

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

OCTOBER 1968.

NEWSLETTER NO. 16.

---

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING.

Wednesday, 9th October, 1968.

8 P.M. Sharp.

At the Auditorium, Old Orchard Shopping Centre, Blackburn.

AGENDA: Confirmation of Minutes of 2nd Annual Meeting.  
Presentation of Annual Report and Financial Report.  
Election of Office-bearers and Committee Members.

To be followed by a display of members' treasures,  
and a display of Society photographs and  
documents.

SUPPER: Members, a plate of supper, please.

---

REMINDER: Subscriptions, \$2 (including the charge of 5c for  
each Newsletter) are due in October.

---

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Mr. Blake, using coloured slides, told the  
story of the Gold Escort Route to South Australia, and the search  
to find it, with clues rivalling those of a treasure hunt. It  
began with the folk memory of an old gentleman in Nhill who  
"knew that carriages with gold passed this way" and he knew a  
well used for their horses. Five historical societies joined the  
search. They were helped by a book by Alexander Tolmer, the  
Police Commissioner of S.A. who was sent to establish a route to  
bring back direct, gold won by miners whose families were  
becoming destitute. An aerial survey spotted hollowed tracks  
made by the wheels, and more recently found by Mr. Blake in the  
State Library of Victoria, were maps made by surveyor MacLaren.  
Mr. Blake traced for us the details of the route, and related the  
stories of many colourful personalities - the commissioner,  
troopers and bushmen - connected with the operation, which during  
1852-3 carried more than £1 million worth of gold from the  
Mt. Alexander area to Adelaide.

---

THE HISTORY OF THE VICTORIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. 1873 - 1972.

The Victorian Education Department has embarked on the colossal  
task of writing its own history to mark its centenary which will  
be achieved in December, 1972. The compilation of the history  
must be completed by 1970 to allow time for printing, publishing  
and distribution.

Since the separation of Victoria from N.S.W. in 1851, there  
have been three periods in the history of State education:

1. 1851-1862. Control was in the hands of two Boards of  
Education (the National Board and the Denominational  
Board). Both national and denominational schools were  
subsidized by the Government. Education was not free.
2. 1863-1872. The Board of Education, with its common schools,  
replaced the dual control of the National Board and the  
Denominational Board. Education was still not free.
3. 1873 onward. The Education Act of 1872 made education in  
Victoria free and compulsory. This, in effect, placed upon  
the Government the obligation to establish State schools  
wherever there were children to be educated.

### Local School Committees:

Since 1851, the system of local control or interest in schools has passed through four stages.

1. The Board of Patrons. 1851-1862. Each school had a local Board of Patrons, with considerable powers. For example, the Board appointed and dismissed the teachers. Generally, it was composed of squatters in the district.
2. Local Committees. 1863-1872. These co-incided with the Common Schools era.
3. Boards of Advice. 1873-1911. An unsatisfactory plan, when the one Board of Advice was responsible for all schools in a very large area.
4. School Committees. 1912 onwards, as we know them now.

### Schools and Population.

Since a school depends upon the township or district it serves, the stages of a school's growth, or decline, parallel the stages of the growth or decline of that town. The town, in its turn, often reflects the development of the nation as a whole. So we can see in the story of the schools of Victoria, the history of Victoria itself.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there were three major factors in the development of Victoria, and the effects of these are well shown in the history of the schools. These three factors were the discovery of gold in 1851 and the subsequent gold rush; the throwing open of the land to selectors from 1870 onward, and the subsequent land-rush; and the building of a network of railways in the late seventies and in the eighties. Co-incidental with the opening up of the land was the opening of the school doors to every child by the great Education Act of 1872.

### The Gold Rush.

This resulted in a tremendous and sudden increase in the population of Victoria, and the mushroom growth of new towns, only some of which remained permanent centres of population. Education was not free, but some of the people desired an education for their children, and either established private schools or sought help from the Government in the form of a subsidized national or church school.

In the large, and temporary gold towns, sometimes tent schools were established. Here again, we see the school taking on, even in its physical aspects, the same character as the town itself. A tent school for a tent population was a natural development.

There was little agricultural development in this early period, for the land was still in the hands of the squatters, one family occupying a vast area of many square miles, with only a small village here and there to serve the needs of a sparse population, and the few travellers along the tracks or coach roads. The squatters did not need public schools; they were content to make their own arrangements, employing tutors, or sending their children to the capital cities or even back home to England for the kind of education they themselves had enjoyed.

### The Land Rush and Free Education.

The throwing open of the land to free selection and the introduction of free, compulsory education as from the early seventies, meant a tremendous proliferation of schools. Other factors increased the number of schools needed. Mothers, glad to be rid of their children for so many hours a day, sent their babies of three years and under off to school. To live up to its new obligations, the Government had to establish schools every four miles or so. At one time, schools were being established at the rate of 150 new schools a year, or twelve every week.

The Railways.

The railways brought further changes. More areas were opened up for settlement. Often the older villages were by-passed and their places taken by new railway towns. Old schools languished and died with their towns, and new schools started.

The Numbering of Schools, 1863 Onwards.

The two Boards that controlled State education, 1851 to 1862, numbered their schools separately. When one Board took over (the Common Schools Board) it listed all the schools that were to remain, in alphabetical order, so that we have:

No. 1 Alberton; 37 Belvoir; 298 Horsham; 545 Sale. There would be approximately 700 of these schools established before 1862.

From then on, schools were numbered in chronological order of their establishment. The range during the Common Schools Board period from 1863 to 1872, was approximately No. 701 to No. 1200, representing 500 new schools. For example we have:

No. 770 Rosedale (1863); No. 853 Grant (1865); No. 957 Walhalla (1867); No. 1172 Foster (1872).

The tremendous increase in the number of schools established from 1873 to 1900 as the result of free and compulsory education, and the selecting land-rush is shown in the following table.

|               |                    |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1873-1876 . . | Nos. 1200 to 1800. | 1877-1879 . . | Nos. 1800 to 2200. |
| 1880-1885 . . | Nos. 2200 to 2700. | 1886-1890 . . | Nos. 2700 to 3000. |
| 1891-1900 . . | Nos. 3000 to 4000. |               |                    |

Acknowledgments to  
Morwell Historical Society News.

BLUNDELL'S COTTAGE, CANBERRA.

This farmhouse is similar in many ways to our own Schwerkolt Cottage in Nunawading. Canberra has grown up around it, and, at one stage, the plans for Lake Burley Griffin envisaged the flooding of this site.

Fortunately, after discussions between the Canberra & District Historical Society and the National Development Commission, it was recommended in 1961 that the farmhouse should be restored and preserved.

The H.S. leases the building for a peppercorn rental from the Department of the Interior. A steady stream of tourists visits the cottage, which is furnished with appropriate century-old furnishings throughout. It has six small rooms, with no electricity or water.

The first people to live there were the Cinn family who arrived from Hertfordshire in 1857. Mr. Cinn, a ploughman on Campbell's 'Duntroon' Station, moved into the front portion of the homestead in 1858, but in the 1860's, the family moved away to their own selection.

The Blundell family, next to live in the cottage, were there for more than fifty years. Extensions were placed on the rear of the home to provide room for their growing family.

Later, the Walton family lived there, and then the Oldfields; Mrs. Oldfield remained in the cottage from 1932 until her death in 1958.

This interesting cottage is a relic of the days of the Canberra valley when sheep and cattle grazed where the Capital now stands.