

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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EARLY NUNAWADING

Some old residents told us at our June meeting about early days in Nunawading. Mr. M. Gray described the leading businesses, including factories, and their situations. The first sub-division of land in Mitcham shopping area was made by McLellan & Co. in 1914, and sold by T.R.B. Morton. Water was supplied to the district from a stand-pipe at the corner of Whitehorse and Mitcham Roads, and cost 4d. to 5d. a thousand gallons. Mr. J. McLean said the railway was single track when it opened in 1882. Mitcham station was there, but Blackburn did not open until Christmas Day that year and Tunstall station in 1888. At first the line was badly run and there was a head-on collision the day after it opened. Mitcham Brick had its own station and there were various sidings for brick and tile works. Mitcham station had a carriage dock to enable loading of drays and wagons. The line was duplicated to Ringwood in 1891. Mrs. Hansen said that in the early 1920's Mitcham was noted for its wild flowers. Truckloads of flowers were sent away, even to Sydney. Mr. W. Bawden said that in 1936 Mitcham was a self-contained semi-country township, where the railway staff knew everybody who travelled by train and were able to introduce young men and women. Large quantities of coal and briquettes used to come from Anderson and Morwell for brick and tile works.

WHITE AUSTRALIA.

In describing the White Australia policy at our Schools Night, Dr. Robson of Melbourne University traced the strength of feeling in favour of it to the lower middle and working class origins of most Australians, who had some fear of economic competition, had little contact with other races, belonged to a nation that had maintained its independence for centuries, and developed a strong pride of empire. This had been exaggerated by the lower class origins of Chinese who came to Australia in search of gold, which could not correct biased impressions about foreigners. The Colonial Office, which was responsible for

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administration of nations of other races, had done its best to modify that policy, but had no more influence after the Commonwealth was established. In answer to a question Dr. Robson said that in the circumstances, and with the state of popular feeling at the time, there was really no other possible policy. A number of excuses were advanced to justify it, but it was in fact just a recognition of a national state of mind.

AUGUST MEETING.

Mrs. Jean Field will describe a visit to Williamsburg, capital of Virginia at the time of the American Revolution. This town has been completely re-constructed and is operating as a town of that period, with workshops and shops in operation and all the residents dressed in the authentic costumes of 1776. It is one of the most notable examples of re-creation of life and times of 200 years ago.

SEPTEMBER MEETING.

Anyone with any interest in the Scottish Highlands should be interested in the September meeting, when Mrs. Elaine Foote will speak on "Tartans."

SOCIAL EVENT.

It is hoped that we will be able to arrange a social gathering some time in early September. Tentative arrangements are being made, but the date has not yet been decided. We will probably try to make definite arrangements at our next meeting.

VISIT TO CASTLEMAINE.

We are having difficulty in getting enough members interested in going to Castlemaine for a week-end visit about the end of October. Several who hoped to go are now unable. Mrs. Shortland would like to hear from those who would go so that she can make arrangements.

VISIT TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Mr. George Cox, M.L.A. is making arrangements for us to tour Parliament House. The date is uncertain, but is likely to be at the end of September or early in October. This will be an evening visit during the week. Members will be notified when the date is decided.

VISIT TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

We are on the list to make a tour of the public portion of Government House, but the waiting list is so long we do not expect an appointment before early next year. This will be a day visit during the week.

VISIT TO CHURCHILL ISLAND.

Earlier this year we tried to arrange a visit to Churchill Island, but failed. The island has now been bought by the Victorian government and the Royal Historical Society has arranged a bus tour to it. There will probably be room for any of our members who would like to join them. Mrs. Shortland can give interested people particulars.

MUSEUM BUILDING.

Anyone who has visited Schwerkolt Cottage lately will have noticed that the museum building is now well on. The City Engineer says it will be finished before Christmas. This means that we will have to sort out what items we have for display, what we should get, how to display them and when we can open the museum. A target date is next March. Members who have items stored in cupboards and garages should look them out and see what needs repair or cleaning before it is placed on exhibition. Any other interesting relics that can be gathered should also be collected.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS.

Just another reminder about photographs. If you have a few exposures left to finish a film, take a few pictures of your own area. In a few years they will become very interesting as records of what Nunawading is like now. We intend to have an exhibition of these photographs at the annual meeting in October, and then place them with our collection of photographs.

THEATRE NIGHTS.

During June and July we had two theatre nights, one at the Forest Hill Theatre and the other at a performance by the Mitcham Repertory Society. The second was particularly successful as we had about 30 present and the production was very good.

NATIONAL TRUST CLASSIFICATION.

For the first time the National Trust has classified suburban streets. The area is Blackburn Lake and the road reserve and front gardens of

several streets in what is known as the "Bellbird Area". It has also recorded Furness Park and part of the Lake Reserve. We have a copy of the citation, which describes the streets as retaining a quiet, almost rural character unique in Melbourne.

MORE BLACKBURN LAKE HISTORY.

Extracts from Minutes of Adult Deaf Society of Victoria, continued from last Newsletter. The High Court had ruled that the property was rateable.

14 February 1921. - The meeting was called to consider advisability of discontinuing the Blackburn Farm flower trade and the letting of the business as a going concern at a rental.

22 June 1921 - Recommendations of 17 June 1921 - That the flower trade etc. in connection with the farm be continued as at present for the next 12 months. That plans for the very necessary alterations and additions to the Blackburn Home ... be prepared at once.

26 September 1921. - The architect's plans for proposed additions to the Farm and Home were submitted.

16 November 1921. - On the architect's advice and recommendation Mr. Peacock moved and Mr. Vial seconded that the tender of Mr. Bellamy be accepted.

27 February 1922. - Opening of additional buildings at end of March - Messrs. the Chairman, Peacock, Treasurer and Superintendent were appointed a committee to arrange this.

27 November 1922. - Lake water. Principal reported that for some time he had suspected that the water being pumped up from the Lake for hot water system used for washing up and bath purposes was not fit for such purposes. He therefore had a sample taken from below the pump and submitted it to the Public Health Dept. for analysis. This report was submitted to the meeting and in view of this it was decided to discontinue the hot water service pending other arrangements, also to have a notice posted up that the water from the lake was not to be used for drinking or washing purposes.

K. A. PATTERSON.

Editor.