

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

June-July 1972

Price 5 cents

Number 40

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

---

Pres: Mr. M. Chatwin    Sec: Mrs. A. Poussard    Treas: Mrs. S. Barker  
44 McCulloch St        4 Elmhurst Rd        14 Tortice Ave,  
Nunawading 3131        Blackburn 3130        Nunawading 3131  
Phone 874-2487        Phone 89-3383

---

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday June 14th 1972 in the Coffee Room, Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading at 8.00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Ian Jones will speak on "Ned Kelly". Mr. Jones has spent many years researching the life of this Australian bushranger and is the co-author of a book on his subject.

JULY MEETING    Work Night.    at the Coffee Room, Civic Centre July 12th

JULY 19th (Note changed date from that set out in year's program)

At Wesley Hall, The Avenue, Blackburn, at 8.00 p.m.  
This is our annual night arranged for the benefit of Higher Certificate Students of Australian History.

Guest Speaker: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, Dept. Economic History, University of Melbourne.

Subject: "A Facit of Australian History - Australia's Mining Rushes".  
We can all look forward to a very interesting lecture and there will be a question time at the conclusion, when Professor Blainey will answer questions on any Australian History subject.

CENTENARY RESEARCH PROGRAM

As the result of the work of the Research Committee, we were pleased to be able to honor Mrs. Lousia Smith of Rooks Road, Mitcham, as our citizen who has resided for the greatest number of years in our municipality. Mrs. Smith, in her 93rd year, has lived all her life in Mitcham, having been born not far from her present home. On Centenary Day, May 4th, the Mayor and Mayoress of Nunawading, Cr. and Mrs. D. Gawler, accompanied by Mr. Brown, Town Clerk, and Mr. Edwards, Chief Clerk, called on Mrs. Smith presenting her with a sheath of flowers and a beautifully transcribed document to record the occasion. She will also receive a copy of Niall Brennan's "History of Nunawading" as soon as it is available. Mrs. Leach, representing our Society presented Mrs. Smith with a gift box of fruit. Photographers and reporters from our local papers were present so the occasion was fittingly recorded.

Tour of Nunawading: On Saturday May 6th, we celebrated the centenary with a tour of our own city. This was enjoyable and educational and in perfect weather, with Cr. Willis as bus driver and Mr. Sewart as our Guide. After the bus was fully booked, several people expressed their desire to join us if we planned another such outing. This may be arranged later in the year if members wish it.

June Seminar: A Seminar on the subject of "Local History and the School" will be held on Saturday 24th June 1972, from 10 am to 4.30 pm in the Theatrette, Camberwell Civic Centre, Inglesby St. Camberwell. For details apply to the secretary.

The 1972 Country Convention: This will be held at Wangaratta on the weekend of September 29, 30 and October 1. Full details and itinerary will be set out in our next newsletter and will also be available from the Secretary.

Acquisitions: We have been given two early model sewing machines and a letter press from the Hooke family home.

Many relics in the form of old tools etc. were found by council workmen when they commenced the restoration work at Schwerkolt Cottage. These have been given to the Society, the most significant being a very large padlock which we presume was used to lock the wine cellar. These are valuable items to add to our collection.

#### 1972 Program (Forthcoming)

9th August:	Work Night
13th September:	Guest Speaker Mrs. Sharp "Wood's Point".
11th October:	Annual Meeting
8th November:	Guest Speaker Mr. Ken McIntyre of Box Hill Historical Society "Cook's Portuguese Predecessors".

\*\*\*\*\*

#### CHURCHES OF NUNAWADING (PAST AND PRESENT) Series 7

THE CATHOLICS Part 3 The Parish of St. John, MITCHAM (concluding)

The staffing of the school throws some light on the developing responsibilities of the religious orders in the area, and the size of the areas administered by both the clergy and nuns.

We know that in 1866, Bishop Gould handed over to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus the "missions of Richmond, Kew and Hawthorn, with the extensive country districts of Camberwell, Nunawading and

Mitcham". In 1889 a new mission with Lilydale as the centre was set up. Father Lynch, who had been itinerant in the area, was in 1890 promised a Presbytery by the residents of Lilydale. Within 12 months it was built and the cost of construction, £1300, paid off. In 1891 the Rev. A. Hennessey replaced Father Lynch, the church was enlarged and the Sisters of Mercy from Mansfield were invited to take charge of the schools, both Primary and Secondary. (The presbytery housed the nuns, until a convent was built.) This mission included, as well as St. Patrick's Lilydale, the mission church of St. John Mitcham, St. Aloysius, Yarra Glen, St. Joseph's Warburton, St. Mary's Ringwood, and St. Brigid's Healesville. Quite a "parish". When St. John's School re-opened in 1936, the Sisters of Mercy travelled by train daily from Lilydale to Mitcham, and staffed the school until 1954 when it was declared unsafe by the Health Commission in May 1948.

In 1952, the new parish of Mitcham was taken over by Father Coghlan, from Father O'Toole of Ringwood, who had administered it since 1934. The boundaries were, Springvale Rd, Burwood Rd, Heatherdale Rd, and Whitehorse Road, included Park Orchards and Donvale.

A new school had been started, with 200 children in three classrooms, but the church had been condemned. So Father Coghlan using the school for Mass, and by a tremendous effort to borrow money and muster willing help, a new church was opened in the same year, to last for the next twenty years. In the year 1954-5, three more class rooms built, and a house opposite the school was acquired for a convent. The Sisters of St. Joseph joined the parish and assisted by lay teachers have staffed the school ever since.

The annual fund raising fetes, run by the ladies of the parish, to rescue the church from debt, have been a central activity and a feature of the Mitcham life since 1953. The first made a profit of £2000 and in 1971 \$25,000 was raised. (Up to 1970 total raised is estimated at more than \$200,000)

The educational liabilities of the parish are illustrated (together with the names of the head teachers) by the growth of numbers on the rolls, extracted from Dept. of Education Inspectors' Report Book of St. John's School No. 1407 at Mitcham:

1939	81 on roll	(Sister M. Sheila)	1942	93 on Roll
1942	93	(Sister M. Hildegard (Fitzpatrick))		
1944	99		1950	138 on roll
1946	95		1952	155
1949	123			

1956	307	on roll	Sister Catherine Teresa	1958	462	on roll
1961	689		Sister Romuald	1963	744	
1967	719		Sister M. Emilian	1970	728	
1971			Sister Pauline			

Since 1961 the parish has contributed to the Diocesan Regional Secondary College of Aquinas in Ringwood. The range of the parallel girls' and boys' schools was completed in 1971 with the first Sixth Form in the girls' school. This achievement was marked by an open air Mass celebrated in the school quadrangle by Archbishop Knox, and attended by all the parish priests who had helped in setting up the school.

The rate of growth of the population soon began to make the church inadequate. In 1958 (the same year as St. John's Presbytery was completed) land had been bought in the area of Forest Hill, opposite Parkmore. A mass centre in the school was used by St. John's priests, until on 27th January 1968, the parish of St. Timothy's with its own Parish priest, the Rev. T. Brophy, was established.

In Park Orchards, Mass had been said for (several) years by priests from Mitcham, using the Chalet as a centre, until in 1970, the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne was established in the care of the Rev. J. McMahon, M.S.C.

In 1956, five acres had been bought in Centre Road, Vermont. St. James' School opened on 1st February 1970 and the Mass Centre had its first Mass on 26th July 1970, celebrated by St. Johns' Parish Priest, the Rev. W.J. Durkin. The school expects an enrolment of 250 by 1974.

In 1971, the parish of Mitcham, still including Vermont, had 1471 catholic families. At this time a parish organization in zones was established, to facilitate the planning of work, to maintain "lines of communication" and to help contact between individual parishioners. The interest of the people in various problems, crystallised in the setting up of working committees in such areas as social welfare, education, the liturgy, public relations etc. and this organization has been used recently (1972) in the setting up of a program of Pastoral Renewal prefatory to the Eucharistic Congress to be held in Melbourne in 1973. It is also to be used to link parishioners with the "Action for World Development" planned by the Australian Council of Churches and Catholic Church to try to "make Christianity work today".

In 1972 the convent has been renovated and extended, the spacious parish centre completed in 1968, has its organizing committee, and with land acquired in 1971, the grounds of the completed school can be suitably extended to alleviate congestion. John McGlone, whose family name is perpetuated in the name of nearby McGlone St. would take pride in the results of the work to which he gave a helping hand, and land a hundred years ago. --- Researched and compiled by J. Rocznik.