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NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 12th March, 1969. 8 p.m. in the COFFEE ROOM, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading.

Two of our own members will address us:

Mrs. J. Field will speak on 'EVENTS AND PLACES ON THE HUME HIGHWAY'.

Mr. K. Farr will speak on 'THE HISTORY OF FLOWERS'; this subject was recently presented to an Interflora Convention by Mr. Farr.

REGIONAL MEETING of Eastern Suburbs Group of Historical Societies at Templestowe Memorial Hall on Friday, 11th April at 8 p.m. A talk will be presented on 'PIONEER WOMEN OF THE DISTRICT' by Mrs. Green. Our members are all invited, but the number of those intending to go must be indicated at the next meeting.

LA TROBE LIBRARY EXHIBITION on 'SPORTING LIFE IN VICTORIA', to be opened at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 3rd March. Thereafter till 24th April. Hours: Monday 2 p.m. - 10 p.m., Thursdays to Fridays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

PROPOSED BUS TOUR by our society of places of historic interest in the City of Melbourne: Sunday afternoon, 20th April. Details later.

R.H.S.V. will celebrate its 60th anniversary in May, 1969.

The third biennial conference will be held at Melbourne University 26th to 28th September, 1969. Two of the principal speakers will be Professor Russel Ward and Dr. Geoffrey Serle.

Other News: Easter Monday, 7th April. Vintage Farm Machinery and Vehicle Rally at Warracknabeal.

Ararat H.S. is organising a folk museum in a former wool store in the town. Wonthaggi: It is hoped to obtain the General Manager's residence of the now defunct State Coal Mine as an historical museum for black coal mining in Victoria.

NATIONAL TRUST of Australia (Victoria) has up-graded the historic COURT HOUSE at PORT FAIRY to the highest classification 'A' (of national importance: to be preserved at all costs). Port Fairy is one of Victoria's most historic towns and contains a large number of historic buildings.

NATURE FAIR AT BLACKBURN LAKE SCHOOL, the home of 'Nature Notes'. Saturday, 29th March. Our society has been asked to arrange a display.

FEBRUARY MEETING: Our first meeting in the Civic Centre was addressed by His Worship the Mayor, Cr. K. Rooney on "HISTORICAL SOCIETIES AND THEIR VALUES". Cr. Rooney described his recent visit to the Swan Hill Folk Museum and told us of the possibility of an old hickory American-built coach being donated to Nunawading. Be brought along a valuable set of 1892 maps of the County of Bourke, which proved most interesting to members. Government grants to Councils were also discussed, with reference to the local lake area.

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Our society has received several requests lately from local schools for history of the district. The following information was supplied on the HISTORY OF THE PARKMORE AREA:

In 1850, settlement to the east of Melbourne had reached Middleborough Road, while the rest of the area was densely forested. Canterbury Road was then known as Delaney's Road, after the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, which stood about the corner of Canterbury and Broughton Roads, Surrey Hills. It stopped at Middleborough Road and a track known as the "Old Track to the Mountains" wound eastwards through the bush.

The area east of Middleborough Road was surveyed, roads and allotments marked out in 1855 by Mr. N. Bickford, foreman of a survey party led by Clement Hodgkinson. Land was offered for sale of 1 pound an acre late in 1855. W. Jones bought land fronting Canterbury Road, between Springvale and Terrara Roads, and southwards to about Jolimont Road. William Morton bought all the rest bounded by Canterbury, Terrara, Burwood and Springvale Roads. Neither seems to have done any farming, but sold again soon afterwards, mostly in smaller farm areas. The Mortons remained in the district as auctioneers and estate agents and Morton Park, Blackburn, is named after them.

Among early purchasers of the smaller allotments were the Courses and McClares, whose descendants still live in the district. On the Burwood Road side Maynes and Frankhausers were among the first settlers. While they were clearing their land they raised money by selling firewood in Melbourne and most lived in huts they built for themselves from slabs split from logs, or from sheets of bark. They were usually only one or two rooms, each about nine or ten feet square. When the land was cleared they experimented with various types of farming to find what was most suitable for the district, trying our dairying, berry and fruit growing and so on. Maynes and Frankhausers were among the first to grow apples, which were the most successful. Mr. McClare did a lot of tanning and John Boulton built carts in Canterbury Road, opposite the Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church.

When the Methodists built their first church they established a school, with help from the government. Attendances were small and children came from two to three miles to it. The nearest school was what was known as Harkaway National School, which has become East Burwood State School.

Many new people came into the district about 1868, the most interesting being Abraham Rooks, who took up land in Canterbury Road, west of Rooks Road, and David Boyle, a nurseryman who had land between Rooks and the Methodist Church, and conducted all the negotiations which led to it being shifted to a new site, which is now Vermont State School. He was a self-taught botanist, who worked with Von Meuller, of the Botanic Gardens, and discovered new varieties of tree ferns.

Other interesting people in the area in the early days were the Fisherites. They were an off-shoot of the Christian Israelites, a stern, strict group, whose men all had long hair and beards and wore old-fashioned clothes. They had a number of farms in the district and a church near the intersection of Canterbury and Springvale Roads. There is a Fisher Street near there now. Their leader, James Fisher, was a member of the Shire Council and took part in many community activities. As their leader he claimed to be able to perform miracles. All the Fisherites went to Western Australia during the 1890's.

The land on which the Parkmore School stands was acquired by the Peggy family about 1912 from Frankhausers who had bought it from Courses. The Peggy family worked this orchard land until recent times, when subdivision took place.

Relevant information is also in 'A Centenary History of the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, 1965-1965' by G.C. Fendley.

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GLIMPSES OF THE PAST: In the issue of the 'Ballarat Miner', 28/12/1862, this paragraph appeared: 'A sample of opium prepared from poppies grown in his Sturt Street garden has been brought to this office by Mr. Hugh Gray. Several experts have pronounced it to be of very superior quality . . . Mr. Gray and others suggest that the manufacture of opium could be profitably carried on in Ballarat, as the climate is very suitable.'

D. MATTINGLEY,
EDITOR.