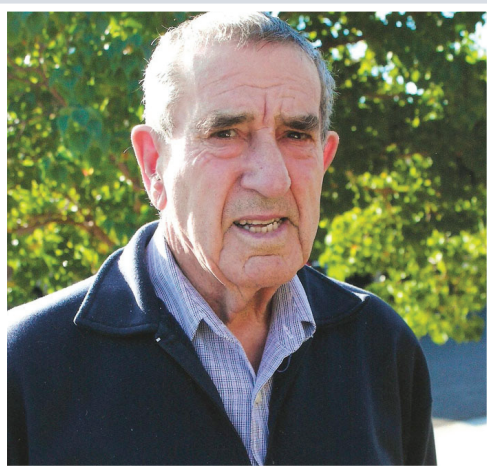




LIFE MEMBER

Arthur John ("Jack") Hart

15 January 1928—



Jack Hart grew up in Sea Lake. His father was a butcher, but also bought land, putting some in his wife's name and some in Jack's. Together they had about 6000 acres which was farmed on a share basis. Jack learned highland dancing as a child. His teacher, who also judged highland dancing at country shows, was Fred Flanagan's mother. When Jack was 13, he went to boarding school in Kilmore. He caught the train to Bendigo, stayed overnight at View Point Hotel, then caught another train next morning to Kilmore, all by himself.¹

Jack came to Geelong in 1945, aged 17, to do the wool-classing course at the Gordon. He stayed at the Terminus Hotel and played football for North Geelong in the Under-18 League with Ivo Gibson's son Alan ("Mousy"). Ivo Gibson (GFC Secretary) was serving in the airforce in New Guinea. Mrs Gibson wouldn't take men in while Ivo was away but as soon as Ivo came home from the war, she invited Jack to stay with them.

Jack turned 18 in January 1946, after the war finished. From then on he was in the reserves with the returned soldiers. He explains that 'in those days people believed that young men's bones were not set—not tough enough for the knocks and twists of League football—until you were 21, so

very few under 21s played in the firsts.

Jack Hart trained with Ernie Davie's running group (see Chapter 11). When he was playing, Jack would run two miles around the racecourse every night. (In 2013, he still walks for half an hour every night.)

Senior players were paid £3 for a Saturday game plus 10 shillings for each training night (Tuesday and Thursday). The seconds weren't paid but on Thursday night after training Max Kelly would bring a tray of hot pies from the bakery to Kardinia Park.

Jack says after the war Ivo Gibson decided that Geelong needed to get some younger players and rebuild. Some players from before the war were told they were too old and left very unhappy.

Jack finished the wool-classing course in June 1946 but to be properly qualified as a wool classer he would have had to go out and work in shearing sheds. Then his dad had a heart attack so, after only half a dozen games with the reserves, Jack had to go home to Sea Lake to run the butcher's shop. In those days being a butcher was hard work. Jack had to go out to the farms, buy the sheep or cattle, bring them into Sea Lake, slaughter them, hang them, divide the carcasses, and pickle or mince the meat. His father wanted to help, when he was well enough, but Jack says the work was too much for his dad, so Jack persuaded him to lease the shop.

Jack took on short-term jobs managing hotels—in those days you could manage a hotel for 28 days without being the licensee. Jack married in 1958, when he was 30. He managed the White Swan Hotel in Swan Hill (now Target) for three years and he and his wife Ann lived upstairs. Fred Flanagan and Lindsay White came up one year for the duck shooting and stayed in the hotel.

After that lease finished, Jack was licensee of the Royal Mail Hotel in Wycheproof. Fourteen years after they married, Jack's wife Ann was killed in a



Football players learning to dance the can can for a performance at The Palais, 1945, taught by dance teacher Molly McKinnon: Mousy (Alan) Gibson, —, Frank Pike, George Pike, Jack Hart, two trainers who were ex-players, Frederick ("Phonse") Marshall, —, Geoff Beaumont at front.

car accident. Jack organised six rooms upstairs to be the bedrooms for his children, and the old staff quarters downstairs for himself. His eldest son, Peter, 13, went to boarding school in Kilmore.

Jack came back to Geelong in 1982 and bought Kiloran Motel at Waurin Ponds. Two of his children, Sarah and David, were at boarding school in Ballarat. The other children went to school in Geelong. The bus from Anglesea picked them up outside the motel. The youngest, Emma, went to St Bernard's in Belmont. The first day Jack drove

behind the bus to make sure they got there okay. They did. But after school Emma waited where the bus had dropped her off in the morning—on the wrong side of the street!

Jack joined the Past Players and Officials Club when he came back to Geelong in the 1970s. He was a committee member from 1997 until 2008. He was made a life member at the annual meeting on 4 February 2008. He was a reliable worker at the club, and one of his roles was getting the half-time food on match days from the early 1980s until 2010.

Sources

1 Jack Hart, interviewed by Susan Kruss, 24 Feb. 2013