

## NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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### JUNE MEETING

The speaker at the June 12 meeting will be Mr. Alan West, of the National Museum. Mr. West has spent a great deal of time with the Pitjantjara tribe of aborigines in Central Australia, and will describe them and their manner of life. We meet, as usual, in the Coffee shop at the Civic Centre.

### JULY MEETING

We will be guests of the mayor (Cr. N. Taylor) at our meeting on July 10. Unlike similar meetings in the past, this will take the form of a gathering of people with similar interests in this and neighbouring municipalities. It will begin with sherry at 7.30 p.m., followed by films in the Willis Room at the Library, and probably a discussion of matters of mutual interest. Historical societies from surrounding cities have also been invited.

### PRESERVING BACCHUS MARSH HISTORY

Mrs. Betty Osborn, authoress of a history of Bacchus Marsh, gave us a racy account at our April meeting of how the Manor House and Captain Bacchus' grave had been saved and restored. When she first arrived in the town there was a ruined building she was told was the Manor House, which meant nothing to her. It was later bought and restored to its original condition by a couple who worked devotedly to complete the work, arousing the interest of some local people. Later a bulldozer was seen levelling graves around Holy Trinity Church, including that of Captain Bacchus. In an atmosphere of controversy and local divisions a newly formed Historical Society managed to save something of the graveyard and now the town has the Manor House. Holy Trinity Church and Bacchus' grave preserved and restored as well as a fine pair of silver candlesticks given to the church by a descendant of Captain Bacchus.

### NUNAWADING COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

Cr. J. Willis, who has been a member of the local Council since the days of the Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham, told our May meeting stories of some early developments such as the Mitcham and Vermont Progress

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Association, Baby Health and Pre-School Centres, how Antonia Park was acquired and a Fire Brigade was started. He said that people had always responded well to calls for community work. As schools and other activities increased councillors had become so involved that they had engagements three or four nights a week. There were some brilliant young men on the council at present, but he wondered how long they would be able to sustain the pressure of work. During its existence the council had bought properties costing \$5,000,000. It would have been possible to buy more land advantageously but the council had neither the money nor the borrowing powers to finance the outlay.

#### EXCURSION TO STEIGLITZ AND BACCHUS MARSH

On Saturday, June 8, we intend to visit Steiglitz and Bacchus Marsh. Our plans are for members and their friends to participate in the tour in their own cars. The meeting place will be the Werribee turn-off on the Geelong road, and the time 10.00 a.m. This is about 1½ hours travel from Nunawading. When all cars have arrived we will travel through Werribee, skirt the northern edge of the You Yangs Reserve, then westward to the ghost town of Steiglitz, where gold was found in quartz in 1855. The Court House, Built 1874/5, Church of England 1869, State School 1875, Pioneer Cemetery, quartz cairn and numerous mine shafts remain from what was a thriving town of 2,000 people.

After a picnic lunch at Steiglitz we will travel north close by the Brisbane Ranges to Bacchus Marsh, meeting at Holy Trinity Church at 2.15 p.m., where we will meet a guide from Bacchus Marsh Historical Society. Captain Bacchus settled there in 1838 and began building the Manor House in 1846. It now has a National Trust classification. After completing the tour members can return via the Western Highway. The round trip will be about 130 miles.

Further information can be obtained from Mr. M. Chatwin, 'phone 874-2487.

EXCURSIONS Ripponlea. Behind a high fence on a main street, close to a railway station and tramway, "Ripponlea" was a surprise for those who visited it on April 20. The former residence of Sir Frederick Sargood stands in extensive grounds, which include wide lawns, a large lake, waterfalls, landscaped gardens, groves of old trees and a large fernery under steel arches more than thirty feet high. The grounds must be extremely attractive in Spring and Autumn. The house itself is only partly open to public. It is very large, three-storied, in typical 19th century style with a

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portice to shelter carriages stopping at the front door and observatory tower. It had recently been given to the National Trust and is likely to be regularly open for inspection.

#### INALA AND CEMETERY

Inala, the Salvation Army's Old People's Village in Middleborough road, which was visited on May 11 was another surprise. An inconspicuous entrance leads to 20 acres of land with rows of small cottages, blocks of flats, and single rooms for men. The population is 480, plus staff, and it has its own shop, telephone exchange, bank, social amenities and two hospital wards, one for minor cases, the other for more serious ones. Flats are arranged around garden courts which are roofed with fibreglass so that they are wholly weatherproof. An additional women's block will shortly be built because of the demand of accommodation. Immediately after that we were shown over Box Hill Cemetery by Mr. R. Allingham, chairman of the trustees, who spoke of its history and showed us a number of interesting headstones and graves, including those of well-known local pioneers.

#### WHAT IS IT?

An alert boy had told us about a mysterious piece of machinery on the north bank of Mullum Creek. It is in an excavation which provides a level base and a similar excavation a few yards away was apparently also connected with it. About fifty yards downstream there is a crude dam of stone about four feet high. The machine is similar to some kerosine engines made seventy years ago and has moulded on the side, "Blackstone, Stamford, England." Three pulley wheels of varying sizes seem designed to drive other machinery, possibly a pump, by belt drive. Although it is out of our area we are hoping to find out more about it and how it was used.

#### THE BATTLING SHIRE PRESIDENT

Shire presidents are usually dignified figures and successful men. Who could think of one as a battling selector finding it hard to pay for his land? Our first president, William Witt, was. He owned 146 acres on the south-west corner of Whitehorse and Heatherdale roads, and 33 acres at Ballyshanessy (Burwood). Allotment 131, of 143 acres, in the north-west angle of Heatherdale and Canterbury roads, was the last piece of crown land left when he applied for it in May 1874, as a normal selection, payable over ten years. He described himself as a grazier and gave his address as Ballyshanessy. By the terms of selection he had to make various improvements and cultivate at least one-tenth of the land. In 1876 the land was forfeited because he had not made

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the annual payment. He appealed, saying he had spent £220 on the land, had cleared it of tea-tree and undergrowth, fenced it all and had 20 acres ready for the plough. It was to lie fallow that summer before being cropped in the autumn. At the time he was working mostly on his orchard, farm and grazing land. He apparently succeeded because he made the final payment in 1879 and received the freehold.

PIONEERS' GRAVES

The following additional pioneers' graves are to be found in Box Hill cemetery:-

<u>Name</u>		<u>Date of Burial</u>
<u>Rooks</u> - Abraham Rooks selected land in Canterbury road, at the corner of Rooks road in 1868.		
Abraham	Wesleyan	2/9/89
Luke G.	Mitcham, Wesleyan	9/10/91
Sarah	Vermont	3/1/96
Violet Elsie	Vermont, C of E	27/4/99

Boyle - David Boyle selected land near the corner of Canterbury and Mt. Pleasant roads, in 1868 and established a plant nursery. He was the first secretary of the Local Committee which established what is now Vermont State School.

David	Wood-carter, Nunawading, Wesleyan	18/9/74
David	Wesleyan	1/9/75
Joseph	10 days, Nunawading, Wesleyan	30/9/81

Slater - William Slater arrived in Nunawading in 1868, bought land on the Koonung Creek, North Blackburn and established a herb farm and orchard from which he exported medicinal herbs to England and eucalyptus oil to America.

Daniel	27½ years, gentleman, Nunawading, Independent	25/7/76
W.H.	Blackburn Presbyterian	4/6/97

McGlone - William John McGlone was the first policeman in Mitcham and owned the Harvest Home Hotel, just west of the present Catholic Church.

John	63 years, Mitcham, Catholic	3/9/92
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Course - William Course bought land on the south side of Canterbury road, near McClare road, about 1880.

Sarah	Mt. Pleasant, Wesleyan	21/1/97
Herbert	Vermont, Wesleyan	25/6/97
William	81 years, Tunstall, Methodist	5/3/1909