



NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 1990 - FEBRUARY 1991

On 11th September - Mr. Alan F. McInnes recounted the story of Dr. L.L. Smith, a Melbourne doctor, but also an early land-holder in our Vermont area.

Dr. Louis Lawrence Smith (Paris and London) arrived in Melbourne in 1852 as a ship's surgeon. He later started a surgery in Bourke Street, and because of extensive advertising he became very well known.

He was a Member of Parliament for many years, and as well, he acquired land in various places and established farms there. One was on L.L.Vale Road, now our Boronia Road, and another in Canterbury Rd., Box Hill, on the present site of the water tower and reservoir.

Our thanks to Mr. McInnes for his research. Members may borrow the full text of his address if desired.

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DATES TO NOTE: -

OPEN DAY: Sunday 28th October, 1990 with Mitcham Arts Association Inc. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

We will have our usual displays and our STALL - members please contribute goods to this. Also Judith Fry will have herbs for sale.

Mitcham Arts Association Inc. will have pottery and paintings for sale.

MEETING TO CELEBRATE OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY.

Saturday, 8th December. 12.30 p.m.

Some members from past years will be present and we look forward to a happy informal gathering on that day.

WEDNESDAY, 13th February, 1991

Our first meeting in the New Year, when we meet at 6.30 p.m. and share a picnic tea, and later hold our formal business meeting inside.

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On 7th October, Mr. Walter Jack, a grandson of August Schwerkolt was on a brief visit to Australia from his home in Pittsburg, U.S.A. He was delighted to be able to see THE COTTAGE and our Museum.

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The City Council representative for the coming year will be Cr. Kevin Abbott.

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Our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held on Wednesday, 10th October and the following office-bearers were elected -

President - Bill Gray	Secretary - Judy Fry
Vice-president - Vacancy	Asst. Secretary - Beryl Gray
Treasurer - Shirley Barker	
Committee Members - Joan Rocznik, Jess Barnes, Joy Kenny, Chris Otterbach and Betty Jones.	

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The area around Blackburn Lake was originally privately owned. At one time, people enjoyed swimming at the south-west part and there were rowing boats available, with a kiosk on the western side. Picnic parties came regularly to this delightful place. According to a resident who remembered these earlier times, vandalism eventually spoiled this set-up.

In 1909 the Adult Deaf Society purchased 75 acres of land here and a building was erected to house the aged, infirm and dependent deaf. In later years, Nunawading City Council, the MMBW and Camberwell Grammar School all acquired part of the remaining land.

However, it appears that in 1938, there was some difficulty for the local Shire Council.

Extracts from the 'BLACKBURN & MITCHAM REPORTER' of the nineteen-thirties: -

BLACKBURN LAKE 25/3/1938

Mrs. Weber, M.L.A. was a guest of the Blackburn Progress Association last Saturday afternoon at the Blackburn Lake. The Association has a strong desire of long standing to acquire the property of which the Lake forms part, as a public reserve, and wished to enlist Mrs. Weber's help in an approach to Parliament for a Government grant.....Cr.F.E.Paice, President, conducted Mrs. Weber and some of the other guests on a tour round the lake. Cr. Paice said that for twenty years or more Blackburn had been trying to obtain the lake. Mrs. Weber also advocated that swimming pools should be available in the electorate. Here everything was at hand to make a natural swimming pool.

In the lake and surroundings there was an asset capable of development in the best interests of the people, and Mrs. Weber promised to speak to the Premier Mr. Dunstan.....and would do all in her power to help in every way possible.

BLACKBURN LAKE 27/5/1938

The Premier, Hon. A.A. Dunstan, MLC and the Minister of Public Works, Hon. G.L. Goudie, MLC, visited the Shire of Blackburn & Mitcham to investigate requests for assistance in the provision of reserves and the construction of baths.

The Premier was delighted at the surroundings and said he had no idea there was such a beauty spot so close to Melbourne. He admitted that it had great possibilities as a picnic ground, but said his Government could not undertake the purchase of land, which must be the responsibility of the municipalities. If the Council could make provision for purchasing the property including the lake, his Government would be glad to contribute towards the improvement of the land and the construction of baths.

Later the party visited Mitcham to hear the request of the Council for a grant for the construction of baths near Mitcham Station on Brunswick Road Reserve.

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25/3/1938

ROAD BEAUTIFICATION

On Monday night, Box Hill City Council received a letter from the Shire of Ferntree Gully asking if the Council would join in an application to the C R B for planting trees in Burwood Road. In moving that the Council agree to support the application, Cr. Mahony spoke strongly in favour of the proposal.

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18/3/1938

The report of the Shire Engineer (Mr. F. Maw) to Blackburn & Mitcham Shire Council contained the following:

The condition of the bridge on Blackburn Road near Heath Street is such that it will be necessary to have a notice shown in some conspicuous place nearby to the effect that loads should be limited to 3 tons, including the weight of the vehicle and that no vehicle should cross it at a speed greater than 10 m. per hour.

The deck timbers are in a bad condition and the supporting stringers are badly affected with dry rot...The cost of re-construction of this bridge, with a reinforced concrete deck would be approximately £220 and it must be regarded as an essential work for the next year.

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11/3/1938

Mr. & Mrs. Hooke of Blackburn, after touring 721 miles in Tasmania on bicycles have returned home with a very happy impression of the lovely island which they hope to re-visit on some future occasion.

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13/1/1932

Poor lads benefit at Tally Ho Farm.

Never was there a happier gathering of youth at the Wesley Church Central Mission's training camp at Tally Ho, where the long pent-up spirit of one hundred poor boys from the inner suburbs of Melbourne is finding an outlet.

According to the superintendent of the Farm, Mr. Edgar Derrick, there could not be found healthier appetites after the lads, accustomed to a life in the byways of Melbourne, have spent a day in the fields or in the concrete swimming pool, also in competitive sport, picnics to Sherbrooke and other places, concerts and camp fires, picture shows - and then to big nourishing meals.

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20/1/1932

Mitcham Quarry being worked.

The preliminary work having been completed, a start was made by the contractor today with the crushing of metal from the quarry at Quarry Road Mitcham - this will show a very substantial saving on the costs for metal.

As complaints have been made regarding the glare from concrete paths, experiments have been carried out by the engineer...a change in procedure has been decided on to give the completed paths a perfectly even but 'sanded' finish instead of the 'polished' surface which is found to be responsible for much afternoon glare by reflection of the sun's rays.

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20/1/1932

Mitcham

The Mitcham & District Musical & Dramatic Society is composed of talented amateur performers, whose object is to assist deserving cases in local charitable and other bodies....For some time the members have been concentrating upon the rehearsal of a production considered to be especially meritorious - a 3 act drama entitled 'ADRIFT' and unique in that it is an original story, written in Mitcham by A.R.Storey who is also the society's producer.

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25/3/1938

MITCHAM MUSICAL SOCIETY at its Wednesday night practices is engaged on Handel's 'ELIJAH' which will be presented later in the season in Melbourne Town Hall in association with Malvern Choral Society and Zelman Memorial Symphony Orchestra. The Society also plans to give a concert in Mitcham, at which related numbers from that work will be given by a balanced choir.

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MORE ABOUT LACE

We have in our museum some pieces of beautiful lace, especially the Fichus.

About 1770, fashion for well-to-do people in Europe and America was turning to the so-called 'romantic' look, perhaps in re-action to earlier indiscriminate spending. Lace itself was used less and less until about 1785, when it had disappeared from all but the most formal of court dress. For the first time in history, lace was used more on home-wear garments and undergarments rather than for show...These years saw the end of lace-wearing for men, but George Washington did pose for his 1797 portrait still wearing a full jabot of Alencon lace.

From then on, in both America and the Continent, no personages of note would be represented wearing lace again. Even during the Napoleonic Wars, when cravats and cuffs for men were mandatory formal court attire, the femininity of lace went unquestioned. By the end of the 18th century, lace was regarded as an exclusively feminine affair.

NOTE: In the Fremantle W.A. Maritime Museum, among the many artifacts recovered by divers from the Dutch wrecks off that coast, there is a small piece of Italian Point Lace. This was found originally as a grubby-looking lump of indeterminate origin. Modern techniques, painstakingly applied, cleared away the accumulated debris to reveal this scrap of lace. Presumably this must have belonged to the elaborate formal attire of some wealthy merchant en route to the Dutch East Indies (old portraits show this style). After three hundred years, the rescue of this lace seems to me one of the most fascinating stories one could ever encounter. D.M.

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