

Chapter 11

Events

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Table of Contents

[Summary](#).....2
[The Basin Picnic and Baby Show](#).....3
[The Basin Centenary Celebrations](#).....3
[The Basin Primary School Centenary](#).....5
[The Claremont Cup](#).....6
[The Basin 125 Year Celebrations](#).....6
[The Basin Music Festival](#).....7
[The Basin Primary School Reunion](#).....7
[Sources of Information](#).....7
[Media Items](#).....8
[Alphabetical Index](#).....9

Summary

Summary

The first the Basin Picnic and Baby show was held in 1959 and was the first major gathering of The Basin people for an event of this type.

The largest event ever held in The Basin was the 1967 centenary celebrations commemorating 100 years since the foundation of the Basin. Planning commenced in 1964 for a week of celebrations that were held in February, 1967.

The centenary of The Basin Primary School was held over a weekend in December 1980.

The Claremont cup commenced in 1986 and was held until the late 1990's.

Celebrations to commemorate 125 years since the foundation of The Basin were held over a weekend in November, 1992. On the following weekend, Clevedon celebrated 100 years of establishment in The Basin with an open day.

The Basin Primary School reunion was held in October, 2011 for former students who completed Grade six between 1978 and 1985

The inaugural The Basin Music Festival was held on the weekend of 18-20th March 2005 and has been held every year since then,

Distinguished Resident

Jim Stephens

Jim Stephens lived in The Basin for over 60 years and was probably the best known of our bus drivers as he spent 30 years behind the wheel. He told many incidents of the earlier days such as driving a bus load of people down Boronia hill when the brakes failed – and rushing over the rail crossing at 50 mph, unable to stop. This would be deadly nowadays but was achieved safely by good luck and good driving. Jim felt that the bus lines had a remarkable safety record, considering the state of the roads in earlier times.

Jim was an original office bearer of the The Basin Football Club and served many years as Secretary/Treasurer, goal umpire, timekeeper, gatekeeper etc., and was also with the cricket club and The Basin Progress Association.

When he retired, he was a dedicated worker with the Knox Historical Society, with particular interest in The Basin History. Over many years, he built up an almost complete collection of The Basin School class photographs, with names of teachers and students. This is no mean feat considering the long history of the school. He also compiled an extensive history of The Basin and its people.

Jim passed away in Feb, 2009.

The Basin Picnic and Baby Show

The inaugural The Basin Picnic and Baby Show was held in April, 1959 at Batterham Park.

Representatives from The Basin Progress Association, The Basin Fire Brigade, The Basin Scouts, The Basin Football Club and Batterham Park worked tirelessly to make the event hugely successful. Many firms donated goods or prizes and shopkeepers from The Basin and Boronia also gave support.

Three student doctors from the Women's Hospital judged the baby show with the winner being Colin Thoren, aged 6½ months, with a total of 3138 points.

An entertaining game of football between The Basin Ladies Football team and The Basin men's team saw the Ladies winners.

The Basin and Upwey Fire Brigades battled out some events and held a series of demonstrations

In the intervals, the crowds were entertained by a group of Highland dancers from Mitcham accompanied by pipe bands.

The Basin Scouts and Cubs ran the hot dog stall, the wishing well and the lucky dip.

Children's races and competitions were very popular with both competitors and spectators.

Overall, an extremely successful show,

The Basin Centenary Celebrations

In 1964, a meeting of all local organisations in The Basin was called with the object of forming a committee to organise suitable celebrations for the town's centenary which had been determined to be 11 February 1967. A committee was set up with Bill Wright as chairman and representatives from seventeen organisations. Each put in \$10.00 to start up an organising fund. Midge Beesley from The Basin Theatre Group took on the position of secretary and Jean Pritchett was treasurer.

One of the first decisions was to accept Ron



*An old school bus in The Basin Primary School Centenary Parade in 1980 passing through The Basin.
Photo courtesy Colin Hart*

The Basin Centenary Celebrations

Ikin's offer to write a short history of The Basin, beginning with the first purchase of land by William Peverill Watson on 11th February, 1867. The purpose of the book was not only to provide a record of the town's history, but to publicise the proposed celebrations. Despite a number of early problems, Ron's book was an outstanding success and even the centenary committee were surprised by how quickly it sold out. The centenary committee were appreciative of Ron's contribution and also the technical "know how" and advice provided by George Russell in the printing of the book.

In addition to the centenary book, pennants and post cards were used to promote the celebrations and raise funds. Functions held throughout the year included open days at Doongalla, a Pop Concert at the Boronia Theatre, The Basin Badminton Club Tournament, The Basin Kindergarten open day and Carols by Candlelight.

The opening Centenary function was the inaugural dinner which was attended by the Minister of Agriculture the Hon. G. L. Chandler and many other distinguished local identities and parliamentary representatives.

The official opening of the new Country Fire Authority fire station at The Basin took place on Saturday, 11th. The opening was followed by an informal social evening; the success of this function was due, in no small way, to the efforts of The Basin Fire Brigade Captain Don Maguire and his many helpers.

A thanksgiving service was held in the Salvation Army Home grounds on Sunday, February 12th. The service was graced by the presence of the Dean of Melbourne, the Rev. Tom Thomas and representatives of all local organisations. A large crowd attended and music was provided by the Salvation Army Band.

An Early Citizens dinner was held on Friday, February 17th. The dinner was attended by many local citizens who have played a long and prominent part in the development of the district and also by former residents who have provided significant contributions in years gone by.

Peoples day on Saturday, February 18, saw a huge influx of visitors from outside the district, including many from interstate. The Lieutenant-Governor, Lieutenant General Sir Edmund and Dame Mary Herring were guests of the centenary

committee at an informal luncheon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fergus Chandler on this day. Nominated representatives of local organisations were guests of the centenary committee at this function which was also attended by the Shire President and Councillors.

Peoples day commenced at 11.00 am with a floats procession through the main streets of Boronia, proceeding up Forest Road to The Basin Progress Hall. The procession was led by six Police Troopers followed by a timber jinker pulled by sixteen bullocks. Twenty-Five floats, bands from Southern Command, Nunawading Pipe Band, Marching Girls, many novelty entries and vintage cars made an interesting and spectacular parade. Many appreciative letters and comments received by the centenary committee testified to the success of the parade.

Entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon, concluding with three parachutists landing in the area. On the same day as the parade, the school committee held a "back to school" and people's day concluded with an open-air concert followed by open-air dancing.

A number of four day exhibitions were staged in conjunction with the centenary celebrations. These included a historical exhibition and displays of historical models, antiques, stamps, Latvian craft, art and international dolls. Banks in Boronia also staged displays to coincide with the centenary and Messrs R. Brewer, Bert Chandler and Son, G. Chandler and N. Perry opened their properties for public viewing.

As a permanent reminder of The Basin centenary, a small cairn, suitably inscribed, was erected on a piece of land, generously donated by the Salvation Army for a Centenary garden, opposite The Basin Progress Hall. The cairn was unveiled by Bert Chandler on the night of the dinner and he planted a tree to provide a living memento of 100 years of The Basin history and perhaps to provide a link with The Basin Bi-centenary in 2067. The cairn contains a time capsule which is to be opened in the year 2017.

A second cairn was erected by the Chandler Family under the great "Chandler" oak tree in Sheffield Road. Legend has it that this tree was planted by William Chandler in 1875 to commemorate the birth of his son Archibald. The Shire President, Councillor Arthur Kleinert,

whose forebears were neighbours of the Chandlers unveiled the cairn.

Knox Council kindly donated \$400.00 towards the centenary celebrations and generous personal donations were received from Cr. Kleintert and Cr. Ernholm. It should be recorded that all organisations received a 300% profit on their shares.

It would be impossible to mention all those who contributed to the success of the centenary, but the efforts of the entire centenary committee particularly Chairman Bill Wright, the Secretary Midge Beesley, the Treasurer Jean Pritchett and Jim and Barbara Stephens deserve special mention. The contribution of those who opened their gardens was greatly appreciated as was the input from countless others without whose co-operation the Hon. Gilbert Chandler would not have been moved to state:

"This is possibly the best function conducted in the Eastern Suburbs".

The Basin Primary School Centenary

Heavy rain and poor weather conditions failed to dampen the enthusiasm and pleasure of the hundreds of people who joined in the festivities to celebrate The Basin Primary School's Centenary held over the weekend of 12, 13 and 14 December, 1980. One hundred years was condensed into that weekend as many past students and teachers returned to share their laughter and memories.

The festivities started on 12th (Friday) with a presentation of centenary medals to present pupils and staff. This was followed by a grade six luncheon in The Basin Progress Hall and, later, a family barbecue at the school. A twilight sports meeting followed and in the evening films of old school camps were shown.

On Saturday the school was open all day for visitors. The historical display was very popular, particularly by those former students returning to the school and reliving old memories. Of particular interest was the slice of an old pine tree cut down recently with each yearly growth ring tagged with that years historical significance to the school. Many old school photographs were on display, causing many former students plenty of head scratching in working out the names of their old classmates. The school photographs on dis-

play were the start of a huge collection which date from 1892 – 100 years of school children in over 500 photographs with most children named. This collection is held by local resident Jim Stephens.

At 1.30 pm., a procession from The Basin Progress Hall to the school was watched by hundreds of people. The procession included the many forms of transport used by children travelling to the school over the years, a horse and cart and old school bus generating much interest. Marching Girls, local organisation members and people in period costume all joined in the procession.

At 3.00 pm. the centenary celebrations were officially opened by the Minister for Education, Mr. A. J. Hunt when he unveiled a commemorative plaque at the school. In attendance at the plaque unveiling, was Miss Kitty Chandler, 93, who was the oldest returning pupil at the celebrations. Miss Chandler began school at the age of 3 and her name is shown on a list of pupils in 1893. Other former students and teachers travelled from all over Australia to attend the celebrations.

Later in the day, the Assistant Minister for Education, the Hon. Norman Lacy, was involved in a tree planting ceremony. The school choir performed an item, and a dance and gymnastic display closed the days celebrations at the school.

In the evening, The Basin Progress Hall was the venue for a foot tapping old time bush dance which entertained parents, pupils and teachers late into the night.

On the Sunday, an ecumenical church service was the highlight of the day. The school was again open all day for visitors.

Lachlan and Briony Armfield, who attended the school in 1980, were direct descendants of Mr. William Chandler, one of the first settlers in The Basin.

Melinda Dobson and Catherine Smith, who also attended the school in 1980, were fourth generation pupils at The Basin School. Their great grandmother, Janet Wicks, attended the school when it opened. She married Robert Dobson, and their son Robert John Dobson attended the school from 1907 to 1916. He was a member of the school committee for 20 years, and a memorial playground was erected in recognition of his work. He married Kathleen Burden who first at-

The Basin Primary School Centenary

tended the school in 1914, and also taught at the school in 1923. Their children, James, Joyce, Lois and Alison attended the school between 1940 and 1951.

President of The Basin School Council, Mr. Bob Cole, summarised the success of the school over the past 100 years in part of his speech

“Many of our children have achieved greatness in both local and State affairs and each child, in his/her own way has taken something of The Basin to enrich their lives”.

The Claremont Cup

Held in honour of the Melbourne Cup on the first Tuesday in November, residents of Claremont Avenue in The Ravine in The Basin held their own event – The Claremont Cup.

Mounted on skateboards, the residents of the street, young and old, held a series of races in which the overall winner got their name inscribed on an aluminium cup.

First held in 1986, the event continued to be held into the late 1990's. Daniel Norton was the first winner of the race.

The Basin 125 Year Celebrations

Superb weather contributed to the success of the focus of the 125 year celebrations held on the weekend of November 7th & 8th 1992 at The Basin Primary School. Over 3,000 past and present residents of The Basin joined in the celebrations

The idea of staging 125 year celebrations had been considered for some years before the event. It was at a The Basin Progress Association meeting in November 1991 that a decision was made to hold the celebrations and planning commenced early in 1992. The theme for the festivities was to be “Back To The Basin”. A program of events between October 1992 and February 1993 was planned with the focus on the weekend of 7th and 8th of November.

Local resident Rick Coxhill volunteered to edit a book entitled “Fire on the Hill – Flowers in the Valley – The Basin 125 Years” to be published in conjunction with the celebrations in November. The book was to expand on the Centenary Booklet edited by Ron Ikin.

A balloon launch, held at The Basin Primary

School on Tuesday 27th November 1992, officially launched the 125 year celebrations. Students of The Basin Primary School and St. Bernadettes Primary School joined together to release hundreds of helium filled balloons. Each balloon was tagged inviting the finder to attend The Basin 125 Year Celebrations and/or advise the school where the balloon landed.

A cocktail party held at The Basin Progress Hall on the 29th November, 1992 to launch the book was extremely successful with over 100 people in attendance. The organisers were privileged to have Mrs. Eileen Turner, who was “Queen of The Basin” in 1930, involved in the official launch of the book. Also in attendance was His Worship, Colin Tidball, Mayor of The City of Knox, and Ron Ikin, author of the Centenary Booklet.

A 50/50 dance organised by The Basin Fire Brigade and held on Friday 6th November at The Basin Progress Hall, attracted over 100 people and was a fitting start to the weekend celebrations.

The celebrations held over the weekend of the 7th and 8th of November were focused at The Basin Primary School and consisted of continual entertainment and included the following happenings:

- Displays by The Basin Fire Brigade.
- Billy Tea and Damper provided by The Basin Scout Group.
- A monster Fete on the Saturday at The Basin Pre-School Centre.
- Community clay paver making.
- Extensive historical displays.
- A twilight Bush Dance on Saturday between 5.00 pm and 7.00 pm attended by over 200 children and adults.
- Tractor rides all day Saturday and Sunday between The Basin Primary School and The Salvation Army Home.
- A Sunday Ecumenical Service held on Sunday at The Salvation Army Home.

A highlight of the weekend celebrations were free conducted bus tours of some of The Basin's scenic & historic sites. Three mini-buses leaving from The Basin Primary School at hourly intervals, gave over 1000 people enthralling one hour historical tours of The Basin.

A “Farm to Forest” run on Sunday attracted

over 150 entrants. Two courses were offered, a 9km and 3km run. Both commenced at The Basin Primary School with the 9km run winding through the Salvation Army Home and Doongalla Forest Reserve.

The Basin Theatre, The Salvation Army Home and Bert Chandler Gardens held open days over the weekend where visitors were welcome at any time.

The final 125 year celebration event occurred on Saturday 6th February 1993 when Clevedon celebrated 100 years of establishment in The Basin with an open day.

Many individuals, traders and community groups contributed to the success of the 125 year celebrations. For the organisers of the event, over nine months of planning came to successful fruition.

The Basin Music Festival

Local resident John Mortimore had been saying for years that someone should organise a music festival in The Basin. Musical gatherings have had a long history in the neighbourhood so taking the next step to having a musical festival seemed perfectly natural

Those early ambitions of John were realised on the weekend of 18-20th March 2005 when the first festival of live entertainment and original music was held in The Basin.

Organised by The Basin Music Festival Association, the event was an outstanding success with folk, acoustic, jazz, pop, blues, country, bluegrass, Celtic and a hint of reggae sounds featured across several stages in restaurants and around The Basin Progress Hall and park.

After Fridays opening night acts, Saturday was the festival's main day with Sunday featuring a village fair and picnic in the park.

In addition to the music found throughout the indoor and on the free stage in the park, the festival included exhibitions and displays by community groups and organisations, including The Basin Fire Brigade who also shared in the profits, with activities for kids and a very laid-back country village atmosphere

Successful events have also been held every year since. Except for the first year, local resident John Allan has been the host for the event.

Associated with the music festival is the popular "The Basin Big Break Youth Stage" for performers under the age of 18 and 25 years. For the years up to 2011, this event was held during the yearly festival in March. In 2012, the event had its own dedicated weekend in July and was an outstanding success.

In later years, in the months before the main event, a series of free summer music concerts have been held in the Triangle.

The Basin Primary School Reunion

Inclement weather did not dampen the spirits or smiles of those who attended The Basin Primary School reunion in October 2011. Former students who completed Grade six between 1978 and 1985 and one ex-teacher gathered to reminisce.

Tales were told of how the big dent in the face was made; shelter shed liaisons and weddings; how long it took to get a pen licence; who spent lunch time inside after venturing into Dobson's orchard during play; how cold was that pool at the Salvation Army Boys Home across the road and which teachers gave the strap.

Sources of Information

- "The Basin Centenary booklet" - Ron Ikin.
- Local residents for information on The Basin Primary School Centenary information.
- The Free Press newspaper for information on The Basin picnic.
- Boronia and The Basin Community News for information The Basin Music Festival and The Basin Primary School reunion.

Media Items

[Media Items on the Internet](#)

Alphabetical Index

A

- Armfield, Briony
 - represented Chandlers at The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Armfield, Lachlan
 - represented Chandlers at The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5

B

- Beesley, Midge
 - assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
 - secretary, The Basin centenary committee.....3
- Bert Chandler Gardens
 - open days for The Basin 125 year celebrations7
- Boronia Theatre
 - pop concert for The Basin centenary celebration.....4
- Brewer, R.
 - opened property for The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
- Burden, Kathleen
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5

C

- Carols by Candlelight
 - The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
- Chandler Family
 - erected cairn under Chandler oak tree - Centenary celebrations.....4
- Chandler Oak tree
 - cairn under Chandler Oak tree - The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
- Chandler, Bert
 - opened property for The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
 - unveiled The Basin centenary cairn.....4
- Chandler, G.
 - opened property for The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
- Chandler, Hon. G. L.
 - assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
 - attended The Basin centenary inaugural dinner4
- Chandler, Miss Kitty
 - at The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5

- Chandler, Mr. and Mrs. Fergus
 - hosted luncheon - The Basin centenary.....4
- Chandler, William
 - planted "Chandler" oak tree.....4
- Claremont Cup
 - first held in 1986.....6
- Clevedon
 - centenary open day.....7
- Cole, Bob
 - speech at The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....6
- Coxhill, Rick
 - wrote 125 year The Basin book.....6

D

- Distinguished Resident
 - Stephens, Jim.....2
- Dobson, Alison
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Dobson, Joyce
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Dobson, Lois
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Dobson, Melinda
 - represented Dobsons at The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Dobson, Robert
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Dobson, Robert John
 - and The Basin Primary School centenary celebrations.....5
- Doongalla
 - open days for The Basin centenary celebration4

E

- Ernholm, Cr.
 - personal donation - The Basin centenary celebrations.....5
- Events
 - The Basin 125 year celebrations.....7
 - The Basin centenary celebrations.....3, 5
 - The Basin Music Festival.....7
 - The Basin Picnic and Baby Show.....3
 - The Basin Primary School centenary.....6
 - The Basin Primary School Reunion.....7

Alphabetical Index

The Claremont Cup.....6	Pritchett, Jean
F	assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
Forest Road	treasurer, The Basin centenary committee.....3
procession - The Basin centenary celebrations	R
.....4	Russell, George
H	printed The Basin centenary book.....4
Herring, Dame Mary	S
guest at luncheon - The Basin centenary	Salvation Army
celebrations.....4	donated land for The Basin centenary garden 4
Herring, Sir Edmund	open days for The Basin 125 year celebrations
guest at luncheon - The Basin centenary7
celebrations.....4	rides for The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6
Hunt, Mr. A. J.	thanksgiving service - The Basin centenary
unveiled plaque at The Basin Primary School	celebrations.....4
centenary celebrations.....5	Smith, Catherine
I	represented Dobsons at The Basin Primary
Ikin, Ron	School Centenary celebrations.....5
attended The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6	St. Bernadettes Primary School
wrote The Basin centenary book.....6	involvement in The Basin 125 year
K	celebrations.....6
Kleinert, Cr. Arthur	Stephens, Barbara
personal donation - The Basin centenary	assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
celebrations.....5	Stephens, Jim
unveiled cairn under Chandler oak tree -	assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
Centenary Celebrations.....4	Distinguished Resident.....2
L	The Basin Primary School photograph
Lacy, Hon. Norman	collection.....5
tree planting at The Basin Primary School	T
Centenary celebrations.....5	The Basin
M	125 year celebrations.....6
Maguire, Don	picnic and baby show.....3
The Basin Fire Brigade - second station	The Basin Badminton Club
official opening.....4	tournament for The Basin centenary
Mortimore, John	celebration.....4
wished for music festival in The Basin.....7	The Basin centenary celebrations
N	cairn in centenary garden.....4
Norton, Daniel	time capsule in centenary garden.....4
first winner Claremont Cup.....6	The Basin Elderly Citizens
P	dinner - The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
Perry, N.	The Basin Fire Brigade
opened property for The Basin centenary	50/50 dance for The Basin 125 year
celebrations.....4	celebrations.....6
	displays for The Basin 125 year celebrations. 6
	involvement in The Basin Music Festival.....7
	second fire station - official opening.....4
	The Basin Kindergarten
	fete for The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6

open day for The Basin centenary celebration 4

The Basin Music Festival
 about.....7
 first in 2005.....7

The Basin Picnic and Baby Show
 about.....3

The Basin Primary School
 centenary celebrations.....5
 fun runs for The Basin 125 year celebrations.6
 grade six reunion.....7
 historical tours for The Basin 125 year
 celebrations.....6
 hosted The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6

The Basin Primary School Reunion
 about.....7

The Basin Progress Hall
 50/50 dance for The Basin 125 year
 Celebrations.....6
 bush dance for The Basin Primary School
 Centenary celebrations.....5
 cocktail party for 125 year celebrations.....6
 The Basin centenary celebrations.....4
 The Basin centenary garden opposite.....4
 The Basin Primary School centenary
 celebrations.....5

The Basin Scout Group
 entertainment for The Basin 125 year
 celebrations.....6

The Basin Theatre
 open days for The Basin 125 Year
 Celebrations.....7

Thomas, Rev. Tom
 thanksgiving service - The Basin centenary
 celebrations.....4

Thoren, Colin
 won the The Basin Baby Show in 1959.....3

Tidball, Colin
 attended The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6

Turner, Mrs. Eileen
 attended The Basin 125 year celebrations.....6
 queen of The Basin in 1930,.....6

W

Wicks, Janet
 and The Basin Primary School centenary
 celebrations.....5

Wright, Bill
 assistance - The Basin centenary celebrations 5
 chairman, The Basin centenary committee.....3