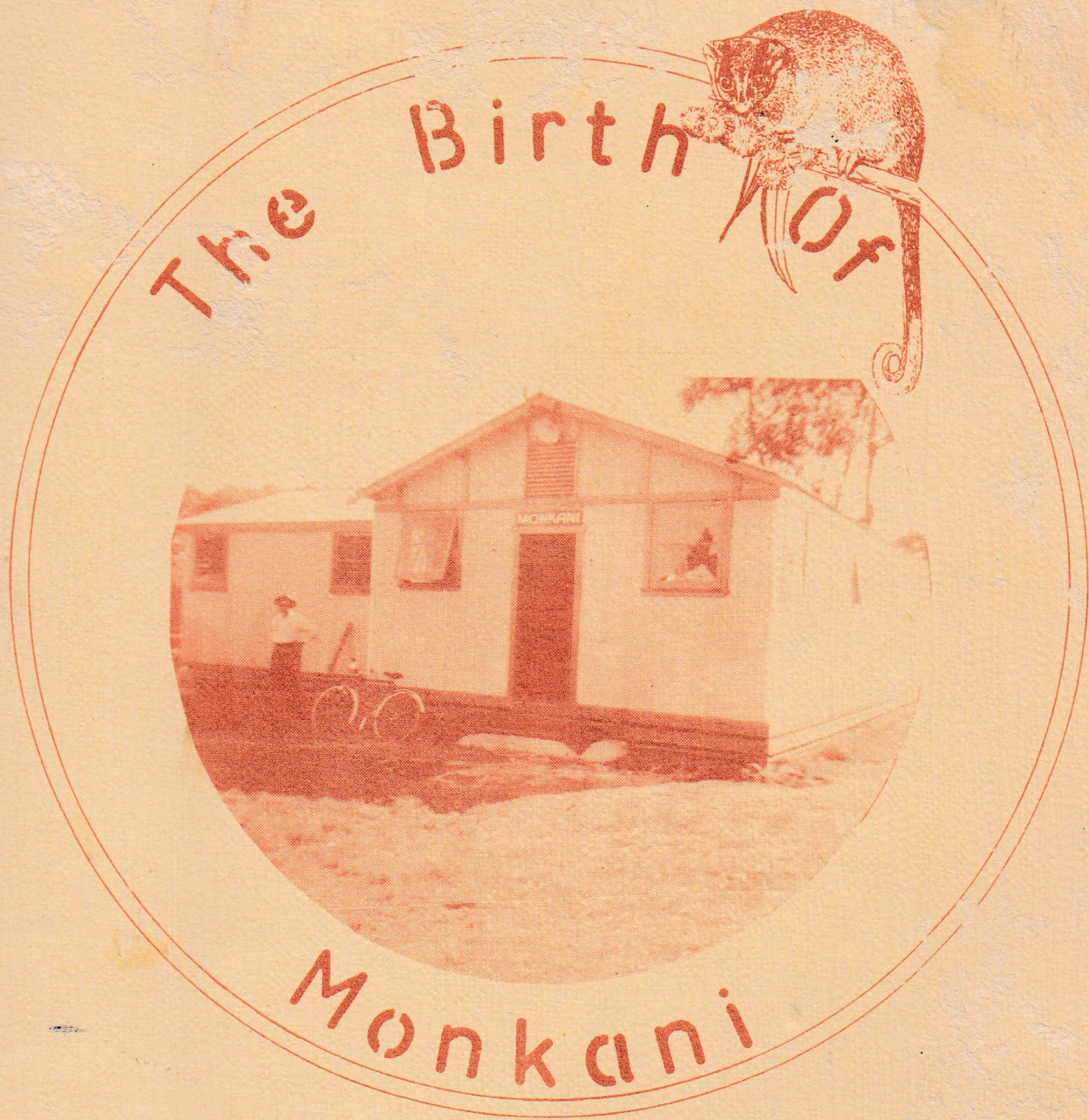




1926 ~ 1980

The Birth Of Monkani

Written by

Leonie Tyson

Researched by

Val Ferres (nee George)
and

May Ireland

This Booklet was written in the hope that when 'Monkani' is finally removed from the Gardenvale landscape, its story and the dedicated people it involved, may not be forgotten.

Besides being distinguished as the first hall in Victoria to be wholly owned by a Guide Company, it is a lively and worthwhile part of the history of Gardenvale, and as such should be recorded.

17th October, 1980.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Late Hon. Sir Thomas White.

Hon. John Don, M.B.E.

Brighton City Council.

Brighton North Ward Progress Association.

Parents and Friends Committee.

Miss May Ireland.

DEDICATED TO THE LATE MRS AMY PEARSON

(Divisional Commissioner)



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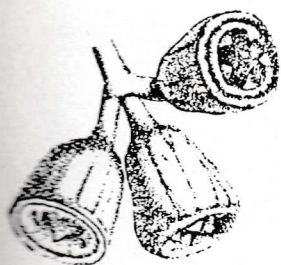
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EPILOGUE



Introduction

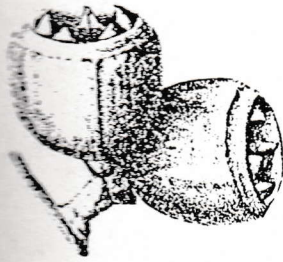
In 1841, Henry Dendy bought 5,120 acres of dense scrub , south of the Yarra, for £1 an acre.

By 1859, part of this same property became known as the Borough of Brighton. With rapid expansion, due to the fertility of the soil and the pioneering spirit of the early market gardeners, Brighton became a Town in 1912.

By 1926, four years after the introduction of Guiding into Victoria, 1st. Brighton Guide Company was formed.

It took almost two years for the Company to be officially registered (for a fee of 1/-), the document having been sent to be signed in England and finally returned to Melbourne in 1928.

The first meeting of the Company was held in St. Stephens' Church of England hall, Gardenvale, but suggestions to demolish the building at the end of the Second World War would lead to events that culminated in the 'Birth of Monkani' in 1947.



The War Years

The 20's and 30's saw the rapid expansion of the Guiding Movement in Victoria from an original 300 to 8000 guides by the beginning of World War Two.

1st. Brighton Company was no exception to the trend and continued to grow and encourage "active citizenship" and "healthy homemaking"* by training girls to become "good wives and mothers of the future"*.

But war was in full flight, and on the home front, many organisations concentrated their activities on helping the war effort, at the request of the local councils.

Many scout and guide groups of the local and surrounding districts almost disbanded when their contributions left them with little free time.

One major contribution was their voluntary training with the Air Raid Precaution organisation, which was probably one of the biggest voluntary

* Girl Guide Association pamphlet

war -time activities.

However, having completed the training, many guides found themselves too young to qualify for the A.R.P. certificate (other citizens had to be 18 before they were permitted to train with the A.R.P. and subsequently receive the certificate) and had to settle with being members of the State Emergency Service(many at the ripe old age of 14.)

1946 saw the first year of peace in six years, the disbanding of the A.R.P. ,and rumours of destruction for St.Stephens hall , which would force 1st. Brighton Guide Company to seek a new meeting place.



Birth Pains

A new meeting place was desperately needed, but it wasn't an easy task to find a suitable hall. However, the young guide Captain(Val George) followed up a suggestion by a local Scouter that ex-army huts could be purchased to serve the purposes they required.

The aquisition of one of these huts necessitated the writing of an application to Army Disposals, and by mid 1946, negotiations had begun.

Without any indication where the finance for such a project would be found, 1st. Brighton Guide Company was allotted an ex-Airforce sleeping hut, of dimensions 76' x 18', for the cost of £120, in the latter months of the year.

But now, to find some land on which to situate the hut! The Captain had her eye on a piece of Crown Land controlled by the council as parkland in Cochrane St., Gardenvale, and set about gaining permission to use it.

Meanwhile, undaunted by the lack of finance ,

land, and a flat tyre, Val George and some of the Guides' fathers set forth to Lara in an old Dodge to inspect the prospective hut. However, on arrival, the hut was found to have an overabundance of gaps between the floorboards, and so, with the aid of the Federal M.H.R., a replacement hut was negotiated.

Fortunately, a timely interest-free loan of £300 was offered to the Company by the Divisional Guide Commissioner. So with a cheque in hand, and chaperoned by her father, the Captain travelled to the Albert Park Barracks to pay the £120 for the hut. A further fee of £90 was quoted by Yellow Express Carriers Ltd. to transport the hut from Lara to Gardenvale.

With unofficial assurance that the Company would be granted the land in Cochrane St., and the pending arrival of the hut, a meeting was convened to set up the 'Parents and Friends Association' from which the Trustees for the new hall would be elected.

1st Brighton Girl Guide Company

Dear Mothers and Fathers and Friends,

As you are probably aware, negotiations have been in progress for some time to acquire for the Company a suitable site and building to accommodate the Guides and furnish them a "home" in which to pursue their activities.

After a great deal of trouble and hard work, the site has been granted at the corner of Ross and Cochrane Streets, Gardenvale, and a building acquired which it is expected will be re-erected within a week or two.

So that the Company may function successfully, it is essential that the girls have the support of EVERY PARENT and as many interested friends as possible.

It is necessary that the present small band of active supporters, The Parents and Friends Association of the 1st Brighton Guide Company, be greatly augmented, and for this purpose a

SPECIAL MEETING

of

ALL PARENTS AND INTERESTED FRIENDS

will be held at

The Guide Hall at St. Stephen's Church of England,
Cochrane Street, Gardenvale

31 on 11/10
Thursday, 24th October, at 8 p.m.

You are cordially invited to be present.

BUSINESS:

1. To elect an Executive Committee to be decided on by the meeting.
2. To confirm or otherwise the proposed trustees for the new building.
3. To consider other general business.
Are you interested in your GIRL'S WELFARE? or will YOU LET HER DOWN? She RELIES ON YOUR SUPPORT.

May we see you there and hear your ideas.

Yours,

Edith Lewis
President

Valerie George
Captain

REPORT OF MEETING CONCERNING

PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION OF 1st BRIGHTON GUIDES

31.10.46.

The meeting which was called by the Captain of the 1st Brighton Guides, was opened with Mrs. Lewis, President of the Parents and Friends Association of the Guide Company, in the chair.

BUSINESS To form a Committee and elect Office Bearers to take over all business matters in connection with the Guide Hut which has been purchased from the Army Disposals Branch, and arrange for repayment of the loan of £300 with part of which the hut was purchased.

Also to arrange for Trustees to take charge of hut maintenance etc.,.

COMMITTEE ELECTED

TRUSTEES

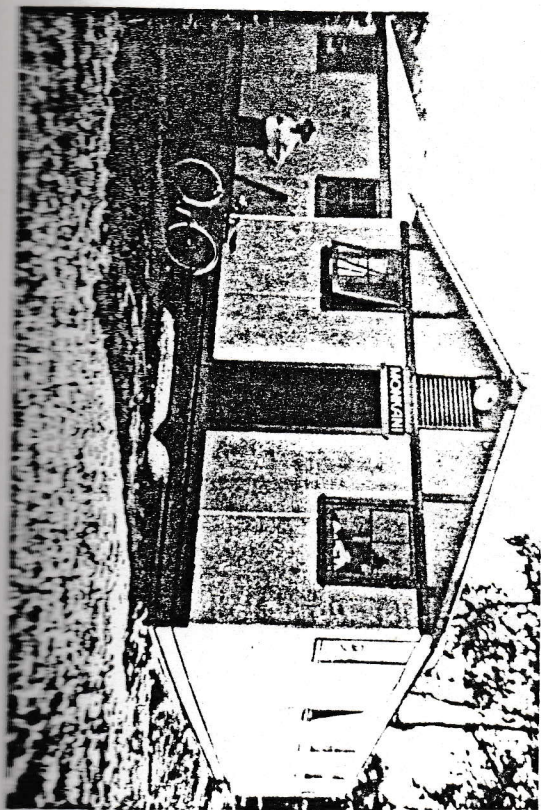
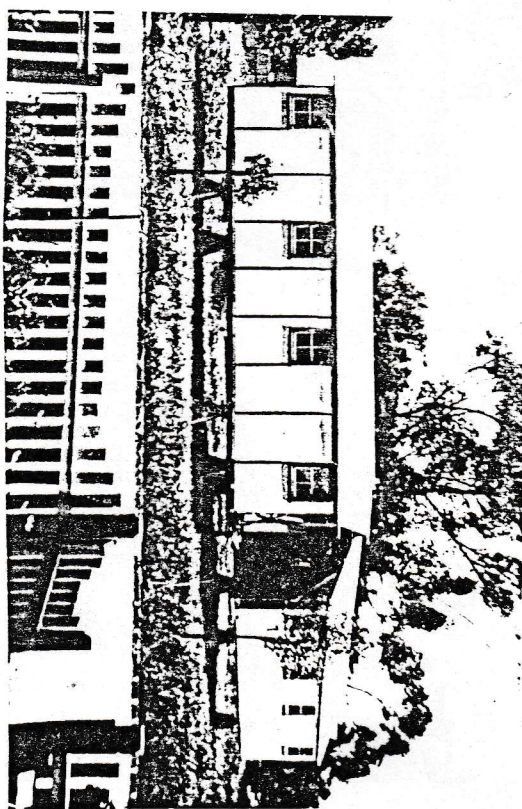
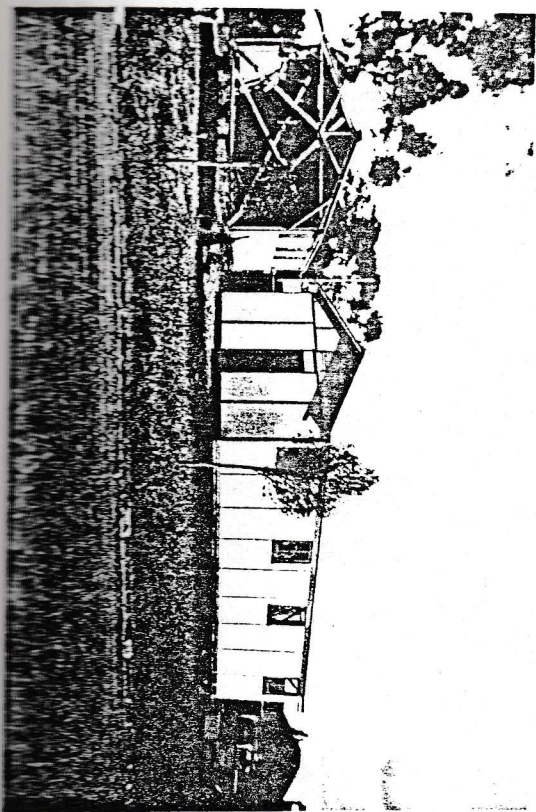
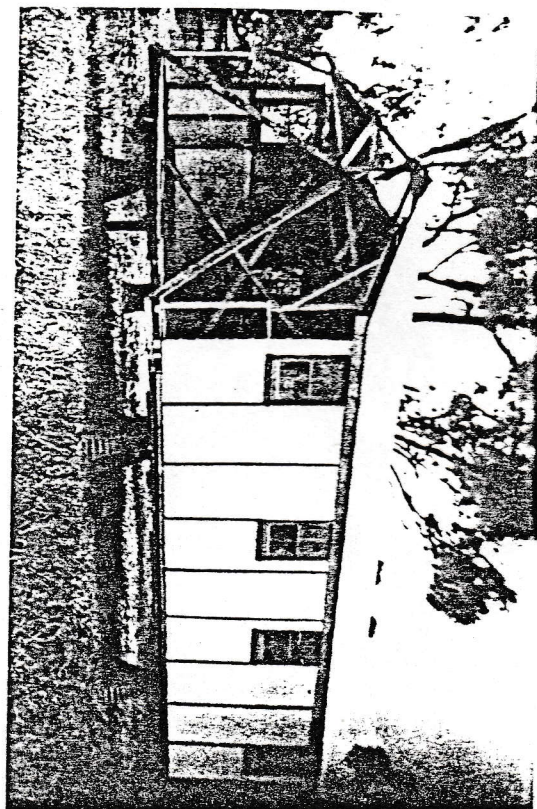
President	Mr. Murphy	Mr. President
Secretary		Mr. Slater
& Treas.	Mrs. Murphy	Mr. Taylor
Asst. Sec. }	Mrs. Taylor	
	Mrs. Slater	
Members	Mrs. George	
	Mrs. Davies	
	Mrs. Harvey	
	Mr. Slater	
	Mr. Taylor	

GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Taylor moved a vote of thanks to the retiring President, Mrs. Lewis, who, for health reasons resigned her office, and to the other members of the Association for the splendid ground work they have done in the short eight months of its being.

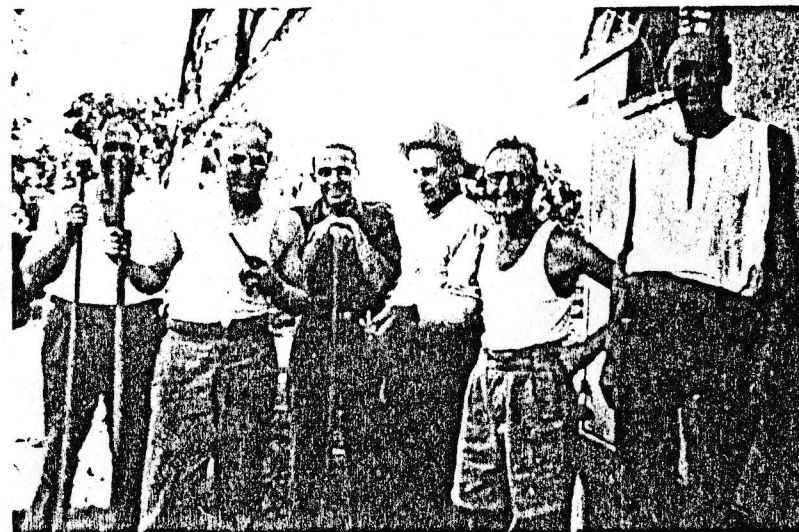
It was suggested that a card night be held on Saturday, 7th December.

-7-





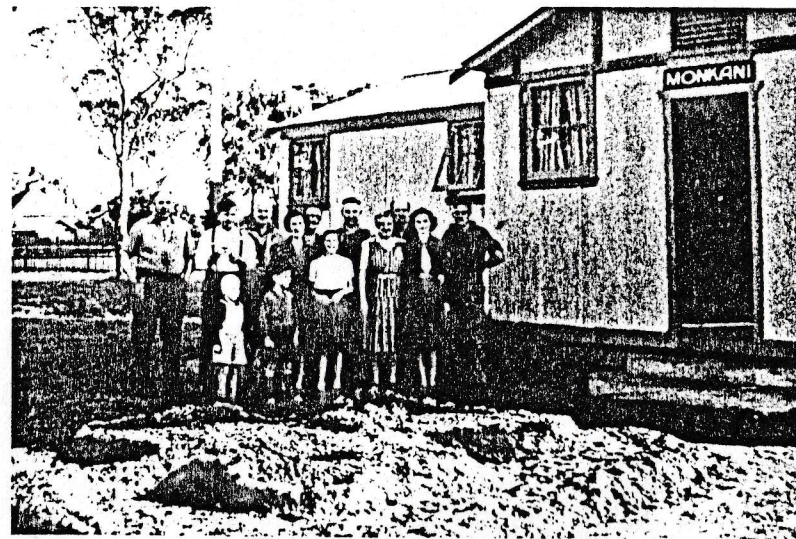
VAL GEORGE (Captain)



MESSRS. LEWIS, MURPHY, —, COLLIER, SLATER, PRINGLE



VALDA HARRIS, BERYL REID, BEVERLY SLATER,
GWEN BRISTON.



GUIDE BADGE GARDEN

While a meeting between the Captain and the Crowns' Land department was held to decide the rent payable on the land, another departmental requirement was fortunately altered. It was thought at one stage that the department would insist that the hall be moved to the left of its' original projected resting spot. Fortunately for all concerned, the move was averted, as it would have left the hall hanging precariously over one bank of Elster creek (now known as Elwood Canal)!

April of 1947 saw the hall finally settled on solid stumps and the front flower garden (formed in the shape of the guide badge) planted. It was decided to name the hall 'Monkani' (aboriginal word meaning 'thank you') in gratitude to the Divisional Commissioner for her loan.

Despite a few birth pains, the dream of 'Monkani' was finally realised, and was distinguished by being the first Guide hall in Victoria to be wholly owned by a Guide Company.

GIRL GUIDE HALL TO BE BUILT

Much interest is being shown in the progress made with the hall being erected for the 1st Brighton Girl Guide Company at the corner of Cochrane and Cross Streets, Elsternwick.

This hall is the direct result of the initiative shown by Miss Valerie George, captain of the 1st Brighton Guide Company.

The erection and completion will be the result of the combined voluntary efforts of several energetic parents, whose hard work will eventually produce a meeting place for the Guides and Brownies of which they shall be justly proud. This will be the first hall in Victoria wholly owned by a Guide Company.

Functions are being held at intervals, and the Committee is now preparing for a fete to be held at the hall on Saturday, May 3.

Many traders in Elsternwick have given their kind support to this worthy cause.

Any donations of goods or money could be sent to Mrs. Taylor, 2 Bridge St., Elsternwick (phone LF 4865), and will be acknowledged through this paper.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Brock, Tozer & Co.	£2	2	0
Elsternwick Furnish'g Co.	1	1	0
N. Garth Pty. Ltd.	1	0	0
Anonymous	0	10	0
Total	£4	13	0

'The News' 6.3.47

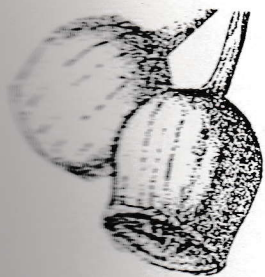
'The News' 13.3.47

THE NEWS
LETTERS TO
GIRL GUIDES HALL

Dear Sir,—I read with great interest in your paper an article relating to the building of a hall for Girl Guides. This will be the only hall owned and controlled by Guides in Victoria. As your article points out, this hall will in future be out of the hands of too many Guides and Brownies, and have long been women's clubs, the movement in the past, something in Victoria that has been lacking in the past. For many women in Victoria, the cold, agree with me, I am sure, will the 1st Brighton Girl Guide Company all the luck in Guide world for their brave venture, the "WOMAN" (St. Kilda).

* * *

(Interesting to note is the depth of feeling that the venture stirred in some of the women of the community)



The Opening

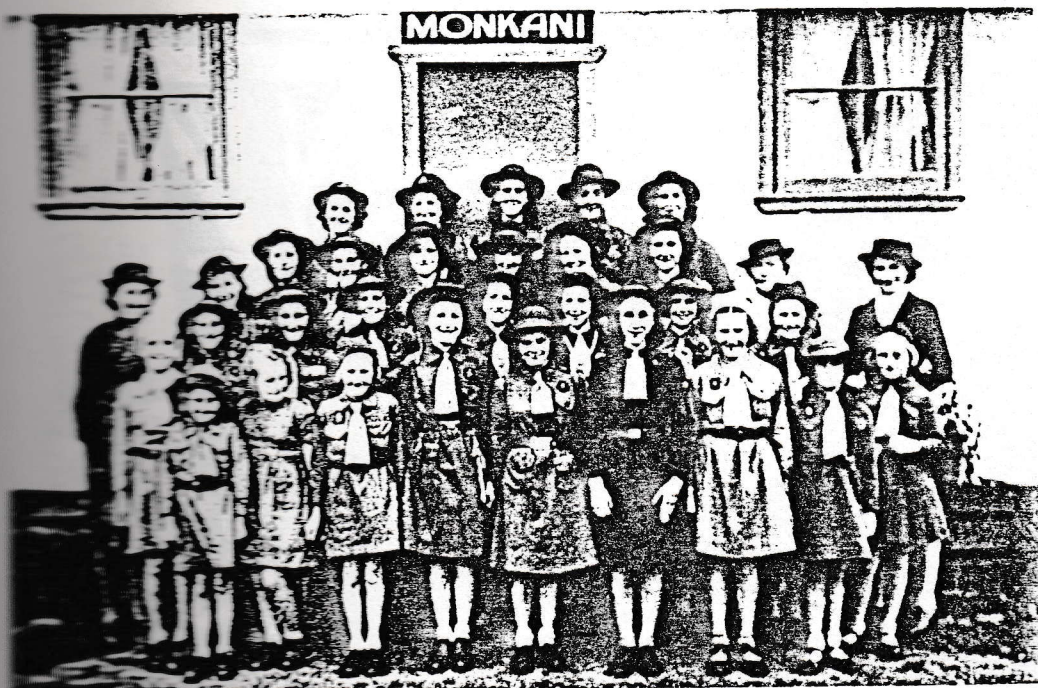
Pre-opening additions to the hall included a flagpole(donated) and a World flag made by the Captain (which to her dismay had to be hurriedly enlarged as it "looked like a pocket handkerchief" fluttering from the top of the flagpole).

While Val was being enlightened on the finer points of "hall-opening etiquette" by the District Commissioner, an invitation (which was graciously accepted) was sent to Lady Chauvel (State Commissioner and wife of General Harry Chauvel of Aust. 'Light Horse' fame...) to officially open the hall. Amongst the other guests that were to attend the opening were Miss Burns (State Secretary for Guides); State Member of Parliament, Mr. John Don; Mr. T.W. White(M.H.R.); local scout leaders and parents.

Finally the day of the opening arrives. A Colour Party is formed, and as Lady Chauvel arrives, walking through the Guard of Honour, the flag is



LADY CHAUVEL



BROWNIES AND GUIDES OF 1947.

broken and the National Anthem is sung with gusto. Lady Chauvel unlocks the door and the visitors enter, signing the Visitors' Book as they do so. Confronting them is the result of months of hard work, courageous foresight and a very Delectable-looking afternoon tea.

Disaster befalls the Captain as the handle of the plate she is holding breaks and scones are delivered all over Lady Chauvel's lap. Composure regained, Val listens to a congratulatory speech delivered by Mr. White.

" I could never have done it without everyones' help" is her reply, after which she almost faints from nerves and exhaustion.

That day was Saturday 12th. of April 1947, and 1st. Brighton Guide Company had just received its' 21st. birthday present in the form of the key to the door of their own hall.

You are cordially invited to attend

THE OPENING

of 1st Brighton Girl Guide Group's New Hall
Corner Cochrane and Cross Streets, Gardenvale

by

Lady Chauvel, (State Commissioner)

on

SATURDAY, APRIL 12th, 1947

at 3.30 p.m.



In Business

With an annual rent of £1 for the land (the first two years' rental was generously paid by Mr. White) and a £300 loan to repay, the guides didn't waste any time in organising fund-raising activities.

It was decided to hold a Bazaar on Saturday 3rd. May 1947, so letters were written to various companies, asking for donations of goods, and many were generous in their reply. The Bazaar was opened by the Mayor of Brighton, and it concluded with the drawing of the prizes for the 'Monster Raffle'. FIRST was won by F. Bugham of West Footscray who declined the prize of 1/2 a ton of firewood and accepted the equivalent value in cash, as that was easier to transport back to Footscray than wood. The 2nd. and 3rd. prizes were 2cwt. of coal and 3cwt. of wood respectively!

B.G.G.

Nº 1568

MONSTER RAFFLE

1st Prize	:	:	:	1	Ton of Firewood
2nd Prize	:	:	:	2	cwt. of Coal
3rd Prize	:	:	:	3	cwt. of Wood

Tickets 3d.

Winners Notified

Drawn on 3rd May. Results "Age" 6th May

COCKRANE ST. ELSTERNWICK

1ST BRIGHTON
GIRL GUIDES

Help
us!

To pay our
debt for all

old folks & young folks etc

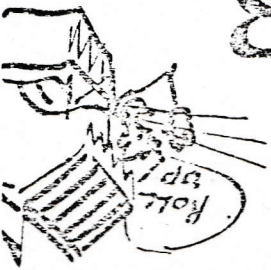
BY COMING

- to our -

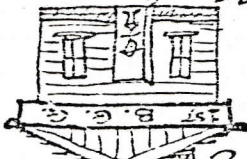
BAZAR

at the outside of the Guide Hall, Sat 3rd

1947



Side Shows



Another fund-raising activity started in 1947 was the 'Crazy Whist' night, organized by future Brown Owl and Committee member, Miss Ireland. This night is still the main fund-raising activity in 1981, after 33 years of continual support from avid card players. and organizer Miss Ireland.

While much of the money raised went into maintenance of the hall and repayment of the loan, an additional £40 had to be raised as a deposit before sewage could be connected to the hall. Thereafter, an annual payment of 5/- was required for sewage service.

Correspondence was sent between Mr. John Don (on behalf of the guides) and the Board of Works in the hope of gaining a reduction in the deposit fee, but in January 1948, still with no sewage connected, the H.M.B.W. replied (perhaps appropriately) that,

"in the circumstances, it regretted that there is no prospect of relief in this matter"! However, in due course, the £40 was raised and paid in April 1948, and although 'relief' did come in the form of a refund of £6.19.1, the hall was still without sewage until the following year.



Finishing Touches

Shortly after it was opened, Monkani became home to all of the three well known groups within guiding that is, Brownies, Guides and Rangers S.R.S Bataan; but by 1956, the Brighton Guides had expanded to include another group. However, to find the beginnings of this association, we have to look back to November of 1949.

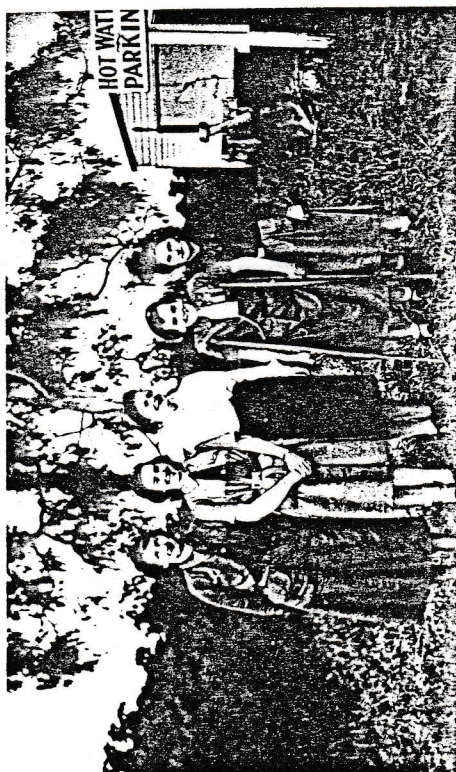
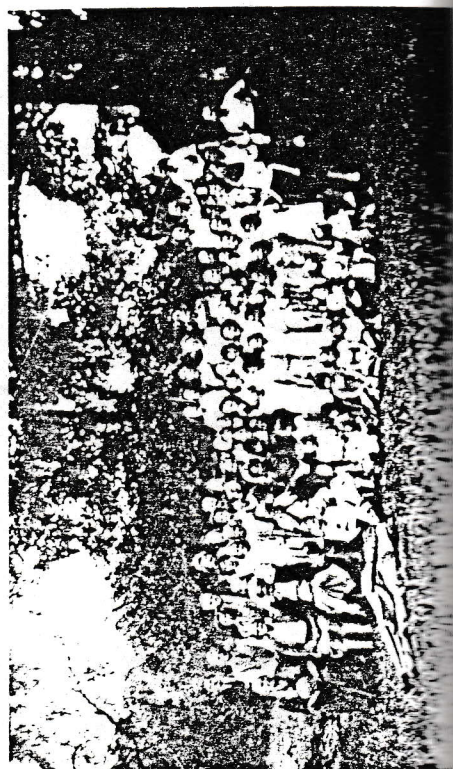
This was the date of the second annual picnic. Apart from being the important end of year function, it was highlighted by the inclusion of two handicapped guides, Margaret Low and Barbara Reilly.

The destination was Diamond Creek via a scenic drive through Camberwell and Heidelberg. The views were admired from two chartered 'Deluxe Saloon Coaches' provided by Associated Day Tours (whose skilled drivers could take you to Cowes, Mount or the Murrindindi Ranges for a mere 26/-, lunch included).

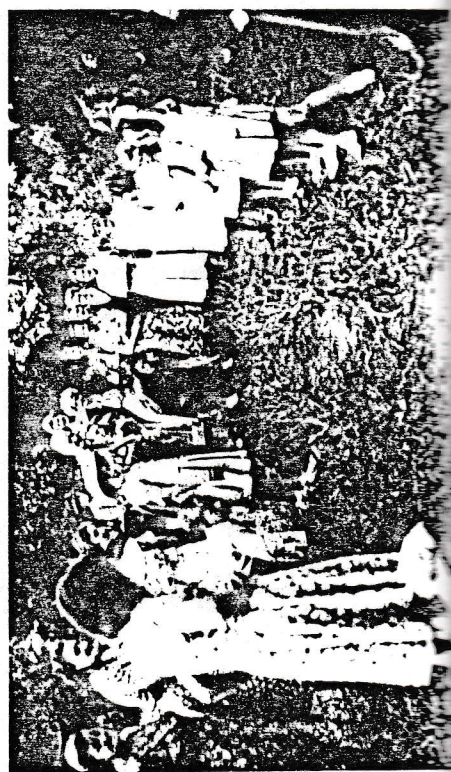
After a program of non-strenuous games such as 'punched eggs' and 'pat balloon', prizes were awarded and everyone sent home with a box of sweets for their efforts.



PICNIC GROUP



IRIS WILLOUGHBY, VAL GEORGE, MRS GALE
(DISTRICT COMMISSIONER), MARGARET LOWE,
BARBARA HENLY.



The 'Extension' group to which the two handicapped visitors belonged eventually became part of the Brighton District by forming the 6th. Brighton Guide Company. However, it was the initial interaction between the two groups at the picnic that encouraged Mt. Brighton to offer Captain Mrs. O'Donnell and her group the use of the hall from 1956 onwards, thus fulfilling the desire of Monkani's originators to house all facets of guiding in one hall.

While the finishing touches were being made to the actual guiding group, the same was being done to the hall itself.

In 1950, it was decided to buy a concrete toadstool(the construction price being £7.10.0.) for the front garden, around which the Brownies could be enrolled in the traditional manner. Stepping stones were placed around the finished toadstool on which the Brownie Motto was carved.

In one of these stones, a bottle containing the names of the original committee members and helpers responsible for establishing the hall was cast in concrete, thus preserving probably the most important part of Monkani's history.



Epilogue

Just as Monkani's history was preserved in the buried bottle, its future was secured by the continued involvement of its original company members.

Some of the guides became future leaders when Captain Val George left to marry Alan Ferres in 1950. For example, Margot Pratt and Daphne Gale became the Guide Captain in 1953 and 1954 respectively. The Tawny Owl (Beverly Slater) and Brown Owl (Jennifer Horwood) of 1955 were guides of 1947.

The impact of the associations formed in the early years of Monkani is still evident today in the fact that the original guides and their Captain still hold reunions each year. Val Ferres also presented Gale Standish with her Queen's Guide Badge in 1972, as she had presented her mother's to her (Daphne Gale) over 20 years ago, making it a second generation award presentation.

The original parents were just as dedicated. Five of these parents were still active on the Committee in 1960. The Committee was also helped in its efforts by continued financial support from Mrs Pearson, who, in addition, very kindly waived the last repayment on the original loan.

The efforts and achievements of the Brighton Company and Committee have been recognised by Guide Headquarters, through the presentation of numerous awards. They have been included in this booklet as they give a clear indication of the tremendous dedication that the Guiding Movement inspired in these people.

1. In 1953, the Committee was awarded the 'Thanks Badge' for its services to guiding. The badge hangs proudly in the hall today.

2. In the late 1970's, Mrs O'Donnell was presented the esteemed 'Wattle' Award (along with long service awards). This commemorated 45 years of continuous service to the 'extension' guide group.

3. In 1980, Miss Ireland (past Brown Owl and Committee Member and also organiser of the Crazy Whist night for 33 years) received her 35 year service award.

4. 1980 was also highlighted by the presentation of the Australian Flag and cassette of the National Anthem to the Company by Mr McPhee, Commonwealth Member of Parliament.

This booklet has described the physical history of Monkani, but the words of the late Mrs Pearson best describe the secret behind such a worthwhile achievement.

"You know, my share originally could have been given by any of many people, but your share could only have been given by yourselves, thats a truth nobody can deny".*

(Generous words from a generous woman who once described one of her donation cheques as 'a scrap of paper').