

NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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NEWSLETTER - MAY - AUGUST 1993

NEXT MEETING will be held at the Museum Annexe on SATURDAY, 5th JUNE 1993 at 1.30 p.m. Please note altered date due to holiday weekend on the next Saturday. KNOWING YOUR ARCHIVES After business meeting members will be given an insight into the Society's archives and how they are recorded.

AUGUST MEETING will be held on SATURDAY 14th at 1.30 p.m. at the home of Mr. & Mrs. K. Rooney. Further details will be given at next meeting. Please advise Secretary if you will be attending.

THANKS to all members who were able to help at the February and May working bees. Visitors frequently comment on the cleanliness and appearance of the exhibits in the Museum and Cottage.

HERITAGE FESTIVAL 1993: Over 200 people, including overseas visitors, visited the Cottage, Museum and Annexe on Sunday 21st March, 1993. Many stayed to enjoy a cuppa and biscuit with members of the Society.

At the APRIL meeting on the 3rd, Mr. Keith Rooney gave a most interesting talk and showed some of the ephemera he has collected over the years. Before commencing his talk he played a record on an old gramophone to set the atmosphere. Amongst the many interesting items he displayed were various scales, including a pocket one used by gold buyers at the diggings.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Just a reminder the financial year finishes at the end of June and subscriptions will be due from 1st July. These can be paid to the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Shirley Barker, 14 Tortice St., Nunawading. Family \$8 - Single \$5.

Our very best wishes are with Beryl Gray who has recently had a spell in hospital. We all hope to see you again soon, Beryl.

PROBUS CLUBS, for retired professional (PRO) and business (BUS) people have been sponsored around the world by Rotary International. The first Probus Club in Nunawading was formed in April 1983, with Noel Webster as Foundation President and 34 members. Now there are eleven Probus Clubs in the City of Nunawading.

On 14th April, 1993, the Nunawading Club celebrated its 10th anniversary. To mark the occasion, Cr. David McKittrick, on behalf of the City, presented the group with a Probus pennant, and, in acknowledgment of his outstanding service to the club in its formative years, a Life Membership was conferred on Noel Webster (who of course is also one of our members).

In her book 'ROMANCE OF VICTORIAN RAILWAYS' (published 1980)
Fatsy Adam Smith wrote :-

" In 1919 Dad was transferred from Port Fairy and appointed station-
master at Mitcham, where our new home was both spacious and far
superior to any other station houses we had lived in. We had a
wonderful view of the Dandenongs from our back windows, and I can
remember frosty mornings when the whole countryside looked white.
From our kitchen window we could see the smoke from the engine
coming over the hill from Ringwood (no Heatherdale then) and we
would have sufficient time to cross the line to the station to
catch the train to Melbourne. [Electric trains didn't go through
to Ringwood until 1923].

Before road transport came, Mitcham was a very busy station -
everything came and went by rail. Many truckloads of flowers
grown around Vermont, particularly violets, were sent by rail to
Sydney, and truckloads of manure came for the flower farms. Being
the centre of Melbourne's main orchard district, a great deal of
fruit was sent away and a large cool store [since pulled down]
stood near the station. Walker's tile works was also nearby and I
remember Dad being given some lovely tiles with an individual design.
Mitcham was 'out in the country' in those days, and we had numerous
friends and relations visiting us on Sundays. They would come by
steam train, we would meet them at the station, and after Sunday
dinner would all go for a walk to the creek to see the maidenhair
fern, to Vermont to see the violet farms, or to look at the fruit
blossom in the spring. Mitcham was noted for its wild flowers,
and many parties of field naturalists visited the area.
After a year at Mitcham Dad joined the relieving staff. "

Thanks to member Harold Bakes, we have the plaster ceiling roses
from the hall and dining room of this residence in our museum, obtained
when demolition took place.

MONTROSE BRICKWORKS FLORA RESERVE:

This area, its name not yet officially proclaimed, is 8.4 hectare
of remnant bushland and regrowth situated on the corner of Montrose
and Cambridge Roads, Montrose. Part of the reserve was the original
quarry and brickworks providing firebricks up to the nineteen forties
and flowerpots until the late fifties.

There is a mixture of excellent quality remnant bushland grading
to degraded and weed-infested areas, especially around the two creeks
and grassed quarry site. A 'Friends' group is working on tidying up
this site, and with the help of the Shire of Lillydale some much-needed
improvements have been carried out.

THE AUSTRALIAN HOME BEAUTIFUL (the Magazine of practical living) June
1953, contained an interesting article on Mitcham's St. John's Memorial
Catholic Church in Whitehorse Road. 'The parish priest, Father G.
Coghlan, got the idea from an American magazine, and Alan G. Robertson,
Architect, put the ideas into effect. It uses Quonset arch girder
construction for the frame' - [further details followed].

DIGGING FOR GOLD:

Between 1990 and 1992, a group of students from LaTrobe University, Victoria, undertook archaeological surveys and excavations in three field sessions at Dolly's Creek, about three kms. south-east of Ballarat, scene of minor gold rushes in the mid-nineteenth century.

This was funded by the School of Humanities at LaTrobe, and a grant from the Victoria Archaeological Survey, and was supervised by Ms S. Lawrence Cheney, now a lecturer at Flinders University, S.A.

Very often it is impossible to obtain such information now about people and their living conditions in these places. The evidence uncovered is radically different from preconceived notions of single men with just their swags on the minor fields, beginning with the official records of an inquest on the death of a miner who rolled while asleep into a mine-shaft and subsequently died. From depositions of friends and neighbors and information from other historical documents, and lastly archaeological research, it is possible to glimpse something of the daily lives and activities at Dolly's Creek and the nearby town of Morrison's. Maps were made of the area, with more than 50 houses (four fully excavated) and 300 mine shafts. People had a relatively comfortable existence, with chimneys and fireplaces in their homes (which meant cooking was done indoors) - many were tents on wooden frames (see S.T. Gill's sketches). Artefacts included bottle glass and pieces of pottery, a thimble, clay tobacco pipes, fragments of a glass cake plate, glass from salad oil and condiment bottles, many ceramic plates (not tin), and an ornate brass mantle clock. There was a school and slates and slate pencils were found.

A most exciting project. All these artefacts, now on display at Flinders University, belong to the people of the State of Victoria and will be housed at the State Museum of Victoria.

MITCHAM REPORTER:7/12/1928 Proposed Fire Station

A request was recently made to the Fire Brigade Board that a fire station be established in the centre of Blackburn & Mitcham Shire. An efficient fire station properly equipped is about to be erected at Ringwood, 2½ miles from Tunstall, while the Box Hill station is 3 miles away from any outbreak of fire in this area.

3/5/1929 Plans for the beautification of White Horse Road were discussed especially the portion bounded by White Horse Road, Station Street and Britannia Avenue. The road in front of the shops was in a very poor state and it was hoped that the engineer would consult a landscape gardener.

24/1/67 The Nunawading Gazette and the Melbourne 'Sun' featured Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Hooke, who had announced their gift of 4 acres of land to the local Council, this to be kept as a sanctuary named 'WANDINONG'.

MITCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL celebrated its centenary in 1988 - a full account appeared in the Newsletter Nov. 1988 - Feb. 1989. In our archives there are various historical items of interest about this institution.

In January 1962 the Head Teacher reported that the school endowment plantation was destroyed by fires which swept the district. As some trees were still fit for milling he asked for the supervisor of school forests to inspect the plantation.

On 2/7/1963 the Education Department wrote to the school to state that as the re-establishment of the endowment was not desirable, the land had been returned to the control of the Department of Lands and Surveys.

At Christmas time there was always a party and frolic and concert organised by the Mothers' Club, but in 1942 there were no icecreams, and a game was substituted. In 1944 there was no treat at all; in 1945 there was icecream available, but in 1945 rationing was in force, and the Rationing Committee was approached in order to continue daily cocoa in winter. From 1932 the Mothers' Club had provided cocoa at recess in winter months. In the early 1950s cocoa ceased and bottles of milk became the daily serve.

SITE MANAGEMENT REVIEW - SCHWERKOLT COTTAGE AND MUSEUM:

A number of our members attended a meeting held in our Annexe (to the Museum) on 28th April, 1993, when the Nunawading City Council's draft of the "Site Management Review - Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum" was made "available for discussion purposes". Our members sighted the report, which has some twenty-two pages, for the first time at the meeting, and in view of its import it is considered that the Society should consider it at its next regular meeting, i.e. 5th June, 1993. Members should try and obtain copies from Parks & Recreation Department of the Council before then.

Some of our members present at the meeting have expressed concern at some of the recommendations - provisional at present - inter alia, loss of some areas of parkland due to the proposed Arterial Road, and the possibility of fencing in the Cottage and Museum etc. so visitors including Wedding Parties would meet the payment required.

Bill Gray

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