VICTOR HARBOR F.C.  Interviewed by Jan Bache 14/8/17.

Where it all began (extracts taken from a book of 125 years of football of Victor Harbor F.C. researched and written by Noel C Pearsons and kindly lent to me by Jeff Kairl. It is a firm belief that football was played in the Victor Harbor area as far back as 1889. Old timers who had played the game locally, and in most cases they were quite prepared to ‘send their minds up memory lane’ to help the cause of Noel’s book. The stories that were told at the ‘Boat Shed’

were many and varied, some of which were hardly appropriate for ‘ears so young’. However the topic invariably was football as most of those present were past or present players of the local club. It was fact in those days that the male species would walk miles to kick a football, with or without footwear. A gentleman named Bill Ewen, mentioned that his father Mr.Lewis Ewen was born at Encounter Bay in 1867, and that he played football for Victor Harbor at a fairly young age and would have been among the really early members of the Club. In 1883 a football match was played at Goolwa on Saturday 21st.July in the presence of a large number of spectators. Goolwa won the match 2.11 d Victor Harbor 1.5. There have been many photographs found, one dating from 1903 claiming it to be the Premiership team for Victor Harbor. Other photos dated 1906.1911,1912,1913. In 1914 files show Victor playing games against Port Elliott, Goolwa, Yankalilla, Willunga, Alexandra Association, McLaren Vale, Hope Valley and Sturt. It was also reported that Victors were not defeated during the season, though it drew one game with Willunga.

In 1923 The Great Southern Football Association was started. Victor’s Mr.Dave Bamford was elected as the first

GSFA President and Mr.F.Page of Port Elliott Secretary.

The researched history in the ‘A Story of the Victor Harbor Football Club’ is very comprehensive of records

found and a wonderful record of the VHFC. Anyone interested to buy the book can make contact with Jeff Kairl

of the VHFC.

Today I interviewed two gentlemen from the Victor Harbor Football Club, John Gordge and Grant Levy.

John is 86 years of age and his memories reached back to when he first started playing for Victor Harbor

in 1951. A young man new to the area he went and trained first with the Valley Club, (a break off from Encounter

Bay club) but never played for The Valley. John played for 16years and during those years played ‘A’ & “B” grades,

playing on the wing and centre and was successful in winning a ‘B’ grade Mail Medal in 1959. John was fortunate to not get too many injuries, mainly a hamstring, but it did not stop him from playing. During his younger days

when he relocated to Victor he resided at the ‘Imperial Guest House’, one bedroom, shared dining and shower facilities. A lady at the guest house did his laundry. John lived at the Guest House for 4 years, and had an

enjoyable time. John remembers the state of the Oval, he mentioned how it fell away on the south eastern cnr about 4 foot, and a fellow called Brenton George and volunteers filled in the drop with Tractors and scoops to level the oval. The change rooms were a tin shed, Bath chip heater and a gentlemen called Brian Jenkins had the hot water ready for the Victor lads after their games, players certainly appreciated that. John was not sure where opposition

cleaned up after match. After the home games the boys would go to the local pub and have a few drinks, of course it was 6 o’clock closing, so it was a quick drink. John remembers one game they played in the country and the

boys were all looking forward to the local dance after the match. Regretably John sprained his ankle, no dance for

him and he had to sit in car and await for the boys to take him home after the dance. John played in 4 or 5 ‘A’ and ‘B’ grade finals and played alongside several great Victor Harbor footballers. The Tugwell bros, Brenton George, Joe Sutton, Kleinig Bros to name a few. Opposition players he respected were; Tonkin Bros & Clarrie Canan from Mt.Compass, Don Bartel & Alan Field from Encounter Bay. John remembers that the matches played against Encounter Bay were played fiercely as both were wanting to win, but the comradeship was great after the game.

During John’s involvement with the Victor Harbor Football Club he was the 1952 Most Improved player, 1953/54 Most consistent, 1959 Awarded Player Life Membership of the VHFC. 1960 Best Grand Final, 1966 Best & Fairest and 1967 Most consistent. Coach of the Senior Colts, represented the GSFA in Lovelock Shield competition at Echunga. In 1961/62 John was Secretary of the club and in 1978/79/80/81 President of the Club. In 1978/79 John was club Delegate to League meetings and was also Vice President of the GSFL in 1981 and also wore the hat of Commissioner. . He was also awarded Life Membership of the VHFC and GSFL Life Membership in 2001. BBQ, on Thursday night were always prepared and cooked by John,and his mates Norm Golding, John Fishlock and John Simmons donated the meat. The boys also prepared evening meals with 3 courses being served. When Victor Harbor celebrated their 100th.year century John and his wife Rosemary organised the event, congratulations to them. John has asked that it be recorded in this transcript that he had great admiration for Julie Curran and her sister Marlene for their involvement in the Encounter Bay F.C.Canteen, the girls worked very hard and credit to them.

The interview with Grant Levy was most interesting. Grant has had a long football career, on and off the field and the recorded stats show: Grant commenced playing as a 4.1/2 year old lad playing for the Fulham North Primary School, progressed through to West Lakes F.C., Sacred Heart 1st. Team, Port Adelaide F.C. and when boundaries were changed by the SANFL was recruited to play for West Torrens F.C.. Grant played in the U19 and won a Premiership Flag in 1989. After Torrens merged with Woodville he played only a few games. He registered with the Victor Club in 1990 and played thru to 2001, he was fortunate to participate in 6 straight premierships as a player, 1998 was Player Coach. Was Captain in 1995/96/99, played 225 games, and 1 reserve game in 1990. In 1993/1955 was Most Consistent, 1994 Runner Up B&F, 1994/96 State Country Team, 1995 Best Team Man, 1997 Most Valued. Was a Member of the club’s committee 1994-1997. In 2000 was appointed Coach of the Zone Team, also Lovelock Shield Team. In 2006 Grant was awarded Life Membership of the VHFC, Grant recruited to play for Henley F.C. IN 2002/3/4, undefeated premiers in 2004. He retired in 2005/2006.

Grant returned to the league and was coach of the Junior Association teams, SDFCA U15 years team, and Coach of Jnr colts in 2012,2013, and won 2 premierships. Grant rejoined the Football club committee in 2008-2010 and was also on the junior committee 2010. To add to his success Grant picked up the role as ‘A’ grade coach in 2014/2015/2016.

Grant’s memories of matches played that the competition was a fierce competition and of a high standard. The coaches he admired whilst playing at VHFC were: Tony Symonds, Dennis Russell, Randall Wright and Kym Smith.

Team mates were Ross Gibbs, Paul Halloran, Jamie Brown, really too many to mention. Opposition players Darren Mansell E/Bay, Sean Jackson, Mark Jolly and Keith Allen from Goolwa.

Grant remembers when he lived in Adelaide and came down to train on a Thursday night, a few of the boys from

town would car pool. Great memories, few beers after training, who is going to drive home? ok we will stay

at the caravan park, responsible boys!

Grant is still involved being appointed as Chairman of the GSFL Women Compeition, with approx. 215 girls registered, bring an injection into member clubs. A competition to look forward to with enthusiasm.