

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER, 1987

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 14th October, 1987 at 8 p.m.
ANNUAL MEETING - Election of Office-bearers -
nomination form enclosed.
At the home of Harold Bakes, 365 Whitehorse Rd.,
Nunawading.

DECEMBER Meeting - 9th December - details next newsletter.

WORKING BEE at the Museum - SATURDAY, 24th October, 9.30 a.m.

1988 - AUSTRALIA'S BI-CENTENARY YEAR

Our City Council has requested our Society to arrange four
displays during this year and the Committee has planned the
following:

26th JANUARY - [Our usual Civic Centre display] - HOUSES and HOMES.

16th - 17th APRIL -

CHRIST CHURCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND, MITCHAM, with other Churches
participating.

10th - 11th SEPTEMBER -

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS.

[In conjunction with MITCHAM ARTS SOCIETY]

12th- 13th NOVEMBER -

OPEN DAY AT THE COTTAGE and the MUSEUM

We have agreed also to supply some monthly displays at
Blackburn Library during this year. All our members will be needed
for these events, so PLEASE note dates in your diaries for 1988.

On 9th September twenty members and friends assembled in the
Willis Room to hear Margaret Ray, Reference Librarian, Nunawading
Library, give a most informative talk on the publications held by
the Library on our local area, and publications which could be used
in "Tracing your family tree". A number of books were on display.

21st BIRTHDAY FOR BLACKBURN BRANCH OF NUNAWADING LIBRARY

In bright sunshine on Saturday, 19th November, 1966, the Mayor of Nunawading, Cr. Graham Walsh, officially opened our first library, then Ivan Southall, the master-writer of novels and stories for young people, spoke to the assembled crowd. The people listened intently to the addresses, obviously delighted that the long campaign for a public library had been won.

After much discussion, the old Morton Park Hall had been demolished, this being the chosen site. The building itself was a triumph for the architect, Walter Colman of Drayton and Colman. A very constricted site, in shape and size, had to accommodate a building of 3500f² to serve about 70,000 population, with clear approaches for public access and deliveries. Within a year, 1000f² had been added. It is now about 4500f², embracing public and work areas, stack entrance and utilities. Since 1984, the work area has also housed the Books on Wheels Service. The interior has been considerably changed through the years, and alterations too to suit changed procedures. Such timber shelving and fittings will never be seen again in local libraries. The whole concept was for warm timbers and natural materials and textures, right down to the Red Cross stools, the circulations desk having a darker timber fascia (and functional to the last detail). As Wal Colman said: 'Books are the library. They should be the source of color and interest.'

Always Graham Walsh had the courage of his convictions. He spoke publicly against censorship, and had embodied in the Library Regulations the Freedom to Read statement of the Library Association of Australia. He advocated the policy that if books were worth buying, then they must be openly available.

The timber house (now replaced) at 26 Blackburn Road had been the starting point and went on to house all the backroom work - selection, acquisitions, cataloguing, processing and administration. Stock being massed for the Nunawading building (due in 1968, realised in 1973) was stored all over the municipality after the old wash-house at the house was crammed, penetrated only by a few possums, rodents and a little damp!

In 1966, the intention was an expectation far beyond the lingering images of book-lending depots - staff spoke of reference services, map collections, government documents, of printed music, of quality international stock, of overseas papers, and of Teens groups being involved with their part of the service.

Nunawading's first library was evidence of the enormous need, the hunger of Australians for books, for knowledge, for creative, intellectual and spiritual nourishment, to be in touch with other societies, to converse with others in this private activity of reading. People flooded in and have continued through their libraries to find a sustenance for which there is no counterpart.

But - alas - today ominous signs loom ahead!

Despite the obvious use of libraries (where buildings are large enough, and handy enough, over half the population use them) and the obvious fact that they are over-used in relation to their scanty resources, that the most lively, flexible and just democracies also happen to be those with the best network of public libraries and with the highest levels of education, alas, none so blind as will not read: your libraries, all Victorian public libraries, are in the gravest danger of dwindling away into the lending depots of old books.

So, back to the 1930's, unless the people, once again, rally to the cause, expressing their alarms to the State Government and to their local council, as is happening in country areas.

No local authority can operate a proper full library service from its own revenue. The State Government is proceeding with its successive funding cuts and ludicrous controls which will be ruinous. At best, acceleration of the deterioration of the past few years. At worst, the most likely outcome, "libraries" which are not public libraries as we expect them to be but consumer outlets of mass publications.

[Adapted from information supplied by the Chief Librarian, Miss Constance Pavey]

Our congratulations and very best wishes to Miss Pavey and her dedicated staff at both libraries. One wonders how we existed before we had our libraries!!

For those people who are interested in actual figures, Blackburn and Central Libraries in the past 12 months loaned 670,502 books.

A CELEBRATION OF SIXTY YEARS.

On 11th February, 1927, a number of 'Diggers' from the 1914-18 War held an inaugural meeting to form a Blackburn sub-branch of the R.S.L., the aim being to help diggers and their dependents if in need, and to establish a permanent meeting-place of their own. On 27th April, a Memorial Hall Fund was opened.

Early meetings were in Sword's Hall (immediately opposite Central Road, in Blackburn Road, a general store and cake-shop), but in 1928 this was moved to Lake Road as a Scout Hall. Over the years various other sites were the Club's meeting-places, and the attempt to build a memorial hall called for much effort and hard work in fund-raising for the members.

Finally a site in South Parade, west of Gardenia Street was purchased and working bees constructed a permanent home, later affectionately known as the 'Old Tin Shed.'

During the 1939-45 War, members and families worked hard to raise funds for the war effort, and local community groups helped by collecting, baling and selling waste paper.

With the extra numbers of 2nd World War veterans, all now looked for more substantial club-rooms. In 1949, the purchase of three old shops on the north-east corner of Station Street and Railway Road eventually led to the sale of the 'Tin Shed', demolition of these shops and the building of new modern club-rooms on this site, officially opened in 1962. Subsequently the Club sold this property (now 'Karinya Lodge'), and purchased the Bowling Club property in South Parade.

NOMINATIONS for election of office-bearers for the Society to be in the hands of the Secretary, Judy Fry prior to meeting on 14th October.

NOMINATION For:
PROPOSER:
SECONDER:
NOMINEE'S SIGNATURE

Demolition of the old building there took place in 1971 to enable more comfortable Clubrooms to be constructed, these later being further extended.

Undoubtedly there were many difficult times in its early years, but now in 1987, Blackburn Sub-Branch of the R.S.L. proudly celebrates its Diamond Jubilee. It seems fitting for everybody to offer very sincere congratulations to this stalwart band of people.

[Adapted from 'SIXTY YEARS OF SERVING STILL', by the late Ron Alexander, Life Member and State Councillor]

CONGRATULATIONS also to the people involved during the last sixty years with the Forest Hill Kindergarten Home. Here Miss K.M.Gregory shares her reminiscences with us:

On the hill opposite the Forest Hill Shopping Centre, the Kindergarten Holiday Home was opened in March 1927 by Lady Somers, wife of the then Governor. The Padre of Toc H then blessed the home.

The inspiration for this piece of social service came from Dr. Mary Gutteridge, then Principal of the Kindergarten College, and Dr. Vera Scantlebury who was Medical Officer for the Free Kindergarten Union (in those days most kindergartens were in the inner suburbs of Melbourne). Dr. Gutteridge in her training in London had taken children from the slums to spend holidays in the country, and these two, after finding many cases of malnutrition here, inspired the past students to form an association to establish a similar holiday home. We were given a block of land at Boronia, but, finding a quarry next door, deemed it unsuitable for our purpose.

Mr. Burke, father of the first secretary, and an estate agent, found the present property, a farm of 14 acres and an old cottage, which we bought for £1400 in 1926. This cottage, built before 1860, with two front rooms added in 1914, had to be converted for a children's home, and for this, Miss M.M. Philly organised an appeal for funds. Miss Liliias Lotnan and I came into residence at the beginning of 1927. We had candles for light, and mice running across the sloping floor, and the loud crowing of a rooster continually on the nearby hill, not very peaceful.

The first group of children came from Brunswick. What a delight it was for those city children to experience the joys of farm life (we had our own cows, fowls, ducks and a few sheep), and the beauty and wonder of the bush. They all gained weight and benefited immensely.

After nearly ten years and a terrible depression, the old cottage began to fall down, so in 1936, a public appeal was launched. Subsequently Marcus Martin designed the present building, opened by Lady Gowrie in March 1937, twenty children being catered for there.

After the 1939-45 War, many people acquired cars, and this meant more trips for children to country and seaside. However, a survey of children showed a need for emergency care, so the home became the FOREST HILL HOME FOR EMERGENCY CARE, and continues as such.

After assisting in caring for more than 10,000 children, I retired in 1972. [K.M. Gregory]

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