

OLINDA GROUND- at the turn of the 19th century the area behind the Mechanics Hall was used as a rifle range.(The Hall wasn't built until 1914)

This picture was taken in 1903.



OLINDA GROUND-1914

Prior to 1914 matches were played on the Boulter paddocks, which later became the famous Boulter Nursery.

However lobbying for a recreation ground at Olinda was underway before the township had a team (see below).

Reporter (Box Hill, Vic. : 1889 - 1925), **Friday 28 September 1906**, page 4

The residents of Olinda have had under consideration for some time the question of providing a recreation reserve and mechanics' institute, and with a view of taking some definite action a meeting was held at Mr J. Gutmann's, "The Hospice," on Wednesday evening, 19th inst. Mr Dodd was voted to the chair. The hon. sec., Mr W. B. Parsons, read a letter from the lands department, pointing out that if the residents would find £2 10/ for survey fees, the department would at once proceed with the work. Mr Gutmann reported that he held a sum of £2 11/9, being the proceeds of an entertainment held at "The Hospice." The secretary was instructed to forward the amount, viz. £2 10/, to the department. The meeting then proceeded to deal with the matter of a reserve for recreation. It was resolved that 5 acres of land be set apart for the purpose, and that an effort be made to have the reserve in readiness for the next annual sports. Mr H. Harboard was appointed hon. sec. to the recreation reserve committee. The mechanics' building will cost £250, and towards this the committee have in labor promises up to £50. It is intended to have the building erected within easy distance of the sports ground, so as to provide for the convenience of Sunday school picnics,

Reporter (Box Hill, Vic. : 1889 - 1925), **Friday 12 June 1914**, page 3

OPENING OF NEW RECREATION GROUND AT OLINDA. Olinda's need in the matter of a public recreation ground are now well on the way to being properly met. The committee of management last month made a start to clear the newly acquired site, which comprises five acres of nicely graded land adjoining the Mechanic's Institute. It is conveniently situated, and has a fine outlook, besides being sheltered by the neighboring forest from the strong northerly wind, which often interferes with games in progress. Their task was a heavy one, as the ground was thickly timbered with well grown saplings, which completely hid dozens of old stumps and logs and remains of old forest giants, fallen in the old splitting days. About a dozen strong and resolute enthusiasts working long hours stuck to the job right up to three o'clock on Saturday last, when the Monbulk men arrived to play the local team. A fine game, which was in doubt till the last few minutes, resulted as follows: - Monbulk, 5 goals 9 behinds; Olinda, 4 goals 7 behinds. The onlookers thoroughly enjoyed the game, but it was manifest to all that though much of the pioneering work had been carried out, a lot of work is needed to the surface and surroundings before it can be regarded as fit to play first class matches upon. It makes arduous effort and brute force predominant over the fine skillful player, besides being somewhat dangerous to limb. The committee realise this but require

money to carry out the secondary works, and to pay what is owing on account of what has been already done. As it is felt that many residents and property owners on the mountain would be willing to contribute to a fund to make the reserve worthy of Olinda, they desire the present position and their future intentions to be known to those willing to assist. At present 2½ acres has been cleared at a cost of £40. Of this £20 has been given in the form of free labour, careful tally of which has been kept, and £20 is owing for hired men, horses, explosives, etc. To meet this liability, they are issuing debentures at 10/- each, bearing interest at 3 per cent., to be redeemed in two years. Other work contemplated is clearing balance of land, 2½ acres, £40; fencing five acres, £20; ploughing, harrowing, etc., £5; grass seed, £3; hire of grading machine £5; extra labour and contingencies, £7; total £80. This with £20 now owing, means that £100 is needed. Those who are sympathetic with the committee's aspirations should forward their donations or applications for debentures to Mr. E. Boulter, treasurer, Bella Vista, Olinda. The raising of this money will do very much indeed to enhance property values, as a well fitted out ground where all members of the community can enjoy recreation is a most valuable asset for them to possess. Later on tennis, croquet, and other forms of enjoyment will find plenty of room, when the clearing, forming and fencing work is quite provided for.



Mechanics Institute, Olinda

The new Hall opened in 1914, the same year as the Olinda oval was used for the first time.

HALL FOR OLINDA Cr McAlpin in pursuance to notice given at a previous meeting, moved that the council make a special order to borrow the sum of £600 for the construction of a hall at Olinda, in terms of notices of intention to borrow published in the Government Gazette of July 2nd, 1913. The mover went on to say that the money was required for building a hall, which was badly wanted at Olinda. The council was being guaranteed, and the building would be managed on similar lines to the Croydon and Ringwood Halls. The population was growing and the district was well patronised by visitors. From a financial aspect he was confident it would be a success and as a public want it would be a great benefit to the residents. The site was a good one and there were a few acres connected with it for recreation purposes. It was also handy to the school and Post office. He had very great pleasure in moving the motion. Cr Daly remarked that he understood that there were some objections on the part of the managers of the Ringwood and Croydon Halls to supply the council with balance sheets. He would like to know if this difficulty would be obviated in connection with this proposition. Cr Blair seconded the motion, and said that he had moved against the borrowing of the money for the Ringwood and Croydon Halls, but he was now convinced that the council had acted wisely and he was satisfied that the hall was a necessity at Olinda. It would be an attraction to the place, would be a good asset, and the council would be furnished with returns. Cr Kings said that he had spoken against the management of the Ringwood and Croydon Halls, and would have opposed the motion if it was to be conducted on similar lines to the other two. The auditors for three years running had referred to the absence of balance sheets from the managers of the Ringwood and Croydon Halls. The President said that when people were willing to help themselves it was the duty of the council to try to assist them. Olinda was handy to the city, was a popular tourist resort, and was a growing place. The hall would be a boon to the place and would be a good revenue producing asset to the council. The motion had his hearty support. On being put the motion was declared carried unanimously. General Business. Resolved, on the motion of Cr Kings and the President, that about three claims of road be formed on the Coldstream road between Mr Black's and 3hr F." 1. Lithgow's properties Resolved. on the motion of the President and Cr TGhee that a footpath be formed from Allison's Cottages to Wine Mall on the Cave Hill road. Cr d'CGhnee called attention to a culvert on Victoria road which had silted up and the water was overflowing and damaging the road. Referred to the engineer. Cr JTGhee said that it seemed to be the practice of some people to cut briars and leave them lie on the roads. He met a man recently driving a flock of sheep along a road and he complained that his sheep were dragging cart loads of briars along with them. Referred to the inspector

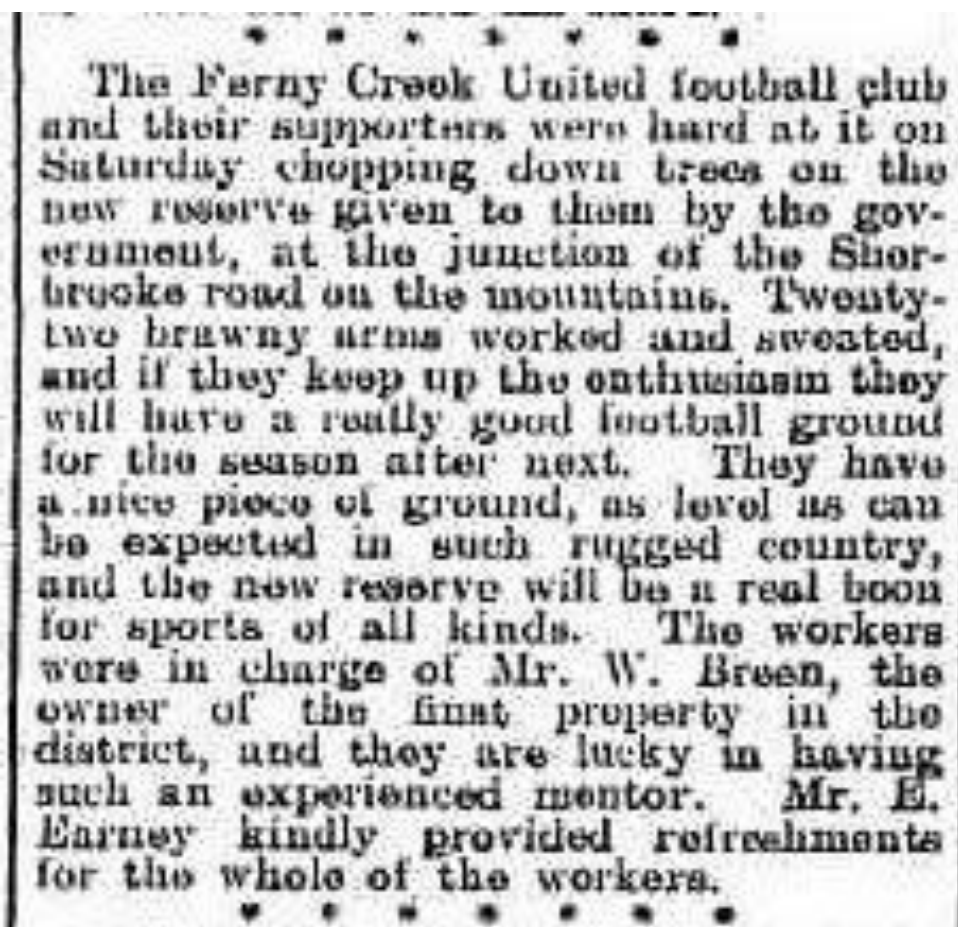
Cr Blair" moved that all owners of land adjacent to roads infested with briars be informed that they must take action once to clear their land and half of the road frontage of briars, etc., otherwise the council will immediately enforce the law against those who disregard the warning. - Seconded by - Cr Kings and carried. Resolved, on the motion of Crs McAlpin and Blair that the pipes obtained for the road near Blood Bros. be laid down as soon as possible. Resolved, on the motion of Cr d'Blair; - that the engineer have the bridge over the bushy creek on the Yarra road, between the Plank - hli;iste id and r Ia. - ne's gate repaired at once. Cr McAlpin reported that Crs. - Daly, and Blair, the ongiter and himself had met Mr Chalmers and discussed the question of drainage with him, but they could not recommend the council to accede to his demands. He moved

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sins in lengtlr prov liding he gives the council the right to turn the i"ator from West is
Prussia. r:riad into same.-Seconded is by Cr lairi and carried. 's Cr Blair reported that Crs Daly
d- and- fcAll in, the enigineer aid himid self had made an inspection of the r- 10oft righ -of-
way Captain Mil'es deve si:ed should le wideied to 14ft. To lie carry out the proposal a strip
of lit land fi;t wide would require to be re taken of tte icreatioa giound. sts The
representatives of the council en could iit recommend the reduction of the reserve, and lihe
moved that at Capttin niles be informed that the a- council cannot agree to tihe proposal it, --

FERNY CREEK

While Olinda was able to open its new recreation reserve, and Mechanics Hall, in 1914
down the road at Ferny Creek plans for a new ground had come to an embarrassing
halt after a promising start three years earlier.

Fern Tree Gully Echoes October 1911



The Ferny Creek United football club and their supporters were hard at it on Saturday chopping down trees on the new reserve given to them by the government, at the junction of the Shorbrooke road on the mountains. Twenty-two brawny arms worked and sweated, and if they keep up the enthusiasm they will have a really good football ground for the season after next. They have a nice piece of ground, as level as can be expected in such rugged country, and the new reserve will be a real boon for sports of all kinds. The workers were in charge of Mr. W. Breen, the owner of the finest property in the district, and they are lucky in having such an experienced mentor. Mr. E. Earney kindly provided refreshments for the whole of the workers.

FERNY CREEK NOTES. At the annual meeting of the Ferny Creek football club the following office-bearers were elected :- President, Cr. C. Earney; secretary, Mr C.Hackett; treasurer, Mr J. Breen; captain, Mr. T. Brown; goal umpire, Mr. T. O'Don. Other business having been disposed of, a lengthy discussion took place as to what had been done in connection with the recreation reserve granted to the residents some six years ago. The chairman (Cr. Earney) made a lengthy state-ment outlining what has been done as far as his knowledge went. Some six years back, in company with Mr T. O'Don, they interviewed Mr. J. Reid, then surveyor-general, and now secre-tary of lands, respecting a site opposite Breen's, and the department granted five acres. A president, secretary, and committee of management was ap-pointed. The government has made three £10 grants. Concerts have been held to raise funds, but for the want of someone to raise those grants, they have lapsed, there only being one of two meetings held that year. The chairman's statement was received with disappointment. On the motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Alderson, the meeting requested the president (Mr. J. T. Bird), and secretary (Mr. W. E. Clarke) to convene a public meeting to explain the position of the recreation reserve. The speakers pointed out that certain residents held in trust, on be-half of the reserve, certain monies, amounting to £20, asked if the govern-ment grants of £30 had been lost, or what had become of it. Taking the properties surrounding the reserve as a guide, they were selling at £100 per acre, hence the reserve must be taken at that value. Were they to lose this valuable asset through the neglect of the officers? The speakers summed up the position as disgraceful, and thought if the minister of lands knew the true state of affairs he would put his pen through the whole business.

It's believed the above articles refer to the ground we now know as the Ferny Creek Rec. As we can see from this article below until that ground was completed matches were played at Breens paddocks, near the Sherbooke Rd junction.

OFC Life Member Paul Jones recalls playing cricket at Breens paddocks as late as the 1950s. Records also show the Ferny Creek Rec hosted MDFA football matches in the early years after WW2.

BOX HILL REPORTER **AUGUST 1908**

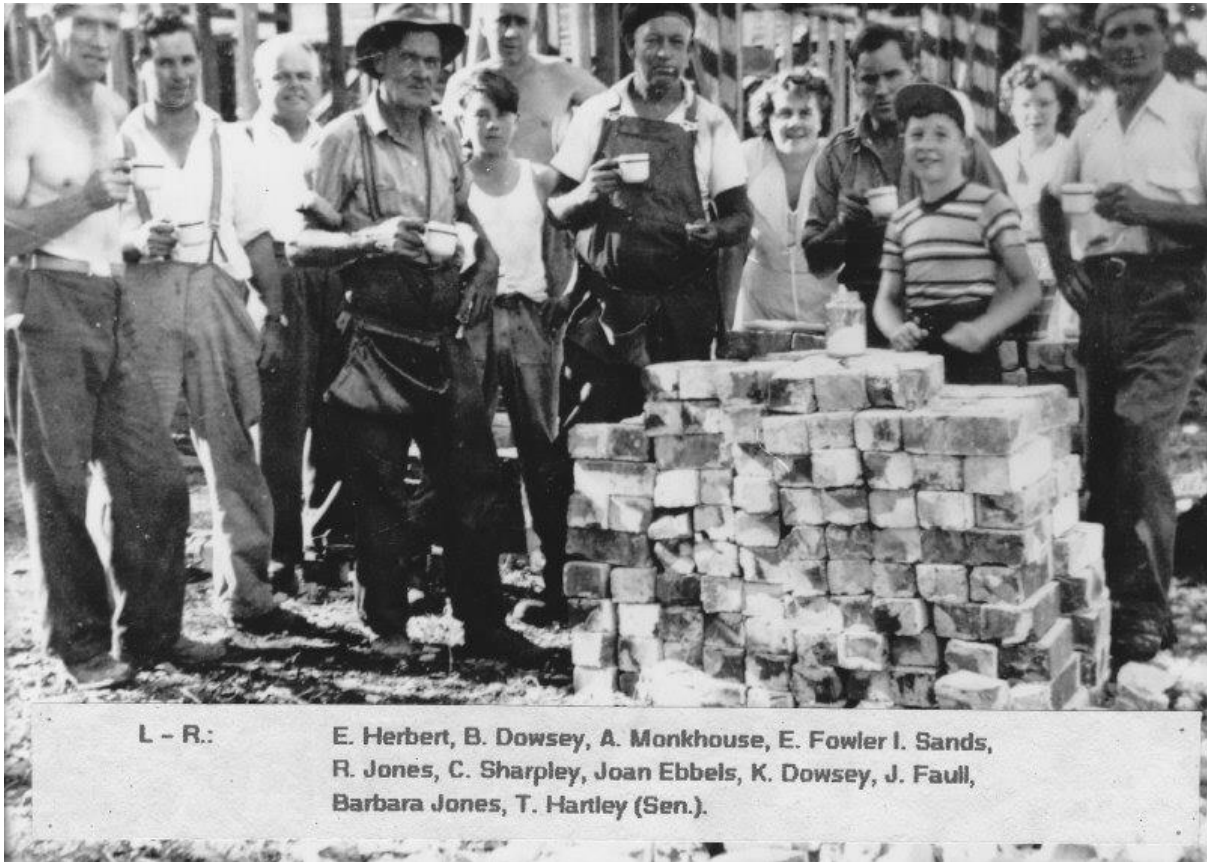
The much-looked-for match between Ferny Creek and Olinda was decided on Saturday on the ground of the former, Mr W. Breen's spacious paddock, which enabled the game to be kept open, and was an advantage to the novices. The Olinda team came with an unbeaten record, while Ferny Creek was arrayed for the occasion. By the second quarter both teams had their full complement of men. Ferny Creek had the wind and the ground in their favor in the first quarter, and more than held their own, but on changing over better combination prevailed, and the visitors closed the quarter with a lead of 15 points. The home team by a spurt put on 18 points to 2, and the last quarter found them one point to the good. All might have been well but for the impetuosity born of youth. Had they sat tight on their score instead of rushing the game, it would have been better for them. It is bad policy for a tiring side to assume the attack in a scrambling fashion. After 20 minutes of here, there, and everywhere, the game closed in favor of Olinda by 6.5 to 4.4. Several of the winning team played good football, viz., Captain Wyles, J. W. Simpson, W. Hughes, T. Brown, and T. Cruise; Jim Barrett hardly did himself justice, and is mostly very fit. For Ferny Creek the Melbourne colt, P. J. Bewicko, was the best man on the ground, and J. O'Connor, W. Breen, F. Carrington, F. Webb, and Mawson worked hard to stave off defeat. Umpire Lay gave general satisfaction.

OLINDA-FERNY CREEK- new pavilion

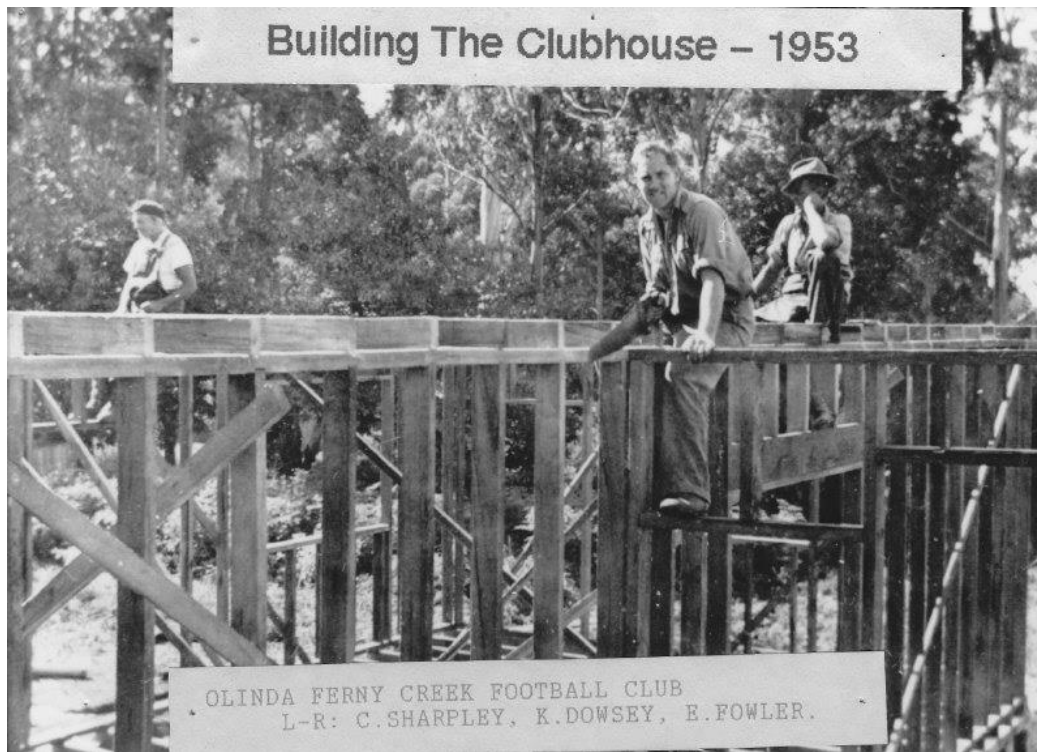
Olinda and Ferny Creek merged in 1946 to form the present Club. Work on the new pavilion commenced four years later.

However we need to note a discrepancy, pictures of building works at the Olinda site are dated 1953 but Life Member Alma Fowler (dec) believes it was completed earlier than that.

Pics and Alma Fowler article follow-



Building The Clubhouse – 1953



OLINDA FERNY CREEK FOOTBALL CLUB
L-R: C. SHARPLEY, K. DOWSEY, E. FOWLER.

This article was published in the Free Press in 1953

Olinda Football Club

Olinda-Ferny Creek football club have plans in hand to build a clubroom and kitchen on the Olinda Reserve. Work is to commence on the new project on Sunday, February 1. Size of the clubroom will be 40 feet by 20 feet and the up-to-date kitchen will be 20 feet by 10 feet.

The building will cost the club approximately £1,000. Most of the money was raised by the ladies committee over the past three years—a truly wonderful effort.

All work on the new building will be done by voluntary labor every Sunday until the job is completed.

The club especially appeals for help from carpenters to do the job. Anyone who can assist in any way for a few hours on alternate Sundays will be appreciated. Volunteers should contact J. or E. Fowler for particulars.

It is hoped to install a hot water service to before the start of the football season and finance is urgently required.

When completed, the rooms will be available to all sporting bodies in Olinda and district.

Life Member Alma Fowler visited us in 2014 and knowing that she played a major role in the construction of the Olinda pavilion we asked her to take us back 60 years. Alma was secretary of the OFC Ladies Committee

The idea of clubrooms came about after a home & away game against Belgrave. They were the first club in the Mountain District to acquire clubrooms. The Olinda players were so excited to have a nice shower after the game that the wheels were put in motion. A meeting was convened to work out how to raise the money for Olinda rooms.

At this stage players were using the Mechanics Hall with no shower facility and a 100 metre run to the ground. Ladies had very little room to serve their afternoon tea. There was only a three sided tin shed with a dirt floor near the old scoreboard (behind the goals at the clubroom end). The tin shed served its purpose but was useless on a wet /windy day. Alma recalls one day setting many scones, jam & cream out only to be smothered in dust with a strong gush of wind. Hence biscuits had to suffice that day.

At the meeting a Ladies game of football was agreed on and It took place one Sunday against Monbulk Ladies . Healthy funds were raised, mainly by donation and it was one of the biggest crowds the Olinda oval had ever hosted !!

During this fund raising campaign the players came to the Ladies committee asking for financial help for an end of season trip to Tasmania. Noele Boulter , Pat Ebbles and Alma all said No Way !! It was new clubrooms or nothing.

Construction started in late 1950 and was completed by commencement season 1951. Materials, mostly secondhand, were purchased but labor was all volunteered. Players took a big role in the building, including Under 16s who cleaned the bricks.

Plans and construction were under the control of Ern and Joe Fowler, two local builders and footballers. It was Ern's decision to move the ladies kitchen to the front viewing area of the building as he said they are the ones who raise the money so they need a good view of the game. So, the building took about seven months to build with all hands on deck every Sunday. Any spare time people could muster would be spent on the new clubrooms.

No official opening was had (building probably ran right to the commencement of the season) Showers must have been a near future plan. No toilets, they were outside near the then playground. Alma doesn't think showers were there at the start. The two playing teams used the rooms for

changing. Olinda would emerge through the still existing side door .Opposition would emerge through double doors on the right hand side looking towards the clubrooms from the oval. The kitchen had only a side door access with no access to the change rooms.The players used the rooms for changing so no women could come into the rooms until well after the men were ready & decent

Approx 1955 Alma & Joe moved to School Rd Olinda.It was there that they got Pop Swyer involved in the football club. He used to light the keroscene heaters for showers and pump up the match ball making sure everything was in readiness for the game. Alma had 10lb of hot-dogs delivered to her home every home game she would cook them on her stove then Pop Swyer would carry them down to the ground for her.

After construction of clubrooms life became more hectic socially and playing wise. Presentation Night organising was always busy. Initially held in the Hall then progressed to “The Georgian” in Falls Road

The old pavilion was replaced in 2014 after a lengthy campaign by the Hilltop group- which represented all the local sporting bodies.



Rats and possums inhabited the old rooms, and the home change room storage area was often flooded.

That home room was built during Tony Cooke’s period as President.



Each club- OFCFNC.OCC and OFCJFC- raised \$20k towards the cost of the new building. However it was a donation of \$225k by the Bendigo Bank (Dandenong Ranges Community Bank- Upwey) that paved the way for the venture.



Work to demolish the old rooms commenced in 2013.





Life Member Kevin Dowsey features in a picture above (back 3 pages) during the construction of the original pavilion. He was also there to see it pulled down. Kevin passed away in 2020.

The new pavilion was built over the footprint of the old building, but the new social room was approximately the same size as the entire old pavilion.



Work was completed by mid 2014 and the pavilion officially opened in August of that year. OFC played Upwey- Tecoma on that day.







Hilltop's Steven Scott (left) and Paul Wicks cut the cake on opening day (23/08/14)



This is the team that played Upwey on the day the pavilion opened.

Notably it was the last game for OFC champion player Tim Scott (middle row, extreme left). Tim was among OFC's best players in a losing team.

In the same year- 2014- OFC also had it's first ever major lighting upgrade.

It was clear that the old lighting system was so sub-standard there was the risk of serious injury on training nights.

The picture below was taken by Bruce Lowery, the pics that follow that were taken in March 7 2014 when the new lights were turned on for the first time. Note the green tinge as they commenced operation.





Chris Hill, Paul Wicks and Helen Wozitsky – let there be light.





New oval at the old Olinda Golf Course-

In 2013, 99 years after Olinda played its first match at the Recreation Reserve, a proposal was submitted to National Parks for a new oval on the golf course site.

The 18 hole golf course had shut it's doors a couple of years earlier because it was no longer financially viable.

OFC had used the golf course for training purposes since the 1960s so it was a logical move for the Club to be given access to a much needed new oval.

With the introduction of women's footy the Olinda Recreation Reserve was suffering from overuse.

Local State Member James Merlino was lobbied and strongly backed the new development, which also included a large playground.



Mr Merlino turned the first sod in December 2019



February 2020



March 2020



May 2020



October 2020



First group to use the new Olinda Green oval- U/15 and U/17 football girls with coach Tom Belloni on February 18 2021

The Seniors also trained later that evening.



The first match was played at the new oval on Saturday 20 February. Olinda Fifts cricket team had that honour.

Ironically, the captain of the team was Peter Hayne. Peter played an important early role in the development when he approached James Merlino seven years earlier.

