converted to a “passive park”.

In the late 1960’s, word spread that a speculator had made offers to buy all the properties on The Triangle as he intended building a supermarket on the site. At the public meeting called to discuss the issue in the Progress Hall, the then Shire secretary Neville Haines was present along

with Councillors of the day. Local residents and Progress Association members were of the opinion that active development of The Triangle should not occur and Council should convert the Triangle into passive park by buying back the properties and not allowing any further development. It is reported that the Council agreed to do this but the agreement was never recorded. Due to enormous public pressure, the supermarket proposal was squashed.

The Progress Association voiced opposition to the building of the Fire Brigade Station on The Triangle in 1967 (which was rebuilt in 1976).

In 1968, due to Progress Association pressure, the land on The Triangle was rezoned by the Council to “passive park” and over the next few years a few properties on The Triangle were purchased by the Council. Progress Association members saw this as the first steps to preventing any further buildings on The Triangle. However, in 1972, Council decided to erect the Elderly Citizens building on The Triangle and the Progress Association was not asked for their opinion or informed of this decision. The Progress Association voiced its disapproval of this new building being erected on The Triangle but it was ignored.

From 1972 onwards, Council purchased more properties on The Triangle (including the old “Glideaway” hall which was demolished) and in 1978 the Council prepared a report on possible uses and plans for The Triangle. The Progress Association was asked to comment on the report. The Councils concept was to categorise the use of The Triangle into active and passive. Active uses included the existing Progress Hall, Elderly Citizens Hall and the Fire Station, and passive uses included yet to be provided children’s playground, bowling green, car parking and grass area. Passive usage would be encouraged to retain

<i>Life Members of The Basin Progress Association</i>		
Mrs. E. Turner, 1928	Mr. W. Ankers, 1945	Brigadier J. B. Puddy, 1970
Mrs. M. Moran, 1928	Brig. J. B. Puddy, 1945	Mr. A. Cooper, 1971
Mrs. L. Jackson, 1928	Mrs. A. Harris, 1949	Mrs. B. Turner, 1972
Mrs. D. Fountain, 1928	Mr. B. Chandler, 1949	Mr. L. Edwards, 1972
Mr. H. Beaumont, 1944	Mr. Ingers, 1949	Mr. G. Grumont, 1972
Mrs. A.M. Dickson, 1944	Mrs. D. Langdon, 1949	Mr. K. Gale, 1974
Miss L. Ferguson, 1944	Mr. B. Wright, 1969	

The Basin Children's Hospital Auxiliary

a "village green" atmosphere. The Progress Association was generally happy with the concept as it implied that there would be no more buildings on The Triangle.

In 1980, the Progress Association was informed of plans to erect a Scout Hall on The Triangle. Progress Association members were outraged and over the next year instigated many meetings between Council, the Scout Group and local residents in an attempt to prevent the building being erected. The Progress Association even considered taking out an injunction against the Council. Suggestions of a management committee for The Triangle were rejected by Council.

In 1981, the Scout Group were offered 2 other sites on Army Road, Boronia but rejected them as unsuitable. After extensive debates in Council about the matter, it was decided by Council in March 1981 to offer the Scout Troop a site on The Triangle.

In 1983, the current car park was constructed with a path beside it covered by a pergola. Other areas were attractively landscaped and included children's play equipment and barbecues. In 2008, there is one remaining dwelling on The Triangle, but this will eventually revert to Council ownership.

Overall Development Plan

In 1992, the Progress Association called a public meeting to discuss Knox Council's Overall Development Plan (ODP) which would allow land development along Mountain Highway. Over 250 people attended the meeting, one of the largest attendances ever. The proposed large scale development of land on the North side of Mountain Highway including a large amount of the Salvation Army, Dobson's and The Basin Primary School.

The plan was developed by the Council after a request from the Salvation Army to redevelop an eight hectare paddock. Council extended the area requested by the Salvation Army to see how the area could be developed in the future. Residents at the meeting said they were not opposed to the Salvation Army development, but the further development made possible by the ODP. Knox Council was accused of "*cutting out the green heart of The Basin*".

Under extreme pressure from all sides, the council revised the development plan to what the

Salvation Army had originally asked for - the re-development of a eight hectare paddock.

Symbol

In 1971, after extensive investigation by George Grumont, the Progress Association adopted as their symbol a small blue native flower - *Brunonia Australis*, commonly known as Blue Pincushion. It is protected under the Wild Flowers and Native Birds Protection Act of 1958. This little blue flower used to "carpet the ground" between The Basin and Bayswater. Like most other native flora, it has suffered the effects of urban expansion and has all but disappeared in the area.

The name "Brunonia" commemorates that of Robert Brown, famous botanist with Captain Matthew Flinders on the "Investigator" and discoverer of the flower at Port Phillip in January 1804.

Ownership

In 2003, ownership of the Hall land was transferred to The Basin Progress Association. Previously, ownership was held in the names of 5 trustees who held the title in trust for the Association. When the hall was first built it was not possible to hold a title in the name of an Association.

Closure

In 2004, The Basin Progress Association was disbanded. The Progress Hall and land were sold to the City of Knox for \$1.

The Basin Children's Hospital Auxiliary

This organisation, like the Red Cross, has never sought publicity but its work has been most admirable since it was formed in 1930. Many women have well served this most deserving cause. Among them have been Mrs. A. Chandler, who was President for 20 years, Mrs. James, Mrs. H. Chandler, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs James, the last two having been awarded Life Governorships. Mrs Gilbert, Mrs. Gower, Mrs. Lees, Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Freeman, and Mrs. Dobson, the last six having been awarded Long Service Badges for 21 years of service.

Various functions were run over the years to raise funds for the hospital, ranging from Pleasant Sunday Afternoons to Banjo Shows, from Crazy Whist to Street Stalls and garment making. In

The Basin Children's Hospital Auxiliary

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 1954 - 1964</i>				
1954	Quiet Weekend			
1955	Without the Prince			
1956	Rookery Nook	Hay Fever	The Late Chris. Bean	
1957	See How They Run	Lace on Her Petticoat		
1958	My Three Angels	Ladies in Retirement		
1959	All for Mary			
1960	We Must Kill Toni	Down Came a Black-bird		
1961	Will any Gentleman?	Blithe Spirit		
1962	Dry Rot	Pantomime - Puss in boots		
1963	The Man Who Came to Dinner	Man Alive	Angels in Love	
1964	Salad Days	One Wild Oat		

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 1965 - 1974</i>				
1965	Love Rides the Rails	The Ring of Truth	The Vigil	Festival Fare
1966	1865 and all That (including Family Album)	The One Day of the Year		
1967	Goodnight Mrs Puffin	The Remarkable Mr Pennypacker		
1968	A View from the Brodge	Separate Tables	Lady Audley's Secret	Autumn Crocus
1969	Arsenic and Old Lace			
1970	The Crucible	Sweeney Todd, the Barber		
1971	Something to Hide	Critic's Choice	When We are Married	
1972	Night Must Fall	The Hasty Heart	Dark of the Moon	
1973	The Royal Hunt of the Sun	The Golden Legion of Cleaning Women	Look Homeward, Angel	
1974	My Three Angels	Black Comedy and White Liars	The Ballad of Angels Alley	

The Basin Red Cross

later years, assistance in the opportunity shop assisted in fund raising. It is estimated that the Auxiliary has handed over \$10,000 to the hospital over its lifetime.

Incalculable voluntary assistance in many areas has been unselfishly given by members. Other donations have been made to deserving local charities. All the members over the years deserve great credit for their efforts carried out in such an unpretentious way.

Sadly, The Basin Children's Hospital Auxiliary ceased operation in 1973.

The Basin Red Cross

The Basin Red Cross was formed in 1938 with Mrs. H. Chandler President, Mrs. Pickett Secretary, and Mr. H. Henley Treasurer. The organisation has had staunch workers in Mr. & Mrs. H. Jewell and Mrs. A. Macauley.

In the early 1940's, Mrs. H. Chandler and others felt the need to do something about the urgent need for an ambulance service in the Hills area. They managed to raise enough funds to buy a

chassis and build an ambulance. The ambulance was built by C. King and J. Wrigley and was on the road by 1942, with Mrs. H. Chandler as its driver. At one time up to 60 calls a month were made. Harry Jewell and Charlie Cahill were also well known drivers.

During the 2nd. World War, funds for war relief, were raised at regular Red Cross Dances at the Progress Hall. Members have been on call for any sort of emergency work and in 1942 were prepared to receive evacuees from Melbourne. Red Cross workers have quickly been on the scene in the event of fires and members frequently give blood in case of emergencies. Indeed Mrs. H. Chandler, Branch President until 1965 and Commandant of Dandenong Ranges Region for over 35 years, has a medallion for 50 donations of blood.

In the early 1960's, a transport company was formed within the Region and up to 100 patients a week were driven to and from hospital. Among the 56 drivers on the roster were Basin Red Cross Members.

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 1975 - 1984</i>				
1975	The Odd Couple	The Constant Wife	The Rainmaker	The Playboy of the Western World
1976	The Vigil	Breakfast with Julia	Death of a Salesman	The Fantasticks
1977	Philadelphia, here I Come!	What the Butler Saw	Gallows Humour; The Public Eye	Roar Like a Dove
1978	The Little Foxes	Abelard and Heloise	Birds on the Wing	Period of Adjustment
1979	Equus	The Bet; The Laboratory; Family Album	Play It Again, Sam	The Fan
1980	Wait Until Dark	Mary, Mary	A Man For All Seasons	You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running
1981	The Birthday Party	She Stoops to Conquer	The Glass Menagerie	Dark of the Moon
1982	Night Watch	A Streetcar Named Desire	Count Dracula	Master Pierre Pathelin; The Private Ear; Hello; Out There
1983	Habeas Corpus	Summer of the Seventeenth Doll	Travelling North	
1984	Barefoot in the Park	Come Back, Little Sheba	Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?	Same Time, Next Year

The Basin Theatre Group

The Basin Red Cross unit officially closed in 1984, but Mrs. H. Chandler continued working with the Wantirna unit until her health deteriorated. The Basin should be proud and appreciative to have local residents serving such voluntary organisations as the Red Cross.

The Basin Theatre Group

In 1954, a small group of friends were invited to meet in Edna Chandler's lounge room at "Noweenth" in Doongalla Road and work on a play with a view to performing it in public. The play was the charming English comedy "Quiet Week End" and it was performed that year in The Basin Progress Hall.

The success of that performance encouraged its repetition in Boronia. This success led to the performance of further plays, with the players manufacturing their own settings and properties,

and gradually compiling equipment. Regular members of these early casts were Tony Poole, Barry Cummings, Lorna Goodwin, Lucy Bond, Betty Turner, George Grumont, and Fergus Chandler in plays which were recalled enthusiastically by regular members of the audience.

The movement became so strong that in 1957, a constitution was drawn up, and office-bearers elected. Led by Edna Chandler as Director-Producer, The Basin Theatre Group settled to a scheme of three major productions a year.

Plays were mostly performed in The Basin Progress Hall and other public halls in the area. Rehearsals were conducted in the home of Edna and Fergus Chandler. As well, monthly acted-play-readings were introduced for workshop purposes and social enjoyment.

By 1962, the group had outgrown the facilities of the Director-Producer's home and needed more

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 1985 - 1994</i>				
1985	Ballad of Angel's Alley	Toby; Fairy tale; The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds	One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest	
1986	Talley's Folley	Absurd Person Singular	The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie	
1987	The Visit	Butley	The Legend of King O'Malley	Last of the red Hot Lovers
1988	84 Charing Cross Road	The Real Thing	A Day in the Death of Joe Egg	The Rainmaker
1989	Love Ride the Rails	The Diary of Ann Frank	The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of macbeth	
1990	A View From the Bridge	Deathtrap	Lovers; Winners; Losers	The Elephant Man
1991	A Majority of One	The Secret Affairs of Mildred Wild	The Dresser	The Prisoner of Second Avenue
1992	Top Silk	Absent Friends	Agnes of God	A Tomb with a View
1993	The Hasty Heart	Death of a Salesman	One for the Road	The Glass Menagerie
1994	When We are Married	Rose	Away	Butterflies are Free

The Basin Theatre Group

space and a home base in which to rehearse and perform. A building affectionately known as “The Hut” was then erected nearby by voluntary labour. The Hut was an A-frame “barn” with two tree trunks supporting the roof. It provided an environment of rustic charm for rehearsals and group meetings.

The purchase of a piano led to the musical productions “Puss in Boots”, “Salad Days” and “Love Rides the Rails”. The new home meant easier storage, and a workshop where sets were prepared by designer Fergus Chandler and other members, before the final setting up in The Basin Progress Hall, the venue of the Group’s productions.

Interest grew in competitive Festival work, resulting in several successes, including the award

for Best One Act Play (Ferntree Gully Festival), The Launceston Players Torch (Tasmanian Festival), Best Actor Award (Moomba Drama Festival), Best Producer (Victorian Drama League) and honourable mentions for various members. Favourable press reports indicated a sustained high standard, and the group was compared with leading metropolitan groups.

Hon. Secretaries who helped to further the group in the early days were Lorna Goodwin, Sally Lowther, Dorothy O’Connell and Midge Beesley. Councillor Guy Turner was an untiring Hon. Treasurer for many years and was followed by Tibor Bedohazy.

The Basin Progress Hall continued as the main performance venue. During this time, The Hut was improved to performance standard. By

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 1995 - 2004</i>				
1995	An Evening with Ayckbourn, Austin and Carlino	Don’s Party	The Golden Age	Noises Off
1996	The Enquiry	Death and the Maiden	Nightmarkets	The Importance of Being Ernest
1997	Hotel Sorrento	Blithe Spirit	Straight and Narrow	Educating Rita
1998	Sleuth	A Night of Crime and Punishment	Habeus Corpus	An Inspector Calls
1999	Steel Magnolias	Nuts	A Month of Sundays	California Suite
2000	Morning Sacrifice	It’s My Party and I’ll die if I want to	The herbal Bed	Do Not Disturb
2001	The Dining Room	Corpse	On Golden Pond	Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me
2002	Dancing at Lughnasa	Shirley Valentine	The Fandale Avenue Townswomens Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery	Run For Your Wife
2003	Ghosts (production cancelled)	Face To Face	Solid Gold Cadillac	Secret Bridesmaids Business
2004	Three plays from Deckchairs - Early Blight, Short Changed, and Theatrical Digs. Gosforth's Fete	Rough Crossing	Rebecca	Life After George

The Basin Theatre Group

1969, the group was able to bring all its productions to The Hut and for the next 4 years it served as the centre for all rehearsals and productions.

With the continuing success of the group came the need for a permanent home; the requirement was for an intimate theatre with good facilities. The group membership included a strongly motivated workforce prepared to voluntarily support the effort and the venture was soon up and running. The quest for a permanent theatre in no way affected stage productions which continued in parallel with the intensive drive to raise funds.

The theatre was to be built on land donated by Edna and Fergus Chandler in Doongalla Road on the fringes of the Dandenong Ranges State Forest. Member architect, Ian Cole, commenting on the style the theatre should take, observed that:

"Everyone connected with The Basin Theatre Group was familiar and enchanted with the A-frame rehearsal room erected in earlier days. It had character, rustic ruggedness and dramatic volume."

It was this appeal which everyone wanted captured in their new building. The new theatre was to be a result of these factors blended together simple gable shape portal frames, concrete floors throughout, rough sawn timber ceilings painted with home made paint, rough sawn Oregon fascias, hand-adzed timbers in hand-made doors to entrances, beamed sloping ceiling to foyer and native landscaping in amongst logs and rocks around the car park and the building.

Group members were enthusiastic in fund raising efforts for the new theatre. Money was raised to pay for building materials from walkathons, garden parties, balls and even chair donations where people donated money to have their name inscribed on a plaque attached to a seat in the building. Group members volunteered their

labour each weekend to help construct the building and after a huge community effort, the new theatre was officially opened in April 1973. It had raised seating for 126, underfloor heating, a foyer, back-stage dressing rooms, work space and a lighting control room.

The Basin Theatre Group was the first amateur theatre in the Commonwealth to build its own theatre without the aid of government funding. The first performance in the new venue was "Royal Hunt of the Sun".

A permanent home for the groups activities made possible a considerable growth in production skills, particularly in the technical skills lighting and set design. The working space designed in the theatre greatly increased the scope of set building, enhanced by the capacity to construct sets on-site.

In the ensuing years the theatre thrived, performing four programs yearly, with a panel of four producers, a working membership of 130, 20 associate members and subscriber membership of 550 playing to around 2,000 patrons at each production.

Since 1989, extensions have been added to increase the foyer size, another wing added for a workshop and storage area. Facilities have been improved for stage lighting, special equipment procured for back-stage projection and the kitchen extended to twice its size for preparation of refreshments. A shelter portico has been added to the front entrance for the convenience of patrons.

The Edna Chandler Award is presented annually to a group member, or members, for the outstanding performance on stage for the year.

The Fergus Chandler is presented annually to a group member, or members, who have made a

<i>The Basin Theatre Group Productions 2005 -</i>				
2005	Fallen Angels	Look Back In Anger	Terra Nova	Lipstick Dreams
2006	Relatively Speaking	The Cemetery Club	Silhouette	How the Other Half Loves
2007	Speaking In Tongues	Don't Dress For Dinner	The Beauty Queen Of Leenane	The Odd Couple (Female Version)
2008	Two Weeks With the Queen	Bedfellows	Gaslight	Over The River And Through The Woods

The Basin Elderly Citizens Club

sustained and outstanding contribution to the functioning of the Group.

The popularity of the theatre is reflected in sell-out performances for every season. The practice of donating the proceeds from the opening night of each season has been of considerable benefit to a variety of local charities. The group is proud of its independence, and regards itself as being very much a part of a community to which it has contributed so much since 1954.

The involvement of Edna Chandler in The Basin Theatre Group and other voluntary organisations in The Basin makes her one of the towns "Distinguished Residents". Her profile is detailed on page 1.

The Basin Elderly Citizens Club

The Basin Elderly Citizens Club began operation in 1965 as The Basin Pensioners Association.

The objective of the Association was to look after the social and welfare needs of the members in The Basin area.

The Association operated from the Progress Hall until Knox Council constructed Club Rooms on The Triangle in late 1972. The official opening took place on 31 March 1973.

The Association has always been active with indoor bowls, bingo, cards and regular trips as some of the activities provided to members. Consequently, a high level of fellowship exists.

In 1979 weekly meetings were changed to monthly and Knox Council began providing hot meals on Wednesdays at lunchtime.

Except for a brief period in early 1980, the Club has been a happy and enjoyable place. During this brief turbulent period, some local members objected to residents from other parts of Knox joining the Club. At one stage, the feeling was so strong that ten members, including four committee, resigned. However, the Club rallied and has had continued success since.

In 1983, the Club moved from being the Pensioners Association to become the Elderly Citizens Club and the joining age was lowered to 55.

The clubrooms are used by many other community groups within The Basin and the high demand for the use of the facilities is testament to the efforts of the Club and Knox Council in keeping the facilities at a high standard.

The Basin Community House

The Basin Community House began in 1987 as

the idea of two local women, Anne Fitzpatrick and Anne Taylor. They felt that the people of The Basin, particularly young mothers like themselves who were at home with children, could benefit from having a place to meet. To share ideas and experiences and to organise a program of activities and services to help meet some of the leisure, educational and social needs of the community.

Since the early 1970's Community Houses (sometimes called Neighbourhood Houses) have appeared in municipalities throughout Victoria. Their goal has been defined as "to enable individuals and groups to participate in the organisation and development of their community and provide support for individuals and families in the community." Generally, they are run by a committee of management made up of local people. They receive some funding from various government departments, depend heavily on volunteer input for the day to day running of the house and employ at least one paid worker as a co-ordinator for between ten and twenty hours per week.

A community house is a place where everyone is welcome. Men, women and children can come along to join a class or group, do some volunteer work, share their own skills or learn new ones. It seemed a good idea to have such a place in The Basin community.

Word soon spread and by early 1988 a group of extremely enthusiastic women began meeting. The members of this original group were: Anne Taylor, Anne Fitzpatrick, Wendy Smith, Yvonne Foster, Mandy Cranwell, Debbie Pearton, Annette Onions, Julie O'Callaghan and Nella Sandham. Later in that first year we were joined by Gil McFadyen, Ros Mortimore, Mieke De Vries and Paula Gullion. The group began meeting once a week at St Mary's Hall.

All of these women had at least one child and most were pre-schoolers. The children had plenty of room to play and the women could talk about the idea to establish a community house in The Basin. The big question was how could they manage to turn such a great idea into reality? They were without any funds, equipment or a permanent base from which to operate, and had no particular experience in acquiring these things.

They applied for grants, worked towards becoming an incorporated body (a legal necessity), clarified their aims and objectives and sought feedback from the local community on the type of

The Basin Junior Field Naturalist' Club

activities and programs they would like. They were able to draw on the experience of established Community Houses and to find a whole network of information and advice for newcomers. They received funding to employ a co-ordinator for 10 hours a week and Anne Taylor was appointed. As the "Community House without a house" they started to run classes and groups out of local halls and members homes.

With the impending sale of St Mary's Church and hall and the on-going difficulties in providing safe child care, the need for a permanent home became urgent. The best chance seemed to be the former teacher's residence in the grounds of The Basin Primary School.

It had been empty for several years and, although structurally quite sound, it had been repeatedly vandalised and would need extensive renovations to become inhabitable. Anne Fitzpatrick had been negotiating with The Basin School Council for a number of years for the house to be made available for community use. They decided to intensify the campaign to be able to use the property. In addition to the work they were already involved in, they now had to start lobbying local politicians and public servants as well as raising thousands of dollars for renovations. This was the beginning of a long, long process. But they still never doubted that The Basin would have its own Community House.

Because of their lobbying, late in 1989 Knox Council entered the negotiations between the Ministry of Education, The Basin Primary School Council and the group. The outcome was that the property at 1221 Mountain Highway would be transferred to the Knox Council for community use. This was the groups first victory. With the support of Council they began renovating the house in 1990. Councillor Geoff Dempster officially opened the doors of the completely renovated home on 1 July 1991.

During this period the group received enormous support from many, many individuals and groups both within and outside the local community. Councillor Geoff Dempster, the local ward councillor and later Mayor, was a good friend to The Basin Community House. Councillor Dempster supported the group when they first approached the Knox Council for assistance and continued to look after their interests for many years in their dealings with the Knox Council.

Council allows The Basin Community House Group to operate from the house rent free and helps with renovations and maintenance. Local service clubs including The Rotary Club of The Basin, The Footmen Club of Croydon and The Rotary Club of Boronia have all helped with some of the major renovation tasks. The Basin Primary School Principal Ian Green and members of the School Council continue to offer support and encouragement.

Today, The Basin Community House offers a broad range of activities and programs. Children are well catered for in playgroups, three year old kinder and child care programs - including a very successful Before and After School Hours Program. Adults can take part in computer courses, relaxation and yoga classes, and a variety of one day workshops covering everything from hair-dressing to astrology. The group are home to a sole parent and low income support group and hope to encourage more support and self-help groups to get started. The group once held monthly art and craft markets at The Triangle.

Since moving into their permanent home hundreds of people have come through the doors to take part in the various programs and classes, to find out what happens at The Basin Community House or simply to find out who we are. Many of these people have stayed and started groups, joined the Management Committee or helped with office work and child care. With their help The Basin Community House will continue to grow and develop and remain an important place in The Basin.

In 2001, the House added extensions to the property to cater for an increase in its services

During the groups short history they have achieved a great deal through hard work and sheer persistence. What started out as a good idea has become a reality. They never doubted it would.

The Basin Junior Field Naturalist' Club

The Basin Junior Field Naturalist' Club was formed by Ray and Jan Brown because of the high level of interest in natural history amongst children in the local community.

The Club held its inaugural meeting on 8 March 1983, with the help and encouragement of Bruce Fuhrer, who is a well-known natural history photographer and author of many books.

Bruce ran The Ringwood Junior Field Naturalists Club for 16 years. Ray and Jan “ferried” children from The Basin across to his meetings once a month, in The Basin Fire Brigade’s bus. Bruce felt there were enough children from our area to start a club here, so The Basin Junior Field Naturalists’ Club was formed.

The first meeting was held in The Basin Primary School Library. Numbers soon grew as the Club became known and within a few meetings, membership rose to 60. The Club caters for children of all ages (and their families) and looks at natural aspects of The Basin area and beyond. It encourages an appreciation of our local flora and aims to help develop the skill and knowledge needed to expand and maintain this area of interest.

The Club is affiliated with The Victorian Field Naturalists’ Club and was a “charter” member of the Friends of Ferntree Gully National Park. It is also a member of The Gould League and therefore has access to their many wonderful publications, charts, etc. Many prominent speakers have given talks on an array of interesting topics too numerous to list!

Andrew Wegner, a well-known local naturalist, has enormous input into the organising of field trips and weekends away to places of interest. The Club charges a very small annual fee and is self funding. The office bearers are all children, with an adult member as an assistant. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, at The Basin Primary School, in the Senior Staff Room, from 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. Regular field trips are arranged and at least once a year the Club goes away for a weekend to explore wild-life, etc., and to have fun together.

In the late 1980’s, Andrew Wegner took over the running of the group from Ray and Jan Brown.

Neighbourhood Watch

At a meeting held at The Basin Primary School in October 1986, hundreds of residents voted in favour of the commencement of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in The Basin.

Ray Brown was elected the first area co-ordinator with Brian Lawrence as assistant. The first meeting was held in The Elderly Citizens Hall and have continued to be held there on the first Monday of each month.

The Basin Neighbourhood Watch area is

bounded by Mountain Highway, Miller’s Road, Mount View Road, Basin-Olinda Road, Wicks Road, Clevedon Road, Nyora Avenue and Bay-view Crescent. The area is divided into 62 zones. Each zone had a Zone Leader whose task was to distribute a monthly newsletter, liaise with residents and the co-ordinator and to attend monthly meetings.

Ray Brown served for two years and was followed by David Apps for two years. Bryan Cranwell served for one year and in 1992 Cheryl Amess was the co-ordinator.

In 1991 The Basin Neighbourhood Watch celebrated its fifth birthday. Cheryl Amess had the pleasure of awarding certificates to those residents who had made a special contribution to Neighbourhood Watch. 20 five year certificates and 29 two year certificates were awarded to local residents. Special awards were made to Bert McAulay for his tireless dedication and to Norman Solomon for the most attendance at monthly meetings.

In 1996, The Basin Neighbourhood Watch celebrated its tenth birthday. Ten year awards were made to Jan Jonker, Neville Perry, Bert McAulay, Norm Solomon and Rhonda Fergus.

In 2001, a number of 15 year awards were to be made, but the lack of a sponsor has postponed the ceremony.

The Rotary Club of The Basin

The formation of The Rotary Club of The Basin began as a discussion in the bar of the Knox Club following a Boronia Rotary Club meeting on Tuesday 5 September 1989, between three old friends; Bill Wright, Jack Wallace and Ted Robertson.

As Neil Whittorn was the then postmaster of The Basin Post Office and a member of The Rotary Club of Boronia, he was asked by Jack to draw up a list of prospective members for a Rotary Club in The Basin. Within three days Neil came up with a list of 38 names. Jack spoke to many people and gained the interest of sufficient numbers to hold an interest meeting on 2 May 1990, at the Eastwood Golf Club, Liverpool Road, Kilsyth.

This meeting was attended by 33 prospective members and was unique in that 12 Rotarians from Boronia were each invited to give a five minute segment on different aspects of Rotary. Although possibly overwhelming, it succeeded in

Sources of Information

gaining the interest of most and two weeks later the Provisional Rotary Club of The Basin was born, with 23 members.

Appointments to office were held with Clive Rust emerging as Charter President and Peter Van Zeyl as Treasurer. Secretary Ray Bolduan and Sergeant-at-Arms David Oreagan were included in the first Board of Directors. Charter of The Rotary Club of The Basin was officially granted on 31 July 1990, and the Club became the 50th in Rotary District 981.

The Rotary Club of The Basin has now emerged as an active community based service club which participates in diverse projects ranging from its Annual Golf Day to sponsoring exchange students to and from overseas countries. Fellowship within the Club has been a major factor in its success, resulting in a solid core of members who are working hard to promote Rotary ideals. The Club meets on a weekly basis and is always keen to encourage new members and undertake new projects which will enable club members to achieve real happiness by helping others.

Sources of Information

- “The Basin Centenary booklet” - Ron Ikin.
- “Fire on the Hill, Flowers on the Valley” - Rick Coxhill.
- Current and former residents. In particular, Albert McAulay and Norman Solomon for Neighbourhood Watch information.
- The Basin Theatre 40 year commemorative programmes for production information and history.
- The Basin Progress Association 50th Anniversary Souvenir for information on the Progress Association and Progress Hall.
- The Basin Progress Association Minute Books for information on Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers and the Progress Association.

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