

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Formation of the City.

Mr. Norman Armstrong, first mayor of Nunawading, spoke at the April meeting and described how the present city came into existence. He joined Drake & Co., Mitcham estate agents, in 1924 and the same year was elected to the Nunawading Shire Council. Finding that less money was being spent in Mitcham than was received in rates, he pressed for severance. As a result Box Hill was separated from the shire area and the remainder was named Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham to indicate its geographic location. Some Blackburn residents wished to form their own borough, but their application failed because it would have had too little revenue to justify the capital expenditure required. The city was proclaimed in 1945 after councillors had threatened a mass resignation, and its name was chosen to preserve the original one. Mr. E.E. Walker had been an important figure during the early days of Mitcham. He was responsible for the shire buying electricity in bulk and supplying residents, financing the Mitcham Methodist Church and the Memorial Hall.

Tracing Family History.

Records available for tracing family history were described by Mr. G. James, of the Public Record Office, who spoke at the May meeting. He illustrated his talk with copies of ships passenger lists, records of civil servants, lists of donations to schools and similar records received by government departments and outlined ways of following up information obtained from them.

Old Residents' Tales.

Our meeting on June 9 will take an unusual form. Instead of a visiting speaker we will have a number of old residents, or members of their families, to tell us what they remember of early days in Mitcham. We expect that each one will remind the others of interesting incidents

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and open up new sources of information. Among those taking part will be Mr. M. Gray, Mr. F. Bowden and Mr. J. McLean.

Schools Night.

Dr. Robson, of Melbourne University, will be the speaker at the Schools Night on July 14, in the Willis Room. His subject will be "The White Australia Policy", which is included in the H.S.C. syllabus, but should be of general interest as well.

Visit to Bendigo.

We have to thank the Bendigo Historical Society for a most enjoyable week-end at Bendigo early in April. They entertained us on the Saturday night, then showed us around interesting features of their city on Sunday. We were particularly interested in seeing their headquarters in a beautiful old house.

Visit to Queenscliff.

Unfortunately we had a very small attendance at the visit to Queenscliff fort. As we were joining the usual weekly inspection of the premises this was not of serious consequence. Our representatives were part of a large crowd, and it was impossible to visit all parts of the fortifications. The fort is open to visitors on Sunday afternoons, but smaller parties, which could be shown much more of the works, can be shown through by appointment during the week.

Visit to Castlemaine.

Our next excursion will be a week-end one to Castlemaine at the end of October. We would like to know who intends to go so that arrangements can be made early. Please let Mrs. Shortland know if you will be going.

Theatre Night.

Money for tickets to the theatre night on June 10 should be in by Monday, June 7. There are still tickets available for any who wish to go, so ring or write to Mrs. Shortland as soon as you can. The theatre night will be at the Forest Hill theatre and the film is "Fiddler on the Roof". Tickets are \$2.25 each.

Opening of Wandinong.

The new park "Wandinong" was opened on Sunday, May 9. This is land running between Canterbury Road and Ronley Street, Blackburn, given to the City by Mr. R. Hooke, who died a short time ago. It is largely in its natural state and it is intended that it should remain in its present condition. At the opening we had a display of pictures,

maps, sales reports and sub-divisional plans of the surrounding area, Mr. Hooke's bicycle, Mrs. Hooke's sewing machine and an old-fashioned dress. Mr. Hooke lived on the property for many years and had an estate agency at Hawthorn. He and Mrs. Hooke, who is still living, were keen cyclists and rode almost everywhere by bicycle. The machine on display had been ridden more than 100,000 miles.

Museum

The building for our proposed museum, in the grounds of Schwerkolt Cottage is now well on the way, and it was inspected by a number of members during May. The first impression is that it will have a very large area to be filled with display items, so we will have to begin planning how to fill it. At present building is delayed by difficulties in getting the right kind of door and window frames.

Display Items

The kind of items we will require are domestic and household goods, which will give an idea of how people lived in the past, books, pictures, maps and similar items. We have a number of agricultural implements, which will probably be sufficient to fill the space allowed for them.

Photographs.

A reminder. If you have a few spare exposures to finish a film, use them up in taking photographs of streets and buildings in your neighbourhood. These may not seem very interesting at present, but they are likely to become valuable in future years, when someone asks what Nunawading was like in the mid-1970's. We hope to have a display of such photographs later in the year.

C.J. Dennis Centenary.

This year is the centenary of the birth of C.J. Dennis. As part of the celebrations, there will be a visit to his grave in Box Hill Cemetery, Sunday 20 June, at 2.30 p.m. If you need any inducement, there will be afternoon tea.

MORE ABOUT BLACKBURN LAKE - Extracts from the minutes of the Adult Deaf Society of Victoria. (Continued from last Newsletter).

17 July 1916. A cutting from the "Leader", pasted in the book, said there was a clearing of 4 acres south of the lake, entirely planted in bulbs. The lake was 23 feet deep in one part, where an old clay pit was included.

15 January 1917. The Superintendent reported that a boy had been

accidentally drowned in Blackburn Lake.

11 June 1917. The secretary reported a notice of rates owing to the Shire of Nunawading had been received.

16 July 1917. It was resolved that a letter be sent to the Shire of Nunawading stating that after taking legal advice the committee is of the opinion that the Society is not liable and therefore consider the Shire should stop sending notices or take action against the Society for recovery of rates.

6 May 1918. The secretary reported receipt of notice of rates due to the Shire of Nunawading. He was instructed to hand it to Messrs. Derham and Derham.

17 December 1918. The secretary reported that on the suggestion of Mr. Martin, with the concurrence of the chairman, he had instructed Messrs. Derham to take counsel's opinion in this matter. The secretary's action was endorsed and Messrs. Mercy and Martin were appointed a sub-committee with power to give a retainer to Messrs. Derham Robertson and Derham under the seal of the Society.

29 September 1919. Resolved that the words "picnics, etc" be eliminated from the notice board at Blackburn railway station.

25 October 1920. A letter was read from Derham, Robertson and Derham dated 22/9/20 intimating that the Nunawading Shire Council had given notice of appeal against the decision given by Mr. Justice McArthur that the Society was not liable to pay rates. It was resolved that the Society's solicitors be instructed to oppose the appeal. (A newspaper cutting quoted 78 acres as the area of the farm and 22 acres as under cultivation). (This appeal went to the High Court of Australia, and went against the Society on the grounds that growing and selling flowers was not a charitable purpose, although carried on to finance the treatment and training of inmates. Also the Society allowed boating and picnic parties to use the land and charged for it. This also excluded the exemption.)

Continued in next Newsletter.....

K. A. PATTERSON.
Editor.