

## **DROUIN CROQUET CLUB INC**

### *A potted History*

Drouin Croquet Club, Gippsland's oldest Club, was formed in 1903 at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Druitt at number 26 Main South Road, Drouin.

Croquet was also played at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chambers.

In 1909 Mr. J.S. Hutchinson wrote to the Victorian Railways Department, Melbourne, for the transfer of land from Mr. Faraghen to a committee of three consisting of Mrs G.V. Stephen, Mrs J. Blacker and Mrs J.S. Hutchinson, who would hold themselves responsible to the department for the rent.

The first lease was granted July 1<sup>st</sup> 1909. The rent of one pound yearly was to be paid for one acre of land, "Lot 16, situated at, or near 56 miles 40 chains of Gippsland line of railway and on right side thereof, near to Drouin station for Croquet Club purposes."

The Club intended spending between fifteen to twenty pounds in beautifying the grounds, making the lawns, planting hedges, shelter trees and constructing fencing.

This site was opened in 1910 and continues to be the home of the Drouin Croquet Club.

Over the years' new leases with the Victorian Railways were signed with the rent increasing to £3 per year in 1936, \$70 in 1972, \$104 in 1981.

In 1986 rent asked for was \$2,900 per year which the Club could not afford--the Railways then decided to sell the land (valuation \$75,000) member Mrs D. Burnip generously donated a considerable sum of money to the Club and together with funds from the Buln Buln Shire the land was purchased.

Our Club house is named after Mr. J. & Mrs. D. Burnip.

The first male member was Mr. Ernest Stocks, and a memorial gate was erected in 1950 at the entrance.

We became an Incorporated Club in 1984.

Club members voluntarily do all the upkeep and mowing of our two lawns and surrounds. Currently we play Golf croquet.

Life Members over the years have been: Mrs. L. Mc Gorlick, Mrs. H. Burrows, Mr. C. Burrows, Mr. A. Lutman, Mrs. E. Maxfield, Mrs. A. Maddock, Mrs. D. Burnip.

The Club has had one member represent Australia at International level. Harley Watts living next to the Club was only 10 years of age when he won his first tournament at Phillip Island. Harley was in the Victorian State side in 1994. In 1996 he represented Australia in Somona, CA. USA and was also chosen to represent Australia in the Mac Robertson Shield. He has also represented Australia in the "Trans-Tasman" Shield, Australia Vs New Zealand. In 1997 he was an Australian Gold Medal winner. Harley now resides in South Australia and has won that State's Championship.