WILLUNGA F.C.  Interviewed 9/8/2017 by Jan Bache.

The Willunga F.C. was established on the 29th of May 1874 and is recognised as the second oldest constituted football club in South Australia, the oldest being Port Adelaide. In 1877 WFC was part of the first official football competition in S.A. Distance from Adelaide forced Willunga to withdraw from that competition and so in 1886 it became a foundation member in the formation of the Southern Football Association along with Sellicks Hill, Aldinga & McLaren Vale. Records show that Willunga won premierships in 1892.93 (undefeated),94,95,97,98 & 99 (undefeated) 1901.02.03.04.09.10.11.12,19.23.31,32,36,38,48,49,50,52,52,54,55,56,61,64,84,. Two Willunga players have represented SA in State Football, Taffy Waye and Ben Thompson. Ben was also drafted into the AFL along with Randall Bone. Over the years there have been generations of families who have worn the Willunga Guernsey: Aldam, Waye, Corbett,Edwards, Martin,McDonald, Fitzpatrick,Giles,Reed,

Today I interviewed Gary ‘Chum’ Reed. Gary commenced playing for Willunga 1947 at the age 12 years, and continued until 1969, playing 311 games. He was a versatile player and represented the Willunga F.C. on the field for over 20 years. Best & Fairest 1961, ‘B’ grade captain Coach, 1950 and 1968 Premiers. Coach of colts teams 1961-1964 and 81 Premiers. Represented the SFA on numerous occasions and was the captain of the first SFA Team to win the Lovelock Shield. He served on the committee for many years. He is a Life Member WFC and SFA and a Club Person of the Year. He was inducted into the SFL inaugural 2007 ‘Hall of Fame’. Gary is a man of great character, held in great esteem within the football fraternity.

The conditions in the early days were: change room, was a tin shed, chip heater, showers, sheep, cut the grass on the oval, and when playing away the boys would get into Reg Verral’s Green Grocer truck and travel to game. The club have recognised Gary’s contribution to the club and name the Snr Colts B&F medal is the ‘Reed Medal’.

Respected players he played with were Richard Croser, Lloyd Binney, Horace Haskett & Reg Verrall to name a few.

Richard Croser commenced playing at 14 years of age, and his first game was in the ‘B’ grade. Over the years Richard played 176 games, Captain coach in 1966/67 and 1970. Captain Coach of the SFA 1966,67,68 and winner of the Mail Medal for Willunga in 1966-67 and 68, remarkable achievement. Richard played football for Glenelg FC.. Injuries were once again a shoulder dislocated. He lived at Aldinga and travelled to matches by motor car.

He was inducted into the WFC ‘Hall of Fame’. Players Richard respected, Gary Chum Reed, Merv Crocker and Michael Fitzgerald.

The matches played by Gary ‘Chum’ Reed and Richard Croser were in the SFA/SFL. Willunga F.C. amalgamated

with the GSFL in 1986, a wonderful football career of great achievements by both these players.

Neil Lang was another gentlemen interviewed and Neil’s story covers a football career of 187 senior games.

After injury curtailed his playing career he became a trainer rising to head trainer until 2007. Over his career as a trainer Neil as attained Level 1 Certificate and every 3 years updated his accreditation. He has been awarded Club Person of the WFC and has worked on numerous committees He is a Life Member of WFC and inducted into WFC ‘Hall of Fame’, Club Person twice and STA Life Member.. He was President of the WFC in 2005. He was State Trainer for the SANFL Country Team 1996/1998 and Zone Trainer.

Gerry Loots – Club Secretary - Gerry relocated to Willunga with his family 22 years ago, but his younger days were in Col.Light Gardens and his parents were not interested in football so that was not a big interest for Gerry.

Socially Gerry played Squash and one of his partners was well known South Adelaide F.C. player David Kappler.

Gerry was preoccupied with his occupation and over the years lived and worked in England and China as General Manager of a Joint Venture for Sola International. Gerry’s sons played juniors footy for Willunga and that is when

he became involved in the Administration role at the club. First he was elected as
Secretary of the Building Committee (roped in by Herman Lucas) and in 2000 was appointed Club Secretary.

When he started this position everything was manual administration and over the years it is now completely computer, which of course means less paperwork!!!. The responsible position of Secretary involves knowledge of Child Safe & Training Courses, Occupation Health & Safety Tragedy Insurance, so it is a little more than just ensuring the players get onto the field. Gerry has a good rapport with people at the SANFL. Accolades goes to the person who agrees to hold this position.

During the interview with the four gentlemen there were wonderful memories shared, very cheeky laughs and a glint in a couple of their eyes. Another wonderful chat with great Stalwart gentlemen of the club.

 (subject to change)