



Official newsletter of the Greensborough Historical Society Inc. (Incorporation No. A0054430X)

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See us in action

New members and visitors are most welcome to join us at our meetings.

Meeting Dates for 2012:

Friday meetings (1:00pm start)

Venue: Greenhills Neighbourhood Centre

- January 27
- March 23
- May 25
- July 27
- September 28
- November 23

Saturday Forums (1:00pm start)

Venue: Diamond Valley Learning Centre

- February 25
- April 28
- June 23
- August 25
- December 8

Heritage Weekend 2012

- October 27 and 28

History Resource Centre

34 Glenside Road
(Cnr Para Road, next to Pre-school)
Lower Plenty

The Society's History Resource Centre is open on Thursday's, 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Members and visitors most welcome.

Volunteers work on cataloging and archiving new resources. Computers are available for research with a variety of databases.

If you are travelling from outside the local area, please call Noel Withers on 9435 4513 to confirm if the Centre will be open on the Thursday of your visit.

Greensborough Historical Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, 28th September 2012 at 1:00pm

At the Greenhills Neighbourhood Centre,
Community Drive Greensborough.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Members are reminded that you must be a financial member of the Society to nominate for positions on the Committee or to vote at Annual General Meetings.

In this issue

- President's report
- Latest news and events
- Feature story – Rosie Bray
- The 'Batman' apple tree
- The Jean Partington story
- Bryn Teg – photos anyone?
- Archives update
- Puzzle time – 1930's style
- Snapshots of a past life
- The Last Laugh

President's Report



Hi Folks

Those of you who attend our monthly meetings will be aware of their current format of predominantly "In House" meaning that we haven't relied upon external speakers.

This has had the effect of making our meetings to have a more sociable atmosphere as well as containing history relevant to our area and though we intend to have external speakers from time to time we believe that our approach this year has been successful.

There are very few buildings left in Greensborough of heritage value but we are fortunate to have possibly the oldest apple tree in Victoria circ 1841, a pioneer children's cemetery circ 1845 and the aqueduct across the Plenty River circ 1890.

Over the past 12 months our member Anne Paul has gathered together all the material that has been collected over the years re the three sites has submitted nominations to Heritage Victoria and the National for formal recognition of what we believe to be sites of significant heritage value.

Anne is to be congratulated for her persistence and particularly here patience because her dealings have not been without frustration however the vibes are good and in recent progress, Heritage Victoria has just listed the Pioneer Children's Cemetery onto its Victorian heritage Inventory so the Society is making a difference and we will continue to do so.

Our Annual General Meeting is to be held at our September meeting and all committee positions will be declared vacant so if you wish to be part of a vibrant team and enjoy greater satisfaction from your involvement then let me know.

Best wishes

Noel

Latest news and events

For the very latest in news and events, the Society's web site at www.greensboroughhistorical.org.au will keep you up to date and informed.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Greenhill Neighbourhood Centre, Community Drive Greensborough on Friday, 28th September 2012, starting at 1:00pm.

Members are encouraged to attend this official meeting. A normal General Meeting will follow after the official proceedings have completed.

The Society's Constitution and Rules require members seeking nomination for the Committee or intending to vote at the meeting to have all fees or moneys owing to the Society paid in full before the meeting.

Working Bee - Sunday 12th August (Report by Noel)

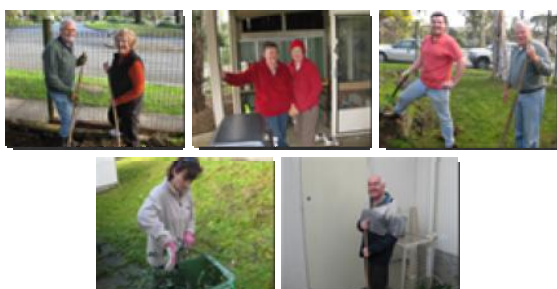
We had a good turn up for the working bee at our Resource Centre and we were blessed with fine weather, which resulted in smiling faces and a spruced up garden area with some planting around the existing rock formation!

The air was filled with the sound of brush cutters, whipper snippers and mower so a big thank you to those who attended and provided the appropriate equipment to show the natural forces just who is in charge we also found the water supply pipe but fortunately didn't damage it and we know it for later.

Dennis and Amanda, our landscape and horticultural experts have great plans for the area and with a bit of funding and a future working bee we will have the garden looking better than it has ever been and reduce ongoing maintenance.

Though we concentrated on the outside to take advantage of the good weather the floor inside got swept and mopped so that it didn't feel neglected.

We worked so hard that we were finished by mid day and there were no takers for the BBQ (anybody eat white bread?) and our team of furniture removers who had gone to pick up some more filing cabinets came back to a cold reception. (Just how many pubs are there between Epping and Lower Plenty?)



Feature story

A Second Chance at Learning – by Rosie Bray

Society member, Rosie Bray's many achievements over the years, both personal and public, have been quietly accomplished without fanfare or bravado. Rosie's contribution to our community and indeed to the Greensborough district comes with her strong belief in social equality, fairness and compassion.

After several years as a journalist with a local newspaper and as a passionate supporter of local government, firstly as a former archivist at the City of Heidelberg and now as a keen observer at many of Banyule City Council meetings, Rosie's diligence and fortitude to get results is greatly admired.

The Society is only one of the many beneficiaries of her time and support. The following is Rosie's own story, written by herself, after much persuasion by her many friends in the Society.

To Rosie – a big thank you for sharing your personal space with us, something we know and understand you value dearly.

To our readers – enjoy Rosie's story and learn.

I consider myself very fortunate to have had a second opportunity at learning.

A chance meeting with Watsonia Technical College Principal Mr Thomson, gave me the first opportunity to enter the class room as a student after an absence of over 40 years.

On reflection was it chance or was it planned??

I was employed at this time by the Leader Newspaper, which was then owned by the Mott Family. My habit was to visit each school and pre-school in the Watsonia and Greensborough area each week for snippets of news. So it was not unusual for me to meet Mr Thomson in one of the corridors of the College. After the usual pleasantries Mr Thomson said that they were asking mature aged people to join their year 12 English class that year and would I like to be part of the scheme? Without any thought I said, "No thank you Mr Thomson, I have plenty on my plate at the moment." However, Walking home from the College, I thought why not, give it a go. And after a talk with Matt my husband that is what I did. The year was 1988, and the beginning of my second education.

I soon found out the class time and requirements and I turned up at the appointed time. It was only then that I found out that I was the only mature aged student to accept Mr Thomson's invitation. The class teacher Mrs



Rosie Bray in 2011
Bachelor of Arts
Honours Degree majoring
in Politics and History
(Photo: Rosie Bray)

Lynne Mc Robert used her professional wisdom, explaining to the 'stunned' class of young people why I was sitting in their class room. We soon settled down to year 12 English, but many times during the year I was asked "Why are you here?" I always had a set answer that I was lucky enough to have a second chance at learning. The year passed quickly and I was pleased that I had no trouble with the studies with good results, and I got on well with my fellow students.

At this stage, I need to relate one small story.

After a month of class work in that first year, I was on my way home one day when Mrs Glyn Wilson popped out of her class room and offered her assistance. Two steps further I met Mr Larry Fraime (Vice Principal) who also offered his help. Just around the corner Miss Kerry Ballard asked if she could help me, only to be followed by Mr Thomson who was anxious to help me (all within five minutes). I am pleased to say that right though out my mature age schooling I received the same help and encouragement from all I encountered.

Studying English at Watsonia Technical College whetted my appetite, and I continued my second education in 1989 by accepting Mr Michael Blake's



'Australian History' Class of 1989
Watsonia High School
[Rosie is in the back row]
(Photo: Rosie Bray)

invitation to join the Australian History Year 12 class at Watsonia High School.

This was a very interesting year, with class teacher Mrs Horsburgh introducing some local people to relate to the depression years that we were studying.

1990, I changed location and studied year 12 Politics at the Diamond Valley Living and Learning Centre with teacher Mrs Julie Jenkins.

1991. Another change of location studying Music B at Macleod College. There were only three in our class. Teacher was Mrs Athalie Haydon.

At the conclusion of 1992 Watsonia High School merged into the Watsonia Technical College location. This became the Greensborough College in 1993. Principal was Mr Thomson and Vice Principal Mr Fraime.

I began to study again at the Greensborough College, studying year 12 Psychology in 1995 with teacher Mr G Makin. From then onwards the teachers at the College kept putting my name down to study other year 12 subjects. I studied English Lit in 1996 with teacher Mrs Lynne Collins. Legal Studies in 1997, teacher Mr Jim

Ouliaris. Economics 1998 teacher Miss Jane Alexander. Info/Tech in 1999. Teacher Mr Rod Webster. 2001 Business Management teacher Mrs Sharyn Campbell and History Revolutions in 2002 with Mr Michael Lonsdale.

I have had some wonderful teachers and I have studied with some great young people during my year 12 education, and I am still in touch with these people who are now adults.

During these years there have been some highs and lows. One sad time occurred with the sudden death during the school year of our Psychology teacher Mr Graeme Makin. Every person at the College felt the loss, especially his year 12 class. We all put an extra effort into the final exam in memory of our much loved teacher. There were some funny times which include Mr Webster's face when he realised that I had never turned on a computer before in his Info/Tech class. Miss Alexander trying to 'drum' into me the rudiments of the economics of Australia. Mr Lonsdale telling me 'the other side' of the three revolutions of the 19th century. And sweating over the numerous essays and exams.

During my second education there were rules to live by.

- Never DOB. (I decided that I would never tell, unless drugs were involved thank goodness that was never the problem.)
- Never go near the teacher's staff rooms. (Students lose confidence in you because they think you are 'one of them').
- Do not try to close the generation gap (wait for the fellow student to approach you.)
- Sit alone to study (if other students want to talk, they will sit near you.)
- Remember you are sitting in their class room and respect their point of view, and do not repeat what you have heard.
- Do not ask their marks after an exam. Only ask "Did you pass?"

What did I learn during my year 12 second education?

- How to get along with young people
- That arguments and debates are essential.
- How to listen and mind my own business.
- How to write essays and study for exams.

In 2002, I managed to graduate with a Diploma of Theological Studies (Trinity College).

I have Mr Lonsdale to thank for showing me the way to study at La Trobe University. In 2003 I entered LaTrobe University and I soon became absorbed in a Bachelor of Arts Degree, and majored in Politics and History, completing my studies with a B.A Honours Degree in 2011. My one proud moment at the graduation ceremony was that I was able to wear my Father's academic cap that he had worn at his B.S.C and Dip Ed graduation in

1937 at Melbourne University. I only wished both my mother and father had been there to be part of it all.

So was this a chance or a planned meeting in the corridor of Watsonia Technical College in 1988?

I want to thank all those who helped me to enjoy my second chance at learning.

Rosie Bray

2012

The Greensborough Batman Apple Tree Story

Readers of the Society's May 2012 newsletter will remember Anne Paul's informative article on the historic Maroondah aqueduct pipe bridge over the Plenty River. In addition to that, Anne has also been very busy with the other historic sites at the same locality – the 'Batman' apple tree and the Pioneer Children's graves. The following article written by Anne is the result of her extensive research and efforts to seek formal recognition of these significant sites. To all budding historians, note how Anne has prepared and presented her research. Read on and discover why Anne's research is so important to these significant sites.

Many Greensborough people will know about our special apple tree, often referred to as the Batman or Whatmough Apple Tree. Over the years various stories have been told about its origin and connection to John Batman.



The apple tree in 2012
(Photo: Anne Paul)

Members of the Greensborough Historical Society, in particular Noel Withers and Dennis Ward have researched the history of the tree, in collaboration with descendents of the Whatmough and Partington families. Local historian Bruce Draper published an article in 2006 *Victoria's Oldest Apple Tree?* which provides an analysis of various reports and newspaper articles on the tree.

We present this article as a summary of the story of the Batman Apple tree and its survival from the earliest days of European settlement of Victoria. In doing so, we wish to thank Dr Sue Hughes from the National Trust of Australia for her assistance with research material and advice, along with Bruce Draper and Society members who have provided images and information.

The Batman Apple Tree grows on the eastern bank of the Plenty River, just north of Greensborough, near the Maroondah Aqueduct pipe bridge, in the Plenty River linear parklands. It is likely the oldest apple tree in

Victoria, being at least 173 years old. The tree has concrete block near its base, inscribed '1841'. The tree is listed with the National Trust, Reference number T11534 under the heading *Malus Pumila*.

The Batman Apple tree was brought from Tasmania by John Batman, along with other fruit trees and planted at his camp at Batman Hill. Batman died in 1839 and his estate was sold. A number of the fruit trees from his orchard were purchased in September 1841 by Mr Flintoff for one pound each and planted in the Greensborough district. Frederick Flintoff and his brother Theodore were early pioneers of the district.

The fruit trees were transplanted a few years later by Flintoff's employee Martin Batey, to Flintoff's Plenty River property, Brancepeth Farm at Point Lookout, behind present day Leischa Court.

Robert Whatmough moved to the Point Lookout dwelling in late 1842. He was a Chartist, who left England to escape political persecution and arrived in Melbourne in 1841. He first lived in a bark hut near the corner of Spencer and Flinders Streets, where his son Emmett was born in February 1842.

Whatmough leased the orchard for many years and made a significant contribution to Victorian horticulture, growing, developing and exhibiting many prize winning fruit varieties. He produced prize winning fruit from the orchard, with apples from the Batman tree known as Whatmough's Fancy. He was an inaugural member of the Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society.

Wax models of his fruit were exhibited in the Great London Exposition 1862, the Dublin World Exhibition 1865, and the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia 1876. They are now held by the Museum of Victoria. Robert Whatmough died in 1887.

The orchard was next leased by Mr Carr and he removed some of the original trees. He cut others back, allowing new wood to form, but retained the old Rymer (Whatmough) apple trees.

In February 1890 Mr Carr and Theodore Flintoff were interviewed in the orchard by *The Evelyn Observer*. The subsequent article *The Garden of Victoria* provides a direct record of the orchards history. The article reports Flintoff saying the "majority of the trees in the garden were brought over from Van Dieman's Land by John Batman and planted in his garden at the Survey camp". He adds that after Batman's death they were purchased by Mr Flintoff in 1841 for 1 pound each, planted in the district, "and a few years after they were transplanted to the garden in question and have remained there ever since." It goes on to say that "among the apple trees several old Rimers were pointed out."

The property containing the orchard was sold by Edith Flintoff, a niece of Theodore Flintoff to John Bosch (Bush) at the beginning of the 1900's.

A 1910 a Leader Newspaper article and photo titled An Ancient Apple Tree at Greensborough 72 years old, shows the Batman Apple tree in the orchard with John Bosch & Emmett Whatmough (son of Robert Whatmough). The article states John Bosch grafted the tree with Rome Beauty and filled cracks with cement to stabilize tree, after advice from Edward Prescott of Burnley Horticultural College in 1910.

A 1913 Leader Newspaper article Making Good on a Small Acreage, cited by Bruce Draper identifies among the younger trees in orchard an old veteran, sole survivor of the original orchard - a Rymer apple, that had been recently grafted to Rome Beauty.

In his 1942 article The Batman Apple Tree at Greensborough in the Victorian Field Naturalist, Edward Prescott confirms Bosch called it 'the Batman Tree' when he inspected the tree in 1910. He questions if the tree came from Tasmania but concludes it was "certainly planted as a memorial of some kind to Batman" and confirmed "there it stands today, after a century, battered and forlorn, but living and appealing."



The concrete block with the inscription "1841"
(Photo: Ian Bryant)

In 1966 Department Agriculture Horticultural Advisor, Bill Rolfe examined the tree and identified Rymer and below the graft possibly Winter Majelin, a Norfolk apple dating back to 1820, and a block of concrete inscribed 1841. He spoke with descendents of pioneer families and concluded he was "fairly certain the old tree on the banks of the Plenty River is an original Batman Apple Tree."

In 2002 Arborist Franz Kreinecker's inspection report provides a brief history of the tree and estimates it to be circa 1841, advising "cultural evidence suggests this being the oldest apple tree in Victoria."



A seedling in 1841 and still in full bloom 170 years later.
(Photo: Anne Paul)

In researching records about the origin of the apple tree the 1890 Evelyn Observer's report of the discussion with Theodore

Flintoff provides the most direct account of the trees provenance. This and the subsequent material examined presents strong evidence that Greensborough's Batman Apple tree is indeed an original apple tree from stock

brought from Tasmania by John Batman, purchased from his estate by the Flintoffs in 1841 and transplanted to its current site, where it has survived and thrived ever since.

Significantly, and even though it has been reworked, it is the only known surviving tree from Batman's orchard and at a minimum age of 173 years, likely to be the oldest apple tree in Victoria. The Batman Apple Tree, with the concrete block inscribed with 1841 still visible, has recently been provided with new bollard fencing. Despite its age the tree is in good health and an attractive addition to the landscape.

A walk down the Plenty River trail, easily accessed from Hamish Court, to visit the heritage precinct that contains the Batman Apple tree, Pioneer Children's Cemetery and Maroondah Aqueduct pipe bridge is highly recommended.

Anne Paul

Greensborough Historical Society
July 2012

End note:

We have been recently advised by Nillumbik Planning Department that they have prepared citations for the Batman Apple Tree and Pioneer Children's Cemetery site and that the application of the Heritage Overlay is being pursued actively.

References

- Evelyn Observer* 28 February 1890. *The Garden of Victoria - Oldest Orchard*
- Leader Newspaper Melbourne* 9 April 1910. *A Notable Apple Tree and photo An Ancient Apple Tree at Greensborough 72 years old*
- Draper, Bruce. 2006. *Victoria's Oldest Apple Tree? Australian Gardening History, Volume 18, No 2*
- Whatmough, S. Partington, A. Withers, N. Robert and Mary Whatmough *Family history Research*
- The Argus* 1937. *Oldest Fruit Tree*
- Prescott, Edward 1942. *The Batman Apple Tree at Greensborough Victorian Naturalist*
- Rolfe, W.A (Bill) 1966 *The Batman Tree Victorian Horticultural Digest*
- Kreinecker, Franz 2002 *Tree Advice on Batman's Apple Tree*

And we couldn't finish without having an apple tree joke:

There was a farmer who planted apples. He was troubled by some local kids who would sneak into his farm at night and eat the apples. He came up with a clever idea he thought would scare the kids away for sure. He made up a sign and posted it in the field. The next day the kids showed up and they saw a sign hanging that read, "Warning!! One of the apples on these trees has been injected with cyanide." So the kids ran off, made up their own sign and posted it next to the sign that the farmer made. The farmer showed up the following day. He looked over the field and he noticed that no apples were missing, but a new sign hung next to his. He drove up to the sign and it read: "Now there are two"

The Jean Partington Story

This story about Miss Jean Partington is one of the many told by Society member Faye Fort (nee Partington). Faye and her brother Gary (also a GHS member) are 'keepers' of the Partington family history, which really is the history of pioneer Greensborough. Related to many of the early families, Faye has been recording her memories for the Society archives and future generations. The house in Hailes Street was immortalised by Ron Reynold's sketch in his book *Greensborough and Greenhills* published in 1972.

Thanks to the generous donations by Society members Merylyn Mullavey and Marilyn Smith, two copies of this book are now in the archives. The archives at Greensborough Historical Society are growing but we need your help to capture as many aspects of life in the area as possible.

Miss Jean Isabel Partington was born in 1903, in the old family home at 25 Hailes Street. The house, built in 1893 by her parents, Charles & Ellen (Britnell) Partington, was a wonderful old house made of double brick without cavity and ironwork around the verandahs.



Jean Partington
(Photo: Society Archives)

Jean was the youngest of 5 daughters, Charles her father had given each of his remaining four daughters a block of land. Vera died young aged 9 years. Her older sister Ivy & husband Herb Godber built a brick house in Hailes Street not far from the SEC yards, and lived there until they passed.

Jean always lived in the family home, her mother died 1928, her father in 1932, and she never married. She was a teacher at Preston Girls' School until she retired. About 1930s Jean divided the house in two; rented one half and she lived in the other half. It was the Greensborough Police Station from 1930 to 1952, with a lock up out the back, until a new station was built in Grimshaw Street, then another new one was built on the corner of Grimshaw and McDowell Streets.



25 Hailes Street
Sketch by Ron Reynolds (1972)
From the book 'Greensborough and Greenhills'
by Irene Turvey and Ron Reynolds



Last known photo of the house (circled) before it was demolished for a shopping centre in the mid 1970's
(Photo: Yarra Plenty Regional Library)

The house was pulled down to make way for a car park, which was an awful shame. Jean then built two small houses on land opposite the Greensborough Railway Station in Para Road where she later passed away in her 90s, her ashes were scattered under the big old oak tree directly opposite the old house, beside the rail line. That oak tree is supposed to be in line with another oak tree, which is situated in Grimshaw opposite Dunne Street, which was the site of the old Toll Gates. Jean's Grandfather Charles planted the oak tree there when he was the Toll Keeper from 1858 to 1861. Jean's land went down to Church Street, which is now the Circuit, and they owned land up near the Jessop Street cemetery as well.

Thank you to the Society's Archivist, Sue Ballantyne, for preparing this story for publication.

Bryn Teg - photos anyone?

Anne Paul has put out a call to ask if anyone has or knows the whereabouts of good quality photos of the original Bryn Teg (Preston Hall) home that is now the Heidelberg Golf Club rooms - before it was remodelled. Any information would be appreciated. Contact the Society if you have any leads for Anne.

Archives Update

Society archivist Sue Ballantyne has provided us with another update of several notable items recently catalogued and stored in the Society's archives. Please contact Sue for further details.

New additions to the Archives:

- Postage scales
- Bottle opener from the Greensborough Hotel
- Centenary tea towel from Greensborough Primary School

- Port Phillip Gazette (limited edition facsimile) 5 volumes from the 1840's
- Engraved drinking glasses from Bundoora Primary School, Watsonia Tech and Watsonia High
- Photographs of modern Greensborough by Jasmin (Jazz) Burge
- Photographs of construction of the Greensborough Bypass Road by Gary Partington
- A group photograph of the Shire of Diamond Valley 'indoor' staff on their last day

These are just a few of the items on display or available at the Resource Centre at Glenauburn Road. We are open on Thursdays from 10.00am to 3.00pm. Visitors are welcome to work on their family research or just browse through the collection. Assistance is available to access the databases and collection.

Sue Ballantyne

Archivist.

Puzzle time - 1930's style

To those avid readers of our May newsletter, here is the answer to the 'square word puzzle'.

F A S T
A R E A
S E A L
T A L K

In this edition, we have another puzzle for you from the children's section of the 1933 local weekly newspaper 'The Advertiser'.

So, here we are 79 years later in 2012 and like last time, you have three months to solve it, unlike the children in 1933 who had only one week and that included posting the answer to the newspaper. Two children shared the first prize of 2s and 6d and received a certificate, 'The Jackass Award' for their efforts.

Sharpen your pencils and the mind – and here you go:

The Indian farmer who died left his three sons his seventeen elephants. The eldest was to receive one half of the total: the next to receive one third of the total and the youngest one-ninth of the total. No elephant was to be killed. The family were puzzled. A wise man was called in and said, "That's easy. All you have to do is...."

So, how did the wise man do it?

The answer is simpler than you think. The children used simple arithmetic but how you start solving it will set up the answer for you – use the wise man to your advantage! Answer will be in the next edition. No prizes.

Snapshot of a past life

Flooding on the Plenty River at Greensborough (1972)



Thank you to Brian and June Roberts for this photo

The last laugh

A selection of jokes and riddles sent in by local children to the 'The Pals' – *The Advertiser* newspaper in 1933.

☞ The 'Early Settler' – A visitor to the village was greatly interested in all he saw. In particular he noticed that one inhabitant of the place was treated with marked respect by the others. "I observe," remarked the visitor, "that you all treat that man with marked deference." "Yes," was the answer, "he's one of the early settlers." "Early settlers?" asked the visitor "Why he can't be over thirty years of age" "That may be true," replied the old man, "but he pays all his bills promptly on the first of each month!"

☞ Motorist: "Is the water deep here, lad?"
Lad: "Oh no sir. It only comes up to the middle of the ducks"

That's all folks!

The next newsletter is scheduled for publication during November 2012.

If you have an article you would like published or have suggestions for improvements to the newsletter, please email your article/pictures to the newsletter editor, Helen Bryant, at email address, helen@officewisdom.com.au.

All contributions for publication must conform to the Society's privacy policy and may be edited as required to protect the privacy of the living and the interests of others published in any article.

The Society is very grateful for all contributions that promote its charter to record and preserve the local history of the district