

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

April-May 1977

Price 5 cents

Number ~~64~~ 63

Registered for transmission by post as a periodical - Category B

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PRESERVING PHOTOGRAPHS

Clive Tilson, at our February meeting, outlined what should be done to preserve photographs. Negatives are more important than prints. They are seriously affected by heat, light, humidity and air pollution. They are best kept in envelopes, plastic for preference, and stored in a metal cabinet which is kept somewhere free from heat and humidity. Handling is a problem as acid on the skin affects them adversely, so the less they are taken out the better. Mr. Tilson also gave us formulas for preservatives for treating wood and leather - particularly for the binding of books.

MAYOR'S NIGHT

Once again we had a good representative attendance at the Mayor's Night in March, with visitors from a number of neighbouring societies. Box Hill is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this month and Waverley has won the preservation of one of their earliest houses, which they intend to set up as a museum.

Doncaster reported the death of Mrs. Green, their president for several years, who has always been very active in civic affairs as well as in their society.

The entertainment for the evening was provided by the Mitcham Repertory Society. It took the form of a play reading. The piece chosen was a short reconstruction of the social history of N.S.W. during Sir Charles Darling's governorship, when Wentworth and Wardell were pressing for much more self-government and the social structure of the colony was changing as free settlers began to displace convicts and emancipists. The exasperation of Darling with newspaper editors who criticised his administration and confusion of land-owners who found they could no longer exercise despotic sway over their employees were well brought out.

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APRIL MEETING

The subject for the meeting on April 13 is a talk by Mrs. Jean Field on "Wedgwood."

MAY MEETING

Brush up your memories of the past in preparation for an informal talk night by members on May 11. This will be a chance to exchange information and enlarge our knowledge of early events.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

All who went on the excursion to Government House were greatly impressed with the magnificence and beauty of the building. At least 45 attended and they were shown over the public rooms by guides from the National Trust. Features that impressed us most were the entrance, reception hall and ballroom. All, including the ceilings, were highly decorated in gold leaf. The entrance is beautiful and the reception hall excellent, with a deep green carpet with so fine and deep a pile that it was described as being like walking on velvet. A drawing room, very large and high, with two fireplaces and window opening on to a courtyard garden, had a fine display of paintings on loan from the National Gallery. The only painting of a former governor was one of Sir Rohan Delacombe. It is hoped that a more complete gallery of former governors will eventually be developed. The ballroom, as big as that of Buckingham Palace, still has its original floor of Queensland cedar. It is decorated in pale blue and gold, with marble fireplaces and three thrones on a dais. A dining room seats 50 at a banqueting table. It was at one time remote from the kitchens, but a small kitchen has now been built into an adjoining room, so that meals can be served reasonably hot on state occasions.

GIFTS TO SOCIETY

We have received from Mr. Verhees an early model of a food mixer. It is hand-operated, but has beaters very similar to those of the latest models, working on planetary action, and a lemon squeezer on top. The date and make are unknown. Any information would be very welcome. Ringwood has given us some photographs from their collection. They are of Mitcham station, a Mitcham football team and what appears to be a picnic. All are undated and we hope to identify the people in them and discover an approximate date. Mrs. Champion has given us a miner's cap, pick and shovel.

MUSEUM

The Museum in the grounds of Schwerkolt Cottage is almost at lock-up stage. The stone faced building with pitched galvanised iron roof

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MUSEUM contd...

merges well with the cottage and the surroundings. The display space inside the building is 37 feet by 23, and an exterior, open space is 50 feet by 25. There is also a work space and kitchen with interior measurements of 9 feet by 23. The exterior space will be occupied by farming implements collected by the Schwerkolt Cottage committee. Some have for years been on display in the grounds of the cottage, others have been stored at the council depot or on private properties. All have been restored and put into good working order, and they will form an excellent collection of the implements used in our district. The Historical Society will be responsible for the arrangement of the interior display. We are arranging to obtain some display cases, and are beginning to sort out what we have to place on display. Late in March members of the committee met Council officers at the building to plan what cupboards, filing cabinets, map drawers, work benches, etc. will be needed to store our records and exhibits. As soon as these are installed, electrical fittings in place and doors hung, we will be able to bring in all the material we have. We shall then have to sort it all, plan and set up all the displays.

This is going to be a big job and we shall need the help of everyone available. The display space is good, with a tiled floor and bagged brick interior walls, giving a rustic appearance which will form a neutral background to the displays.

The Council has offered us its help in preparing our exhibitions and has asked us to let it know how we propose to organise and staff the museum. This is something we shall have to consider and arrange as soon as we can.

LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS

Why they are where they are and who made them.

Quarry Road and Cook Street, Mitcham. Report by a Crown Land 1868 in the Public Record Office:-

"The track to the quarry which runs diagonally through Cook's 42nd holding is undoubtedly the best and nearest at present for the carters of stone, but it entirely spoils Cook's land for cultivation or pastoral purposes----- This track leads out of Cook's land into the sold land and therefore is only of use until the owner of this land shall forbid trespass thereon. ----- The surveyed road through Cummin's allotment is very good until it comes within about a quarter of a mile from Marshalls Gully and there it wants a hill cut down and gully filled up.

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Cook offers to do this for £6 - if this were done it would afford sufficient access to the quarry and be in my opinion the most serviceable road".

Railway Road and Blackburn Road, Blackburn. Letter from the secretary, Shire of Nunawading, 1889, also in the Public Record Office.

"I am directed to inform you that the fee simple of Railway Road and Blackburn Road is in the Freehold Investment and Banking Company, City. The roads were made by them and have been handed to and taken over by the Council. If necessary to their proclamation the Co. will transfer to the Council at any time. Part of Station Road was also vested in the same Co. and handed to the Railways Commissioners, which with a strip excised from the title of one Thomas Cook forms the Road, Transfer of this to the Council can also be obtained if necessary." (The Freehold Investment and Banking Company was one of the most notorious of the Land Boom companies).

State of White Horse Road about 1870. A petition from Ringwood residents, also in the Public Record Office.

"We have at the present time to go down to the corner of Mr. Setford's fence and up a hill known as Blood's Hill, one of the worst roads with the exception of White Horse Road in the Colony of Victoria."

"THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME" is the title on a subdivisional advertisement for the Tunstall ^{west} ~~east~~ Town Estate in 1926. The land, owned by Mr. J.J. Kelly was on the ~~east~~ side of Springvale Road, between White Horse Road and the railway. Twenty shop sites and 40 building blocks were offered. Half the area is now occupied by the Community Youth centre and sports ground. Mr. Kelly lived on the White Horse Road corner, shown on the map as "This would be a splendid site for the new Town Hall" A picture theatre and two shops, still standing, were shown at the corner of Springvale Road and the Oval Way. Among other attractions were 74 trains a day, and the city only a journey of 30 minutes. One of the original advertisements is in the Vale Collection of maps, La Trobe Library. We have a copy.

The Alkoomie Estate, along Carween Avenue, Mitcham, was auctioned in November 1920. One of the original advertisements for this is also in the Vale Collection and we have a copy. It included the railway time tables, showing about 25 or 26 trains each way on week days. Electric light and power passed the estate and water mains were only 250 yards away.

K. A. PATTERSON
Editor