

KATE TREMLETT
B. App. Sc (Phy) C.F.P. M.A.P.A. M.A.F.G.
Feldenkrais Practitioner
Physiotherapist

*5 Jillian Way
MT MARTHA 3934
Ph: 03 5975 9159
Fax: 03 597 5 9687
Mobile: 0415 171 092*

Provider No: 0717519L

*Sunbury Community
Health Centre,
12-28 Macedon St
SUNBURY 3429
Ph: 03 9744 4455
Fax: 03 9744 6777*

Provider No: 0717516F

KATE TREMLETT AND THE OVER 50'S EXERCISE GROUP.

Kate started the Over 50's Exercise group in 1985 after perceiving a need in the Sunbury community. At that time, there were very few suitable opportunities for older people to safely exercise to maintain or improve their fitness under medical supervision.

In Perth, a similar program had been running with great success and Kate had visited an exercise class whilst on holidays there.

Thus inspired, she developed an appropriate program for SCHC, containing all the essential elements of a balanced exercise program : a cardiovascular component (which involved walking, marching, dancing), flexibility and strengthening exercises, balance work, stretches and relaxation.

The classes proved very popular; one class quickly grew into two, with a total of 40-50 participants each week. Morning tea was held after each group and the social opportunity this provided was also an important part.

In fact, the exercise group also developed into a marvellous social group, with movie trips, lunch outings, excursions and fund-raising functions for SCHC. Many volunteers for the Centre came from this enthusiastic group.

Anniversaries of our starting date were celebrated with enthusiasm, and often guest speakers/ presenters were invited to attend. Christmas break-ups and special occasions were enjoyed with great gusto and champagne!

The Over 50's Exercise Groups were a power house all through the eighties and nineties. Many SCHC staff, including Ros Stevens, CEO, were envious and wanted to join but lamented the fact they were too young! However, they all enjoyed attending our celebrations and socialising with the participants.

By the time the 21st anniversary was being celebrated, Kate Tremlett had left the SCHC, but Physiotherapist Pek Hill had taken over in the ensuing years and Kate was delighted to have been invited back to the 21st celebrations, proud to have been part of such a great institution!

The group was a marvellous example of community health principles in action, preventing health problems and maintaining fitness with regular exercising and social networking. It was a real showcase for SCHC.

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Kate Tremlett : My Long Association with Sunbury Community Health Centre

I began work at SCHC in 1979, as soon as I had qualified as a Physiotherapist. Jim Wetherill was CEO, and he persuaded me to work two evening sessions, seeing orthopaedic outpatients, even before I began my full-time job at the Royal Melbourne Hospital!

I continued to work part-time there, and full-time at RMH until 1985, when I left acute hospital work behind and joined the SCHC Physiotherapy team of Marg Thornell and Andrea Algreen-Ussing. I loved working full-time in Community Health. In addition to 'hands-on' physio treatment, we did a lot of preventative health work and initiated many valuable community programs. Ros Stevens was CEO at this time and she encouraged us to think of new and innovative ideas to improve the health of the community.

One such idea, the health screening program : 'One Stop Body Shop' was the brainchild of Marg Thornell and myself. This was a huge undertaking, involving every staff member, and over one weekend we provided free health checks and screening tests in every area: Hearing tests, skin checks, lung function tests, posture assessments and scoliosis checks, fitness tests, eye tests etc etc. This was a most successful program that ran for many years. I remember one year, Marg appeared on Bert Newton's

show promoting our 'One Stop Body Shop'. She did a lung function test on TV and we were inundated afterwards with people as far away as Bayswater wanting to attend!

We organised special events for 'Women's Health'; monthly lecture series with eminent guest speakers and an annual 'Women's Weekend', run early in September so we could decorate the entire centre with daffodils. Helen Hill from Nursing and Lindy Neve from Counselling, were also instrumental in the organisation and every SCHC department was involved. We offered a variety of guest speakers and workshops, covering a wide range of Women's health topics, both serious and frivolous, such as 'Sexuality', 'Meditation', 'Pelvic floor Function', 'Belly Dancing' and 'How to look your best'!

These weekends were hugely popular, well-attended and ran for a number of years.

We participated in many community events such as the Sunbury Fair, held annually in March. Various groups, such as the Over 50's Exercise group, Nursing, Family Day Care, would proudly participate in the official March through the town's centre, which would culminate with activities and stalls on the Village Green. SCHC would man a booth there, promoting our health services and activities.

I began the Over-50's Exercise Group in 1986, and this ran for many years, eventually evolving into exercise groups for those with differing capacities, such as 'Sitting exercises for the frail elderly' 'Weight and resistance Training' etc.

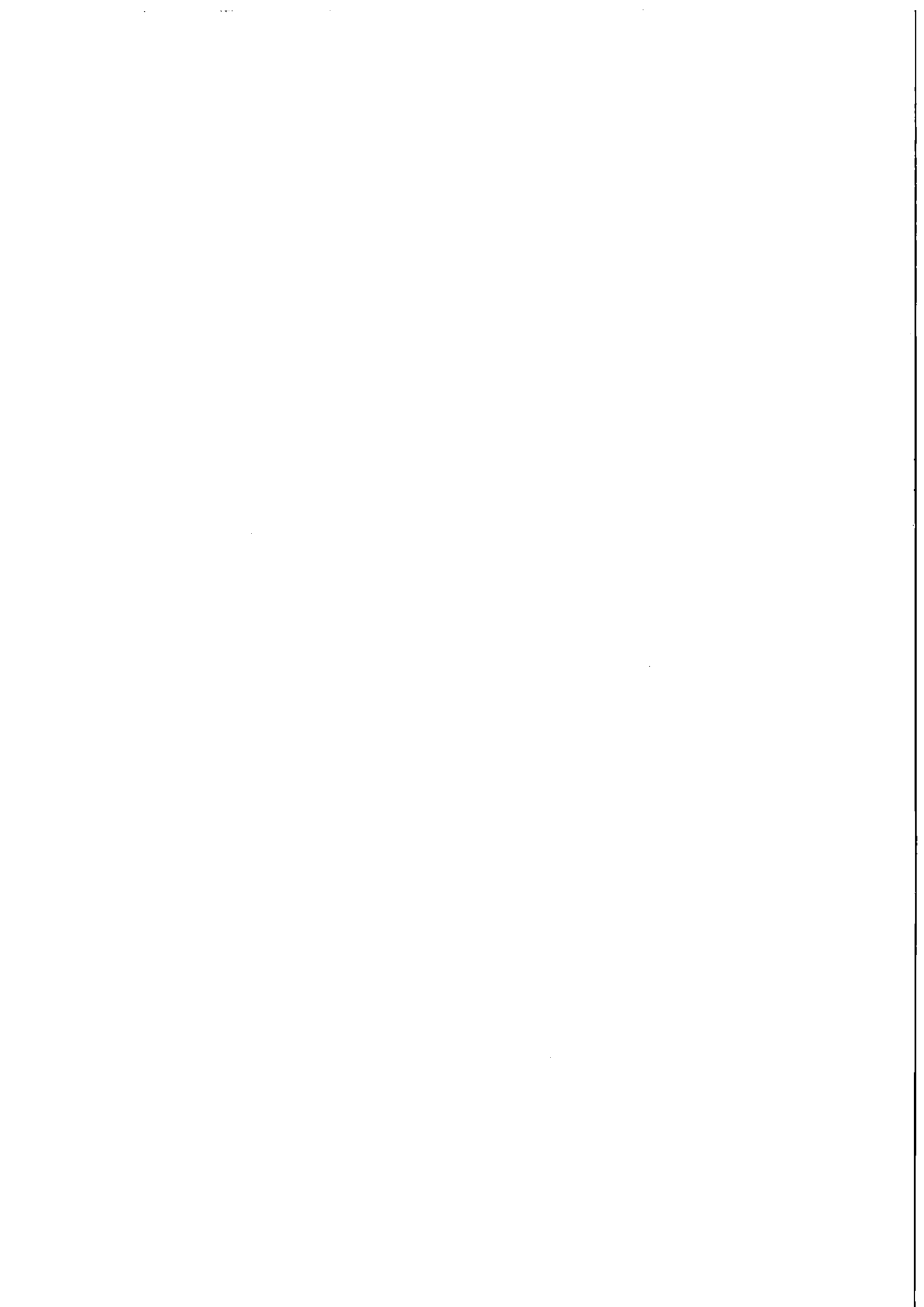
Over the years, we organised many activities such as Tai chi and Qigong courses.

In 1988, I undertook extra studies, enrolling in the 4 year Feldenkrais Professional Training Program, with full support of

Ros Stevens and the Board. This was to prove a very useful adjunct to the physiotherapy services we offered, and way ahead of its time. At that time there were no qualified Feldenkrais Practitioners in Victoria, let alone in Community Health. After two years of study I was qualified to teach 'Awareness Through Movement' classes, which I ran for clients and staff. Upon graduating in 1991, I began working with Individual clients in the Physio Dept. (The Feldenkrais Method embodies what we know today as 'Neuroplasticity'; the brain can change itself and learn new things even when damage has occurred. Its application in neurological conditions such as MS, stroke, Parkinson's Disease, paediatric learning difficulties, etc produces amazing results, but Feldenkrais is also used widely to treat orthopaedic conditions and physical problems such as arthritis.)

I enjoyed my work at SCHC immensely but I left, reluctantly, to move to Queensland, returning several years later and once again happy to provide Feldenkrais services to the Sunbury community. Despite living now in Mt Martha, I travel to Sunbury once a week to still see my clients on Mondays.

I have enormous affection and respect for the SCHC. So many of my clients, especially those in the Over 50's exercise group, were like my extended family. I think of them fondly still. Such amazing work, much of it ground-breaking in the community health field, was done by the Health centre and its dedicated staff in the years I was there, and in the years since, and I feel very privileged to have been a part of it.



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VOLUNTEERS IN PHYSIO DEPT

We were so fortunate to have the enthusiastic assistance of volunteers in the Physio dept, notably two: Roma Pretty and EdnaTudball-Smith. They assisted with making client appointments, changing linen, getting hot packs, admin duties, whatever we needed!

ROMA PRETTY: Roma first came to the SCHC in the 1980's, joining the second(at 10.30am) Over-50's Exercise Group. She was just recovering from surgery to remove a brain tumour and was not particularly strong; her balance was poor and she was at first unable to even get down on to the floor to exercise.

She quickly improved, went from strength to strength, made many friends at the centre and was very keen to give back to the community, thus volunteering to help in Physio and with the Over 50's group..

She was loved by all and continued in her volunteer capacity at the centre for many years.

EDNA TUDBALL-SMITH: Edna was a very loyal and dedicated helper in the Physio dept for many years. She came in several days per week and was happy to help with whatever was required. She organised regular fund-raising 'Movie Luncheons' for the Over 50's group and was always in charge in the kitchen for morning tea following exercises.

