BLAST FROM THE PAST.  Interviewed by Jan Bache 28/07/2017.

Yankalilla Football Club – what a great history there is to be told about this Member Club, formed in 1880s, not much is known of the clubs early history because information and records from this era have misplaced.

I spent an afternoon with Jeff Prior who spoke with great passion about the club he has been

affiliated with during his life. Jeff commenced playing in 1964 and only played 3 years in “A’ grade

because his employment took him Interstate. Over the years Jeff has come back to Yankalilla

and has held the position of President 2004/2005,Secretary, also volunteering as Time Keeper & Goal Umpire, as these positions are sometimes very hard to get a volunteer to fulfil as well as also preparing Match Report for the local Victor Times plus sponsor. Jeff is very proud of the facilities and oval at Yankalilla but as is the usual case takes a number of volunteers to keep them upto the standard. Jeff’s father Bill Prior was ‘A’ grade coach for 3 years, i.e. 1956,1957 and 1968.

Couple of Jeff’s favourite memories, on one day that his family of boys all played on the same day, creating a

club record, Dad ‘A’, 3 brothers playing Reserves. Snr Colts, Jnr Colts and young Jeff playing mini Colts,

even Jeff’s Mum and sister donned themselves in the club uniform to form a formidable memory.

Playing matches against Myponga on a cold wet day has great memories, no hot water,wash in puddles, cut boot laces off shoes so much mud, foggy, and mud shin deep, one instance ball lost in mud.

Bill Prior (Jeff’s dad) other than dedicating his energy into football he was a great Bike rider, competing in an annual bike race that commenced at Strathalbyn to Adelaide, this was in the 1940’s not sure of exact year but Bill always stated he held the state title and record because year after he won it the race was no longer run.

The Yankalilla football club was a member of the Fleurieu Association which included teams from Willunga, Aldinga & McLaren Vale. At certain times of the season, trial games were played against Victor Harbor and other neighbouring teams.

In the first years of the club, the club colours were Red & Navy. These were later changed to Double Blue and later still to Black & Gold, the current colours. In 1926 the clubs home ground was moved to the Memorial Park Sporting complex which had just been created, this has remained the clubs home ever since. When the oval was built at the Memorial Park, there was trouble because a large Gum tree could not be removed from the Oval.

The Gum tree stayed and during games it was quite common for the ball to become stuck in the tree. The

Gum tree was eventually removed in the late 40’s.

The club applied to join the Great Southern Football Association in 1934, but they were refused. However, in 1935 were accepted into the league. The club had been trying for many years to for a B grade competition within the GSFA. However, the Association refused to allow a B grade compeitition, so in 1955, the club decided to field a B grade side in the Southern Football Association, which had a B grade competition in place for many years. The SFA covered an area from Reynella to Yankalilla.

The A grade team continued to play in the GSFA while the B grade played in the SFA. The B grade team played in the 1955 Grand Final against Reynella at Aldinga. Yankalilla B grade was in the Grand Final and won the Premiership in its first season in the SFA. In 1956 the club’s A grade team decided to join the SFA as having two teams in different associations caused a lot of conflict within the club at the time.

The club appointed former Glenelg player in Bill Prior (Jeff’s dad) as coach that year. He lived in Adelaide, but drove to Yankalilla for training 2 nights a week and for games on Saturday in an old Bedford van. In 1968 the club left the SFA and rejoined the GSFA where it has remained until present day. Over those years there have been some very talented Coaches and players who have worn the Guernsey proudly for the Yankalilla Football Club.

 After an enjoyable chat with Jeff another get together is planned and Jeff is going to get a couple of

the old Combatant players of the yester year to come along and tell their story.

Comment from Jeff, ‘we have had a lot of **Men of Great Character** play for our club and their stories

we must hear.’