



NEWSLETTER - JANUARY - APRIL 1993

Saturday 10 October, 1992 our Annual General Meeting took place, with the following office-bearers elected.

President:	Mr. Bill Gray	Committee:	Mesdames Rae Matthews,
Vice-President:	Mr. Ian Barker		Joy Kenny, Jess Barnes, Betty Jones,
Secretary:	Mrs. Judy Fry		Joan Rocznio, Beryl Gray and Miss
Treasurer:	Mrs. Shirley Barker		Chris Otterbach

Newsletter Editor: Mrs. Doris Mattingley
Printing and Distribution: Mrs. Beryl Gray and Mrs. Val Riches.

The President thanked all who had contributed to the work of the Society. Beryl Gray and Joan Rocznio continue to deal each week with the huge amount of classification still to be accomplished in the Archives. Among other members assisting is Mrs. Norma Jamieson.

Saturday 12 December 1992 was our final meeting for the year. As usual members enjoyed meeting together and sampling the delicious food.

Discussion took place about AUSTRALIA DAY celebration, 26 January - 4-10 p.m. at the Nunawading Civic Centre. The Society as usual will be providing a display.

The Victorian Heritage Festival 1993. An Open Day at Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum will be held on SUNDAY 21 MARCH 1993 from 12 noon to 4.30 p.m. There will be a special display in Museum Annexe - mainly EDWARDIAN.

Another display will be in the Nunawading Municipal Library during the month of March.

A few 'Show and Tell' articles were brought along and naturally were of interest to all.

REMINDER: Next meeting will be held on WEDNESDAY 10th FEBRUARY 1993 at 6.30 p.m. at the Museum Annexe. Please bring a plate of food to share.

WORKING BEE: Saturday 13 FEBRUARY from 9.30 a.m. Jobs include oiling agricultural machinery, window cleaning and vacuuming. Bring lunch if able to stay for the afternoon.

APRIL MEETING will be held on the 3rd at the Annexe at 1.30 p.m. This date of meeting has been altered due to Easter.

At the October meeting, we were fortunate to be introduced to the recently published book - ORIGINAL ORCHARD 'OLD STRATHDON' by one of our members, Mrs. Marny Miller. This is a fascinating story of a local family over many years and their contribution to our district as we know it today. The City of Nunawading has now purchased the remaining segment of the original land and plans to retain it as a 'working orchard'. Other areas were considered for this honor, but this is the chosen one, with the original homestead still in good order. This book can be purchased from the Council.

As Shakespeare said: "THE PLAY'S THE THING".

We are very proud to have Max Grant as one of our members. Max, 'stage-struck' at the age of eight, has performed an incredible amount of stage production since then, bringing enjoyment to thousands of people.

This ranges from shows for the troops in Darwin, when he was in the RAAF, to four decades in Nunawading, including MRG, Arts Council, forming and assisting local groups such as The Avenue Church Players, Maroondah Musical Society and Blackburn Players. All those who know Max were delighted that he was Citizen of the Year in both 1959 and 1988.

The following article is contributed by Max, giving a brief account of our much-loved MITCHAM REPERTORY GROUP in its fortieth year.

FORTY YEARS ON!

"A Repertory Group in Mitcham? It'll never go." This was the opinion expressed by the late Winifred Hunter but how wrong she was, for forty years later the Mitcham Repertory Group is still going strong. Winnie did become a foundation member and was actively involved with the Group during her lifetime. You see it all began when Max Grant met Phil Mudge at a Box Hill Operatic Society performance in 1950/1. They had been involved with the Murrumbidgee theatrical scene way back in the thirties, and Phil learning of Max's intention to come and live in Mitcham, prompted her to suggest they should start a "Drama Group" there when he was settled. So it was early 1953 that this DID happen and the word went out of their intentions. There had been a small group under the title of the Albert Players operating from the Mitcham C. of E. and this group did become the nucleus of M.R.G., even to a small bank balance of a few pounds which was most welcome because we had no money. So it was that a few interested folk, including the doubting Thomas, Winnie, met at Daphne Powell's home in Warnes Road, Mitcham. A play was chosen "Quiet Weekend" and rehearsals commenced. This was in March 1953. Six months later it was felt that we were ready to show our faces and the curtain went up in the Old Memorial Hall on Tuesday, October 6th for a one night stand. We had gathered a cast from all over, any one who could read and walk was roped in. The show went on. Since then of course we have progressed from various halls, kindergartens, schools and the Arts Centre, both for rehearsal purposes and performances. Hundreds of performers and crew have passed through the Group in the forty years. The plays presented have been varied ranging through comedy, always the most popular, farce, melodrama and drama with a few musicals thrown in, two of them original productions. We have had lots of fun, never seemed to produce any outstanding talent but loads of triers. We are currently preparing for our 129th production, Terence Rattigan's "Separate Tables" produced and directed by our founding father, Max. Performances are at the Nunawading Arts and Entertainment Centre from February 18th to 27th and enquiries and bookings may be made from Yvonne on 874 6780.

BLACKBURN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE now sponsors a regular publication: BLACKBURN STATION SHOPPING CENTRE NEWSLETTER, which contains much relevant information about Blackburn itself today, with some interesting snippets of local history.

The longest serving retailer is Mr. George Robinson of Robb's Cycles & Sports Store, recently featured in the Nunawading Post. He commenced his business in 1945, just after World War II.

A legal firm practising here for more than sixty years is that of Yuncken & Yuncken.

Blackburn Branch of the Red Cross began in 1974 and focuses on working in the community rather than fund-raising only.

Prior's Hardware originally was established in 1922 in a small single shop by Leo Prior, as Prior's Ironmongery. In later years various members of the family joined the business, with a name change and extended premises. New owners in 1987 had the misfortune of a huge fire, but with great local support they were able to continue.

Blackburn Bowling Club, formed in 1926, was officially opened in South Parade but in 1967, the club moved to a new location in Pakenham Street, with the RS & C Bowls Club now occupying the first site.

A recent business is the delightful Bellbird Garden Design & Decor Centre & Coffee Shop, with its Cottage Garden extension.

At the Main Street end of the South Parade area are several new and interesting additions to the business world: 'Kelly's Cottage', a first-class educational toy shop, 'Wan Nam' Asian Food Market, 'Misty Twist' needlecraft and folk art shop, 'Chikkles' Food Bar, and Blackburn Pet Shop.

Parker's Fine Food Deli has also opened for business, with a special range of gourmet products and refreshments available.

Another of Blackburn's long-established family businesses is that of Hoskins Furniture and Floor Coverings, founded in 1954, and so now thirty-eight years have been spent serving the Blackburn community.

VISIT TO BALLARAT

On Friday, November 14th, ten members of our Society and 32 members of other Societies set off by coach to Ballarat. On arrival at our destination, most people were accommodated at the Pepperella Motel and the others at Smythesdale Motel.

Our tour commenced at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday and for the rest of the day we explored places of interest in the Shire of Granville. Joan Hunt of Woody Yaloak Historical Society gave a running commentary on the places passed through - Smythe's Creek, Sago Hill, Haddon and Nintingbool. We travelled along narrow country roads and had to imagine the former bustling townships, tent cities, mining machinery and activities. Except for the occasional church, miners' cottages, mullock heaps and old oak and pine trees marking house and hotel sites, little remains. Today the green rolling country is intersected with hawthorn hedges and any remaining bush is secondary growth - all trees were cleared for use in the mines or for domestic purposes.

After visiting the Smythesdale Gardens, now being restored by the Woody Yaloak H.S., we had morning tea in the original courthouse. The later society uses the building for meetings and is now restoring the property. Opposite was the fine old Smythesdale Hotel and next door the bluestone police lock-up. Our tour then included Watson's Hill, Brown's Diggings and Smythesdale Cemetery where the high mortality rate among children at the time of the mining boom was clearly evident.

Visit to Ballarat continued.

Driving through Scarsdale, Monkey Gully, Italian Gully and Staffordshire Reef, we were reminded of the different nationalities of the miners and the way they remained in groups - others were Germans, Welsh, Irish, Chinese and Tasmanians (Derwent Jacks).

Past other sites, where we were given a brief account of the story behind each name. We saw Piggoreet township and a volcanic basin and outcrop (Devil's Kitchen), then we listened to a transcript of a court case at Smythesdale. At night, Joan Hunt spoke on 'Family Life on the Woody Yaloak Goldfields in the eighteen-sixties', with its many hardships. We explored the township of Buninyong, older than Ballarat and drove to the summit of the mountain. Then on to Ballan to be again entertained by the local H.S. in their meeting place, the old Court House.

We cannot speak too highly of the organisation of Christine Gray, the fund of information supplied by Joan Hunt and the hospitalities of the different societies.

Rae Matthews

BARELLI FAMILY (from an interview with the two Barelli sons Doug and Allan 1989).

Father Louis came to Mitcham in 1890, working as a butcher and later as a baker, moving the location of his shop several times during the following years. These sons recalled the past - the constant demand for wood for the ovens- horses were kept until the mid-fifties for horse and cart delivery of the bread. In early times, this extended as far as Ferntree Gully on unmade roads, and other goods such as meat also were taken to isolated customers.

The depression was recalled as very trying for all with unemployment everywhere, and people unable to pay their accounts. After World War II, the business expanded successfully with the rapid increase of population here. The Barelli Bakery was innovative in its business, being one of the first to introduce sliced bread in this area; a family member travelled to USA to study modern bakeries. They marketed their products under their own label and purchased other businesses which were eventually brought into the organisation. All baking was done in Rooks Road and then distributed from there. At one time, there were five pastry cooks employed.

Many roads were still in very poor state with resultant damage to delivery vehicles, but eventually it became compulsory for ready-made roads in new subdivisions. Not surprisingly controversy occurred with already previously approved areas.

TIP-TOP purchased the Barelli Bakery in 1961.

Doug Barelli was a City Councillor and later, Mayor of Nunawading in 1961-2, his great interest being to secure land for sporting groups and open space.

The Barelli family is well-known and respected in the district for its contributions to the City over the years.

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