

NUNAWADING & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER ... 1967  
Editor N. Leach

NEWSLETTER NO. 7

\*\*\* SECOND ANNUAL MEETING \*\*\*

WEDNESDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER

8 p. m.

AGENDA

To confirm the Minutes of the First Annual Meeting.  
To elect the Honorary Office-Bearers.  
To elect Members of the Committee.

To be followed by a

FAMILY EVENING

Members are asked to bring along and discuss briefly their own Historical Possessions.

Supper ..... Ladies, please bring a plate.

PLACE: METHODIST HALL, WHITEHORSE ROAD, NUNAWADING.

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FLASHBACK: A year ago, this Society celebrated its first birthday, and as a change from the local scene, members brought along some of their personal treasures and chatted about these.

The oldest object displayed was a Greek Kylix, excavated in Magna Grecia, now Southern Italy, its date of manufacture being calculated as 400 B. C. - a simple unglazed bowl with twin handles. The other things seemed new beside it. Still some distance away from our time were coins - one issued by the Roman Emperor Hadrian about 113 - 117 A. D., and a Scottish coin of 1153, when David II was on the throne. An old flintlock gun, most of its minor parts missing, looked like a walking stick, and indeed, a previous owner had used it as such. Everyone admired a sampler dated 1831, and the needlecase used with it. A later sampler, of about 1895, showed various stitches on a miniature apron. At intervals throughout the evening a 130 years old clock provided a melodious background with its striking. There were two cut-glass salt-cellars of 150 years ago, and a century old butter print; this latter showed how even prosaic farm produce could achieve an artistic finish. An English member displayed her beautiful copper warming-pan (at least 120 years old). How much more intriguing this seemed than an electric blanket, but undoubtedly a little more trouble. Two brilliant waistcoats appeared, one of red and blue brocade, and the other of huckaback, embroidered in blue, gold, and brown. Removable shank buttons, complete with little clips, fastened this, a relic of days when fixed buttons on clothing were taxed. A delightful blue fringed parasol with carved bone handle of 100 years ago fascinated everyone, but somehow it just didn't look adequate for coping with the sun of a scorching Australian summer day. A gavel of the 1800's if only it could tell us of meetings long past - peaceful? - turbulent? - but probably both. A sleeping doll 80 years old wore its original hand-sewn clothes, and very smart it looked. A watch of 1872, gold brooches, and a locket were other treasures, and a tiny prayer-book presented to a bride in 1871.

Social surveys are not confined to our own day; in 1899 a book was published, entitled "A Study in Poverty in York". Among other points, it discussed poor relief and servants' wages, and the minimum amount of food and clothing for the different classes.

D. M.

CONGRATULATIONS: to our trio of Grandmothers - and Grandfathers, too - Grand-daughters for Mr. and Mrs. E. Faggetter and Mr. and Mrs. D. Field, and a Grand-son for Mr. and Mrs. F. Boxshall.

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HISTORICAL EXHIBITION, 7th - 8th October: The display of old letters, maps, old photographs, Australiana, and pottery was a credit to members and others who participated, and created much interest among the continuous stream of people. This was evident by the expression on their faces. Memories were stirred and members enjoyed discussions with the visitors. Noticed amongst the visitors was Mr. Weston Bate, the noted historian. We are extremely grateful to the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society for giving us this opportunity.

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THE PLACE NAMES COMMITTEE : Mr. H. S. McComb, a Past President of the R. H. S. V., began his address by indicating his close association with Nunawading - his father was Shire Engineer in the early days. Speaking on the Place Names Committee, he said that, when the Royal Society was started some 20 - 25 years ago, interest was stimulated in the recording of such information. A committee was formed, but due to the rapid mapping of Australia, it was necessary to co-ordinate the work, and in 1965 an amendment of the Survey Co-ordination (Place Names) Act was passed. The Place Names Committee first met in 1965, and now there are about 100 affiliated Societies, and many others are closely associated with the work. The first plan of Victoria was prepared by H. J. Keene in 1860: The Department of Lands and Survey is now compiling a new plan of Victoria. The greater part of our early place names came through the surveyors, especially the aboriginal names. The Act was an endeavour to bring together the practical work of the surveyors and mappers. It has been estimated that it would take 1700 years to bring all the information up to date! However, an interchange of surveys of State Government and Commonwealth Departments should help to speed up matters. The Place Names Committee comprises six members. Most of them represent the Government, and the Act is administered by the Surveyor General. The members comprise: Chief Draughtsman in the Department of Lands and Survey; Surveyor and Chief Draughtsman of the Office of Titles; Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Board; two nominated members (one appointed by the Municipal Association of Victoria, and one by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria). As a matter of interest, it is the first time the R. H. S. V. has been mentioned in a Government Act. The members of the Committee are appointed for three years; Statutory Committees can only do what they are authorized to do, and the main purpose of the Committee is to lay down the proper spelling of place names. The Committee handles many problems, and in cases of doubt the local Historical Societies, local organizations, and local residents should be considered. As a matter of interest, Mr. McComb said that the P. M. G.'s Department goes to a tremendous amount of trouble to see there is no duplication of Post Office names. The Committee dealt with the case of Hazelwood and Churchill when there was doubt about which name should be retained. Upper and Lower Fern Tree Gully at one time thought of changing their names, and Bilby was suggested for Upper Fern Tree Gully. This would perpetuate the name of a man who had a cattle-run in that area in the early days. The Dandenong Valley Authority had asked the Place Names Committee to affix a name to a creek not previously named, in the Shire of Knox. Local Associations have been approached for their views. Local interest and local people are the vital concern of the Committee. Mr. McComb mentioned that some areas in our State have never been officially named, i.e. Mildura, Gippsland, the Wimmera, to name a few. Yet another matter is the question of an apostrophe in a place name, particularly roads. As the roads are eventually made

and become Council or Government property, so the apostrophe will be dropped. To ensure that a permanent record is made, local Councils must proclaim in the Government Gazette any change of name of street or road. In his researches, Mr. McComb had come across many old plans, and he produced modern-day plans showing how areas had been sub-divided. He indicated that in 1858 - 1860 land could be sub-divided without official approval. Some of the blocks were square (120" to 180"), and fronting two roads was common practice. Some of them were very small with frontages of 14' to 16'. Along the Whitehorse Road between Mitcham and Ringwood were such place names as New Brunswick and Studley, but these villages were never developed. Quite a lot of land was "jumped", or, more legally, acquired by adverse possession! The town of Norwich, about which Mrs. Uhl has written in detail, was also shown by Mr. McComb. Another plan showed a large area between Springvale Road and Surrey Road where a township called Springfield existed between Koonung Creek and Whitehorse Road. Springvale Road was known as Walker's Road, and Surrey Road as Barnes Road. It is thought this might be connected with an area near Whitehorse Road owned by a man called Barnes. Finally, Mr. McComb said that, in addition to the P.N.C., a council had been set up called the National Mapping Council, and the ultimate aim is to issue a gazetteer. At the conclusion of Mr. McComb's address, many questions were asked on both local and Victorian place names. A vote of thanks was passed by Mr. K. Patterson.

(Mrs. P. McLean)

AUGUSTUS WOLSKEL MEMORIAL LECTURE "THE WRITING OF HISTORY"

Professor C. M. H. Clark, M. A., Professor of History, School of General Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, A. C. T.

A Summary of Professor Clark's Lecture by Miss E. Ronaldson

The arts should be a comfort to mankind. Painting and writing concern the universal problems of man, and at last Australian poets and writers are dealing with these. History, too, should deal with this. It should be a source of wisdom and light. Poets have insight which many historians lack. For example, many Australian historians have written about the 1890's, but it was the poet Lawson who saw what was really happening when he wrote "Middleton's Rouseabout". Historians can make use of these insights.

The history which interests Professor Clark is the history which tells the story of the past to cast light on the meaning of life. The conflict between man's world and God's world is the source of anguish in life, and the revelation of this in a work of art gives majesty and grandeur. Some writers are great because they have one great thing about life; others are great because they know many things. The problem is how to convey this. Some authors cheat and tell what they know, and this can be dull, others convey the truth by painting scenes. Some do it very well, for example Hancock, Turnbull, Blainey, and Serle. Trevelyn is a master of this art; he resists the temptation to comment on the scene to make sure that the reader has not missed the point. As an example, Trevelyn's account of the murder of the Duke of Buckingham was read. The author is detached enough. In doing this, the author is attempting something very difficult, he is trying to convey a vision of life.

Throughout the book, there should be four voices. There should be a leading man, a great theme, and a character who can sum things up, as the Revd. Richard Johnson does in the first volume of the "History of Australia". The writer may believe that some men have a tragic flaw in their character and be profoundly convinced it is the central theme in life; he will look for man and scenes to reveal this. W. C. Wentworth is an example of the type of character who could be used. Governor Arthur is an example of the type of man who finds himself in a comical

position which becomes tragic because he is a self-appointed improver of the morals of mankind. In writing of an historical figure, it is important to create a human being, a whole man. There were many giants in Australian history before the period of industrialisation. Some writers have already done this, for example, H. H. Richardson, "The Fortunes of Richard Mahony"; M. Bassett, "The Hentys".

One of the historian's problems is that he has to deal with particular characters, while the poet deals with universals. Real characters rarely say the things an artist would want them to say. Macquarie could be regarded as a character with a tragic flaw. However, when he returned to England in 1820, he showed no awareness of a fault in himself, he had no tragic awareness. What is more, no contemporary writer put down the artist's truth about Macquarie - his desire for revenge, his need to suffer on this earth. John Macarthur was a man of great achievement, by 1820 he sought recognition of his great dream, but his own past was in the way. Macarthur had raised his hand against everyone in the colony because he believed everyone had raised their hands against him. In a work of art he should suffer from his past, in actual life he went mad.

The raw materials of history are the great conflicts of man; the conflict of God's world and man's world; Catholic truth and enlightenment; conflict of classes; conflict of man and his environment. These are the subjects of all great literature.

There will always be frail people, unable to handle human society, but who see it clearly; see men preying on each other like the creatures of the sea. They will communicate a vision of life, not just the terror but also the beauty. Their subject is not just the tree of knowledge, but the tree of life. They bring comfort and light to their own generation.