

F6/34

The Friendly Societies' Carnival at Mentone

The following is an excerpt from Kingston Historical Website: At War

Full transcript available at <http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au>

F6/34: "The Murder of Nurse Cavell", Tableau with Ella Allnutt portraying Nurse Cavell

F6/35: The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society Fruit and Vegetable Float, showing a returned serviceman standing by the float.

The Friendly Societies' Carnival at Mentone was held on Easter Monday 1916 during the 1st World War. Australia was at war with Germany. Nurse Cavell, a British nurse was shot by the Germans on October 12th, 1915 for sheltering allied soldiers in a Red Cross hospital and helping them to escape to neutral Netherlands. The deaths of Australian soldiers were being reported in the local press, and wounded troops were returning home. It was in this context that the local friendly societies decided to organise a carnival to raise money to support those discharged wounded local soldiers, who were attempting to return to civilian life.

The organisers of the event, the Moorabbin United Friendly Societies, hoped to attract a large crowd to the carnival at the Mentone recreation Reserve on Easter Monday 1916. The plan was to have a procession of floats from Cheltenham, a program of sporting events on the oval, and a concert at night at the Mentone Skating Rink. Several valuable prizes were to be won during the day.

At 11am the procession started led by the Cheltenham Brass Band. The friendly societies then followed; AOF, IOR, HACBS, PAFS and ANA. The Protestant Alliance Friendly Society had two entries in the parade, "The Murder of Nurse Cavell", (F6/34), and a fruit and vegetable display, (F6/35) – both floats won their category.

Amongst the many other participants and prize winners, were tradesmen's wagons including Rose Bros. undertaker's hearse, baker's turnouts, a tableau of "Burke and Wills at Cooper's Creek", and a milkman's turnout. J Marriott won the market gardener's award.

At the reserve a series of races was held including a walking race, a trotting race, a race for bandsmen and several others. In addition there was a football kicking contest, and another for bowling at wicket.

Overall the day was rated a great success. Approximately 140 Pound was raised for the Discharged Wounded Soldiers Fund. Much of the success was due to the work of the ladies' committee of forty people. They solicited donations prior to the carnival, sold refreshments on the day and benefited by the auction of the fruit and vegetables which, under the conditions of entry to the parade, became the property of the committee.

The organising committee for the carnival consisted of about 30 men led by Mr CR Ashby as president, Mr W Walsh as honorary secretary, Mr A Morgan as honorary treasurer. Mr GT Allnutt and his son, Albert, were both indefatigable workers, and the procession judges Cr Stone, Cr F Groves and Mr Woodmason, had the difficult task of selecting the winners in the procession.