

Some thoughts from Port Elliot Town & Foreshore Improvement Association President Sue Dixon.....

Vale Colin Lawrence Ekers - 27/01/1932 - 17/06/2020

It was with considerable sadness that we contemplated the news that Colin Ekers, in recent years one of our punctual and positive community representatives had passed away.

Colin Ekers came to Town and Foreshore meetings representing the then newly established Southern Fleurieu Historical Museum. He is fondly remembered for delivering a report each meeting handwritten in old style script, always three copies. Suddenly and recently he surprised all of us, announcing that he now had a computer and an email address. No reluctance to keep up with the times despite his passion and love for history and the old ways, and especially the dairy industry. Colin wasn't afraid to be outspoken but he was also unfailingly positive, fair in his opinions and creative in his thinking.

The wonderful iron cow sculpture in the Ratalang-Bashams Beach Reserve came from Colin's original idea for a fibreglass cow to celebrate a milestone in the dairy industry. I am not sure if he ever recovered from the difference in price of the eventual vandal proof "cow" as compared with a fibreglass model.

We will miss Colin's support and unreserved enthusiasm for our Association, and the district of Port Elliot.

Vale Rex Goodall

PETFIA and particularly The Friends of Waterport sub-committee were saddened to learn of the passing of Rex Goodall, one of our stalwarts and a founding member together with his wife Betty of the subcommittee which continues to care for the Waterport Heritage Reserve. In more recent years Rex had been dogged by bouts of illness, and had been forced to no longer participate in tasks carried out by the Friends, but he had been part of the team which carried out the initial restoration of the Old Police Stables, the old heritage listed Well, and the construction of the viewing platforms and access bridges in use today. It is perhaps fitting that he was working in his garden, one of his many interests, when he was struck down by a heart attack. Betty mentioned that one of Rex's great wishes was a ride in a helicopter, which he achieved when he was rushed to FMC. Sadly, despite the great efforts of the medical staff, Rex passed away three days later.

Rex had been a farmer in the Mallee until he and Betty retired to Port Elliot, where they both quickly become part of our community. Rex was truly a 'Jack of All Trades', who could turn his hand to almost anything. He is truly missed by his friends and associates in PETFIA.

Ruth Miller

Another quiet achiever and town stalwart has just as quietly left our town to pursue a travelling dream she and her partner Don have shared for some time. Ruth Miller leaves Port Elliot all the better for her time here.

Why will we miss Ruth?

Ruth saw a need for a Dog Park in Port Elliot and on a dusty area of ground almost single handedly has created a meeting place and an area that so many members of the public have contributed to or have used for social and emotional reasons as well as exercising dogs. A council survey done on a cold wet day in winter in 2015 showed 75 vehicles a day visited the Dog Park now located in the Waterport Historic Reserve.

Ruth has worked collaboratively with Council to realise the need, but I doubt there is a business locally that has not been moved to contribute in some way because Ruth approached them with such positive enthusiasm. Three examples of projects in the park initiated, organised and funded by Ruth through solicited donations were

- Ramp, bridge and steps constructed over the tunnel – Elliot Gardens Men’s Group created drawings, Victor High FLO students built the structure which was opened on 2nd December, 2015
- Shelter construction and stone wall– money raised by Ruth, seat built by Victor Men’s Shed with funding from the employer of a young worker who had worked here but died in an accident. His family are thrilled.
- Stone entrance wall for the reserve area with Ruth liaising with TAFE to build with 10 students, Resthaven to provide lunches, Traegers to donate limestone, Garden Works sand, cement etc.

Simultaneously Ruth organised a paver mosaic project with local volunteers, a timber dog sculpture which also works as a seat and new agility equipment to be built by the Victor High FLO students. An outdoor art exhibition coordinated by Ruth followed and was repeated in a bigger and better fashion in following years.

How Ruth has contributed and inspired

Exercising dogs is almost secondary to the positive effect on so many people using the Park. Comments in the Visitors Book reflect this with the most poignant from the elderly, disabled and lonely. One comment said it was the one time in the day that they spoke to another person; a blind man reflected on the joy he felt that he could now take his guide dog for a run and the elderly had similar comments re safety. Visitors to the area express their appreciation sometimes with donations of up to \$50.

Ruth has led local teams of volunteers laying paths, mixing concrete, planting trees as well as organising a variety of fundraisers. The Friends group she started look after dispensers, the visitor’s book, help keep the park tidy, keep water supplied to the small dog area and maintain a Facebook page. And on it goes.

The doggie bag waste project is destined to change the use of plastic waste bags for doggie poo in many council areas. An ethics application to UniSA was successful and the second survey of users is now complete. The survey link was shared via social media to Facebook sites.

Don, her busy partner and another quiet achiever, wrote and edited the online newsletter with Town and Foreshore news which was informative and showed Don’s great sense of humour. He also put in extra hours for the Garden Group when the need arose, and was always around when an extra pair of willing hands were needed. They will both be missed.