

The Stellas story

1979-87

Introduction

The aim of this booklet is to briefly cover the history of Stella maris in Darwin from the time when the old railway house was made available by the A.N.R to the Apostleship of the sea to be used as a Seafarers' centre. I hope to do this by relating stories of the people who have contributed in many ways and events that have happened during the years of Stellas development in Darwin. I have attempted to keep events in a chronological order but many times and dates have not been recorded over the years.

The old railway House has in its self an exciting history. It was built pre second world war and was used to house railway employees assigned to the Darwin railway station. It survived the war having some scrapnel damage during the bombing.

the old house also survived the Cyclone in 74. The cables that tie the roof down must have been responsible its survival

It was occupied up until 1976 when the rail closed. Ernie Carey discovered it unoccupied and neglected in his search for a home for Stella Maris in Darwin

It is once again used as a residence after it's many face lifts reenovations upgradings and changes during its time serving the needs of the seafarers of Darwin from 1980 to 1991.

The first record of ships being visited in Darwin goes back 1967 This work was done by the memebers of the Society of St Vincent De Paul

At the request of Bishop O' Loughlin to the St Mary's St Vincent de Paul Conferemneec Ernie Carey took up the challenge of caring for visiting seafarers

The Seafarers were entertained in a room in the old presbertary a Port Chaplain was appointed in January 1975

With the support and encouagement of Bishop John O'Loughlin Ernie Carey set about the task of finding a building which would be suitable for the development of a club in Darwin 1979 The Australian national railways agreed to lease the old railway house to the

Apostleship of the seas for their use. th agreement awas that the block and building would be leased on condition that the building would be upkept by the Apostleship of the sea. The old house had been

neglected since the cyclone and the area surrounding was like a jungle with heaps of cyclone debris still lying around

Ernie Carey set to work with the support of his wife and family to turn the building into a club and also to obtain permanency over it

After months and months of paper work the ANR agreed to lease the property on condition that the place be maintained and it could be proved that there was a need for such a club

Father O'Shea the then National Director contributed \$5000 towards the refurbishing and up grading in the form of a loan

1980 After much hard work the Stella maris seafarers' club or Stellas was blessed and opened in April 1980

At that stage the Bar was in the up stairs section and a small chapel was opened on the ground level.

The committee at that time were Ernie Carey Pres Barry Clements Vice Pres Bob Brennan Treasurer
 Judy Cole Joe Scanlin Mrs R wood Margaret McDonald
 Father Leon DeSouzer Port Chaplain
 Alf Maynard, Paul and Margaret O' Loughlin, Josie Clements Mary Johos Peg Carey Mrs Maynard Mrs M Tomlinsson Dan Thomas Mrs Franklin J Francis D Sallick
 Father Peter Guy

1981-82 Managers
 Dan Archer from Perth
 Margaret Wright from Brisbane
 Keith Braybrook
 Cyndy Tapper

The manager was to be assisted by volunteers . they staffed the bar and did any other jobs that needed doing at the time. some of the volunteers that can recall are Margaret McDonald Mary Juhos Paul and Margaret O'Loughlin Les Evans ernie and peg Carey and their family.

After some time it was decided that a manager should be appointed Margaret Wright was engaged to . as manager she ran the club for a short time and Cindy Tapper took over this role.

My first involvement was to take a couple of fellow who who were staying at St Vinnies at

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Westralia St up with myself to do some maintenance work at Ernies request

8/5/1982 A small demountable or donga was purchased for \$8000 and shifted on to the place to be used for a caretaker or perhaps a manager. this remained there till the demountable was erected for social and welfare facilities

The first Manager appointed was Margaret Wright and she was assisted by many volunteers to help with many duties mainly with serving behind the bar I filled in on od occasions when someone of the regulars could not make it.

When Margaret Wright left Cyndy Tapper was given the position of manager during her time ernie Carey invited Peter Evans to join the staff as an assistant to Cyndy. He and Jo lived in the demountable the very basic accommodation which was on the property this was in 1982 the gross income for that was \$67,000 Peter was paid \$15000 for the year and Cyndy \$17000 the gross profit would have only been in the vicinity of \$30,000.

Cyndy decided to move on Jim Leitchfield the then President said to Peter " I can't make up my mind to over you the managers job or through a tarp over the lot and throw it into the sea"

Jim decided to give Peter the managers job and being an army personal was transferred out of darwin shortly after that.,

Jack and Margaret Evans had joined the committee at this stage Joe Scanlon was persuaded to accept the role of president

Joe Scanlon's main role to this point in time was to run the barbecues which were conducted every Sunday evening. Everyone pulled together and supported Joe Scanlon and Peter.

Jo Evans took the lead in a the social actiities helping with the catering and arranging social functions and eventually a social club was formed peter was proud to announce that the gross income for that year reach an all time high of \$360000

The committee then comprised Joe scanlon President Jack Evans vice Pres Paiu O'Loughlin Secretary Margaret Evans Treasree Margaret McDonald Joyce Taylor Mary Juhos Josie Clements Margaret O'Loughlin Jo Evans. Father Brian Healy Chaplin

Peter Evans could see the growing porential for the club and suggested we 1984 escavate under the

building a nd trans fer the bar down stairs. eventually started and was put in charge of the project which was done mainly with volunteer workers . pick and shovells and barroews with the sweat and toil of the volunteers . retaining walls were built and concrete floor poured . Toilet and showers were built a cool room costing \$5000 was installed and a bar built. a chap by thename of John day a resident of the Bakhita centre built the first bar it had a few face lifts from time to time. Dwight did some of the work with the finishing of the toilets a nd dick Lovetts lalaid the concrete

When were were obtaining health permits etc we found that the ceiling wasaws 6 inches too low and we looke like we might havve been in trouble but we got a temporary permit to carry on the work. everyone was very helpful That included the fire authority the health people and the Liguor Commission. An interesting point when we asked to trans fer the licence downs stairs we were told that the licence extended all over the block of land..

1984 A restuarant was opened upstairs and has been continued ever since

1986 A we~~w~~lfare worker was appointed and this role was filled until till 1994 The welfare workers were Peter Evans Ron Brandt and Kim Francis worker

1987 A demountable was opened for the use of welfare officer and social events

Patrick Thomas

1988 Had an offer of another block from the government

The committee decided to accept offer and had some prliminary plans drawn up. The Architect engaged was Len Smythe. Many obstacles stood in the way of proceeding with the building. the two main one were that a high rise building was tio be built alongside and the building was estimated at an excessive cost. The committee reversed the decision of accepting the alternative site, the minister was informed and and the request was renewed that we retain the present site nother block was offered in Carey street but was refused because of inacesability to the walf and the mooring basin

1989 The Save our Stellas committee formed and received wonderful public support The 7.30 report highlighted the issue. The president was interviewed on the talk back program

A petition was presented to the minister by Noel Pagen puric