

Nunawading Historical Society

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

APRIL – MAY 1970

Price 5 cents

X - N 44
Number 29

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne, for transmission by post as a periodical

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MEETINGS. As announced previously, no April meeting will be held, but the 6th Regional Meeting of the Eastern Suburbs Association of Historical Societies will be held at Croydon on Friday, 17th April.

Wednesday, 13th May, 1970. 8 p.m. Coffee Room, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. Mr. Alex Jamieson, one of our members, will speak on:

'AN INSURANCE INSPECTOR'S EXPERIENCES ON THE ROAD'

Mr Jamieson has many experiences of historic interest to relate to his fellow-members.

MARCH MEETING. A week prior to his death, Mr W. L. Radden, of Ringwood Historical Research Group, attended our meeting. Mrs Radden read his paper, the results of his intensive research on 'Early Warrandyte', and then Mr Radden was able to answer questions from members.

The first settlement in the area was in 1839 by Anderson. Gold was found in 1851 and soon 150 men were employed at the site, now known as Anderson's Creek. However, in the course of time, alluvial gold petered out and quartz mining followed. As the large Victorian gold-fields developed, most men left this smaller field and mining ceased. In 1857, land allotments were sold. There was also much interesting information from early police records to 1865, when the police-station was closed.

Historical Treasure Hunt for students: Saturday 23rd May – assembling of entries

Saturday 30th May – awarding of prizes

Saturday 6th June – collecting of entries by students

Details will be announced at the May meeting of members' responsibilities.

Nunawading City Council. For the purpose of investigating the possibility of publication of a history of the City of Nunawading, the Council has formed a committee comprising Crs Oakley, Willis and Walsh.

1972 will mark the centenary of the forming of the Shire of Nunawading and the matter of a celebration is being investigated also.

SEHA DISCOVERY SCHOOL

'In the Wake of Captain Cook' took place at Queenscliff 7th to 9th March. This was the first event in connection with the Captain Cook Bi-centenary celebrations in Victoria. There were tours, addresses, historical displays, a civic welcome and official dinner.

Dr Bowden, well-known for his studies on George Bass and the Western Port settlement, spoke on 'Aspects of Captain Cook', with special emphasis on the combating of scurvy. In addition, there were two films: the first traced Cook's voyage along the east coast of Australia showing the present-day locations, against a background of quotations from his journal; the second cleverly used sketches made on Cook's three voyages, old prints, and photographs of

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English localities, to illustrate his explorations.

Members of the school visited many historic places on the Bellarine Peninsula and local people presented the background of these. In addition to the usual guided tour of the Queenscliff Fort, the O.I.C. recounted the early history of this establishment and its role up to the present day. At the Portarlington Mill, recently adopted by the National Trust, a local resident told its story, together with other information about the district. Probably few people are aware that Cobb & Co. coaches were travelling in this area in 1861.

Another speaker displayed some of his collection of aboriginal artifacts and then led the party to the site of a former aboriginal encampment, and here everyone was at liberty to dig for any artifacts still remaining there. Members were also admitted to the Port Lonsdale Lighthouse, where they inspected the light, and where they could watch ships passing through the Heads. Nearby is the cave where William Buckley is supposed to have sheltered at one time, after his desertion from the Sorrento settlement.

The week-end concluded with a launch trip on Port Phillip Bay, in the wake of the early explorers and settlers – Murray, Grant, Flinders, Robbins, Collins and Batman and Fawcner.

LAND-BOOMERS IN NUNAWADING

Land boomers tried to make a "killing" in Nunawading in the early 1890's. Sir Matthew Davies group of companies, one of the most notorious of the speculative groups, was behind it. First of all the Freehold Investment and Banking Co, with Sir Matthew's brother J. B. Davies at its head, together with the Freehold Bank, a Ballarat bank established by James Oddie which had merged into the Mercantile Bank, the central company of Davies' empire, bought out a number of local land-owners, including John Quinlan, Alfred Rawlings, Furzer and Watt, W. Collis (who had a brickworks on his land), John Paton, H. R. Kefford, G. A. Gardiner, J. H. Watts and G. A. Goodwin. They owned 22 properties in the Parish of Nunawading, mostly in the present city of Nunawading, and two others just across the border in Bulleen.

Among the land they bought was the area around the present Blackburn State School and between Central road and Canterbury road, including the Lake Reserve.

The company directors then formed a new company, Blackburn and Tunstall Property Co. Ltd, to buy, sub-divide and sell the land from it. Its main shareholders were John Moodie, of Melbourne, investor, who had for a time been a director of the Mercantile Bank, 14,150 shares; Royal Investment and Banking Co. Ltd., 24,395 shares; Victorian Trust and Agency Co. Ltd., 8,600 shares; Gascoigne Investment Co. Ltd., 4,000 shares; Victorian Investment and Guarantee Co. Ltd., 1,200 shares. J. B. Davies took 1,000 shares. Each share was of value of £21/10/, but only 10/- was called up. The company had a paid-up capital of £17251/9/ and unpaid £12,748/11/. This seems an absurdly small amount of cash with which to buy a few thousand acres of land, so it seems likely that a large amount of the purchase money was left outstanding, particularly as the purchase price was £225,000. The only local shareholders were:- T.R.B. Morton, 250 shares; E. W. Parry, 200 shares; G. A. Goodwin, 50 shares; Mrs A. Goodwin, 25 shares and George Bates, 20 shares.

Besides its investment in this company, Gascoigne Investment Co. owned some forty or fifty acres itself in Nunawading.

The company was registered 13 August, 1890, with an office at 213 Collins Street, Melbourne, and Morton as accountant.

They do not seem to have sold any land, or if they did it must have been very little, and when land values fell a few years later under the pressure of over-supply, it had to be wound up, having lost everything and owing more than it could possibly raise.

Morton had the job of liquidating its Nunawading properties which he sold off gradually over a long period.

WHO STOLE THE DOORS?

This is police report, of very mild interest, received at Russell street in 1885. The main interest in it is the proof it gives that Dr L. L. Smith still owned his "Model Farm", but had given up supervising it himself in favour of letting it to tenants.

The story began when his private secretary, Edward G. Purves, wrote to the police asking them to investigate a report that someone was dismantling the farm buildings by taking the roofs off the piggeries.

Constable Balchin reported 29 June 1885 that he visited the farm with Mr Bean the manager. It had been rented to a Mr Adams for the last 12 months. He found 11 doors off the piggeries and spouting apparently broken down. The top half of the stable door was also missing. He found six of the small doors being used to make a crossing over a drain. He thought they had been taken down by various tenants, and Mr Bean thought the same as the piggeries had not been used for years. Mr Adams said the place was in the same state as when he came there, but he would see Dr Smith and explain the position.

K. Patterson

PORTLAND

Recently daily newspapers reported the gift of the Henty plough to the Portland Shire Council by Mr Pearse of Melbourne. This Scottish-made plough used by the Hentys was given in 1879 to Hugh McLennon 'in acknowledgement of the vast strides made by his firm in plow-making in Victoria.' Mr Pearse acquired it in 1935.

Historian Mr. Noel Learmonth in 'The Portland Bay Settlement' has told much of the town's early history. While there are few records, it is known that there were sealers and whalers in this area years before Portland or Melbourne were settled. The Mills brothers were in Portland Bay two years before Dutton, and James Wishart was sealing in the bay on Laurence Rocks when Dutton first landed at Whaler's Point or Single Corner (now identified as Battery Point). He built a house and lived there for some months, engaging in sealing. He went away several times and returned again to live in his house, still sealing. In 1833, he established a whaling factory in Portland Bay, erected buildings and grew vegetables. Edward Henty visited there in 1833 at the suggestion of the Master of his schooner, 'Thistle', Liddell. After two more visits, he returned in November, 1834 to settle.

The 'Thistle' left Launceston in October with Edward Henty, a friend, Henry Camfield, and four indentured servants as passengers. Owing to rough weather, the voyage took thirty-four days, the ship anchoring in Portland Bay at 8 a.m. on 19th November. On board were building materials, live-stock, a bullock dray, a plough and harrows, a whale-boat and provisions. The manifest of the 'Thistle' is in the Public Library, Melbourne; it contains

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items shipped by Henty & Co., Hewitt & Co., and P. W. Welsh, marked 'stores for the whaling party at Portland Bay.' ('First Years at Port Phillip' by R. D. Boys). Later Francis and Stephen Henty arrived.

In 1835, Edward Henty commenced 'tongueing'. This meant that he did not employ men to chase whales, though he did so later, but he supplied whalers with provisions and sometimes sent some of his men to assist in towing in a dead whale. Then after the blubber had been stripped off, any oil remaining in the carcass would be his property. (Learmonth).

On a recent historical tour of its district, by Heidelberg Historical Society, one of the homes inspected was 'Charterisville'. David Charteris McArthur built this home in 1840 on a property of 190 acres, spreading in a fan shape to the Yarra River on each side of the present Burke Road bridge. Charterisville, constructed of local sandstone quarried on the site, was much larger originally than it is today. Also, in the grounds were extensive outbuildings. One two-roomed cottage was built by McArthur for Edward Henty and his wife to occupy on their honeymoon. It was recorded that the old winery at 'Charterisville' was made from more than 150 whale ribs, presented by Henty as a gift, following the honeymoon visit. These were placed to form an arched way to carry the vines. Unfortunately, no evidence of them can now be found.

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(Editor)

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