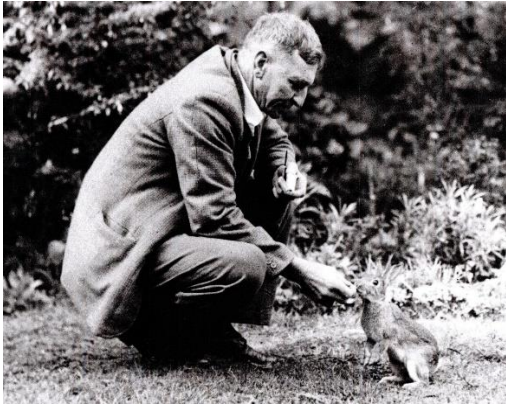


# Charlie Hackett – Ferny Creek

1893 - 1971



Charlie Hackett's grandfather Robert Hackett was born in 1818 in Ballydaly, County Offaly, Ireland in part of the Eastern and Midland Region. Robert died on 1878 in Ferbane, Offaly, at the age of 60. Elizabeth died in 1898 also in Ferbane having lived a long life for those days of 78 years. The Hacketts had one son, Robert John Hackett, with Elizabeth Anne Simpson in 1846.

Robert John migrated to Australia in about 1875 and had two sons, twins, with Lucy Ellis Martin and a daughter Kate who died in 1908 at the age of ten. Lucy was born in 1854 in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria. She married Robert John Hackett on 10 January 1889 in Fitzroy, Victoria. She died in 1942 in Victoria at the age of 88, and was buried in Ferntree Gully. Robert died in 1923 in Victoria at the age of 76.

When Charles Henry Hackett and his twin brother Robert were born in 1893 in Carlton, Victoria, their father, Robert, was 47, and their mother, Lucy, was 39.

Charlie married Clarissa Jane (Clare) Jones in 1921. Claire was the daughter of Bill and Alice Jones. Bill was the son of Mathew Charles Jones who was born in the Cotswolds in England and who arrived at Point Henry in Geelong in 1849 where Bill was born after marrying his cousin, Clarissa Ann Bedgood. Alice's father, Robert Fitzgerald Hughes was born in Armagh County in Northern Ireland

They lived all their married life at Hackett's Corner on Main Road Ferny Creek from about 1923 adjacent to the Sherbrooke Forest with a sawmill nearby and not far from Bill and Alice in Main Road a mile closer towards Sassafras.

They had three children during their marriage, Jack, Dorothy and Lucy. Jack was a mechanical engineer and worked for tractor and agricultural machinery manufacturer Massey Ferguson. He was instrumental in introducing sugar harvesters into Cuba. Jack married Lorna Johnson and they had two sons, Timothy and Andrew who are still living. Their eldest daughter Dorothy was married to Bill Borthwick MP.

The youngest Hackett was Lucy, married to Rupert Johnson, Lorna Johnson's brother. They had two daughters Joanne and Sally still living.

The Hackett home still stands opposite the Old Main Road termination on the 'down' side of the Tourist Road where the Hackett Track begins.

Nephew Graeme Jones tells a wonderful tale from sixty-seven years ago. Charlie met “two odd sorts of people” on Hackett’s Track in Sherbrooke Forest just after break of day. The year was 1955. The Old Vic was playing Shakespeare in Melbourne as part of a national tour. Katherine Hepburn was performing “The Taming of the Shrew”, “Measure for Measure” and “The Merchant of Venice”. Charlie had no idea who they were. He found them interesting to talk with and met them several times, always early in the day, and suggested to them where there were dancing mounds – where male Lyrebirds would be found dancing to impress female birds. Uncle Charlie worked alone as a carpenter, wandered alone along river banks leaving his rods “set” but preferring to walk thoughtfully with the constant hope he would find someone with something interesting to share – what spinner they used for rainbow trout or what bait for redfin.

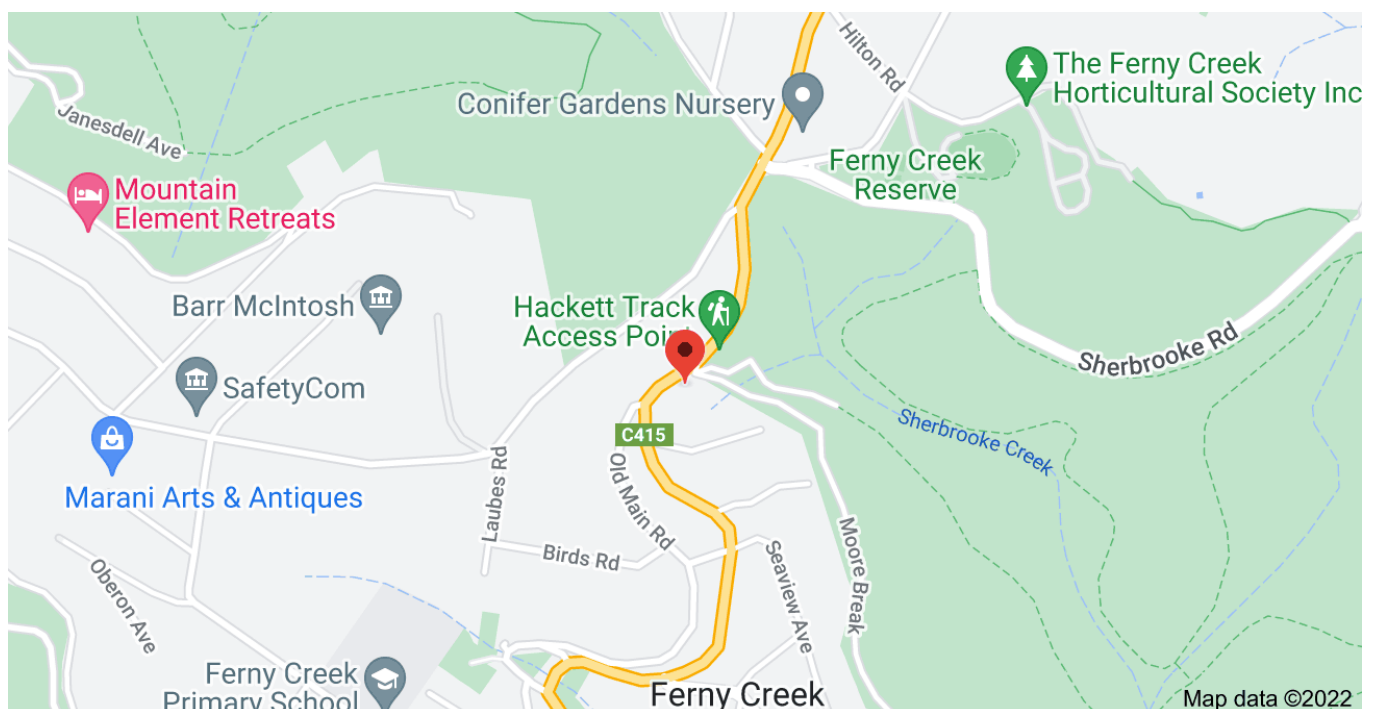
He didn’t regard the distances he walked as significant, he walked the roads of the Dandenongs carrying his hefty tool bag every working day, did a day’s work then walked home again. “You would have found them interesting” he said to me some years later.

“I don’t know why they were travelling up to Sherbrooke at dawn to watch Lyrebirds, but they did. Odd sorts of people.”

I knew they were Helpmann and Hepburn and told Uncle Charlie this. He replied “Interesting: Odd sorts of people.”

I did not know that Ron Barassi was involved in the ballet which became “The Display”. We know Ron. His second wife is an old friend. They were married in our garden. Our house was enlarged in the 20’s or 30’s with a sleep-out on the veranda and a second bedroom and hallway. Uncle Charlie Hackett did the work.

As a schoolboy Charlie and Clare’s nephew Derry Jones, son of Clare’s brother Arthur, remembers his pipe smoking uncle Charlie best for his introduction to rabbit hunting and firing a shotgun around Breen’s paddocks on One Tree Hill Road and for his life-changing lessons in carpentry. Derry spent numerous Christmas holidays in the 1940s staying with them while his mother was busy working in the greengrocery in Mont Albert.



Hackett Track one of the longest tracks in Sherbrooke Forest is named after Charlie. It runs from near their home, now 238 Dandenong Tourist Road, and connects with the track leading to the falls.

Charlie Hackett was an excellent footballer who played in the forward line for the Ferny Creek Football Club which was formed in 1910 and was subsequently named Ferny Creek United. Ferny Creek played Belgrave in a match that year.



### FERNY CREEK—1926 or 27

Back Row (l to r) A J Thomas Mr James H Breen Tom Ebbels P Hobbs J Ignatious Len Techow \_\_\_\_\_ Les Storrie  
Middle Row Jack Clarke Stewart Devine Charlie Hackett Henry Linden Norm Jones Johnny Taylor Bob Bennett Alan Lowe (trainer)  
Front Row Ray Techow Eddie Earney Ray Techow (?)

It was reported also that in 1910 Olinda defeated Ferny Creek in the Grand Final. (It's believed there was only one other team in the competition, Monbulk. OFC was named premiers beating FC United 8.19 to 2.7 and FC United beating MFC 14.29 to 1.5.

Another report in 1910 said FC United consists of the "young bloods of Ferny Creek, Sassafras and Sherbooke."

The captain, W Sharpe, was from Sherbooke, Hon Sec Gordon Bird was from Ferny Creek and the President C Earney was from Sassafras. Olinda, Ferny Creek and Monbulk played each other four times-according to Life Member Charlie Hackett.

In 1912 Ferny Creek lost the final game and the premiership to Monbulk by four points. Charlie Hackett won the Mountain District Football Association goal kicking award that year with 24 majors.

Ferny Creek and Monbulk again battled for the flag in 1919 and this time the Red and Blues were successful after Monbulk lost points from six games for playing an ineligible ruckman.

After being a powerhouse club for many years, Ferny Creek won its first premiership in 1924. BUT should the 1919 flag have also been awarded to Ferny Creek? Helen Coulson's landmark book on the history of the

Dandenong Ranges references the Ferny Creek premiership in 1919. However, it was widely accepted in newspaper articles after 1919, and in League records, that Monbulk was the rightful winner. So, what happened- and why did the subsequent row almost destroy the League?

In 1919 the premiership was awarded to the team which finished on top of the ladder and Ferny Creek and Monbulk were the standout clubs. Monbulk had their noses in front of Ferny Creek and were undefeated when the teams clashed on August 16.

In what was possibly the match of the season the Red and Blues (FCFC) lowered Monbulk's colours by one point and firmed as flag favourites. However, the following week Ferny Creek, playing at home in front of a noisy crowd, was upset by Belgrave 4-7 to 3-9.

Monbulk then went on to enjoy a strong win over Belgrave, despite a newspaper correspondent noting that Belgrave were awarded 39 free kicks. That victory meant it looked like the flag was heading to Monbulk until Ferny Creek lodged a protest against a leading Hawk, ruckman McDonald. Ferny Creek claimed McDonald was an ineligible player which meant The Hawks forfeited points in six games.

Consequently, Ferny Creek returned to the top of the table and closed in on the Club's first flag.

Monbulk historian Armin Richter says it's known that Coulson spoke at length with FCFC legend Charlie Hackett and other Ferny Creek people for her book. Hackett and his mates were so angry with the 1919 season outcome that the Club, a founding member of the MDFA, withdrew from the League in 1920 leaving only three clubs in that competition. Richter suggests that it was Hackett who told Coulson that the 1919 flag belonged to Ferny

Ferny Creek were premiers in 1924 beating Belgrave in the Grand Final. FCFC played in five grand finals in a row for this one victory.

In 1925 - Ferny Creek played in the Scoresby District Football League (there is no record of MDFA playing that year) and lost Grand Final to Fern Tree Gully.

1932 - Ferny Creek defeat Boronia in the MDFA Grand Final. However, Boronia protested that the final bell went too early and the MDFA ordered the match be replayed. FCFC refused, claiming many of its players were unavailable because of work. The flag was awarded to Boronia. FCFC always counted 1932 as a premiership year.

1933- Ferny Creek disbanded after this season with many of its greats, such as Charlie Hackett and Henry Linden, beginning to age. Jolly Rowe is awarded the MDFA medal for best player.