

NEWSLETTER

April 1978

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Mayor's Night

Our April meeting will be the Mayor's Night, when we will have visitors from a number of neighbouring kindred societies.

We will meet in the Mayor's reception room at the Civic Centre at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 13 April

Please note the change of meeting night

About 8 p.m. we will go to the Willis room, where Mr Laurie Dunn will show two of his prize-winning films. One is on famous Melbourne buildings, the other is a documentary on the work of bullock teams. These films have won awards in film competitions around the world.

We saw them last year, but they are so good they are worth seeing again.

Members, please bring supper.

Australian Navy

Our early small, but useful, navy was described by Mr. Ricketts at our March meeting

Sydney had been the base for the British Pacific squadron and Victoria established a squadron of the "Cerberus", 2 gun-boats "Victoria" and "Albert", and four torpedo boats. Queensland had two very heavily armed gun-boats and South Australia built a cruiser, the "Protector", which was the only early Australian ship to see active service. It went to China during the Boxer Rebellion, flying the South Australian flag, which no British naval officer had ever seen, or recognised.

After Federation two destroyers, "Yarra" and "Parramatta", were ordered in 1909. When George V established the Royal Australian Navy the "Warrego" was sent out in pieces to be assembled here and an old clipper was commissioned at the training ship "Tingara". Other ships were received from Britain, the cruiser "Brisbane" and three more destroyers were built here.

Mr Ricketts joined the navy in 1912 and trained on the "Tingara". During World War I he was on the "Encounter" and "Psyche", two ships given us by Britain, which carried out routine patrols in the Indian Ocean. These were quite uneventful, but it has been found since that their presence prevented attacks by German raiders.

After the war he intended to sit for examinations for promotion to officer rank, but was advised against it because many officers had come from the Royal Navy and were often very wealthy. They set a standard of living beyond the means of those on navy pay only.

He rejoined the navy at the beginning of World War II and after a period of training recruits was sent to sea in a corvette engaged mainly in mine-sweeping, to be a steadying influence on a young and inexperienced crew. Later, after transferring to our first frigate, "Gascoigne" he saw active service in support of landings on Pacific islands. His most vivid memory was of the accuracy of the naval bombardment supporting the landing at Tarakan.

His talk was illustrated by many slides of notable ships which have flown the Australian flag.

Wine Table Draw - The draw for the wine table will be made at our May meeting. Please bring all books of tickets so that the draw can be made.

Magic Lantern Show - It is very short notice, but if you would like to see a Magic Lantern Show (not Slide Light), there will be one at Mornington on 3 May at 8 p.m. The place is the corner of the Esplanade and Main street, in the old Post Office. Lt-Col H. Lee Archer, a R.H.S.V. councillor, will show slides of old Melbourne. If you would like to go, let Warwick Shortland know. He will have room for a few people in his car.

Sheep Feeding in Nunawading - During 1902 Victoria had one of the worst droughts known and sheep owners had to use every means they could to keep their flocks alive. One way was to send them around the countryside, feeding on grass by the roads, or on areas reserved for camping by men with travelling flocks and herds. Nunawading, although it was so close to Melbourne, had its share of travelling sheep, which tended, in defiance of rules that they must travel at least a certain distance each day, to stay anywhere with grass. The Council became involved on 3 April 1903 when Mr. C. Norman and others wrote to it about many sheep feeding on open land for months and asking the Council to have the nuisance abated.

Cr. Collier said the complaint was quite justified as the sheep were a perfect nuisance and were continually trespassing on private property, and besides it was unfair that they should be allowed to consume the grass that was owned by the rate-payers. He moved that a committee be appointed to find out what power the council had in the matter and see it was enforced.

24 April - The committee reported and recommended that the council's solicitor be asked for his view opinion.

1 May - The council received legal advice and the inspector was instructed to report cases where mobs of sheep did not travel the distance per day required by the Act.

Our Special City - The area we now know as the City of Nunawading was established as the Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham in 1925. When it became the City of Nunawading in 1945 it required a special Act of Parliament, because the area was 15½ square miles. The Local Government Act laid down a maximum area of 9 square miles for a city. Fortunately for Nunawading there were precedents for having cities of larger area. The City of Heidelberg had 42 square miles and the City of Moorabbin 23 square miles.

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