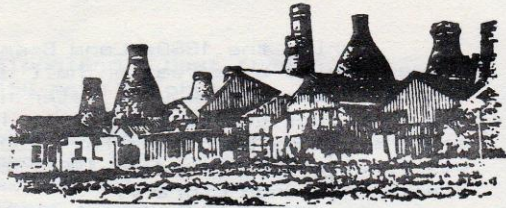




[INC.]  
NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY/NEWSLETTER



Series 2. No.7.

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 1991 - FEBRUARY 1992

On Wednesday 9th October our Annual General Meeting took place, and the following office-bearers were elected:

President: Mr. Bill Gray  
Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Judy Fry  
Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. Shirley Barker  
Asst. Secretary: Mrs. Beryl Gray

Committee: Miss Chris Otterbach  
Mesdames Valda Arrowsmith,  
Joan Rocznik, Joy Kenny, Bette  
Jones and Jess Barnes

The Society now has responsibility for Schwerkolt Cottage as well as our Museum. The City Council has been very generous financially for both these projects, as reported by the Treasurer. In his Annual Report, the President mentioned, among other subjects, the increasing number of requests for archival information. Thanks is due to those members who are carrying on the collating and cataloguing of our records, and to all others who assist in so many ways.

Cottage Committee:

Mesdames Bette Jones,  
Valda Arrowsmith and  
Gwenda Tretthewey

Publicity: Mrs. Barbara Rogalski

Newsletter Editor:

Mrs. Doris Mattingley

Newsletter preparation and

posting: Mesdames Val Riches  
and Beryl Gray

\*\*\*\*\*  
NOTE: Saturday, December 12th 12 Midday - Please bring a plate of  
goodies to share.

Wednesday 12th February, 1992. First meeting for the year. As  
usual, meet at 6.30 p.m. and bring a plate of food to share.  
General business meeting to follow.

29th March 1992. Proposed bus trip to BLACKWOOD. Details later.

OPEN DAY 20th October:

This was probably one of our most successful Open Days, some three  
hundred people visited the Cottage, Museum and Annexe and showed great  
interest in all they saw. They asked many questions, many in regard to  
ancestors and others, re the history of the houses in which they live.

In the Annexe, Bette Jones had prepared a display of nightwear and  
lingerie from around the 1880's until the time of nylon - late 1940's.  
On the display boards T.R.B. Morton, investor, valuer, estate agent and  
churchman was featured. Also, on display was one of his old 'valuation  
books'. His grand-daughter and her family also attended.

It was a lovely spring day but there was the added complication of  
the Open Day at Mitcham Railway Station. A display board with information  
regarding the station and station masters and early surrounding properties  
was set up. Members were also in attendance there answering many questions.

Our thanks go to all those who assisted in both these displays.  
Mention must also be made of the members of the Mitcham Arts Association  
who displayed pottery and art and demonstrated again raising much interest.

Members were most interested to see on display at Mitcham Railway  
Station copies of correspondence between Dr. L.L. Smith and the Railway  
Commissioner regarding the drunkenness of the gate-keeper at the Mitcham  
Crossing in 1882.

Bill Gray

\*\*\*\*\*

During the 1880s Land Boom, the Freehold Investment and Banking Company built a recreation hall on the northern corner of Blackburn and Central Roads, Blackburn, later named Morton Park Hall, after T.R.B. Morton, the prominent estate agent. In 1905 the Shire of Nunawading purchased this and the nearby open land for £750. In 1929, Film shows began. The hall was finally demolished in 1965, the site having been chosen for the Blackburn Branch Library.

Blackburn Branch Library opened on 19th November, 1966, with Dr. Graham Walsh officiating and author Ivan Southall delivering the address. This means that this library has its 25th Birthday this month, and we all rejoice in saying 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'. Displays will be on show for a week, commencing on 19th, and several speakers will be there.

In our rejoicing, we pay tribute to Miss Constance Pavey, the first librarian, who worked tirelessly for years in establishing our library service.

Sir Richard Steele (1667-1729) said:

'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body',

while John Wilson, a bookseller who died in 1889 wrote :

'For a jollie goode booke whereon to looke  
Is better to me than golde'.

In England the development of circulating libraries in the later decades of the 18th century supplied the market for the large number of novels then available. Two new styles of fiction became fashionable and popular, the sentimental novel and the Gothic one, in this era. However, a number of writers also produced histories, biographies, essays, travel books and books of letters.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the majority of novels published then were each in three or four volumes, and this 'three-decker' retained its popularity until late in the Victorian period. The standard cost of each volume was half-a-guinea, a high price for many readers and quite beyond the reach of the working-class of that time. However, with a subscription of a guinea a year, readers could borrow a volume at a time from one of the circulating libraries, by far the most influential of these being Mudie's, opened in 1842. An alternative to publication in three volume form was supplied by monthly serialisation in magazines - Dickens and Thackeray both used this method. 'Pickwick Papers' in 1836 established the custom firmly. Usually a novel was completed in 19 monthly issues, and what misery it must have been for readers to await the next instalment. Towards the end of 'The Old Curiosity Shop', many people wrote impassioned letters to Dickens, begging him to spare Little Nell's life, but to no avail. There were also numerous novels dealing with social problems, politics and religion.

In England significant adult education began with the industrial revolution, and the first institutions providing it were the Mechanics Institutes. The originators were well-wishing middle-class 'improvers', who wanted to assist workmen 'to become acquainted with such branches of science as are of present application in exercise of their trade.' The Australian colonists unthinkingly copied this custom, and built more and more institutes. The Government gave some financial support in these from the eighteen-fifties, to help in restoring social order and to ameliorate the unruliness of the gold-fields.

Some later qualified for a 'library' grant, and many institutes appeared between the 1892 depression and the 2nd World War as public halls and libraries. From these buildings sprang our library movement, and in part they initiated both technical and adult education of today.

In Walhalla the Mechanics Institute had Gippsland's best free library, and in 1883, there were 556 books and 150 more on order, 'extending over the whole range of literature.'

In earlier newsletters, the account appeared of the lady in Croydon beginning a travelling library on horseback in 1931, with the plan to acquire a horse and jinker for the scheme at a later date.

Small suburban libraries proliferated in past years, but a long time passed before city libraries became firmly established.

Today we are indeed fortunate with three libraries in our city, Blackburn, Central at Nunawading and Vermont South.

\*\*\*\*\*

MORE FROM THE 'REPORTER'

23/9/1932 BOX HILL BAND.

With the early advent of fine weather the Box Hill Band has actively entered on what promises to be a very busy season. On Friday last a performance was given for the unemployed Christmas Gifts Fund. On Sunday the band took part in the Massed Bands Recital on the Melbourne Cricket Ground at which twenty seven bands were present, including two from Mildura and one from West Geelong. On the first Sunday in October, Box Hill will take part in a massed performance at Hawthorn, again for charity.

\*\*\*\*\*

23/2/1934. SCOUTS PREPARING FOR THE WORLD JAMBOREE.

It was decided to hold a rally at Tunstall Park on March 17th. At the rally separate pageant displays will be given by groups representing Blackburn, Mitcham and Vermont groups. Demonstrations of bridge-building will be made and eighty cubs will perform Jungle Dances. District camps at Dandenong Creek will be held at Easter. All these activities are a rehearsal for the World Jamboree to be held here this year at Frankston.

\*\*\*\*\*

27/4/1934. CENTENARY BOOK CLUB.

A new and up-to-date lending library will open at Miss Cameron's cake and sweet shop at 192 Station Street, Box Hill, on Monday next.

It is to be known as the Centenary Book Club and the only cost to subscribers will be threepence per book. The best recent books will be kept and new books by popular authors added from time to time.

\*\*\*\*\*

A recent donation to our archives was an advertisement issued by an estate agent, undated, but presumably issued in the post-war era of development. (Who could resist the delights of such an area?)

VERMONT HEIGHTS ESTATE  
48 LARGE RESIDENTIAL ALLOTMENTS  
Penlyne Avenue/Centre Road  
BORONIA ROAD

Vermont is not 14 miles from Melbourne, encircled by the Blue Dandenong and Healesville mountains and the pale blue distant peaks of the Dividing Range and Mt. Donna Buang, which on clear days show their soft blue heads occasionally and then fall to sleep in the faraway mists. Cloudlets circle lovingly over the village, throwing it into the deeper shadowed blue of the sapphire, so that purples, blues, pinks and dazzling tones of the clustering mountains may shine out with added glory.

Half a mile from the village, with frequent bus service to Mitcham, one and a quarter miles distant.

\*\*\*\*\*

BALLARAT AND ITS HISTORY

Gold was discovered here in 1851, but there had been farming people in the district before that, and reports state that there was a log church at Buninyong in 1847.

The first newspaper lasted only a few weeks, the 'Banner' (1853) and the 'Ballarat Times and Southern Cross' followed from 1854. This cost 1/- and from 1857 6 pence. In 1858, all the compositors went on strike for higher wages. For one week, the paper was published with each day's edition almost exactly the same, only the date being changed. During the seventies, two rival papers expressed scorn for each other in such words as 'the reptile contemporary along the street'.

In 1853 the first hotel opened, and in 1856 the first council asked the Surveyor-General for a library in Sturt Street. It is known that a Mechanics Institute was already in existence in 1855. A free library opened in 1869 for East Ballarat, and in 1878 one began in the west.

All the 477 hotels in 1867 stayed open as a matter of course until 1.30 a.m. In 1858 a Philharmonic Society began, but lasted only five years, however others followed, for fairly short periods. Large audiences constantly attended during the sixties and seventies the performances of operatic groups. Bands also appeared among the local people, and obviously among the diggers, there were many fine singers and musicians. Some of these were Welsh and organised the first Welsh Eisteddfod in Ballarat in 1855, this being the sole one in Victoria.

The first race-meeting took place in 1855 in the area now known as the Dowling Forest Race-course and Australian Rules Football was little more than a year old when Ballarat Football Club began in 1861. Ballarat Regatta Club (later the Rowing Club) started in 1862; the rowers had to perform on nearby Lakes Burrumbeet and Learmonth for some years until a lake was formed from the swamp (now Lake Wendouree). The first Bowling Club began in 1864, the Cricket Club in 1856, though the first recorded cricket match took place in 1853, between teams of the two localities of Gravel Pits and Canadian Gully.

In 1877, A Meredith squatter brought from India and Persia teams to play polo, however, after a match in Ballarat, no more is recorded of this venture there.

Cyclists had an asphalt track in the eighteen-sixties, in 1891 Ballarat Harriers had their first run, and the first tennis courts were made at the Eastern Oval in 1880, while 1885 saw the first Golf Club. In 1856 Ballarat acquired its first Agricultural & Pastoral Society, the first Champion Sheep Show being held in 1876.

In the mining days, blacksmiths and iron-workers were necessary, the foundries making much mining machinery; later this changed to agricultural machinery, and one business became the manufacturer of locomotives for the Victorian Railways. Coach-building began early here, also two steam flour mills, several breweries, cordial factories, and in the eighties, three bacon factories. Amid great excitement, in 1887 the first horse-tram began operating.

\*\*\*\*\*

<u>Editor:</u>	Mrs. Doris Mattingley	Tel. 878-4630
<u>Prepared for posting by Beryl Gray and Val Riches</u>		
<u>President:</u>	Mr. Bill Gray	Tel. 874 2731
<u>Secretary:</u>	Mrs. Judith Fry	Tel. 874-4220
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Mrs. Shirley Barker	Tel. 878-3987

\*\*\*\*\*