

THE LATE RWBRO. CYRIL ERNEST (BILL) COOPER, PSGW
23/4/1908 to 27/12/2008

We mourn the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of the last surviving Foundation Member of the former Glen Waverley Lodge.

Cyril Ernest Cooper, affectionately known to us as “Bill”, was born on 23rd April 1908 on his father’s market garden in Poath Road, Murrumbeena, the tenth child of Norman Richard and Wilhelmina Augusta Marie Cooper. His mother died when he was nine months old and his father subsequently remarried.

Bill commenced his education at the then Rosstown (now Carnegie) Primary School. In 1917, aged nine, he transferred to the newly opened Murrumbeena Primary School. He attended Sunday School at the Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church in Murrumbeena Road.

In 1922, aged 14, he left school to work with his father, who had sold his farm and gone into cartage contracting. Bill drove the horses and dray. They carted bricks, sand and other building materials to sites throughout the metropolitan area.

In 1926, Bill and his brother leased a property on Ferntree Gully Road, Clayton, growing vegetables. Five years later, when that lease had expired, they leased another property where the Monash Freeway now crosses Ferntree Gully Road in Mount Waverley and continued to grow vegetables for a further five years.

In 1936, Bill bought a twenty & a half acre property in Watsons Road, Glen Waverley for 830 pounds. For some 30 years, he grew vegetables there until he sold the land to developers in the mid 1960’s. He selected a block and built the house for himself and family.

Bill met and married his wife, Edna, in 1937 and they had two daughters, Marie and Valerie. Sadly, in 2000 Edna died after 63 years of marriage. Marie then retired to housekeep for her father until he moved to a nursing home last year. Valerie married and gave Bill and Edna two grandsons and two great grandsons. Sadly for them all, she died in 1997.

In his younger days, Bill was a very active sportsman, playing for both the Glen Waverley Football and Cricket Clubs, and captaining the cricket second eleven. When the Mulgrave County Club was formed in 1961, he became a foundation member and played both pennant and socials Lawn Bowls for many years.

He was also a member of the Waverley Historical Society and, in 1987, became a foundation member of the Probus Club of Wheelers Hill. Until recently, he regularly attended their monthly meeting and went on most of their regular outings.

Masonic History

RWBro. Cyril Ernest “Bill” Cooper was a Freemason for sixty-four years and ten months, having been Initiated in the **Spring Vale Lodge, No. 389**, on **28th February 1944**. He completed his Second and Third degrees over the next twelve months.

In 1950, the Master of that Lodge was the late Worshipful Brother Les Allen, OBE, PSGD, a prominent citizen and Municipal Councillor who, with many other local Freemasons (most of whom were market gardeners or fruit growers), was active in the formation of a new Lodge in the Waverley area. The **Glen Waverley Lodge, No. 683** was Consecrated on **28th July 1950** and Bill became a foundation member.

After progressing through various offices in the Lodge, some 56 years ago, on **15th September 1952**, Bill was Installed as Worshipful Master of his mother Lodge, **Spring Vale**. Subsequently, on 19th May 1956, he was Installed as Foundation Worshipful Master of the newly Consecrated **Lodge Criterion, No. 780**.

During his years of active membership of Glen Waverley, he was a guide and mentor to the general membership and, in particular, to a succession of Worshipful Masters. His delivery of charges was exemplary and inspirational. I will always remember his active participation as Proclaiming Officer and conducting the whole evening's proceedings at my own Installation as Master of that Lodge in 1973.

For his services to Freemasonry in general and his then three Lodges in particular, he was conferred with Grand Rank in 1963. For his continued service, he has subsequently been promoted four times, achieving the very high rank of Past Senior Grand Warden nearly eighteen years ago in 1991.

He was the highest-ranking member of Glen Waverley when it merged with Coinda and Affiliation to form **Lodge of Rapport, No. 920**, on 13th September 1997 when he became a Foundation Member of that new Lodge. He was subsequently elected a Special Member.

He received his Fifty Year Jewel in the then Glen Waverley Lodge in February 1994 and his Sixty Year Bar to that Jewel in the Lodge of Rapport in 2004. He was due to receive his Sixty-five Year Bar eight weeks from now, on 28th February.

In 2006, his health deteriorated and he became so frail that he was admitted to a nursing home in Upper Beaconsfield. Sadly, he passed away on Saturday, 27th December 2008, only four months short of his 101st birthday.

Many thanks to RWBro. John O'Reilly, ED, PJGW for providing this thorough insight into the life of RWBro. Bill Cooper, PSGW.

Vale Bill Cooper