

# ***History of the Cranbourne South Riding Club***

## **Introduction**

This is a brief description of the events and people that have been a part of the history of the Cranbourne South Riding Club. There are some gaps in this document during some years so that if you feel you can contribute then please contact Sue Bennett (03 9775 9686)

## **Formation**

Cranbourne South Riding Club ( CSRC) was formed in 1970. At that time the only existing club for horse riders in the Cranbourne area was the Cranbourne pony club which held rallies at the Melbourne Hunt club.

Lesley Cole, a Cranbourne South resident, was very concerned about the safety of her children who would have to ride across the South Gippsland Hwy to attend this Pony Club. This meant that those riders who lived in Cranbourne South had no club to attend if they could not float their horses.

Because of this, a group of like minded , horse loving people established the Cranbourne South Riding Club to fulfill the needs of the Horse Riding community on the Cranbourne South side of the South Gippsland Highway.

Lesley Cole was the prime mover in the formation of the riding club and also became the first secretary.

The club was therefore originally formed primarily for junior riders but soon became available for adult riders which meant that families could ride together.

Foundation members included A. Brown (1<sup>st</sup> President), L. Cole (1<sup>st</sup> Secretary) , J Kelly, K Ellery, V.Kelly, L&G Fawcett, P Potter, C Kent and N Cranston . All were office bearers.

\*\*\* Note that a new honour board to be installed at the club soon will show all the Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers from 1970 to now (2014).

## Main Top era

The Club held their first few rallies on a property in Browns Road between Westernport Hwy and Pearcedale Road. After only a few rallies they approached and gained permission from the managers of Main Top to run their rallies on this large farm.

Note that Main Top was a cattle farm before being turned into what is now the suburb of Botanic Ridge.

The Club ran their rallies at Main Top for almost a decade (1970-1979) before moving to Morning Mist Reserve.

Some early pics from Main Top



Riders arriving at Browns Road entry



Camelle Davies ( daughter of Pam)



Lunch at Main Top

The grounds used at Main Top consisted of a large open area where rings were set up with temporary boundaries. There was a rough dirt floored shed, a BBQ for lunch , ice to keep things cold and holes for toilets. It was a happy fun club with many contributors. Many lasting friendships were forged during this decade from 1970 to 1979.

## Morning Mist era

### *How the grounds evolved ....*

Morning Mist Reserve was purchased by the Shire of Cranbourne in 1972 . The Centreville Ratepayers Association began raising money in the 1950's for community needs. They recognized the need for Cranbourne South to have a recreational reserve and paid 50% of the purchase price for the 38 acres known as Morning Mist Recreational Reserve ( MMRR).

Note: In recognition of this , in 2010 a plaque was placed at the entrance near the barbecue area at Morning Mist . CSRC hosted a lunch for the surviving members of the Centreville Ratepayers that could come to the unveiling of the plaque in their honour.

The Lord Mayor Jeff Ablett attended and officiated on the day. Kelvin Robinson

Time	Guests
	Unveiling of Plaque at Morning Mist February 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2009
	<u>Program</u>
12 Noon	Welcome Jeff Bennett Chairman of Morning Mist Recreational Reserve COM
12.05 PM	Kelvin Robinson Member of the Centreville Ratepayers and Secretary . Shire of Cranbourne Councillor in the 70's represented the West Ward including Cranbourne South, Pearcedale and Devon Meadows.
	Outlines history of Centreville Ratepayers association and their contribution to the establishment of Morning Mist recreational reserve
12.15 PM	The Mayor Geoff Ablett Unveiling of the plaque and response
12.25 PM	Jeff Bennett Chairman MMRC Concluding comments Invite all present to walk through to the Riding Club Grounds for lunch

who played a key role in the Centreville Ratepayers and was also a councillor in the Shire of Cranbourne in the 1970's travelled down from Sydney to attend. He was disappointed at the lack of sports facilities at the recreational reserve.

Without this group of dedicated people we would not have the wonderful grounds we have today.

... see Appendix

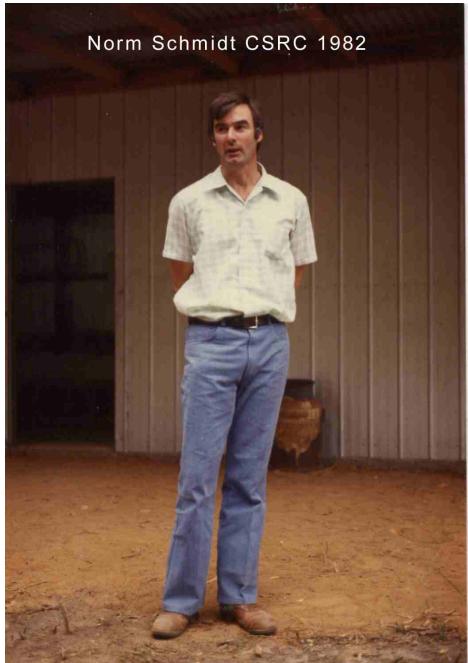
<< Program for the Unveiling

## *How the grounds were divided ...*

In 1976 the Shire of Cranbourne held the inaugural meeting of the reserve. A committee of management was set up. It was decided that a survey would be undertaken to see what the locals would like at their recreational reserve.

The plans drawn up from the information collected from the survey included provision for an area for the riding club , tennis courts , netball courts, football oval, picnic area, walking and riding tracks all while preserving areas of bush.

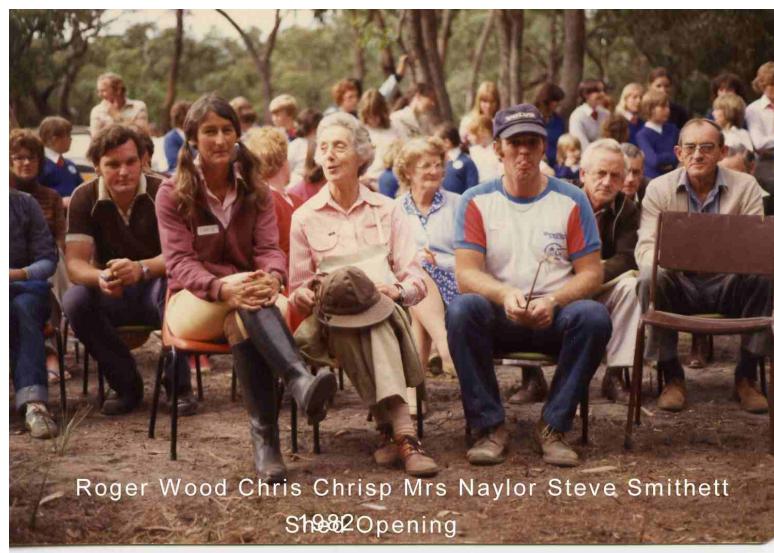
A master plan, including all these activities, was drawn up and passed by the council. We have newspaper cuttings about this plan in the Morning Mist Recreational Reserve (MMRR) historical records.



Unfortunately the only two sports that were catered for were the tennis courts and equestrian grounds. The Cranbourne Shire recognized the need for CSRC to have their own permanent home and for Cranbourne South to have a tennis club.

These two clubs were the first residents. Historical records show that both of these clubs worked very hard establishing themselves including financing their own club rooms.

### CSRC Shed Opening in 1982



Norm Schmidt was pivotal in organizing and building the shed . Below are attendees at the Shed opening in 1982.

Jeff Bennett and a friend put the finishing touch on the club shed by pine lining it, making it into a very serviceable club room.

Note that only a small amount of financial support was received from the Shire of Cranbourne . The hard work, club member resources, plus donations from the Centreville ratepayers accomplished the basis of what is there today.

By 1980 the CSRC were well established at MMRR. They requested to have the use of the approx 19acres of bush on the reserve for their cross country, which at this stage was still marked to be developed into a football oval.

This was approved and the Riding Club developed the tracks that were used by the public into a functional and attractive cross country course which the club and public used for well over 15 years.

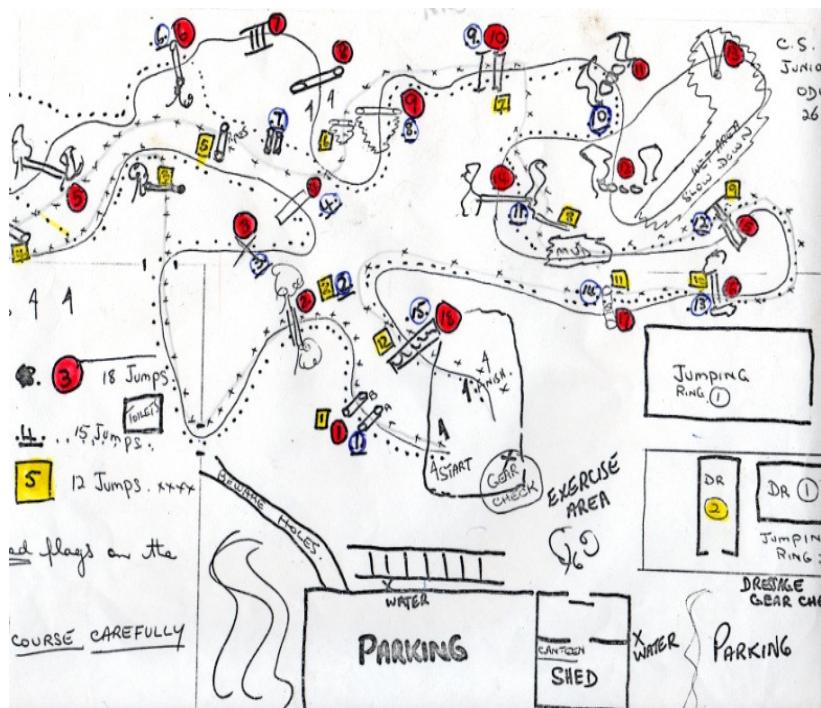


Figure 1 Cross Country course through MMRR 1983

A map of a course through both the riding club grounds and the adjoining area is shown for a one day event in 1983. There were some very innovative jumps including a picnic table jump.

The club was well known for the one day events they would run using the cross country . Entries to these events were extremely popular and attendance was always restricted because of the numbers wishing to enter..

Continued Page 7 .....

## Some Historical Pictorial memories of Rallies and Events at Morning Mist .....



<< This pic shows the large shed and members watching a group in 1982



Loxley Smithett on Pepper CSRC



<< More activities on Ring 2 including Bag race.



Loxley & pepper



Alissa & Pepper Megan Barratt on Bubbles

Camelle Davies ( daughter of Pam) receives an award at breakup presentation in 1983 ..  
Norm Schmidt is presenting >



Maz Smithett & Santas Helper Tom

<< Marilyn Smithett was an early member of CSRC and later became an assessor with HRCAV



Melanie Bennett receives a Christmas gift at a breakup rally. >>

These pics reflect the happy family spirit that has characterized the CSRC and still exists today (2014)

Continued from Page 5 ...

This probably prevented the oval development. Unfortunately by the mid 90's this 19 acres was locked away for conservation and has had very little recreational use for the Cranbourne South residents.

## **Some Key Events ..**

In 1984 CSRC joined the HRCAV and became incorporated. Prior to this they had their own insurance and were not affiliated with any other horse association.

## **Sharing the Grounds with Cranbourne Pony Club (CPC) ...**

In 1990 CSRC invited the Cranbourne Pony Club (CPC) to join them at tMMRR . The 2 clubs have been sharing the facilities since then.

## **More Issues with use of the grounds ..**

Unfortunately the 19 acres adjoining the equestrian area was closed to riders by the mid 1990's. At first it was closed for what they called safety reasons and then, in another few years, was declared a conservation area with no access to horse riders. (Note that the native flora had thrived during the years the riding club had used it). This meant there was no off road safe areas to ride in Cranbourne South and the CSRC could not hold One Day Events (Horse Trials) because of the lack of a suitable cross country course.

Jeff Bennett lobbied the council from 2003 about opening up the tracks in the conservation area for riding . This was nearly accomplished but failed at the last minute

## **Wax & Wane ....**

Around the mid 1990's membership of CSRC diminished. By the late 1990's they would often need only one instructor. Fortunately the Phylans and Julie Flint kept the club operating by maintaining our affiliation with the HRCAV and

keeping a good relationship with the City of Casey and holding rallies although very small.

At the same time the CPC had developed into a large club since joining us at MMRR . At this stage the Pony Club committee was against use of the club grounds outside rally days. This led to some friction at the time . However the CSRC was able to negotiate key access to the grounds which enabled access to the grounds outside rally days by signing a key holder policy which designated requirements to ride safely on the grounds. This Keyholder policy is still applicable today.

## **Recent History ..**

Since 2002 the riding club membership has increased to around 100 members as it was in the late 70's 80's and until the mid 90's. The club has resurfaced all the rings except ring 4 and replaced our old squalid equipment shed with a large and impressive new one.

## **Principles and Aims of the Club ..**

The CSRC has always been a family friendly and inclusive club that brings together horse lovers to learn how to care for their horses and progress their skills in riding, minimize any risks associated with riding and enjoy their association with other riders.

Cranbourne South Riding Club was aware that families with horses were not always high income families. Therefore the club has tried to keep their fees as inexpensive as possible and has raised the monies needed to cover expenses and instruction with fund raising.

Fundraising events included horse events ( Showjumping in recent times), but also they had many enjoyable social events that would allow attendance by the local community. These included dances, entertainment nights (with artists), trivia nights and markets

The CSRC members are bound by a common love of horses and love to share their passion with others with friendship and support.

## Recent History in Pics ...



Breakup rallies with trophy presentation and keen competition in novelty races are a highlight of the CSRC year.

Horseman (aka Mark Williams aka club groundsman) has been a feature of our breakup presentation for many years

<< Horseman 2011



**Our Showjumping Day has always been a good fundraiser as well as being popular with club members and visitors. The picture shows Bree Pellow competing in the 2009 Showjumping Day. Priscilla Williams was prominent in organizing these events.**



A rally held in April 2014. Note the Ring has been resurfaced and is now a high quality arena.



**CSRC equipment shed purchased with help from the council in July-August 2009. Power has been added to the shed which is a giant improvement from the ram-shackle structure that preceded it.**

## **Life Members ...**

**Meryl Agars** was president for many years. She was great with children, often taking lessons. She was also very involved with MMRR committee and other community activities

**Figure 2 Meryl taking a class on Ring 2 when it was a grass ring**



**Norm Gray** looked after the grounds and equipment at Main Top and at MMRR. He was a great servant to the club for many years.

**Norm Schmidt** was president in 1983 and worked for the club for many years before and after this. He was primarily responsible for the erection of our club rooms.

**Niki Cranston** was secretary in 1973 and on the committee for a number of years. She was very community minded and worked for the good of others.

**Jeff and Sue Bennett** were at the club from approx 1976 till 1987 and returned to the club about 2000 working hard to bring families and children back to the club and make much needed improvements to the grounds.

**Pam Davies** was posthumously awarded a life membership in 2014. Sadly she lost her battle with cancer in 2012. The committee voted unanimously to recognize her years of dedication to CSRC. She worked as hard as any of the men in preparing the grounds . at MMRR. She built many of the cross country jumps. She was always at the forefront in fundraising.

Pam on her beloved Casper



Appendix which follows was collated by Pam Davies and presented at the unveiling of the plaque in honour of the Centreville Ratepayers Association.

It explains the role of the Centreville Ratepayers in the History of CSRC.

Acknowledgements also to Leslie Cole for supplying information of the very early history of CSRC and there are some early photos provided by Pam Davies and Marilyn Smithett.

Sue Bennett has collated this information together with Jeff Bennett.

# HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF CENTREVILLE

In November 1958, William Victor Wright who lived at Frankston Road Cranbourne, established a Service Station & General Store. (Centreville Store) Mr Wright feeling that this particular area with a radius of one and half miles from his store was being neglected by all Authorities and was a sort of "No Man's Land". Mr Wright consulted an old resident and friend Mr Wilbur Capon Senior of Lyppards Road, and a young friend Mr. Ian Reid (who had purchased a two & half acre block from Mr Wright's Sub-division in Potts Road.) They discussed doing something to bring progress and development to the area.

The result was that these three Gentlemen decided to call a Public Meeting Which was held in Mr Wright's Barn on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1960.

The result was that the Centreville Ratepayers Association was formed in spite of strong opposition from outside areas being Langwarrin, Cranbourne South, Lyndhurst South (now Skye) and the Shire of Cranbourne Council.

The above places all claimed the new area as part of their own.

With strong adverse propaganda against the proposed new area the opposing areas called a large Public Meeting and it was agreed that a survey be taken on the proposed boundary and if the majority voted for it they would be agreeable to it. The Survey revealed 33% against 61% for and 6% of no opinion.

Not with standing the poll result all opposition parties still tried to squash the area that was to be known as Centreville.

Mr Wright came in for much abuse from outside and was called all sorts of not too flattering names.

The result was the strongest Association and rapidly developing area.

Footnote: This Association together with the Ladies Sub-Committee worked constantly. Fund raising and donating to needy families many sporting groups, Fire Brigade, Swimming Baths, Street Lighting, Rubbish collections Road upgrades to name a few. With foresight they purchased land for Public Recreation use firstly in McKays Road. This was later sold with the provision that the monies raised from the sale would go towards a larger complex within its Centreville Boundaries. Their next purchase of land together with the Council of Casey is the 37 Acres known As Morning Mist Reserve which houses The Tennis Club, The Cranbourne South Riding Club, The Cranbourne Pony Club & lastly a Pigeon Club. & Public BBQ area. The rest of the land remaining is a very large area set-aside for Flora & Fauna.

The Centreville Rate Payers Assoc from inception in 1960 achieved all of the above until it was abandoned when the area out grew its need and the old members left the area. This happened in 1985. The surrounding districts then gobbled up Centreville it became part of their boundaries. Centreville may have been forgotten except for some hard working members of the Morning Mist Reserve Committee who felt the need to recognise the work done by this group and show appreciation for their grounds so they approached the Council and Today Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2009 the Mayor Jeff Abblett will unveil a plaque to acknowledge the Centreville Rate Payers Assoc work for their Community and in a small way preserve their deeds for Local History.