



NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1988

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 12th October, 1988 at 7.45 p.m. in Archival
Annexe. ANNUAL MEETING: ELECTION OF OFFICE-BEARERS

Nominations to be with Secretary by 5/10/88.

While our attendances at meetings in members' homes have been most satisfactory, with several new members, it was an important night on 10th August when we met for the first time in our Archival Annexe.

Mr. Wal Ashton delivered a most interesting and informative address on silver hallmarks. This system of specially marked silver was introduced in 14th century to protect the industry, and clients from forgery, the earliest recorded mark being the King's mark [the leopard's head].

Mr. Ashton developed this story fully and also showed some of his own silver articles.

'PEOPLE AND PLACES IN PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS' - our exhibition with Mitcham Arts Assoc. Inc. 10th-11th September: attendances were very disappointing. The Arts Society had a fine display of their paintings and we showed some of our historical photographs and sub-divisional maps.

Members please note in diaries that important date:

12th - 13th NOVEMBER - Also with Mitcham Arts Assoc. Inc.

OPEN DAYS AT THE COTTAGE AND MUSEUM. Round up 'all your friends and neighbors to attend. We plan to show some of our antique clothing that is usually packed away, and there are very interesting articles.

The Society will be holding a stall - donations of cakes, jam, plants, etc. would be appreciated; in order to raise funds for the blinds which are needed for the Annexe windows.

The Mitcham Arts Assoc. Inc. will have paintings on display and for sale. Barbara Rogalski is donating a painting of SCHWERKOLT COTTAGE, to be won by lucky number. Also some Arts Society members will be there engaged in their favorite pursuit - Painting!

ART SHOWS: Shirley Jones, a valued and long-standing member, is to have an exhibition of her paintings at the GALLERY ART NAIVE, 430 PUNT ROAD, SOUTH YARRA. Opening 9th October, 1988 at 2 p.m. until 16th November, 2 - 5.30 p.m. Sun. Wed. Thurs. Frid. Everyone welcome. Best of Luck, Shirley,

Barbara Rogalski - Exhibition of Paintings of NUNAWADING at Mitcham Arts Assoc. Inc. Gallery, 16 Humphreys Avenue, Nunawading. Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th November, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. each day. Barbara has spent many hours capturing the beauty of our local bush and creek lands in all seasons. Of particular interest should be the many aspects of SCHWERKOLT COTTAGE at various times.

Also: Doreen Richter and Lawrence Mitchell will present ceramics of bush animals with a bush theme. Details: 874-4668.

Again a very special 'Thank You' to Mr. Ken Barelli for his donation of office furniture for our Archival Annexe.



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Celebrations for various anniversaries have been occurring lately - here are some of them:

VERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL. Sixty students joined in a Folk Dance display at Camberwell Civic Centre recently as a Bi-Centenary celebration. Participants and onlookers had a very happy time together.

CENTENARY OF THE AVENUE UNITING CHURCH IN BLACKBURN.

Over the two weekends in September 1988 [3-4 and 10-11] The Avenue Church celebrated a centenary of Christian witness in Blackburn. The Uniting Church itself has been in existence only since June 1977, but the congregation at that time consisted of members from the former Methodist and Presbyterian churches both of which traced their origins back to 1888.

Soon after the railway came through in 1882 and the Blackburn Freehold Investment and Banking Company began sub-dividing land, United Free Methodist settlers met for worship in the home of Mr. John Williams. By 1894 they had built a church on land he donated in Chapel Street. Wesleyan Methodists, rejecting a Box Hill Circuit suggestion of co-operation, set up their own rival brick church building in George Street just when their State Conference was contemplating union of all Methodist groups. That eventuated in 1902, and gradually Blackburn Methodists consolidated in the George Street building, until in 1911 they moved to a new site in Railway Road where they remained and expanded through depression and two world wars. The move to The Avenue took place in the expansive days of the Fifties, and the capacious Wesley Hall began its use in 1957 when Rev. Norman Pask was minister.

Presbyterians, like the Methodists, began in 1888 when lay Home Missionaries from Box Hill conducted services in settlers' homes. But no organized church resulted until in 1922 Rev. Peter Forster of Box Hill gathered a congregation in the Main Street home of Mrs. Robert Paton. After that events moved quickly. They purchased land in the Avenue, built a church in 1926, added a hall in 1928, and steadily expanded until the present fine edifice could be erected in 1960, while Rev. Fred. Strickland ministered there.

By 1965 the two congregations, on opposite sides of the one street, were co-operating in worship and many other practical ways. To maximize their Christian witness in the community they achieved a form of church union long before the official national union occurred in 1977.

Over two September weekends, in special services with crowded congregations and nostalgic social re-unions, they recalled the past and prepared for the future.

A 108 page history book called "Avenue to Unity" [available from the church office for \$8] tells the story of how the two became one, thus combining their resources for more effective Christian service to the community in the future.

[Rev. Rhys Miller]

HALLIDAY PARK, MITCHAM - 50 Years old

During the Mitcham Jubilee Week [1938], Halliday Park, formerly the property of the late Councillor R.R. Halliday, was officially dedicated by the then Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr. Edward Campbell.

Then Rev. A.D. Page performed the religious part of the ceremony, blessing the reserve and a special memorial fountain, erected in memory of Cr. Halliday. Many local people were present at this event, together with a number of official representatives.

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MITCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL (1888 - 1988)

On 30th September, 1938, the 'Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter,' [circulating in the municipalities of Blackburn, Mitcham & Doncaster] described the Jubilee celebrations of the 50 year-old Mitcham State School No. 2904.

At the inauguration of the festival, local people learned the story of the early scholars attending the Box Hill S.S., East Ringwood, then Vermont. After the opening of the railway in 1882, the subsequent increase in population indicated the need for a school. The C. of E. Hall was leased first, and then in 1890 the State School building was finally opened.

After various additions over the years, in 1930 the Minister of Education formally opened the new brick school half a mile along Mitcham Road, which we know today. Celebrations in 1938 included a bonfire in the grounds, an old-time night in a school-room, a social evening and a Jubilee Ball.

[From Phyl Johnston and Andrew Hillier who are writing a history.]

The school will celebrate on Saturday, 19th November from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Program includes rooms set aside decade by decade with photographic and schooldays memorabilia; activities for present students also are planned, the day being open to all ex-pupils and teachers. Our society and the Bird Observers' Club are providing display boards and the history book will be launched.

AND THE BROWNIES ALSO.

On 21st June, 1988, the 2nd Blackburn South Brownie Pack celebrated its 21st birthday. The Brownies themselves planned the event - invitations, decoration of the hall, and supervising old-time games - quoits, hoops, noughts and crosses, darts, and everyone made a gum-nut key-ring to take home. Younger guests in Australian costume joined others in bush dancing, this being followed by a birthday cake ceremony.

This pack meets in the Eley Park Guide Hall (opened in 1974), after several earlier moves. Recently all members visited Schwerkolt Cottage and the Museum, enjoying especially the children's room and the toys in the Museum. The organisation of the party, the cottage visit and a task to explore the past [yet to be organised] will give each Brownie a HERITAGE 200 BADGE as a memento of the Bi-Centennial Year.

[Mrs. Sue Errey]

LABURNUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Twenty-five years ago when the great mass movement of school age children into our State system was approximating its peak, Laburnum Primary School, No. 4863, was accepting its first pupils. The school was built on 2.5 hectares of land, owned by nearby St. Pascal's Monastery, which was exchanged for land in Bedford Street, owned by the Education Department.

Commencing with 308 pupils in February, 1963, the attendance grew rather rapidly and during 1966 another four classrooms and library were added. The school was officially opened on 31st October, 1964. The present enrolment is 280 pupils.

Through its quarter of a century history the school has been well served by its School Committees and continues to be well administered by its School Council and Staff.

Showing admirable forethought, and as evidence of their pride in their school by both administrators and parents, the school has established what is in effect an archival library in which is chronicled every step of progress since, and including, the opening day to the present. This will make the task of the writers of the school's history much easier and has set an example which all State schools - Primary and Secondary - could emulate.

The new school, which takes pupils from Box Hill as well as from the neighbourhood, consisted of eight classrooms and the usual office and sick bay, but lacked adequate playing space. Fortunately this deficiency was overcome when Sparks Reserve was being constructed. Seizing the moment, the Committee offered the contractor the opportunity to deposit the over-burden on the site where it was needed. Not only was the offer accepted, the contractor reciprocated by offering to grade the area. Such co-operation not only saved the Education Department much money but the school obtained its additional playing space sooner than was expected.

It is interesting to note that the Crawford team used Laburnum school as a location when filming "Light the Empty Places" for the Education Department's celebration of the centenary of State education.

During their HERITAGE WEEK, pupils set up a museum of old-time implements - lamps, tools, irons and other pieces - a very interesting collection. Then on 10th August, they had a special celebration day, with bush dancing, class-rooms set up as rural schools about the eighteen-fifties, and a family picnic to follow.

[Mr. D.S. Green]

The recent Bi-Centennial Touring Exhibitions at the Museum of Victoria can only be described as superb.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: The British Discovery of Australia was the story presented of early exploration and settlement, with the relevant scientific achievements, through journals, charts, specimens and paintings of maritime explorers, convicts, Governors, Scientists and artists.

THE GREAT SOUTH LAND showed a remarkable collection of books and maps relating to the early European voyages in Australian waters and discoveries, from the 16th century to the First Fleet arrival.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, numerous stories about imaginary voyages were published, but also there were many books about actual adventures of intrepid mariners, until finally, the numerous accounts of the First Fleet, with the subsequent settlement at Port Jackson.

SHIPWRECK: - Discoveries from Australia's earliest documented shipwreck in 1622 to 1797. These were Dutch wrecks off W.A. and the British ones of the Sirius, Pandora and the Sydney Cove.

Of great importance is the actual DIRK HARTOG PLATE, originally left in 1616 and now lent specially by the Netherlands Government, beside the DE VLAMINGH PLATE of 1697, given back to Australia by France in 1947. Enthralling for all those interested in Australian history.

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