



NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 1988 - FEBRUARY 1989

The Annual Meeting of this society was held on 12th October in the Archival Annexe. We thank Mr. Ken Barelli for attending and conducting election of office-bearers. These were:

President: Mr. Bill Gray. Vice-President: Mrs. Joan Rocznik  
Secretary: Mrs. Judith Fry Asst. Secretary: Mrs. Beryl Gray  
Treasurer: Mrs. Shirley Barker  
(Also these members for the Committee:)  
Mrs. Maureen Mason. Mrs. Joy Kenny. Mrs. Jess Barnes. Mr. Andrew Hillier  
Newsletter Editor: Mrs. Doris Mattingley  
Typing: Mrs. Beryl Gray. Posting: Mrs. Val Riches.

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The President presented his Annual Report for the past year, which has been a particularly busy one, with the four Bi-centennial displays requested by the City Council, and the opening of the Archival Annexe.

Committee members have worked consistently in the many tasks occurring, but special thanks from all of us to the President, Bill and Beryl and Secretary Judith and Treasurer Shirley.

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NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 14th December, 8 p.m. at the Archival Annexe. This is our Final gathering for the year, and Joan Rocznik will present a light-hearted account of her recent trip overseas. Please bring a small plate of supper goodies.

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FIRST MEETING For 1989: Wednesday 8th February 6.30 p.m. at the Museum. Please bring a plate of food to share. Tea and coffee available.

Also, remember a chair and [optional] mosquito repellent. This is always a happy get-together after the long break from meetings, so it is hoped everyone will attend.

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Attendances were not large for our open days and displays on 12th-13th November. As all members had given much time and effort for this weekend, this was somewhat disappointing for our fourth and final Bi-Centennial display. However, everyone enjoyed the clothing display, and our stall raised \$163.41 and the Lucky Draw \$248 towards the blinds needed in the Annexe.

Mitcham Arts Association members were busy painting and they had arranged a very interesting display of their earlier works. The Cottage painting donated by Barbara Rogalski was won by Mrs. Gloria Green of Box Hill North with green ticket C26.

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As reported in the 'Nunawading Gazette' on 2nd November, 1988, the Armstrong Family of Nunawading has presented our Society with extensive memorabilia of this district, originally collected by the late Norman Armstrong, our City's first mayor, and extended and further collated by Raleigh and Ian, his son and grandson. This is a most valuable addition to our archives and we are very grateful indeed for this gift.

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The Blackwood Historical Society has invited our Society to visit Blackwood on Sunday, 26th FEBRUARY, 1989. We will be leaving at approx, 9 a.m. and travel by bus. Cooked meal can be arranged at local Restaurant if bookings are known ahead - main course about \$7.50, sweets \$3., or alternatively cut lunch can be taken. Please give your name to the Secretary by the December meeting if you are attending. Final details will be in next newsletter.

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#### MITCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 1888 - 1988.

On Saturday, 19th November, 1988, Mitcham Primary School celebrated its first 100 years of providing education to the Mitcham Community.

The proceedings were opened by Dame Pattie Menzies, who attended the opening of the then 'Senior' School on its 'new' site in 1930, representing her husband who was local M.L.A. in State Parliament for the old United Australia Party from 1929-34, before entering Federal Parliament as the member for Kooyong.

The present school principal, Mr. Alan Cole spoke first, welcoming the large crowd of past students, their husbands, wives and children, and Parents of former and current students, who had all "come back to Mitcham".

He was followed in turn by the State M.L.A. for Mitcham, Mr. John Harrowfield - himself an ex-student of the school - who also spoke, congratulating the school on its centenary.

The President of the school council then addressed the gathering, estimated at around 2000 people, and the doors were literally thrown open to the masses.

Ten class rooms were transformed for the day into Reunion rooms, with the obligatory school photographs and memorabilia from each of the 10 decades of the school's existence.

A centenary history of the school was available for sale on the day, entitled "Queuing For Cocoa", with which a piece of centenary cake was available, until the latter ran out.

The sale of unbaked clay paving bricks at \$1 each, on which the buyer could record his or her name or a suitable centenary message. These are to be used to pave an outdoor sound stage, which was formerly the school's swimming pool.

A time capsule containing visitors' books from each of the reunion rooms and assorted 1988 Memorabilia, including a copy of the School's history is to be opened [hopefully] at the 150th anniversary celebrations in 2038!

A pottery model constructed during 1988 from all grades of the School, depicting 'The Village of Mitcham in 1888,' was part of a project funded by the Arts in Education Program of the Nunawading City Council, under the supervision of Artist-in-Residence, Michael Cantor.

A 'centenary' window of etched glass was also dedicated as part of the celebrations and depicted the centenary dates 1888-1988.

One of the highlights of the day was the quest to Find the oldest scholar. A ninety-two year old man from Patterson Lakes claimed the title and was presented with a gift from the school.

Although not part of the official school celebrations, a Bush Dance was organized by ex-students for ex-students. About 200 people enjoyed further reminiscing at the A.H. Stutchbery Hall at nearby Mitcham High School.

By all accounts the day was a great success and events like this owe a great deal to the dedicated and co-operative team of local Mitcham people- many of whom have had some association with the school - who arranged, co-ordinated, designed, cajoled, liaised and otherwise gave of their time to make the Mitcham Primary School Centenary celebrations' day such a happy and successful event in the life of the school and the community it has served for so long.

[FOOTNOTE]: It is fitting that Mitcham Primary School should celebrate its first 100 years in 1988, because next year it will cease to exist as a separate entity. Instead, along with Mitcham High and Technical Schools and their counterparts in Donvale it will become "campus of the newly-devised, multi-campus Mullyana Secondary College", catering for education from Prep to Year 12. A new century and a new phase in the life of an old school.

#### GOLDEN JUBILEE

Mitcham Primary School's Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1938 were an even bigger affair than the recent centenary, and actually ran for a week from September 24th [the true date of the centenary] until September 29th.

The Blackburn and Mitcham Reporter spoke of the festivities in glowing terms, devoting the entire front page of their September 30th, 1938 edition to the celebrations:

....."Mitcham, gaily beflagged and bathed in glorious sunshine gave warm welcome to hundreds of visitors, who with the citizens, took part in the school Jubilee Celebrations...." The inauguration of the festivities took place at the junior school on Saturday... The school grounds were a hive of activity. Free rides on the merry-go-round, and the Ocean Wave and a Free Punch and Judy show kept the youngsters in a ferment of competition.....

An old time night was held in one of the school rooms, and concurrently a bonfire was lit in the grounds of the new school.

Other items on the programme included a 'picture night', jubilee ball and concert.

A song for the occasion entitled Come Back to Mitcham was even penned by a local resident, Mrs. J. Penfold.

"Come back to Mitcham, ye Parents and children,  
Come back again to the land of your birth  
Join in the revels, the dancing and singing,  
Come to the jubilee for fun and for mirth.  
Come back to Mitcham and meet all your school mates  
Bridge o'er the years that have passed since you met  
Welcome awaits you and pleasures a-plenty  
Come to the jubilee and trills you will get.  
Come then in hundreds and come ye in thousands  
Come here where peace, joy and happiness rule,  
Drown all your sorrows and think not of morrows  
Come to the Jubilee of Mitcham State School."

[Andrew Hillier]

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Ten members of the Society attended the Eastern Districts Weekend at Camperdown 4/6th November. Visits were made to a number of historical homes. A more detailed report of this most interesting trip will be in a later issue.

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All local residents were aware of the wild and windy weather experienced here in recent weeks. The 'Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter' of 12/8/1927 had this paragraph:

#### CYCLONE DAMAGE AT EAST BURWOOD

"Sunday afternoon's cyclone cut a vicious track through East Burwood, with the result that the roofs of three large sheds and stables on Mr. Mullins' property were deposited, some in the tops of the trees about a quarter of a mile away, and other pieces of iron miles further, nearly to Bayswater. Trees and bushes in the path were twisted and broken, and sheets of iron were also blown off roofs nearer to Burwood."

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#### HISTORICAL SNIPPETS ABOUT AUSTRALIA.

The first publication of local poetry was Judge Barron Field's 'FIRST FRUITS OF AUSTRALIAN POETRY' in 1819.

In 1821 the first literary journal 'THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE' commenced publication, and precursors of what became THE AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY in 1826 were established during Governor Macquarie's term of office.

In 1802 Francis Peron wrote a detailed account of his travels, impressions and observations in his narrative of the Baudin expedition, which visited Sydney in 1802. In his VOYAGE aux TERRES AUSTRALIA', he wrote of several Frenchmen who were living there. One baron, who had been granted asylum in England during the French Revolution, was subsequently permitted to settle in New South Wales. He had devoted himself to agriculture, with six convicts to work for him, and his special interests were growing cotton and coffee trees.

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#### Do you Remember Snugglepot and Cuddlepie?

On 6th November, GUMNUT VILLAGE was officially opened at Austraflorea Nursery in Belfast Road, Montrose. This new venture is an Australian project for promoting the best of our country and demonstrating it to local people and overseas visitors. It is set within the Austraflorea garden of native plants, a most delightful setting. Though English-born, May Gibbs became a much-loved Australian writer and artist, best known for her 'Adventures of the Gumnut Babies' and other similar stories. Here visitors of all ages can renew their interest in these stories and also purchase first-class local craft work.

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