

**NUNAWADING
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



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NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1983
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Dear Members,

Our July & August meetings were well attended, thank you for coming along on such cold & wet nights. Thank you to Betty & Keith Rooney for their hospitality for the July meeting & thank you to Andrew Hillier for his interesting talk on the background of the old records he played for us on the 1930's phonograph, we all loved those old tunes & the old vocalists, it was great.

The August meeting at the Coffee Shop was followed by a most informative talk by Miss Constance Pavey, Nunawading City Librarian. Miss Pavey told some fascinating anecdotes of the library's earlier days; she also spoke on books and libraries of the future giving us an almost unbelievable account of the anticipated changes to come. Miss Pavey would appreciate any old sheet music to add to the library's music section, please contact her if you can help.

OP. SHOP FUND RAISING EFFORT. Start saving your unwanted items for our next Lion's Den (Blackburn) Op. Shop fortnight, 8th to 19th May 1984. A roster will be worked out before next May so please keep a couple of days free. Last time we raised over \$800 which was a great help with completing Museum displays etc.

NOTE Dr. Stanley Cochrane Memorial Kindergarten is celebrating 25 years since the official opening of the kinder. on Sat. 9th Oct. '83 with a Craft Fair.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Wed. 14th Sept. '83 7.45 pm Nunawading Historical Scty. Meeting at the home of Rupert & Betty Muckleston 31 Churinga Ave. Mitcham. After the meeting we are to have a Members' Night, everyone is asked to tell us about some article or happening from the past. Such nights have been very popular in the past so please take part. Please bring a small plate.
- Wed. 12th Oct. '83 7.45 pm Annual General Meeting of Nunawading Hist. Scty. Coffee Shop Nunawading Civic Centre. All members are urged to come along for this most important meeting. Send nominations to Secretary.
- Wed. 9th Nov. '83 7.45 pm Nunawading Historical Scty. Meeting at the home of Allan & Teddy Poole 6 Lernes St. Forest Hill. Please bring a small plate of supper.

Nunawading Hist. Scty. Newsletter is published every 2nd month, Edited by Shirley Jones 2 Delhi St. Mitcham V. 3132. Prepared for posting by Val Fitcher. President Mr. Keith Patterson phone 878 3162. Secretary Mrs Doris Mattingley 2 Leons Crt. Blackburn V. 3130 8784630 Treasurer Mrs Shirley Barker 14 Tortice St. Nunawading V. 3131

"A THREE WEEKS SENTENCE TO PORT ARTHUR"

or How a Librarian left her books behind for three weeks!

In October 1981 an advertisement appeared in the National papers for "Voluntary Historians" to work at Port Arthur between January 10th & February 18th 1982. I had not used any of my history skills gained during a double history major in an Arts degree at ANU, & had thoroughly enjoyed my previous short look at Port Arthur so decided to apply.

I was fortunate that my second qualification as a librarian made me most acceptable. Due to work commitments I could only give three weeks of my time so arrived in Hobart on Tues. 1st. February with some trepidation as to what lay ahead but enthusiasm to enjoy it.

We arrived at Port Arthur after a hot trip from Hobart. The "volunteers" were sleeping & eating in the Commandant's House, which is usually occupied by one of the resident archaeologists. There were about 30 volunteers in the group that was there for the 3 next weeks, 3 historians & 27 archaeologists; we represented all of the eastern states of Australia & our ages ranged from 18 to 55. About 6 people chose to sleep in tents in the gardens of the Commandant's House while the rest of us chose our stretchers & went exploring.

I shared a room with 4 others & we were all fascinated by the archaeological "dig" that was taking place in the verandah outside our room. We later noticed that the 3 rooms at the back of the house were also part of the dig & were to learn later that the various holes outside the house were part of an investigation of the drainage system of the house.

The historians were "clean" people who spent most of their day working in the parsonage. Our main task was to index a number of Colonial Secretary Office files relevant to the administration of Pt. Arthur to provide greater access to their contents. My library skills were used in compiling a subject index to these files. Each member of the group was also given a research project. One worked on the life-styles of the officers, one on the wharf area & my task was to gather information on the Separate or 'Model' Prison.

During the three weeks we learnt a lot about the administrative changes that occurred during the penal settlement & gained a glimmer of understanding about the life that was led there 150 years ago. Our research only showed us just how much information still has to be gleaned on the many intricate topics that fit together to provide an overall understanding of the historic site. While working & living on the site it was easy to consider that area as one's total world, television & radio were rarely available & a newspaper was usually only scanned; it did not seem to be a necessary part of our life there.

The volunteer project runs for six weeks each year & I would heartily recommend it to anyone who wishes to find out more about one of Australia's unique historical areas.

Carolyne Cohn
(nee Webster).

The Coastal Safety Services Br. of Dept. of Transport & Construction maintains approx. 350 navigation lights inc. lighthouses around the Aust. coast. They are conducting a nation wide survey to locate any relevant material pertaining to the history of lighthouses in Aust. Any pictorial or photographic material, cuttings, personal notes etc. would be welcomed. Contact: Anne Robertson P.O. Box 111 Dickson A.C.T. 2602.
