

◆ NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 9th April, 1969. 8 p.m. in the
COFFEE ROOM, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading.
Mr DEREK DUKE will address the society on some local history:
'THE NUNAWADING MESSIAH'

BUS TOUR of HISTORIC PLACES IN THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, Sunday 4th MAY, 1969
Bus will leave Civic Centre at 1.30 p.m., returning by 5 p.m.
Members wishing to participate please use enclosed application form.
Late bookings may miss out.

CASTLEMAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY is holding a FIELD DAY on Sunday, 20th April.
Particulars at next meeting.

MARCH MEETING: Members enjoyed this evening very much, with its two different historical presentations.

Mrs Field has made a special study of *'EVENTS AND PLACES ON THE HUME HIGHWAY'*, and we heard interesting stories of both past and present. We went on an imaginary Cobb & Co. coach trip, and saw photographs of many places of the coaching era that no longer exist today. Some remain, as the six-span bridge at Avenel and the bluestone Presbyterian Church at Campbellfield. Much traffic also went north-east to the Beechworth goldfields, and the National Trust is now restoring the old Commercial Hotel there. The Faithfull massacre and the Kelly Gang naturally have a place in this story of a highway.

Mr Farr then spoke on *'THE HISTORY OF FLOWERS'*. Some flowers, as the crocus and the iris, were known even in early Egyptian times, and the rose has been a symbol in various ways for centuries. Shakespeare in his plays mentioned sixty flowers, apart from trees. Several century-old books on flowers may be seen in the State Public Library, one of dried, pressed flowers being specially interesting. At the present time, Interflora operates in all except three countries of the world for the easy exchange of flowers. Even Timbuctoo has three florists.

In thanking the speakers, Mrs Fabgetter expressed her wish to read Mrs Field's projected book. In regard to Mr Farr's subject, she told us she had seen a 'Shakespeare' Garden in Birmingham, and she had visited the former Surrey home of Mr Slater, whose herb garden flourished in Blackburn a century ago.

It is hoped to print a revised version of the 'Short History of Nunawading' shortly. This should be of special interest to newer members who may not be aware of the research already carried out. The Slater herb garden is one of the topics.

DISCOVERY SCHOOL ON PHILLIP ISLAND, arranged by the
South-Eastern Historical Societies, 8th-10th March, 1969.

Bus trips around the Island and on the nearby mainland, and a launch trip 'In the Wake of Bass' made up a weekend of fascinating history. Local historians spoke to the group, giving many unpublished stories of earlier times in this area. Another speaker was Dr Keith Bowden, who described an early military settlement near Corinella, where a fort was built, in case the dreaded French turned up to annex more territory. No trace remains of this fort today.

Dr Stephen Murray-Smith recounted some history of Bass Strait, a special study of his. In 1898, Captain Bishop accompanied Bass and Flinders on the first part of their 'Norfolk' voyage which proved Van Diemen's Land to be an island. In the 'Nautilus', he went to the Furneaux where he began collecting oil and skins. On Cape Barren Island, he laid out plans for a village, named Christmas Village, and today there is a move to preserve what remains of this place. Another story concerned Flinders Island, where Robinson gathered the remnants of the Tasmanian Aborigines. Today the original chapel still stands, in use now as a shearing shed. The owner is quite willing to hand over this building to the National Trust if a new shed is provided for him.

Oil in Western Port is much in the news today, but it is not widely known that for three years from 1932 an oil tanker was anchored off Hastings by the Pacific Oil Company as a floating petroleum storehouse. Oil in drums was ferried ashore and tankers replenished the bulk supply.

In the early years of the 19th Century, sealers took great toll of the seals for their oil and skins. Muttonbirds too provided oil, and, up till 1918, Melbourne cake manufacturers collected thousands of their eggs each year. Swans were also prolific on Phillip Island and swanskins were another export.

The first authorized carrier of Her Majesty's Mails to Phillip Island was an old British sea-dog called George Cox. He began the service between the mainland and the island in 1858, his first vessel being a small rowing boat.

So much has changed since the first sailors, sealers and escaped convicts came by, but one thing remains unchanged. The sailors of the small ships of one and a half centuries ago were often glad to 'run' for shelter from Bass Strait into Western Port. One yachting member of the group mentioned his crossing from northern Tasmania to Melbourne in January 1969. He left in clear weather, but twenty-four hours later he was very thankful to take refuge in Western Port until Bass Strait was calm again.

SOME EXTRACTS from the BOX HILL 'REPORTER' of 15th February, 1929

Walker Park, Mitcham: A report on the work of the Walker Park Committee was received by Council from the Secretary, Mr A Richards. He said that the Committee was having a 300 ft. sign 'MITCHAM RECREATION RESERVE' painted on the fence in Whitehorse Road to advertise the place to passing motorists and would-be picnickers. The Committee also reported and directed Council's attention to the dilapidated appearance of the ovals in Whitehorse Road. It was hoped that the Council would agree to make the oval on the opposite side of Whitehorse Road and that a gardener would be employed to look after the other ovals.

Vermont State School: The Hon. R M Cuthberston, Assistant Minister of Education, and Mr E W Greenwood, M.L.A. for Dandenong, visited Vermont S.S. Local bodies for a long time had been agitating for the removal of the school from its present unsuitable site to another position. The Minister decided to recommend the purchase of a new area of ground containing over four acres, and the removal of the present school buildings. The buildings themselves will be done up and general improved educational facilities provided.

For Sale: Gent's Bicycle, small size, new condition. Edie Coaster free wheel, sacrifice £4.
Good horse and covered wagon, excellent condition. £15 the lot.
The Corner Shop, Tunstall.
Motor Car. D.S.Grey, latest balloon tyres, splendid order through, bargain. £45. 142 Blackburn Road, Blackburn.

J. Uhl.

"History of the Parkmore Area" in the March Newsletter was contributed by Mr Patterson.

WALHALLA: Ned Stringer and his small party discovered alluvial gold at Stringer's Creek -- later called Walhalla -- in December 1862. Stringer died in September 1863, at Toongabbie, while returning to the field from Sale, where he had gone to seek medical attention. However, most of Walhalla's gold was found in the rock, and the progress and decline of the town coincided with the prosperity of the big ore-crushing mines, such as the Long Tunnel Mine, which opened in 1865 and closed fifty years later, in 1915. Estimated population figures during this period are: 1865 - 150 people; 1879 - 1700 people; 1885-1895 - 4500 people; 1900 - 2872 people; 1915 - 150 people.

Walhalla School, No 957, started with an enrolment of 70 pupils in 1867, and this rose to approximately 600 pupils in the boom

period about 1890. Then came the decline to a one-teacher school and finally closure in 1965. But -- who knows? Perhaps one day Walhalla will have a school again.

D. Mattingley, Editor.

GLIMPSES OF PAST TIMES

Some extracts from the Day-book of Merriman's Creek Hotel (fifteen miles south of Sale on the South Gippsland Highway). This book is in the possession of the Yarram Historical Society.

Thursday 19th April 1860. Jas McFarlane. 2 men tea 4/-. Bed 4/-.
Breakfast 4/-. Horses in paddock 4/-. 16/-

Black George. 1 glass. 1/-

Monday 23rd April. Harry at Hoddinot's. 2 nips 2/-.

L McAlister. 5 nips 2/6.

Pearson's Bob - blackfellow. 1 bottle rum 6/-. Nip 6d.

John King, The Ridge. Dinner 2/6. Bed 2/6. Brkft 2/6.

Stabling 10/- 2 nips 1/-. 6 horses in paddock 12/-

Bullocks in paddock 3/-.

11th March, 1861. Mrs Buntine. Bullocks in paddock 2 nights. 5/-

Mrs Hoddinot. 2 bottles essences 4/-. Slate 6d. 1 lb. French chocolate 2/6. 3 penholders 6d. 1 box magnum bonum pens 6d. 2 lbs salt 2/-

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Hugh Buntine lost his run and pre-emptive right he had taken up in 1844, and after his death his widow became a well-known teamster, carting on the roads as far as Walhalla.

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NATIONAL TRUST. The Customs House, Melbourne, beside the Pool in the Yarra, where the earliest ships tied up, was to have been demolished some years ago. Because of the efforts of interested bodies, including the Trust, in persuading the authorities to use it in some way, the building was renovated recently to accommodate Federal Parliamentarians in Melbourne.