

# NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

APRIL - MAY 1972

Price 5 cents

Number 39

Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by post as a periodical

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## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 12th, 1972, in the Coffee Room, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading, at 8 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Mr Walker whose family have been connected with our local tile and pottery works since 1885. Mr Walker, himself conducts his own business, Walker Ceramics, at Wantirna.

## MAY MEETING

May 10th. Work Night.

**CENTENARY YEAR RESEARCH PROGRAM** is making good progress thanks to the enthusiastic committee led by Mrs Leach. Many very interesting stories of the early days in our district have come to light to date but we know there are many more just waiting to be told. Any members who can give further help to find

- (1) the resident who has lived the greatest number of years in our Municipality
- (2) the oldest house still being occupied
- (3) the oldest business still operating

are asked to contact Mrs Leach, 39 Creek Rd., Mitcham, 874 3429.

## REGIONAL

The Eastern Regional Conference, hosted by Lilydale, was well attended. The old Shire Hall in Castella St. was the focal point of the Centenary of the Shire of Lilydale celebrations on opening day. This Conference was part of the program. There was an excellent display of Photos, Maps and items of interest prepared by the Historical Society, followed by a Buffet Tea and a program by a folk singing group. Lilydale is certainly to be congratulated for the excellent way in which they conducted the Conference.

**THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY** advises dates of two events taking place later this year.

**The Royal Historical Society** advises dates of two events taking place later this year.

**The VCAHS Winter Seminar** will take place in the City of Camberwell Theatre on Saturday June 24th, and the subject, "Local History and the School".

The 1972 Country Convention is to be held at Wangaratta Friday September 29th to Sunday October 1st.

Both these occasions are highly recommended to historians and these advance notices are for the benefit of those who may wish to attend them. Detailed information will be available at a later date.

**THE TREASURER** will be pleased to receive overdue subscriptions, **PLEASE!**

**"HOW HISTORY WILL VIEW THE 70's"** was the title of the talk given by the Mayor of Nunawading, Cr D. Gawler when he and the Lady Mayoress visited our Society at our last meeting. This proved to be a very interesting talk, showing, through the ages, from the stone age, when primitive people had no security and few problems, to today, when with advanced knowledge, we have the problems associated with modern living to contend with. These are mainly, population, traffic and living congestion, pollution of air and waterways, noise levels and encroachment on man's own privacy. Cr Gawler expressed his hope that the 70's will be a turning point in history, when man will face these problems, overcome them and so protect our environment, in this age of modern living, in order that we may live happily ever after. This certainly inspired each of us to think about our present way of life, in view of the fact that, with each new device there can be a threat of danger to the things we have learnt to value. In question time many interesting views were expressed, including one lady's opinion of the new computer's handling of the rate notices.

### **HISTORICAL ITEMS**

Anyone having visited the Royal Historical Society at 19 Queen Street, their home until recently, would have noticed the highly decorative green tiles on the walls throughout the building. Thanks to the successful negotiations and perseverance of Mrs Mattingley and Mrs Field, and the manual labor of George Cox and Ian Barker, we now possess a very handsome collection of these tiles. We are grateful to these members, and to the owners and the caretaker of the building, who made their work possible, prior to demolition. These tiles were probably imported towards the end of the last century, and we hope, when Mr Walker visits us at our next meeting, he will be able to identify them. Together with the photos taken inside the building, by Mr Chatwin, we feel we have a valuable addition to our own collection of locally made tiles.

**RESTORATION OF THE WINE CELLAR AT SCHWERKOLT COTTAGE** is on the program of works to be done by the Council, as the result of a government grant of funds to ease unemployment. This is good news indeed, and we hope soon to follow, will be the construction of our historical building, seeing we have been advised by Council that they are stock-piling bluestone pitches for that purpose.

**THE HISTORY OF NUNAWADING** by Niall Brennan will be published about the middle of August this year, about the same time as the new Civic Library will be completed. It is anticipated the Council will hold a function to fit the occasion.

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THE CATHOLICS Part 2 The Parish of St. John, MITCHAM

The opening of this school was one outcome of the efforts of the committee formed at the meeting in August of the previous year. John McGlone was the first president and John Quinlan, the secretary. James Berry and John Bronogh "were assisting members with power to aid others". John Quinlan's notebook lists 110 people who subscribed sums varying from 2/6d to £5 to the collection for the new chapel, and a list of 11 others who contributed "after he had resigned".

The notebook also records "regulations of the Berrying ground at Air Hill cemetery for the catholics". It sets out that a man who had subscribed £2 at the collection for the church was entitled to one grave, if he subscribed less and later made it up to £2 he would be so entitled, and "the man that paid four pounds is intitled to two graves".

The names of some of those who qualified are known from the records of the graves existing in 1952, when permission to exhume and re-inter the bodies was given by the Health Commission to make way for a new church.

The names were:

May Bowen (daughter of J.A. & M. Bowen), d. 9.3.1909 aged 24 years (the last buried there).

Mary McClare (wife of John McClare), d. 21.10.1877 aged 40 years.

Wm. Grace (husband of Mary Grace) d. 18.2.1877 aged 32 years.

John Pratt (son of Margaret Pratt of Ringwood) d. 30.1.1876 aged 14 years.

John Barry . . .

Wm. Patrick Grace (son of Wm. Grace) d. 8.8.76 (or 8.8.78).

Also mentioned is Ellen Quinlan. Feb. 1875.

Early records of the school say that by 1st June 1872, 26 children were in attendance, and these were expected to increase to 40 soon, with the hope of receiving financial aid. A school roll of 1880 lists 28 children ranging from 4 years to 15 years, and is signed by a teacher, M.A. O'Leary. A roll dated 1886 lists 46 attending and is signed by T.M. Conway. Ages recorded here, starting at 2 years 8 months and 3 years 7 months and up to 15 years 1 month suggest that the teacher's responsibilities were wide indeed. As well as Air Hill, children were attending from, for example, Blackburn Creek (Mary Logan), Vermont (Patrick and Michael Keenan, Thomas and Joseph Galvin), Springfield (James O'Connor, James Hayes), Doncaster Road (Philip and John Cummins), Ringwood (Michael, Catherine, Jane and Margaret McDonnell and Ellen Millar). Records of the names of successive teachers are incomplete, but those of Miss Stapleton and Miss Hornby are known. Miss Hornby retired in 1929 when her sight was failing.

The register of 1888 records that the school was closed from the 24th March, and for the first two weeks in April during the enlarging of the church. On 20th May 1888, the additions to the

building were opened, with Rev. A. Sturgo, S.J., Rev. P. O'Connor, S.J., and Rev. R. O'Flynn, present.

In 1920 Mitcham became part of the Ringwood area on its establishment. Ringwood's first Mass, in the church near the corner of Whitehorse Road and Mount Dandenong Road, was held on 7.11.1920. In 1929, when Miss Hornby retired, the Mitcham school was closed, in the hope that children would attend Ringwood. It is briefly recorded "They did not". It is unclear what happened to local children in the interim – perhaps they went to some of the other local schools, but on 29th March 1936 a new school costing £1840, built by Mr O'Connell, was blessed by Dr Mannix. This school was on the site now occupied by the Spotless Drycleaners.

*(to be continued)*

Researched and compiled by J. Rocznik.

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A. H. Poussard (Editor)  
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