



# CARING FRIENDS

S U M M E R 2 0 2 1 / 2 0 2 2 N E W S L E T T E R

**Ryder-Cheshire Victorian Homes Foundation Inc.**  
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## GREETINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings and welcome back to freedom from lockdowns! After almost a year of restrictions, borders are gradually re-opening and we look forward to hosting our country residents.

This was our 40th year of operation but unfortunately it passed by without fanfare. On a sad note, our Inaugural President Bill Galbraith passed away on 21 September 2021 almost 40 years to the day that he and Group Captain Leonard Cheshire VC officially opened the Homes. During September we received further sad news with the announcement of the passing of Committee member Michael Negri and long-time volunteer Betty Trotter. On behalf of the Committee of Management and all those associated with the Homes we extend our sincere condolences to the Galbraith, Negri and Trotter families.

### Resident Carer Update

In July we farewelled Jaysmine Maan. Jaysmine after successfully completing a Master's in Business Information Systems moved to Canberra to further her career prospects. Shortly after we welcomed Occero Fuller joining as a student Resident Carer. Occero is settling in well and often seen with his cycling gear and bike ready for another ride around the suburbs. Talal continues his nursing studies while volunteering and is now looking forward to a Christmas break. Nick Dodd whilst waiting for his permanent visa has been a great volunteer, displaying his versatility in assisting in all aspects of the of the Homes operations. Thank you, Nick.

### Don Sinclair House

Don Sinclair OAM was our President for 25 years. In his honour and with the endorsement of his family, we have named Building 10, "Don Sinclair House". The new signage was completed in October but due to COVID-19 restrictions there was unfortunately no official gathering to mark the occasion. We are confident of making this a calendar event in 2022.

### Renovations

Lockdown and restrictions as well as Government imposed limitations on on-site tradespeople significantly impacted on the progress of the renovation of Building 14. However, in late October with much excitement and anticipation we received the permit to re-occupy the building. Many thanks to all involved in the renovation program giving of their time and skills to finally achieve the full refurbishment of Building 14. We now advance the program to renovate Building 12 which has been decamped and readied for the builder. Completion promises to be more straightforward following experiences learned from Building 14's refurbishment. An interim completion date is June 2022.



### Donations

We thank all generous Caring Friends readers, support groups and individual donors who have continued to support the Homes. The renovations and extra expenses incurred to ensure additions and constructions were compliant, combined with the decrease in resident numbers due to cancellations have left our reserves depleted. All donations are very welcome. A cut-off donation slip is on the back page of this newsletter.

### Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas party and carol singing did not take place this year. The party when it occurs is an enjoyable opportunity for residents, Committee, staff, volunteers and supporters to share some seasonal goodwill. However, it is our intention to provide Christmas lunch for those residents who are not able to be with their families for Christmas.

Upon closing, I sincerely thank all the Committee, Management, Resident Carers and cleaning staff for their dedication and support during this difficult year whilst continuing to maintain a "Home away from Home" atmosphere.

*With best wishes for the Festive Season as we look forward to 2022 with renewed hope for a more predictable year.*

**Peter Overton**



▲ Kitchen Renovation  
◀ Don Sinclair House

## INTRODUCING OCCERO

Hi everyone,

My name is Occero, and I am a native of Jamaica, the home and birthplace of a number of famous people like Bob Marley (founder of Reggae music) and Ian Fleming (British writer of the James Bond series), and the country's more recent star Usain Bolt. I moved to Melbourne in 2020 to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology at La Trobe University. I came across the Ryder-Cheshire Homes through the University off campus accommodation page while browsing the internet. I am so pleased to be part of the Ryder-Cheshire Homes Family. One of the core reasons I joined the Homes is the lovely service it provides for people living in regional Victoria. In my leisure time I enjoy cycling, hiking, volunteering, socialising and meeting people from different cultural backgrounds.

Being an international student in a foreign country can be awfully lonely at times simply because you're away from your family and friends. However, since being at Ryder-Cheshire, Sandra and Leila have supported me and made me feel at home. I am looking forward to meeting you should you come to stay with us.



## MANAGER'S REPORT

As the weather warms up and we head towards the end of 2021 I am sure we are all looking forward to a festive season where we can celebrate with family and friends.

The second half of 2021 was another challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic. Melbourne went back into lockdown for an extended period and unfortunately this meant no volunteers or any social activities within the Homes. We also received extremely sad news on the passing of Betty, who was a wonderful volunteer for many years at the Homes. Betty's energy and enthusiasm was infectious and her commitment to volunteering over many years was recognised in 2016 when she deservedly received the Jagajaga Community Australia Day Award. Betty retired from Ryder-Cheshire in 2019.

Jaysmine, our lovely Resident Carer for the last 2 years made the decision to move to Canberra to commence a new position and departed in July. A morning tea took place with reminiscing and stories of her time at the Homes. We wish Jaysmine all the best with this exciting new chapter in her life.

We welcomed Occero as our new Resident Carer, to join Nick and Talal. Occero has lived in Australia for the last 3 years and is originally from Jamaica. Occero is currently studying a Bachelor of Psychology at La Trobe University, he has previous hotel, hospitality and admin experience and has settled in well.

The completion of the renovations in Building 14 certainly kept us all busy. During a brief lift in restrictions, we had two volunteers, Michael Wisth and Michael Negri come in to build tables for the renovated rooms. They certainly did not waste any time and their production line of tables was impressive with all of them built in one day! A big thank you to Michael Wisth, and Michael Negri will be sadly missed by all of us at Ryder-Cheshire.

As lockdown 6.0 commenced and no volunteers were able to come in one of our fantastic residents, Stuart came to our assistance, and what an incredible help he was. Over a 2-week period "Super Stuart" built flatpacks, cleaned kitchen cupboards, bathrooms, blinds, and windows. There was no job he could not

tackle, and we could not thank Stuart enough for his time and assistance over this period.

On Saturday 30 October 2021 we



were finally able to welcome the first residents into the new rooms. The overwhelming response has been so positive and complimentary. The new induction cooktops, full size refrigerators, new bathrooms, TV's, and furniture have been wonderful additions to the rooms, and really make the Residents stay so much more comfortable and relaxing during their time with us.

The cleaning team – Iwan, Joy and Liz have been absolutely amazing during this period. On top of all their regular duties and extra cleaning due to Covid, they were able to do a thorough clean of the newly renovated rooms, along with everything that had to go back into them – kettles, toasters, microwaves, pots, pans, cutlery, utensils, and crockery. Once the new rooms were furnished, the breakdown of Building 12 rooms was then completed in preparation for the renovations. Our cleaning team certainly deserve a well-earned break over the Festive period.

COVID-19 Government guidelines remain a focus to ensure the safety of all staff and residents. All Staff and Volunteers (when they return) are fully vaccinated. Residents are required to be fully vaccinated or have a medical exemption. Vaccination certificates or exemptions are required to be shown on arrival. Masks will continue to be worn indoors in all public areas of the Homes. We thank everyone for their continued support to ensure we remain a safe environment for all.

In 2022 we hope to bring back Covid Safe activities and welcome our wonderful volunteers back who make Ryder-Cheshire the welcoming place it is for all who stay.

*From our team here at Ryder-Cheshire, we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

**Ryder-Cheshire Management – Sandra & Leila**



Bedroom Renovation ▲  
Bathroom Renovation ▶



▲ Jaysmine's farewell - Kathy, Leila, Sandra, Jaysmine, Peter, Nick & Terry  
◀ Super Stuart

## VALE WILLIAM (BILL) GALBRAITH, INAUGURAL PRESIDENT

Bill passed away on 21 September age 85 years. Bill's early education was at Xavier College. His school years and his time growing up as an Altar Boy at the Carmelite Monastery, Kew nurtured his strong faith and spirituality and a sense of fairness and duty. Bill went on to study Commerce at Melbourne University and began a career teaching accounting. However, in his thirties he moved into Real Estate and then Hotel Broking and didn't look back having found his niche. Bill notched up some of the largest Victorian residential real estate and hotel property sales during his working life.

In 1970 he met his wife Mary through their shared volunteer work with Ryder-Cheshire and time spent individually in Dehra Dun, India. Married in 1972, they shared 49 years together and a family of six children.

On 24 February 1981 Bill was elected provisional President of Ryder-Cheshire Victorian Homes Foundation and on 24 September 1981 with Group Captain Leonard Cheshire VC officially opened

the Homes. Bill made significant contributions to the Homes whilst having a growing family and running his own company. Bill also spent many hours with Leonard Cheshire, an inspirational man whom he greatly admired. Bill was President until 1983 and remained on the Committee for a few years thereafter. Bill always maintained his interest in the Homes attending several functions over the years. Bill is survived by Mary, his six children and fourteen grandchildren.

Extracts from the Eulogy



## VALE BETTY TROTTER, VOLUNTEER

Betty worked as a volunteer at the Homes for a great number of years. Betty first began volunteering at Janefield Disability Services for children and following this at Plenty Psychiatric Hospital. At the hospital Betty worked in the coffee shop making coffees for the patients. Her next stint of volunteering was at the Eye and Ear Hospital kiosk, and subsequently the Austin Hospital Gift Shop and Op Shop.

Attending Morning Coffees in the early days of the Homes, Betty's energy and enthusiasm could not be quelled and she became a volunteer at the Homes. Betty looked after reception at least one session a week and organised the Wednesday afternoon teas. Betty will be especially remembered for her friendly, welcoming manner, her commitment and dedication to the Homes, a place she loved to work, as well as being a staunch Collingwood supporter!

Betty passed away on 11 October 2021.



## VALE MICHAEL NEGRI, COMMITTEE MEMBER

Sadly, and unexpectedly, Michael passed away on 12 September 2021. A compassionate man, he is well remembered for his love of people, keen eye for adventure and sharp sense of humour. Michael joined the Committee in 2005 and shortly after accepted the role of Treasurer, a position he held until 2016. Born in Numurkah, Michael enjoyed an adventurous youth often later recalling certain memorable events. Michael joined the Healesville State Savings Bank of Victoria in 1951 working for 39 years before retiring as an executive officer at age 55. Married in 1958 to Ellen, Michael was a devoted father and family man and together they raised five children. Michael was a committed Christian, loved people and espoused tolerance and acceptance while being a lifetime advocate for the disabled and the disadvantaged.

Michael had a thirst for education and with Ellen studied senior school subjects while his children were still at school, to then go on to complete a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Economics at Melbourne University. A great reader of politics, philosophy, history

and theology, Michael also spent over 20 years tracing the origins of his family, "Parallel Paths" being the culmination of this work. Michael worked on and co-launched the book "Salt and Light" in March 2020, a selection of homilies and artwork in honour of his identical twin brother Fr Patrick Negri SSS.

Described by his family as an ethical man with a strong moral compass, Michael invested time in people. He volunteered for many years at the St Francis Church Pastoral Centre. Widely travelled, he was able to enjoy first-hand his interests in culture, architecture, and history. A Richmond Tigers fan, Michael loved life but not getting old! Nevertheless, the regular golf day always remained a calendar event.

Michael's presence and participation at the Homes will be very much missed. Nothing was too hard, too big, or too small for him, he was always ready to lend a hand right up until his passing. Michael was a gentleman with a compassionate heart who offered the generosity of friendship to all.

Extracts from the Eulogy



## SNIPPETS

*"Love the upgrade since I was last here."*

*"Thank you so much for providing me with such a quiet calming space to relax in for a few days away from the hospital. It was very much appreciated."*

*"Exceeded our expectations."*

*"Wonderful accommodation for people who live in remote areas to access medical services. The staff are very kind and each unit is clean, comfortable and has everything you need. Thank you."*

*"My wife and I were very, very impressed by RCH Ivanhoe. Staff and volunteers so pleasant and helpful (even providing an umbrella). The unit was most comfortable, and we were so fortunate to be in a room with no stairs."*

*"Thank you for supporting my daughter and granddaughter. Thank you for making it feel that little bit more normal with life at the moment, bless you all."*

# AROUND & ABOUT CARISBROOK

In this edition we visit Carisbrook in Central Goldfields Shire. Located on the Pyrenees Highway lying 7km east of the regional centre of Maryborough and home to the poet Matilda (Tilly) Aston who established the Victorian Association of Braille Writers.

In the 1850's the township grew around the lucrative trade of collecting tolls from diggers travelling between Castlemaine and Maryborough. The town developed into a trading post to meet miner's needs for supplies and was officially declared a borough in 1857. In 1863 when gold was discovered 8km to the south at Majorca, around 15,000 diggers arrived, dramatically boosting the district population which was then just over 100.

The main buildings of historical interest are found dispersed around the township including several churches and municipal buildings. Each is within walking distance of the other. One of the most significant buildings is the Lock-



▲ Primary School circa 1874  
▶ Town Hall  
▼ St Paul's Anglican Church



▲ St Francis Church 1864  
◀ Log Lock-up



Up built around 1852, the oldest of its type in Victoria. It backs onto the tranquil Tullaroop Creek Nature Trail where a variety of native wildlife including platypus can be seen.

In front of the Uniting Church a large memorial is erected to poet Tilly Aston, one of the town's most famous inhabitants. Tilly, who was blind, was truly a remarkable pioneering woman. Born in 1873 she was the youngest of eight children to Edward Aston, bootmaker, and his wife Anne. Vision impaired from birth Tilly lost her sight totally by age 9. By chance she met Thomas James a blind miner who as an itinerant blind missionary taught her how to read Braille. Encouraged further she continued her education reading Braille while boarding at the Victorian School for the Blind in Melbourne.



▲ Tilly Aston Memorial Plaque  
◀ Tilly reading Braille to children circa 1900  
◀ Tilly as a young adult

At age 16 she was the first blind Australian to attend university, enrolling in Arts at the University of Melbourne, only to give up in her second year as there were no Braille textbooks. Tilly then set up the Victorian Association of Braille Writers where she wrote in Braille before typing her poems in standard English. In 1912 at age 39 she joined the education department becoming head teacher at the School for the Blind, a position she held for 12 years. She was awarded a Commonwealth Literature Grant in 1935 and received two King's Medals for distinguished citizen service. A prolific writer she regarded her best compilation of poems to be "The Inner Garden" (1940). Tilly fought for equality for the vision impaired and campaigned for political rights through what she described as "The Blind Vote". Her ability to lead an independent and remarkable life despite her disability was and still is inspirational. Tilly passed away in November 1947. The Federal seat of Aston is named in her honour.

Source: Tilly Aston Memorial, Carisbrook  
**Teresa Overton**

## CARING FRIENDS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Instead of receiving a hard copy, we can send it to you via email. Simply call our office and provide your email address, or go to [www.rydercheshire.org.au](http://www.rydercheshire.org.au) and follow the links. Thank you.

## REGULAR SOCIAL EVENTS SUSPENDED

Get-togethers for a chat over morning or afternoon tea, monthly art and craft group and musical entertainment have been suspended. Please look out for notifications from our front office when these are expected to resume.

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you have time a few hours a week to assist at the Homes or act as Resident Carer over a weekend we'd love to hear from you! No pre-requisite skills required. For all enquires please call (03) 9254 2400.

# DONATION

Ryder-Cheshire Ivanhoe Homes (ABN 94 074 894 677) receives no government funding and is financed entirely through its own efforts and the generous support of Caring Friends.

Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

Visit [www.rydercheshirehomes.org.au](http://www.rydercheshirehomes.org.au) to donate via **PayPal**

If you would like to make a donation, please fill in the form and send it to the address below:

**RCVHF Inc.** 10-14 Donaldson Street  
IVANHOE VIC 3079

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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