

❖ HAROLD WHITTLE ❖

BACKGROUND

Harold Whittle was born in Lancashire, England, in 1916. One of six children, his father died when he was 10. He served in the anti-aircraft section of the British Army in World War II and took part in Operation Dynamo, rescuing British troops from the beaches of Dunkirk. In 1942, he married Toowoomba-born Sybel Lindley who had been studying in London before joining the British Army with the onset of war. Harold and Sybel, with their two-year-old daughter Susan, came to Australia in 1946.



LIFE ON BUDERIM

In 1947-48, the young Whittle family lived in Brisbane where Harold worked for a commercial artist. They then moved to Buderim where they rented a cottage and leased adjoining land to grow bananas, strawberries, beans and other fruits and vegetables. In 1949, they bought a 38 acre property on the northern slopes of Buderim and built the house that still stands in Horseshoe Bend. Their son Simon was born in 1952.

With a life-long interest in commercial art, Harold started a business in Nambour specialising in logos and sign-writing. Surveyor (and later Maroochy Shire Chairman) Fred Murray, a tenant in the adjoining premises, wrote in his autobiography that Harold Whittle '... was a clever commercial artist cum cartoonist ... (and) easily the most amusing yarn teller I've heard. ... When he wasn't working or playing golf, he was telling jokes.'

In 1960, the Whittles subdivided 24 allotments from their property, a development that required the dedication and construction of a new road (now Horseshoe Bend), and resulted in some of the finest building sites on the Sunshine Coast.

In 1963, Harold and Sybel bought the Maroochydoore Advertiser and the Caloundra Weekly. The free weekly newspapers both thrived under his guidance as managing editor, with the Advertiser in particular lifting from relative obscurity to its place as a widely read and respected country paper. He sold the businesses to Provincial Newspapers Queensland in 1972 but continued to work there until 1974 when he suffered a debilitating stroke.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Harold served as Division 4 (then Buderim) councillor for the Maroochy Shire Council from 1961 to 1964, when the role was an unpaid, part-time one.

He was a keen Rotarian, a member of the Buderim War Memorial Community Centre (now BWMCA) and a member of the Buderim Amateur Theatrical Society (BATS). With his well-deserved reputation as a good story-teller, he was also an entertaining public speaker.

A natural sportsman, he was primarily involved in cricket, tennis and golf. Both he and Sybel were part of a group that helped establish Headland Golf Club of which Harold became a life member. He was, at various times, club captain and club champion, and served as President for six years.

Harold died in 1991.

Donor: Simon Whittle