

❖ TOM SIMPER ❖

BACKGROUND

Adelaide-born Tom Simper served with the Australian forces in the Middle East and Papua New Guinea in World War II. He married Joyce Young in 1944 in her home state, Victoria. Eight years later, with their three young children, they were Queensland bound with caravan in tow. They explored as far north as the Daintree before settling on Buderim in 1954.

LIFE ON BUDERIM

Tom and Joyce grew bananas and small crops on a 20 acre property situated around the upper section of Jones Road, an area then known locally as Shaw's Hill. With their children involved in school and church activities as well as Scouts, Guides and the Junior Red Cross, the Simpers became extensively involved in community activities. Tom and Joyce also played tennis with the Buderim Tennis Club and participated in various productions of the BATS Theatre Company.



Tom returned to his trade as a bricklayer in 1960, working primarily on residential projects throughout the Buderim district and, in 1966, he and Joyce bought the Buderim Newsagency which they ran for eight and a half years. During this period and in his ensuing retirement years, Tom became even more involved in community activities.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Tom was Chairman/President of the Buderim War Memorial Community Centre (BWMCC) from 1959 to 1969 and then again in 1971. Major issues addressed by the centre during the sixties included the need for reticulated water, a police presence, a postal service, street lighting and sealing the red soil roads. (The only bitumen was a strip between the school and the post office.) The period was marked by several significant milestones. The first formal Anzac Day commemoration service was held in 1961. Buderim's Centenary was celebrated in 1962 with the compilation of a booklet (A History of Buderim), a street parade and various other activities. The Buderim Historical Society was formed in 1966 when Sybil Vise gifted her property to the community for use as a museum (now Pioneer Cottage). Her wish was fulfilled the following year after restoration work was completed largely through community participation, with Tom contributing countless hours to the task. Significant work on the War Memorial Hall and the building housing the library, billiards room and Country Women's Association rooms were also completed that year.

Tom was a tireless worker for his community. As well as heading the BWMCC committee for that busy and fruitful decade, he was a volunteer fire warden with the Buderim Rural Fire Brigade. He served with various other community groups including – Foote Sanctuary (president), BATS Theatre Company (president), Bridge Club (president), Maroochydore High School P & C (president), Anzac Day Committee (chairman), Buderim Uniting Church (secretary), and was also a foundation member of the Maroochydore Rotary Club. He was often heard to say in his retirement years – 'I'm so busy, I think I'll have to put a boy on'.

Tom was busily engaged in one of his community activities in 1982 when he died suddenly, aged 64. The 'Tom Simper Walk', a public walkway running off Eckersley Avenue to the Foote Sanctuary, honours a man who loved his community.

Donor: Joyce Simper