

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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MEETINGS. Wednesday, 10th June, 1970. 8 p.m. in the Coffee Room, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. **WORK NIGHT**, when members can all join in assembling and collating the society papers and photographs.

Wednesday, 8th July, 1970.

Professor A. G. L. Shaw of Monash University will deliver an address on
'CONVICT TRANSPORTATION'

All students of Matriculation Australian History in local secondary schools are specially invited to this meeting, which will be held in WESLEY HALL, THE AVENUE, BLACKBURN. All those attending are requested to be seated **before 8 p.m.**

REGIONAL MEETING OF EASTERN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES:

Sixteen members from Nunawading attended this event on 17th April. About 200 people were present, and they were able to inspect many photographs of the district together with old watches and guns, and a wonderful collection of old phonographs, supplied by Ladson's Museum.

Speakers during the evening were the President of the local society, Mr Spencer, the Shire President, Cr Frost, Hon. J. W. Manson, M.L.A., and Hon. W. A. Borthwick, M.L.A.

After guests had heard delightful music from a musical box 105 years old, owned and lent by Mr Browning, they watched slides of Croydon district sites, the early views being contrasted with present-day ones. Mr Harley Forster of the RHSV also spoke, and then all visitors were entertained to supper.

NUNAWADING members are reminded that it is their turn to be host society **next year.**

HISTORICAL TREASURE HUNT. There will be a full account of this in the next Newsletter.

MAY MEETING. One of our members, Mr Alex. Jamieson, gave an interesting talk on : 'AN INSURANCE INSPECTOR'S EXPERIENCES ON THE ROAD'. Mr Jamieson told of many incidents over a period of years, right up to the present day, when he has assisted owners of historically interesting old cottages to restore these when necessary. As Mr Jamieson's address has been taped, it is planned to have available later a typescript of this for members.

LAND SETTLEMENT IN NUNAWADING

Nunawading was the site of one of the most successful agricultural settlements of the eighteen-sixties. By the Land Act of 1865, it was possible to take out licences to occupy small to moderate-sized areas on or near a gold field for residence or cultivation. In most eligible districts, there was a great rush for licences from all sorts of people, from small

farmers and miners to teachers and policemen. Many of them were only dabblers who were glad to have a second source of income, but gave up when they found it required more time and work than they were prepared to give to it.

Because of its nearness to Warrandyte, Nunawading was open to applications and a combination of circumstances made the Nunawading settlers outstandingly successful. This was particularly gratifying, as the country between Nunawading and Lilydale was judged, on the basis of crude soil analysis, to be particularly barren.

Almost all unoccupied land was taken up between 1866 and 1869. Land around the present Vermont shopping centre, between Boronia and Terrara Roads was claimed by Isaac Moore, Thomas Jobbins, Joseph Cann, Thomas Bowen and John Keenan. Abraham Rooks, David Boyle and Francis Voigt took up the area in Canterbury Road between Mt Pleasant and Rooks Roads. Patrick Geraghty, John Matters, John McClelland and Robert Sergeant settled along Whitehorse Road between Springvale and Mitcham Roads. William Cook and Ainger settled on the north side of Whitehorse Road, east of Mitcham Road. Towards Donvale, along Mitcham Road, were John Brenock, William Logan, Patrick McKean, Rudy Larkins, George Hislop, John Wakefield, Michael Britt, James Kent, Robert Simpson, Carl Schmidt and Herman Herr. All except one made a success of his holding and their transactions went smoothly to the stage when they received the freehold of the land. This was unique, as no other district came within sight of 100% success.

The only disturbances to a completely uneventful process of selection and purchase were the cutting of roads through some allotments, the deaths of William Cook and Michael Britt and transfer of their land to their widows, and a short period when Moore was behind in his annual payments.

Factors in this excellent record were :—

1. Almost everyone was a farmer, wood carter or a laborer from a farming district, in fact, all had had experience on the land.
2. Almost everyone came from surrounding districts — Hawthorn, Camberwell, Box Hill and Doncaster, and had some local knowledge.
3. Almost everyone lived on the land and preferred mixed farming, including cultivation, fruit and vegetable growing, poultry-keeping and dairying, so that if one failed, another might succeed. The poorest result was that of Jobbins, who was described as a gentleman and his address given as Prahran. He does not seem to have lived in the district.

In contrast to other districts, where selectors usually fenced, cleared, cultivated and built a small house, the Nunawading settlers in addition frequently had stables, dairies, fowl-houses or piggeries, and one or two waterholes on each block.

Results in Warrandyte, which should have benefited most, were very different. There were about twelve selectors, but the successful ones were mostly in that part of the parish touching Ringwood shopping centre are of today, whose experience and activities were very similar to those of Nunawading. Some did take up land near the present site of Warrandyte. Apparently all abandoned the land except a printer from Richmond, who secured an area near Pound Bend.

K. Patterson

In the recently-published 'Golden Age of Australian Painting', Alan McCulloch refers to the period of 1894-5, when Frederick McCubbin lived in Blackburn

and painted there.

One hundred years — a century — has become in our society an occasion for special celebration, whether for an individual person or a group of people.

The Bi-Centenary celebrations for Cook's sighting of the east coast of Australia are still taking place, with awards to be made for Literature, Art, Sculpture and Films. At the Melbourne Royal Show, 17-26 September, an exhibition, 'Panorama of the Pacific' will be arranged with the co-operation of the Department of External Territories.

From 10-19 August, 1970, the VICTORIAN ARTISTS' SOCIETY will hold its Centenary Exhibition in its galleries at 430 Albert Street, East Melbourne. In addition to paintings by prominent members, V.A.S. archival documents and letters, there will be a collection of material on early Melbourne history. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. week-days, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

In London, special celebrations will be held to commemorate the death of Charles Dickens on 3rd June, 1870. This year there are twenty new books about this author, centenary celebrations across the country, and a Dickens Memorial Service in Westminster Abbey attended by the Queen Mother. In addition, there will be an issue of four five-penny stamps showing Pickwick, Micawber, David Copperfield, Betsy Trotwood and Oliver Twist; also, a film version of 'David Copperfield, a new musical based on 'A Tale of Two Cities,' and a number of B.B.C. commemorative programs.

In 1972, one hundred years will have passed since the Shire of Nunawading was gazetted on 3rd May, 1872. This shire consisted of the present-day areas of the Cities of Box Hill and Nunawading.

Following is an account of another 1972 Centenary :—

CENTENARY OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN 1972

The first agriculturists' association established in Victoria was the Port Phillip Farmers' Society. It was started in 1848 and in the fifties was very active conducting competitions and shows and starting local societies in an effort to improve agriculture in Victoria.

Leading members of the society were instrumental in having formed a Board of Agriculture in 1859. The Board sponsored agricultural information and competitions through the societies, but this did not meet the needs of the growing agricultural industries of the State.

There was a need for an authority to conduct experimental work, publish reliable information and provide staff to induce farmers to adopt new methods of agriculture.

On the June 19, 1872 the Honorable J. J. Casey was appointed the first Minister of the Department of Agriculture. However, some difficulty was experienced in staffing the new department and a Secretary was not appointed until November 15.

Advertisements were printed inviting each candidate for the position to submit, as well as his qualifications, "a paper upon what he considered the benefits that could be conferred upon the agricultural community by the establishment of a Department of Agriculture, its functions and management".

The successful candidate was Mr Alexander Robert Wallis, and by 1875, in his third Annual Report, he was able to announce the selection of a site for an agricultural college "in the immediate vicinity of the township of Dookie", the receipt of seeds of radish, turnip, bean, lettuce and sesamum from Japan and the award of prizes for

CENTENARY OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN 1972

inventions of farm machinery.

Material of these early days of the Department of Agriculture is being collected for preservation and display. (Department of Agriculture)

More about PORTLAND

In 1839, the Governor, Sir George Gipps, directed Foster Fyans to proceed to Portland Bay and report on its suitability for settlement. After a trying journey on horseback of 13 days from Geelong, Fyans made his report. "The Bay appears a very fine one and perfectly safe . . . As to the land, I cannot speak too highly of it, and the produce of corn, potatoes and vegetables, exceed anything I have ever met with — water in abundance and thousands of fine timber . . . I am also of the opinion that the land, Harbour, and property about here are far superior to Melbourne, and much more valuable . . . I candidly tell you that I consider an acre of this ground of more real value, than a dozen at Melbourne."

(Quoted from 'First Years at Port Phillip', by R. D. Boys. The original report by Fyans is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.)

From the same book :—

Jan. 14, 1840. The 'Port Phillip Herald' announced that the Master of the Revenue cutter, 'Prince George', G. A. Moore, had stated that Portland Bay could never be a place of importance, except as an outlet for the shipping of wool. The land in the immediate vicinity of the bay, with the exception of a narrow belt of about 800 acres in extent, was exceedingly sterile and unsuited for agricultural purposes, indeed no land for such purposes was to be found within 35 miles of the bay.

However, on 22nd July, 1840, Sir George Gipps directed suburban and cultivation allotments near Portland Town, and cultivation and town allotments in Portland, County of Normanby, to be sold by public auction in Melbourne on 15th October.

D. Mattingley
(Editor)

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ADDENDUM

Land Settlement in Nunawading :

Add the name of John Leber to the list of settlers along Mitcham Road (see Page 2).