



NEWSLETTER - JULY - AUGUST 1986

MEETINGS: Christ Church of England Hall, Edward St., Mitcham. 7.45 pm.

Wednesday 9th July. MISS RACHEL FAGGETTER, Director of the Children's Museum, Museum of Victoria, will address our Society at 8.30 p.m. Miss Faggetter is the daughter of the late Mrs. Pat Faggetter, one of our foundation members and well-remembered for her Herb research and Slater Family history. Members' business meeting 7.45 p.m.

Wednesday 6th August. Please note this date, a week earlier than usual. We plan to go to Schramm's Cottage (Melway 33J10) to participate in the Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society meeting, and to hear more of the early German settlers there. Details: July Meeting.

In May, Cr. Christine Fensham told us about her interesting cycle trip in China, and in June, Mr. Len Elliott enthralled us with his stories of restoration and conservation of 'old things.'

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria feels that, to carry out its functions effectively it needs to increase the number of its members throughout the State. Annual subscription is \$25. More details from Secretary.

MORE LOCAL HISTORY.

The railway line was extended to Blackburn and Mitcham in 1882, with subsequent great expansion in local industries, particularly brick works and potteries. The system was electrified in 1923. One of our foundation members, the late Mr. G.H. Neve, was working as a student at the General Electric Company at Schenectady, U.S.A. in 1922, and he handled the contract for the supply of automatic equipment for the Mitcham (Vic.) sub-station. At that time, this was one of the most advanced sub-stations in the world, because it was fully automatic. Previously, such installations required someone in attendance at all times.

One of our earlier members related to us the story of his grandparents, who lived in Hawthorn, in the era of the late eighteen-seventies and early eighteen-eighties. They grew grapes on their property, which was situated in the area now bounded by Lisson Grove, Power Street, Riversdale Road and Glenferrie Road. The trip there from Melbourne meant travelling by horse-drawn tram to the river at Burnley, where the crossing was accomplished by ferry. Travellers then had to complete the journey on foot.

Some years ago, an early resident of the district used to describe how he cut timber and carted it by dray to the brick-works in this area, in the late eighteen nineties and early nineteen hundreds.

MORE ABOUT RAILWAYS.

In the eighteen-fifties, road cartage costs from Melbourne to the gold-fields of Ballarat and Bendigo were incredibly high, with extra charges for police protection against bushrangers. These costs and those of road-building, with high wages and expensive fodder for the horses, all led to the idea of railways. The first steam-train in Australia ran in 1854 between the city and Sandridge (Port Melbourne). A group of Geelong business-men had received a charter for a railway in 1853, but the first train did not run until 1857, from Geelong to Greenwich (Newport). From here passengers changed to a steamer to complete the journey to Melbourne.

However, two small early railways had interesting links with road-builders. One was built by Richard Wayman, road and bridge contractor in 1846; it was 200 yards long and carried stone from Wayman's Quarry to the banks of the Yarra River. Another in 1846 was built by David Lennox on his Portland Pier. This 3 feet gauge line was in position when 400 feet of the piers were finished in December 1845, but rolling stock was not in use until late in 1846.

From 'ROADS' (Vic) RCA Publication.

ANOTHER Forest Hill.

When the surveyors were marking the Victoria-New South Wales border in mid-nineteenth century, they commenced their survey at the source of the Murray, and they built a cairn on the first hill-top, which was called Forest Hill. This cairn is still in existence today, more than a century later.

EXTRACT from 'The Illustrated Magazine of Art', Vol. 1, 1853, Castells London.

A machine has at last been invented which promises to make the wrongs of distressed needlewomen a matter of historical record, instead of living a painful reality...

Every minute a yard of cloth is sewn in a style far superior to that of hand-sewing. It will prove invaluable, as it does the work of twenty hands, and will undoubtedly cheapen clothing of every kind greatly. Immense numbers of the sewing machines are disposed of every week, however, the price £30, will of course for the present, place it out of the reach of most, but that it will one day be an essential article of furniture in every well-regulated household, we have no doubt...

You ask what will become of the poor needlewomen? This will ruin them? Nothing of the kind. Much misery may no doubt result from the suddenness of the change, but the result will in the long run, be the overthrow of a system which disgraced our civilization, and the rescue of thousands of mortals from misery and degradation. Every triumph of machinery over manual labour is a gain to humanity.

(From Shirley Jones)

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