MAV 01258

a kerosene lamp. In conjunction with this there will be an exhibition by the Brighton Philatelic Society (there's history in stamps!) and on Tuesday 18th, Wednesday 19th and Friday 21st., April there will be a showing of films of historical and art interest lent by the State Film Centre.

The exhibition will be officially opened on Tuesday evening (18th) at 7.30 by Councillor F. Le Page.

RETREAT HOUSE, OF CHELTENHAM.

In Cavanagh Street, Cheltenham on eight acres of grass and trees stand some brick buildings now called Retreat House. The space that separates them from speeding traffic and endless rows of suburban homes makes them look strange - and peaceful - today. Most of the buildings have been there a long time, the oldest for seventy-five years. And their story begins even further back with a young English girl called Emma Caroline Silcock.

Emma was born in 1858 at Sutton, Norfolk. She went with her sister, like so many English children, to a boarding school, and later - and this too was fashionable - to school in Brussels to improve her French and music. She became interested in religion and decided to be a nun; she was received as Novice Esther into the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, an Anglican institution, at Wantage in Berkshire. She was fond of playing the organ and one day was in the chapel practising. She was not very tall and in stretching to reach the pedals fell and injured her back. After some months of treatment her doctor, fearing tuberculosis, advised a removal to a warmer climate and she came to Australia to stay with relatives in Melbourne.

At that time the Church of England in Melbourne was much concerned about the poverty and crime in the section of the city around Little Lonsdale Street. Bishop Moorhouse, the second Bishop of Melbourne had established in 1885 a "Ladies' Committee of Ways and Means" (the name sounds quaint today) to deal with the problem. The Committee bought for £700 a building in Little Lonsdale Street; the ground floor had been a shop and bakery; above it were five rooms. A photograph shows it square, bare and solid, and of course right on the street. Here a "Mission to Streets and Lanes" was established and Sister Esther, now recovered from her illness, was asked to take charge of it. In 1888 with an assistant she set up a soup kitchen and began collecting clothes from the wealthier church members to distribute among the poor. Two other Sisters, Ellen and

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