

Looking back with Molly...



By Molly Smith

Looking back at the Tourist Centre

The official opening of the Walpole Tourist Bureau Pioneer Cottage in 1987 was a dream come true for the committee of the tourist bureau at that time.

In those early days of the committee the main aim was to finance a centre.

All types of ideas were explored at meetings – one of them being the purchase of a caravan.

Funds were limited and an offer from CALM (as it was then) to construct a suitable centre if the Committee would provide the materials was received with great enthusiasm.

The suggestion (from the late Peter Harbin who was president at that time) that the building be modelled on an early settler's cottage was approved and construction went ahead.

The committee watched in keen anticipation as the project progressed.

It was proposed that the building should house CALM literature and tourism leaflets and be open continuously. Volunteers manned the centre whenever they could spare the time.

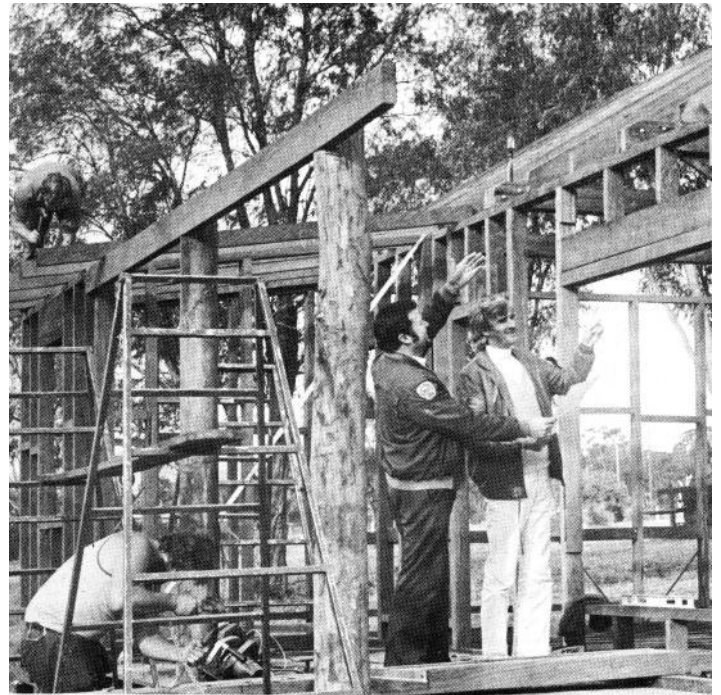
As visitation increased it was realised that a Manager was needed to co-ordinate the volunteers and tenders were called for this position.

The late Doreen Whale was appointed on a very small remuneration and under her efficient management, the fledgling Tourist Centre became a viable proposition.

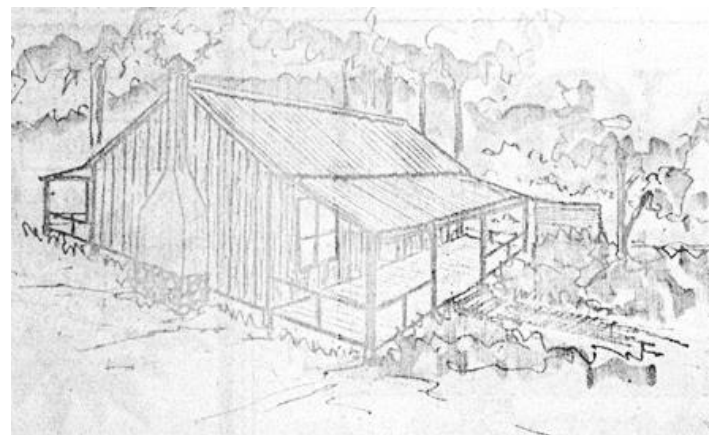
From then on regular hours were set for the centre. Visitors were counted in on a sheep counter in those days, and volunteers usually took along something to occupy their time when the days were quiet (as was often the case.)

Looking at the Walpole Visitors Centre now, it was certainly a case of “from small beginnings...” and as the popularity of Walpole and its districts has increased so has the Visitors Centre become an essential focus in the town, necessitating an increase in the size of the structure in 1999.

On a recent visit, the three ladies on duty were continuously busy and I was impressed by the efficient, friendly and welcoming atmosphere visitors were experiencing.



Above Peter Bidwell (left) discussing plans with the then Walpole Tourist Bureau President Peter Harbin, in June 1987. Photo WNAD Historical Society.



An early sketch of Pioneer Cottage. Source WNAD historical society

Walpole Quality Meats
More Customers
Better Prices

Walpole Nornalup Tourist Association
AGM

Date: 3 May 2016

Time: 6 pm at Walpole Nornalup Visitor Centre.

RSVP to Adele at
Walpole Nornalup Visitor Centre.

