

A Brief History of the Lions Club of Glenside Inc. 1980–2025

In the Beginning

In 1980 five members of Marion Lions Club (which no longer exists) decided that they wanted a club that met closer to where they lived, in the Glenside area. They were Phil Ashwin, Don Caire, Ray Leibich, Bill Lungenmuss and Bruce Sinclair. The DG at the time, Jim Adam, was all for the formation of a new club; but against it were Marion Lions Club (not wanting to lose five members, three of whom were Board members) and Burnside Lions Club (whose membership catchment would be invaded).



Burnside eventually agreed, provided that it would be the sponsoring club, and a formation meeting was held at Burnside Town Hall. Seventeen members were inducted there and then by the District Extension Chair, Harold Gilbert. Among them were Noel O'Brien, still a member (pictured here); and Bruce Spangler, a member until recently. Terry Yuen and Paul Holland (remembered fondly by many of us) joined within a year.

Right from the start our meeting days were set at the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. John Tuffley of Burnside Lions attended the first few meetings and assisted greatly in getting the show on the road.

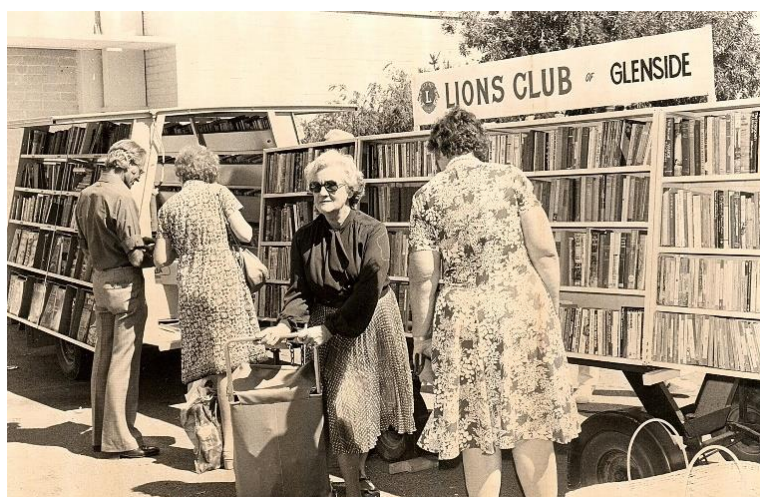
More members were recruited via that reliable precursor to social media, a letterbox drop. Among others this attracted the licensee of the Botanic Hotel, which became the Club's first meeting place.

By the time of the Charter Dinner there were 29 members – slightly more than we have now. The Dinner was a grand affair. It was held at the University of Adelaide Refectory on 29 March 1980 and the guests included State Premier David Tonkin, DG Jim Adam, Burnside Mayor Coralie Soward, and members of Burnside and Marion Lions Clubs.

Getting Down to Business

Fund-raising started modestly with \$20 from selling drinks, but Bill Pattullo had the idea of selling second-hand books from two trailers in the carpark of Demasius Department Store, which stood on the site now occupied by Burnside Village. The Book Carts, as they were called, were bought from Stirling Lions Club, from which Bill had transferred when he and his wife moved to Tusmore. In the Club's first year this raised \$7,798, equivalent to \$41,000 at today's prices.

This allowed for donations to a wide range of beneficiaries in the Club's first year, including the Braille Association, Ash Wednesday Appeal, Salvation Army, Burnside Library, Eastwood Community Centre and the Lions Miss Personality Quest.



In its first few years we supplemented the Book Cart profits by delivering telephone directories, selling drinks at the Burnside Fair, putting on film nights at the Trak (remember the Trak?) and organising wine-bottlings. Wine for the latter was supplied by two wineries, both clients of Bruce Adam, charter club member and accountant.



Later we raised money by making and selling a calendar, sponsored by local businesses, with proceeds going to Burnside Hospital. Rob Byrne was the prime mover.



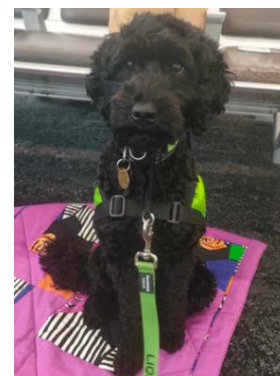
Our first involvement with the Lions Youth of the Year competition was in 1983-84, led by Paul Holland. Paul Turner took over and Glenside Lions remained involved until around 2016. This program has languished in recent years in our District, and efforts are being made to revive it.

But selling books has always been our main activity. By 1989 that business had outgrown the carpark and the Book Carts, which were sold to Paralowie Lions. Burnside Council offered to build us a shed at its Conyngham Street depot – provided that we cleared the site by demolishing an old brick building. This

was accomplished in six weeks by members wielding sledgehammers. Wooden shelving was built by charter member Bob Duffield and other equipment was bought second-hand at auction. Now we had a proper bookshop. Within four years the annual turnover exceeded \$24,000.

Trying Everything

Having got the Club on a firm footing, our fifth and sixth years were hectic. The club newsletter ('Pride') was launched. The first scholarships were awarded to Glenunga High School students (2 at \$500, increased to \$550 two years later). Christmas visitations began, with 28 visits in 1984-85. We hosted Ashley McDermott from Colorado under the Lions Youth Exchange Programme. We sponsored two cranio-facial patients, from Thailand and New Zealand. We had a Club visit to the Lions Hearing Dogs centre, starting a long-term relationship which led to our donating \$45,000 in 2023 to fully train a medical alert dog called Leonie.



Even more significantly we held our first Art Show, in conjunction with Burnside Apex Club, which made a profit of \$894. Oh, and Hayden Edwards, our Treasurer for many years, joined the Club.

The Club has always looked for projects where our contribution could make a material difference over time. Notable among these have been Operation Flinders, which we supported substantially in its infancy and has gone on to be a successful, well-funded organisation of great benefit to the State. In 1989-90, when Ron Glasson joined and the Book Mart grossed \$14,189, we boldly committed to funding Burnside Council's Mobile Library to the tune of \$8,000 per year for three years.

Consolidation

The 1990s were a time of consolidation and “playing our winners.” In 1992 we commenced a relationship with Eastwood Community Centre, which continues to be close. In April this year a large contingent of Glenside Lions accepted the Centre’s invitation to its annual party for benefactors. The excellent canapes were prepared by students who were learning their skills in the kitchen that we equipped.



In October 1992, remembering the success of the event six years earlier, the first of our Annual Art Shows was held. Significant investment in screens and lights was evidence of our intention to make it a long-term project. Apart from 1996 when we switched seasons from spring to autumn, and 2020 because of Covid-19, the Art Show has run continuously for 33 years. All profits go to a single beneficiary each year, most recently to the charity Second Chances.

In 1994 the Book Mart moved again, to the old Glen Osmond Institute in Glebe Road, opposite the MFS fire station. Takings had come within a whisker of \$25,000 in the previous year and bigger premises were certainly needed. We invested in steel shelving and stayed for fourteen years, during which time turnover doubled.

The custom of an annual Fellowship Weekend began in 1997, with a trip to Clare. In subsequent years the destinations included Wirrina, Goolwa, Barmera, Strathalbyn and Robe.

The decade ended on a high note, with Book Mart sales topping \$33,000 in expanded premises and following a plug on Channel 10 News. A community bus was purchased for Eastwood Community Centre (in conjunction with the now-defunct Adelaide Chinese Lions Club). And stalwarts John Varcoe, Paul Turner and Alan Hook joined the Club.



The Twenty-first Century

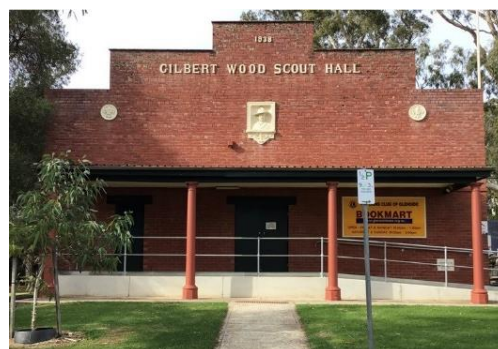
Hitherto our Club had been almost exclusively involved in raising and donating funds. In 2000-01 Noel O’Brien organised lymphoedema screening at Burnside Village, and two years later this became a District project. Similar screenings took place at intervals, and in 2007-08 we undertook three blood pressure and diabetes screenings. These continued as a District project until 2017, during which time over 6,000 people were screened.



Noel was also active in the Skin Cancer Screening Program in South Australia, that started in 2011, and was instrumental in acquiring and setting up the management framework for the mobile unit that has been operated jointly by Districts 201C1 and C2 since 2017.

2003-04 was a particularly eventful year. The Club got a website. A New Member Information Night was organised – the only one we have ever had? Best of all, our Leos Club at Glenunga International High School was chartered. John Hillman got it going and served as its advisor until 2023. Now Steve Ryan has that role, assisted by Gill, and the Club goes from strength to strength. For many years we have also been providing scholarships to selected GIHS pupils.

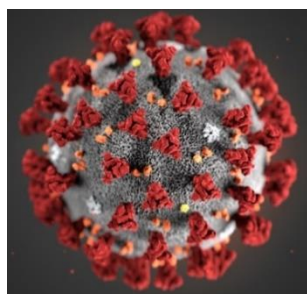
But the highlight of the noughties was the Book Mart's move in 2008 from Glebe Road to Kennaway Street, on the edge of Tusmore Park, where the Burnside Council had a derelict brick building: the Gilbert Wood Scout Hall, built in 1938 as the home of the Linden Park Boy Scouts. This move was occasioned by the need to demolish the Glen Osmond Institute, as well as the continuing growth of the Book Mart's business.



We were allowed to occupy the scout hall, make repairs and furnish it with steel shelving given to the Club by the Glen Osmond Institute Library, which had occupied the other half of the Glebe Road building before its demolition. The Library also gave their books to our Bookmart. Additional second-hand shelving was purchased at that time to complete the Kennaway Street fit out.

This was transformational in terms of our capacity to receive, process and organise the books that are donated to us; to accommodate the ever-growing demand for second-hand books; and to turn an impressive profit. Even the name was transformed, from Book Mart to Bookmart.

None of this would be possible without the many hours worked by Club members and an almost equal number of volunteers, augmented by some ex-members who can't bear to tear themselves away from this temple of literature.



The Club was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, of course. This occurred during Alan Hook's presidency and presented us with numerous challenges. We all had to do an online course and wear a 'COVID Marshal' badge while on desk duty at the Bookmart. Customers had to observe social distancing and rub their hands with sanitiser on entry. The Bookmart was closed for several weeks and turnover was 15% down in 2020; but thanks to pent-up demand it bounced back up in 2021 and has continued to grow. This year's turnover is likely to exceed \$250,000. A worse effect of the pandemic was the cancellation of our Annual Art Show. Fortunately it has flourished since re-starting in 2021.

Diversifying

Right from the start we have been primarily a fund-raising club. That is not to say that we have neglected direct service delivery to the community altogether, but it has always been secondary. In recent years all Lions Clubs have been urged to get more involved in service delivery, partly because this makes us more visible and therefore better able to recruit new members. Our response has been mainly in the domain of health screening:

- Hearing: periodically the Hearing Australia mobile unit is parked at the Bookmart giving free hearing tests.



- Skin cancer: the mobile unit was parked beside Victoria Park for two days in August 2023; over 150 people booked appointments and were screened.
- Vision: nine of our members have been trained and accredited to screen children for vision impairment, and in collaboration with Burnside and other clubs we have been involved in a dozen screening events.



We are also collecting in-kind donations to Foodbank, using the Bookmart as a collection point and delivering the donated items to Foodbank's headquarters. Every donor thanks us for what we're doing.

Of course, we consider both of our fund-raising projects to be *services* too. The Bookmart offers a wide range of affordably priced and impeccably categorised books, many of them hard to find anywhere else, while also allowing people to dispose of their surplus books in a guilt-free and socially profitable way. The Art Show connects artists with potential customers, who can indulge their love of art at affordable prices, while also involving local businesses as sponsors.

We aspire to focus more on youth. Between 1984 and 1999 we contributed to the Lions Youth Exchange program by facilitating visits from and to the USA, Thailand, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Finland and Denmark. Not so long ago we were active in the Youth of the Year and Leo of the Year competitions, thanks largely to many years of hard work by the late Paul Turner. In 2024 we provided a judge (Anne Bayetto) for a Junior Public Speaking competition, but for the most part our recent contributions have been only monetary.



Recognition

Over the years our Club has occasionally been recognised for its work in the community:

- 2008-09 Premier's Community Award.
Our newsletter 'Pride' won the District 201C1 Club Bulletin Award.
- 2021-22 Burnside Council's Business of the Year award in the 'Social Change Maker' category.
- 2023-24 The Art Show was Burnside Council's Community Event of the Year.

But the recognition that matters most to us has always come from the people we've helped, whether directly or indirectly.