

HISTORY OF ST. CATHERINE'S FRIENDSHIP CLUB – 1984 – 2014

After the Parish acquired the Dry Cleaning premises, Edda Davis and Father Fitzpatrick decided to use the room as a drop in centre for the senior members of the Parish. In December, 1984, twenty two Parishioners met and decided on the name of their new club and elected their first executive. President – Alice Jones, Vice President – Kath Ward, Secretary – Joyce Fallon, Assistant Secretary – Nora McLean, Treasurer – Margaret Hammill and Assistant Treasurer – Bill Peeke. Members painted and made curtains for their meeting place. Jim Canterbury donated and laid the carpet. Jim also laid the carpet in the new church. The above Committee held these positions for 1985.

June Westren was elected the Second President, Vice President – Mary Bray, Secretary - Roma Joyce. In 1986 Helen Bridges took on the position of Assistant Secretary towards the end of June's Presidency. The Treasurer was still Margaret Hammill and in June 1988, Jack Carey, by a motion carried was elected Assistant Treasurer. Margaret Hammill resigned as Treasurer at the 1989 AGM. Jack replaced Margaret and was Treasurer until he resigned at the 1997 AGM. It was not until 1987 that the outings and trips were organized and the first big trip was in 1988. Jack Morahan was Auditor for ten years and was thanked by June Westren on his retirement. June held the Position of President for eleven years, 1986 to 1997.

Pat Shanahan was elected our Third President in 1998 with Vice President – Maureen Jackson for one year, she was replaced by Pat Harris, Secretary – Roma Joyce, Assistant Secretary – Helen Bridges. Roma and Helen swapped positions for one meeting, Eileen Bransgrove then replaced Roma as Assistant Secretary and the Treasurer was Bruce McGill. Pat was President for seven years, 1998 to 2004.

During June and Pat's time, they were both President and Social Co-ordinator, organizing a very full social calendar. Their activities were vast, they included Christmas and New Years Eve parties, holidays, long and short, dances, luncheons in the hall and out, picnics, theatre parties, TV shows and mystery tours, craft days, markets, guest speakers and many trips to the races. That is giving you an idea of the commitment from June and Pat, plus the executive committee of those past years. They were both awarded Life Membership in 2007, in recognition and appreciation of their work over all those years.

In 2005, Lloyd Dowd was elected our Fourth President, Helen Bridges remained Secretary for two years and was replaced by Roslyn Mooney in 2007, Assistant Secretary – Eileen Bransgrove, Treasurer – Bruce McGill, Assistant Treasurer – Bruce Farnham and the first Social Committee was elected, with Pat Vallance as Co-ordinator and Molly McGill, Carmel Farnham, Pat Harris and Tricia Vallance as Committee Members. Bob Bransgrove joined the Committee in 2006. In 2007, Marilyn Patton joined the Executive as Assistant Treasurer. Helen Bridges and Peter Mooney joined the Committee. Bruce McGill resigned at the end of 2007 after nine years as Treasurer. During Lloyd's term we held the Inaugural Seniors Mass for Shire Friendship Clubs at St. Catherine's. Every year, Bosco Community and Friendship Club take turns with us at hosting a Mass followed by morning tea to celebrate Seniors Week in March and have been supported by Monsignor Brian Rayner and Father Michael Court from Engadine. We received a grant from Menai/Hurstville Catholic Clubs, through the Sutherland Shire Development Support Expenditure Scheme for \$2,290. This money was used to purchase the two trolleys for moving the tables and one for moving the chairs around the hall at a cost of \$500 each. The two white tall cupboards were purchased and the metal cupboards storing the Dinner Set, cups and saucers, plus the tablecloths were acquired by the Parish. Lloyd was President for three years, 2005, 2006, 2007. Patrick Vallance, Tricia Vallance, Molly McGill and Carmel Farnham did not stand for election in 2008.

In 2008, Bruce Patton took on the position of the Fifth President after Roslyn Mooney was elected President and the position of Secretary was left vacant, so Roslyn remained as Secretary and Bruce Patton took on the job of both President and Treasurer. Assistant Secretary – Eileen Bransgrove, Assistant Treasurer – Peter Mooney, Social Co-ordinator – Bob Bransgrove, the Committee Members were, Marilyn Patton, Chris Jacobs, Barbara Foster, Gloria Monkhouse, Pat Saunn, Helen Bridges and Anna Natoli. Bruce thanked outgoing Committee members Helen Bridges, Pat Saunn and especially

Bob Bransgrove for his work on the 2009 calendar. The 2009 elections saw Marilyn Patton take on the Social Co-ordinator position and Allan Roberson joined the Committee. Bruce Patton still held both positions of President and Treasurer at the 2010 elections, with Secretary – Roslyn Mooney, Assistant Secretary – Eileen Bransgrove, Assistant Treasurer – Peter Mooney, Social Co-Ordinator – Marilyn Patton and the Committee Members were, Allan Roberson, Barbara Foster, Chris Jacobs and Anna Natoli.

Around this time, we acquired about a hundred of the red padded chairs, plus five tables donated by Club Menai and transported back to the hall by Owen Monkhouse, with help from Peter Mooney and Chris Jacobs. Bruce was President for three years, 2008, 2009, 2010, then stood down from the Presidency.

In 2011, Allan Robinson was elected our Sixth President, Secretary – Roslyn Mooney, Assistant Secretary – Eileen Bransgrove, Treasurer – Bruce Patton, Assistant Treasurer – Peter Mooney, Social Co-ordinator – Marilyn Patton, Committee members, Barbara Foster, Chris Jacobs, Gloria Monkhouse, Anna Natoli, Irene and Brian Myers, 2012 saw Pauline Ives and Pam Buckley join the Committee. At the 2013 elections, Pauline Ives was elected Assistant Secretary and Eileen joined the Committee. Allan Roberson was President for three years, 2011, 2012, 2013.

Our Seventh President, Brian Myers was elected in 2014, Secretary – Roslyn Mooney, Assistant Secretary Pauline Ives, Treasurer – Irene Myers, Assistant Treasurer – Peter Mooney, Social Co-ordinator – Marilyn Patton for the long trips and Annette De Luca joined the Committee and has taken on the day excursions. The Committee members are Eileen Bransgrove, Anna Natoli, Gloria Monkhouse, Chris Jacobs and Pam Buckley.

The Executive and Social Committees over many years have not stopped planning our outings, trips, luncheons and the vast array of activities, such as, card bingo, trivia, show and tell at our meetings, raffles, including the meat raffle donated each month by Wright's Meat's Gynea. June Westren decided we should have a Meat Raffle after seeing one elsewhere, so June and Mary Bray approached Wright's way back in the late 80's and after all this time they still support us. How good is that? Mary Bray collected the meat before every meeting until she retired from the Committee, Helen and Reg Bridges took on the job and on Helen's retirement, Peter Mooney did it for about 12 months and now Chris Jacobs is in charge. Before Chris, the meat raffle tickets were sold by anyone who volunteered. Nancy Casey was in charge of the general raffle for many years until Barbara Foster replaced her and now Pam Buckley now has the job. Every meeting we also have a stall selling books, donated items, etc. and the money raised goes towards the charities we donate to every year. Dorne Bell ran this stall for many years and Faith McAllister has taken on the responsibility. Each meeting, all Committee Members are kept very busy, both on the door and handling the social activities, as well as the morning tea, with help from members with the washing up. Each month we have a Mass said for the deceased members of our club, usually on our meeting day. With help from David Morrison and our photographers, we print a monthly newsletter, with a Chairman's Report, Dates to Remember, plus Reports on all our functions. We have been responsible for organizing the morning tea following the Anzac Day Mass for many years.

From our original start in the dry cleaner's building, then the original church building for a couple of meetings until it was destroyed by fire. June Westren then organized in 1989, with help from Len Rayner, a move into the Scout Hall for meetings and functions and at some stage paid \$300 to lay a path across to the Scout Hall. Every meeting, chairs were carried from the school and then returned. I believe at some stage, meetings were held in the school library. April, 1987 and the decision was made to purchase cups and saucers, then in May, the large urn was purchased from Norm Provan for \$208. Bill O'Connor and Neil Ryan were known for their tea making abilities. In July, 1989, June and her Committee designed a spoon to be sold through the Parish and raise funds for a substantial donation to the Altar in the new church. In 1991, our club paid \$120 to have the piano fixed in the hall [old church] and to be used also by the school. April, 1992, saw June again looking for ideas to raise money towards building the toilets in the hall and fix up the kitchen with cupboards and doors to store the urn, cups, etc. A cook book, with everyone donating recipes, a Fete Stall selling craft, which the members made by holding lots of craft days and a major raffle, that was sold throughout the Parish and were all successful and raised many dollars.

Over the years, The Friendship Club has supported the Parish in many ways and in 1992 spent \$640 on material for a kitchen, it was built by Doug Foster and Peter Bridges, in 1994, Neil Ryan, Tom Corney and Leo Venier fitted a sink and I think the lino was laid and a fridge was purchased. Wally Westren and Bill Irvine painted the cupboards in October 1992. February, 1993 and the decision was made to purchase 52 chairs at \$7.50 each and 10 tables at \$168 each. Over the next 12 months they increased the chair numbers to 80, to accommodate the growing club.

Father Hannon on behalf of the Parish made a contribution to the purchase of the tables. Not sure when, but the dinner sets, used at Melbourne Cup luncheons were purchased. The cutlery we still use today was purchased at St. Vinnies, Sutherland and donated by Dot Carey. Roses and plants were purchased and planted in front of the hall {old church} and had to be replaced due to lack of watering. June and Pat both agree, that without the wonderful support they received from Father Hannon, plus the other Priests in the Parish who also supported the functions and meetings, their job would have been much harder. Father Hannon also went on outings and always attended meetings. Father Hannon chose both our Club Prayer, said before our meetings and the Prayer we say on our outings.

This December, 2014, marks the 30th Anniversary of the formation of the first elected Executive, our wonderful St. Catherine's Friendship is still vibrant, with a current membership of 133, holding a meeting every month, plus our regular social activities. We would easily be the oldest Seniors Club in the Shire and with Bosco Friendship Club, are the only two active Parish clubs. Monsignor Brian Rayner is our Parish Priest and we also get great support from Liz Ermers and Grahame Cashman with our newsletter and Church notices.

Many of our members and those no longer with us have been the main support of the Parish and School since its formation and Father Paul O'Donoghue, the Police Chaplain, said one Sunday not so long ago, as he watched the more senior members of the Parish arriving for Mass, "they are the DNA of our Parish" and I could not agree more.

After reading June's notes and many of the previous Minutes , plus lots of phone calls, I hope the above details are a favourable and hopefully a fair and reasonable account of the many years gone before us and does justice to the many Executives, Committee Members and all Members, past and present, all those hard workers that have got us where we are to-day, we say a "Big Thankyou"

Sadly, as 2014 draws to a close, so too does the use of the Parish Hall, the venue, where we have held our meetings, etc for many years. We now look ahead to 2015 and our monthly meetings to be held in the Gynea Bowling Club from the Friday 16th January. As we implement changes to our club, we pray for your continued support.

Roslyn Mooney