

August
2011

NEWSLETTER

CITY OF MOORABBIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

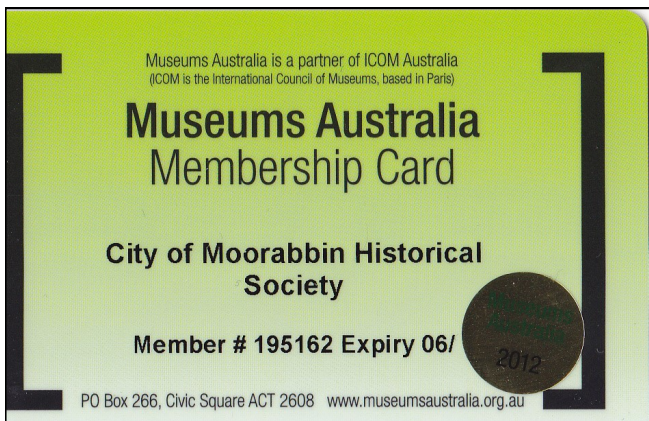
The next meeting of the Moorabbin Historical Society will be on 28th August 2011, from 1pm to 2pm in the 'Grace Lewis' Room, after which time 'Box Cottage' Museum will be open from 2- 4pm for the general public. The committee look forward to seeing all our members again, and interested visitors are most welcome to attend.

Items of Interest:

- A warm welcome to our three new members, Roslyn, and Fran and Holger.
- At the last Open Day Jim set up and demonstrated the new MP3 player to provide some animal noises and sound-track in the barn area. Although this initial trial was very limited, I'm sure that our members could certainly see the potential. To develop this further, I recently contacted, Einar Beckmann, who is a tutor at the Mulgrave Neighborhood House. Einar has significant expertise in IT media, and he very kindly agreed to put together a 50 minute soundtrack for our MP3 player in the barn - **at no charge**. The MP tracks are a mixture of truly beautiful Australian bird calls, ten minutes of the "old horsemen" talking about the declining use of horses in 1962, (lifted from my DVD), Jack Thompson's exciting recitation of the "Man from Snowy River", lots of cows, horses, sheep noises, and 3 songs that I hope visiting children will relate to: "Home Among the Gum-Trees", "Old Man Emu", and the Seekers "I am Australian". Einar has donated considerable time and expertise to blend and alter the sounds and different volumes of these many "clips" to produce a smooth-flowing effect.
- Yet further "exploits" of Dennis. After many visits and hours of quite complicated work, Dennis , with some assistance from Jim, has finished installing the new security alarm for 'Box Cottage'. Next, Dennis, (with some assistance from Joan), has been working on the new garden area where the gum- tree was removed. He has re-laid some pavers, and then, with the kind assistance from his son managed, (*somehow*), to move the cement horse-trough and water-pump to "centre-stage". Finally Dennis moved some bluestone pitchers. What an improvement, once planted up with some native shrubs, this will be a lovely area! Yet again, what can we say but, "Thank you Dennis!!
- The on-going issue of disposal of green-waste after members pruning, weeding, and planting drives, has finally been resolved. Following discussion with Amanda Mills I'm delighted to report that GECC has kindly agreed that the Parks and Garden's officers will check, and remove the waste for us on a regular basis. This is such a relief for those of us - **you know who you are** - who have lugged bags of green waste across the park to take home for recycling!!
- Last week at my request, Peta Knott, (a Curator), who is currently managing the ongoing Museum Australia, Victorian Collection's Project, visited 'Box Cottage' Museum. Peta spent a couple of hours looking through the museum, vetting our conservation techniques, and finally making simple, and **very** do-able, suggestions for improving our displays to a group of our members. It was reassuring to hear from Peta that in general our efforts at conservation, the use of shrouds, acid-free tissue paper, and numbered tags attached to button-holes etc are correct.

- Peta also suggested that simply re-grouping areas of our collections with simple signage would be of benefit, eg. Placing our many sewing exhibits together. *In particular*, Peta feels that it would be of great benefit to group the City of Moorabbin artifacts in their own separate area. In general these ideas seem so very sensible you do wonder why we haven't thought of it before! With these changes in mind, our members will have to organise some volunteer "drives" to get together and re-do our cabinets. Exciting times, eh! It's also important to mention that in response to my enquiry, Peta visited us simply as an *unpaid volunteer* from Museum's Australia Inc, therefore we have an even greater appreciation of her valuable input.

Below is a copy of the MHS Museum Australia membership number. **MHS members, please cut out this facsimile** and attach it to some cardboard for your use. The original membership card will be held in the filing cabinet in the 'Grace Lewis' Room, under the title 'Museums Australia'.



For 'Box Cottage' Museum the real benefits of our MA Membership will mainly be in *finally* having access to professional advice in many areas relating to our museum, including conservation, as well as advice on funding applications. However there are a *few* benefits for individual members of the MHS, so please also read, and take account of the email from Peta Knott, outlining those benefits below.

Helen Stanley

From: "Knott, Peta" <pknott@mavic.asn.au>
To: "Helen Stanley" <helensta@timeweb.net.au>
Sent: Monday, 15 August 2011 11:54 AM
Subject: RE: Just a query
 Hi Helen,

Just to explain a bit about MA and MAVic. We (MAVic) are the state branch of the national body (MA) and they are very short staffed which may explain why they have not returned your email. Also, if you asked them specifically about whether MA members get discounts to Museum Victoria events, they may not necessarily know as that is a state matter not a national one. MAVic negotiated a special deal with MV – here is what MA members get

10% off museum entry (You may have to argue this point depending on the person behind the desk!)

No discount on Tutankahmun tickets but you do get a free audio guide
 You could try asking for 10% discount on IMAX tickets but that would depend on the ticket person.

As for other Victorian museums – try asking for a discount – there is no hard and fast rule unfortunately. It depends on the institution. We are trying to rectify this in the future.

Sorry it is so vague. Hope this helps!

Cheers
 Peta
 Peta Knott
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 Tuesday-Friday
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The Building Of Moorabbin Hospital; An Example Of People-Power:

Yesterday, as I was driving past the now Moorabbin Campus of Monash Medical Centre, in Centre Road, East Bentleigh I thought it would be of interest to remember the many highs and lows of those local residents, (many now long gone), who dreamed and never gave up the fight for over 26 years, to ensure that a hospital for Moorabbin became a reality. Greatful thanks go to the Leader Newspaper for much of the following information from the ***Souvenir Edition of the City of Moorabbin News - Pictorial, Sunday, October 19th 1975***, as well as personal notes from Mr H. Smith's estate.

In Moorabbin the 1940s was a frightening time. A Polio epidemic swept the then City of Moorabbin and schools were closed, and children quarantined in their own homes, were schooled by correspondence. In this climate of fear, residents became acutely aware of the need for their own local hospital. In 1949 the *Moorabbin Hospital Society* was set up with the aim of building a hospital for the district.

In 1949 seventeen acres were purchased on the corner of Centre and Gardiner's Road, East Bentleigh, for the sum of \$32,548. This site was thought to be ideal for a Moorabbin Community Hospital as it was located far enough away from the then bustling Bentleigh shopping centre, yet had access by public transport. The cost of the land was shared equally by the City of Moorabbin and the Hospital and Charities Commission. **BUT** the "sticking point", over many years was proved to be, that ***no firm date was given for construction!***

Meanwhile, Mr Fred Newry Porter was one citizen who enthusiastically embraced the dream of a hospital for Moorabbin. The Porter family had arrived by sailing ship in the 1850s from County Armagh, Northern Ireland. (The well known McGuinness family of East Bentleigh were their shipmates). Fred's second name "Newry" seems to indicate that was the name of their home town in County Armagh, near the Mountains of Mourne. Mary Jane Porter, a spinster and Fred's only sister was for many years owner and proprietress of the Boundary Hotel in East Bentleigh. Two other brothers, James and William, also bachelors, lived with Fred and Jane at the hotel. Another brother, Robert, was married and lived in Queensland. But, there were no descendants.

Fred is believed to have been born around 1865. A bachelor like his brothers, he had inherited the East Boundary Hotel from his sister, Mary Jane Porter. Harry Smith, (1899—1988), recalled that Fred Porter was a large man, pleasantly spoken and quick in repartee. Fred described himself for business purposes as a "Licensed Dealer". The "dealing" mainly concerned trading cattle and sheep, but also extended to anything that could be turned to a profit. Fred often drove a pony and jinker towing a cow or heifer at the rear. Harry remembered that he also delighted in the use of school-boy slang such as "Oscar Ashe" for "cash". It seemed that the worry of raising the money to build a new hospital was over when Fred Porter generously gave, under his 'Last Will and Testament', the whole of his substantial estate of \$94,792 towards the building of a Moorabbin community hospital. (Circa 1951, when Fred passed away in his eighties). The bequest was subject under the Terms of his Will, to the commencement of building within ten years of his death. Had the building of the hospital commenced within this time, the customary government subsidy of \$3 for every \$1 donated would have been sufficient to build a hospital. **But**, the government failed to subsidize the Porter bequest within the ten years limitation, this failure was a bitter repudiation of its promise. **Instead**, Fred's money was distributed to other hospitals outside the City of Moorabbin! A time of despair degenerated into community apathy.

To quiet the unrest, in the 1950s the government "gifted" \$28,000 to build a new maternity wing onto the old 'Anne Street' Hospital, situated at 1 Anne Street, McKinnon. Whilst the Anne Street Hospital was a gracious looking property, unfortunately it was also old and small, with just a few beds that were used mainly for local midwifery patients, and minor surgery. The government's "gift" increased the Anne Street beds to a total of 28. Hardly enough to satisfy the needs of the large Moorabbin municipality. Whilst the Anne Street Hospital's nursing care was good, even in the 1950s it lacked the refinements and equipment of a modern hospital. One midwifery patient still recalls the time that the legs of her bed-head actually fell through the old floor!!

The residents of Moorabbin hopes were dashed further when, with the establishment of the new teaching Hospital at Monash University, Clayton, representatives of the of the Charities and Hospitals Commission met with the Moorabbin Council to explain the change of policy and encouraged the

council to turn the reserved Moorabbin Hospital land over to **“housing for the aged”**. The Moorabbin Council agreed to this change as they were now persuaded that the expansion of Anne Street Hospital, and the development of the Monash Hospital at Clayton would satisfy Moorabbin resident’s needs.

In 1963 the people who had worked so hard and contributed towards the Centre Road hospital saw their dream rapidly evaporating. There was opposition to the “patched-up” Anne Street Hospital solution, and also the misuse of the long-held hospital site now newly “ear-marked” for aged housing.

Finally it was a letter to the Moorabbin Standard, Mr Harry Smith of Bentleigh, “which said in effect that if the people of Moorabbin didn’t wake up they would lose the hospital for all time”, that galvanized a small group of community members to action.

The letter mobilised a local resident’s force, and began a demonstration of the value of determination and **“people power”!** Importantly the Allens of East Bentleigh, Mr Harry Smith of Bentleigh, Mr Jim Wyles of McKinnon, Mr Alex McDonald and others formed a **Protest Committee**. In just three weeks’ the save **Moorabbin Hospital Petition**, was promoted and circulated throughout the City of Moorabbin in a bid to keep the Moorabbin Hospital project viable. Winifred Allen, (a nursing sister), and her husband Mr Noel Allen, who had responded to Harry’s letter, initially set up card tables along the shopping strip in Centre Road, Bentleigh. This was not to prove successful. Next Winifred and her husband took the issue to their separate churches, (Winifred attended St Peter’s RC Church, and her husband was Presbyterian), and this proved a far better forum. Many other churches throughout the City of Moorabbin were then contacted and in every case, religious ministers exhorted their parishioners to “sign up” for the Petition. Then Mrs Allen had the brilliant idea to contact butchers throughout the City of Moorabbin area, (and there were many butchers in 1963), and successfully sought their help in gaining many more signatures on the Moorabbin Hospital Petition. Other well known community families took up the challenge. Luckily the Smith brothers were already well known in Bentleigh, and as one brother, Arch Smith, owned the popular service station on the corner of Centre and Jasper Roads in Bentleigh, he had the perfect opportunity for a “captive” audience. Then other community organisations became enthused. In the end a bound Petition containing over 5000 signatures was handed to Mr J A Rafferty, MP, **who the Protest Committee knew was contesting an election at this time**. Accordingly, Mr Rafferty duly presented the Moorabbin Hospital Petition to Parliament.

As a result, (magically), there was a dramatic change in the previously shelved hospital plans. In a joint statement Mr J A Rafferty and Mr R Suggett announced that following “strong representations to the highest level”, State Cabinet had agreed that a new hospital **would** be built on the Centre Road site, **but limited to thirty beds**.

Despite this assurance, hopes were dashed **yet again**, when in 1969 the then provisional committee for the new hospital made an application to the Supreme Court to seek approval to use the funds available for a **geriatric centre**. Just in time, in 1972 it was discovered that the provision of sufficient land at Monash Clayton for that hospital on the Clayton campus had become a problem. This fact caused the Hospital and Charities Commission to finally reconsider the contentious, but still vacant, Centre Road, Moorabbin Hospital site. In 1973, following continued community opposition to the annexation of the Moorabbin Hospital funds, the government finally capitulated and abandoned the contentious legal proceedings in the Supreme Court. Mr Lew Reese, MP for Moorabbin announced the tenders for stage one of the new Moorabbin Hospital .

It was on Sunday, October 26th in 1975 that Sir Henry Winneke officially opened Stage 1 of the 200 bed, new Moorabbin Hospital in Centre Road, East Bentleigh.

The Moorabbin Hospital has continued to change and develop over the last 36 years. For instance although both the Emergency Department and popular midwifery section have been closed, the Moorabbin Hospital importantly now boasts a state-of-the-art Oncology Department, as a subsidiary of the Peter MacCallum Hospital, as well as the traditional medical and surgical departments.

This **very** abbreviated history of Moorabbin Hospital is also an inspirational reminder of the benefits of perseverance and people-power. Whilst the general populace that now, (thirty-six years later), simply takes for granted the benefits of a modern public hospital on their doorstep, those of us with an interest in history must “dip our lids”, and pay our respects to those community-minded volunteers whose

determination made it happen.

'63 dispute over credit for hospital

In November 1963 there was an argument in Moorabbin Council as to who should get the credit for the latest decision, at that stage, to go ahead with a 30-bed hospital.

The clash was between former councillors Ken Hodgson and Reg Butler. Both represented the north ward.

Cr. Hodgson said it was the members of the Hospital Provisional Committee who induced the government's final approval of the hospital. "They had never abandoned hope of obtaining a hospital on the selected

site," he told council.

He said the committee had been ably backed by Mr. R.H. Suggett MLA and Mr. J.A. Rafferty, MLA who influenced the government to change its policy.

Cr. Butler differed. He said the whole credit of getting the hospital should go to Mrs. N. Allen, a trained nurse of East Bentleigh "who set in motion a concerted effort to bring pressure to bear on the authorities to reverse the decision to spend \$90,000 on renovations and additions to the old building in Anne Street and concentrate on a new building in Centre Road," he said.

He referred to the petition of 5000 names gathered by a group of people who opposed the Centre Road site being used for any other purpose than a hospital. This petition was finally presented to parliament.

Left: Article from Page 38 Souvenir Edition, Moorabbin News, Sunday, October 19th 1975.

Right: Article from Page 11, Souvenir Edition, Moorabbin News, Sunday October 19th 1975.

and a little help from above?

If prayer does move mountains the role of Rose Kennedy in the construction of the hospital should be recognised.

"Every time I read a black headline about the hospital I would say a Hail Mary and throw a St. Joseph's medal onto the site," she would say during the frustrating years of the sixties.

Rose, who lives in Centre Rd. and is one of the pioneering Kennedy families of East Bentleigh was in her eighties during these times.

Her interpretation of a black headline was one which deferred the hospital again; and there were plenty of these.

"When I was on the bus going along Centre Rd. I would start a Hail Mary as soon as we got to the hospital site fence and have it finished at the corner of Gardeners Rd."

How many holy medals had she thrown onto the land? "Can't remember now ... it was quite a few."

T & CO.
D WHOLESALES
V FABRICS
STS IN:

S. GIFT PACKAGING AC-
PRESSURE SENSITIVE
WERS & SEASONAL

FINALLY: (JUST FOR A LAUGH!)

"The Dead Parrot"

A woman arrived at the vet with her parrot lying "claws-up" at the bottom of the cage. The vet pronounced the bird dead.

"Are you positive?" she cried. "Couldn't he just have fainted?"

The vet sighed, left the surgery and returned with a Labrador dog. The dog stood on its hind legs, sniffed the parrot, turned to the vet and shook its head. The vet led it away and returned with a tabby cat, which leapt onto the table, looked at the parrot and shook its head.

"I'm afraid your parrot is **definitely** dead," said the vet handing her the bill. "Four hundred dollars!" gasped the woman. "Just to tell me my parrot is dead!"

"Well," he said, "if you'd accepted my opinion, it would have been \$50. **But with the lab report and cat scan, it's \$400.**"