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NUNAWADING HISTORICAL SOCIETY [INC] NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - APRIL 1994

Series 3 No. 1



PAST MEETINGS

The 28th Annual Meeting of the Society was held in October 1993 and the following office bearers were elected -

President	Bill Gray	Tel. 874 2731
Vice-Presidents	Valda Arrowsmith & Ian Barker	
Secretary	Judy Fry	Tel. 874 4220
Asst. Secretary	Beryl Gray	
Treasurer	Vacant	
Committee Members	- Mesdames Joan Rocznio, Shirley Barker, Rae Matthews, Bette Jones, Jess Barnes, Joy Kenny and Jean Gorsuch.	
Newsletter Editor	Beryl Gray	

On December 11th, we were privileged to have as our speaker, Mr. Max Grant, a member of our Society and founder of the Mitcham Repertory Group 40 years ago. He told us of his early experiences in drama in Moorabbin and how the local repertory group was formed when he came to live in Mitcham. He has been involved with the Repertory Group over all the years and produced many plays. Society members were very interested to have a look at Max's newspaper cuttings on various plays and performers over the years.

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS - 26th JANUARY 1994. As usual the Society will have a display at the Nunawading Civic Centre. Members willing to help for a couple of hours, please contact Beryl Gray, 874 2731.

FUTURE MEETINGS

SATURDAY 12th FEBRUARY 1994 at 1.30 p.m. in the Archival Annexe. The speaker will be the Mayor, Cr. K. Abbott and his subject will be 'The Importance of Local History'. Please make a special effort to attend and bring your friends with you.

NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS' THEME for 1994 is 'Heritage on the Move' and the Society has chosen Dancing/Choir/Celebration.

At the meeting on SATURDAY, 9th APRIL, 1994 at 1.30 p.m. in the Archival Annexe, Laurel Martyn will speak. She was the first Australian dancer to be acclaimed overseas and was the Artistic Director of Ballet Victoria for approximately 30 years. This meeting is part of the heritage program.

SUNDAY, 17th APRIL 1994 will be OPEN DAY at Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum from 12.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Afternoon Tea will be served to visitors.

Christina Emma OTTERBACH, much loved member of the Society passed away on October 25th 1993. Chris was born in Mitcham and lived in Victoria Road (now Rooks Road). She attended Mitcham Primary School and during her working life was a cook at 'Winlaton', Springvale Road, Nunawading and Canteen Manageress at the Nunawading South Primary School for many years.

Chris was a committee member of the Society for many years and was also a member of the Nunawading Ladies Benevolent Society Nunawading Branch of the Maroondah Hospital Auxiliary and Nunawading Anglican Church. A very well attended thanksgiving service was held on October 29th at the Anglican Church.

Emma Otterbach (Scott), Mother of Chris, went to school at Vermont and Mitcham Catholic, and was taught music and painting. She studied painting at the National Gallery School with Nelson Ellingsworth and eventually worked in the studio of Walker's Pottery (Aust. Tessellated Tile Co.), Mitcham, painting tiles. Some tiles at Flinders Street Station were painted by Emma.

#### BOX HILL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 30th ANNIVERSARY - 21st NOVEMBER 1993

The President and his wife represented the society at this function. Andrew Lemon spoke and launched the new publication -

The Days Before Yesterday - Picture Book of Early Box Hill  
1870 - 1930's by  
Eleanor Finlay and Marjorie Morgan

This publication was a joint project of the Box Hill City Council and the Box Hill City Historical Society. Copies can be obtained for \$12.50 (\$14.50 posted) from the Community Historian, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.

#### HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

The Society has given approval for the purchase of a new photocopier machine which will be more versatile than the current model which the Society has had for some years.

The Society, as well as answering many enquiries from students, people tracing family history or companies in the area, in 1993 received valuable information from relatives of families who used to reside in the City of Nunawading. Also Committee members receive enquiries at home.

If any member feels they could give a few hours weekly to help with cataloguing and filing, please contact the Editor.

The Society has the following books for sale -

Windows on Nunawading by Dianne Sydenham	-	\$19.95
Short History of Nunawading	-	\$2
Original Orchard "Old Strathdon", Nunawading by Marny Matheson	-	\$6

These books can be purchased at the Museum or Archives.

## TRIP TO BEECHWORTH

At 5.30 p.m. on November 10th, 9 members of the Nunawading Historical Society joined the coach, which then continued on to pick up our compliment of 45 passengers. We proceeded on our way to Beechworth where we were accommodated at the Carriage Motel.

The following morning, accompanied by a local resident, we set off in the direction of Eldorado. The original dredge, which during the twelve years of its operation won large quantities of gold, is now a forlorn sight sitting in shallow water and gradually disintegrating. As we drove around the quiet township of Eldorado, it was interesting to see the Catholic Church, built of hand-made bricks, and the Anglican Church, built of local stone; both were in an excellent state of preservation. The sites of hotels which have long since disappeared or have been converted into private homes, were pointed out.

Next door to the present primary school was the original school which now houses an excellent museum. Here we spent an interesting half hour before returning to Beechworth for lunch at "The Old Priory".

Our next "guide" gave us a lively commentary as we drove to Stanley, the fruit growing area - cherries, apples, pears and chestnuts were in well tended orchards. One item of interest was an underground coolstore set into the side of a hill. This has been in use for many years and is as effective now as when it was built. Our guide, who was himself an orchardist in the Stanley area, knew all the local residents and their history, and this made the area come alive.

Next we drove to Yackandandah where the local Historical Society has the old State Bank as its headquarters. The Bank Manager's rooms and the residence, now in the process of restoration, were interesting to wander through.

We returned to Beechworth via Wooragee, the site of another of the mining settlements.

After the evening meal at the Motel, a resident who grew up in the Wooragee district, talked about his experiences and particularly about his contacts with the aborigines. He had thoroughly explored the surrounding hills and knew of many sites associated with them.

On Sunday morning we were taken on a tour of Beechworth with its many points of interest, before returning to "The Old Priory" for an early lunch.

The trip home progressed as expected until we reached Seymour. Here we turned off the highway and finally came to the Alpaca Farm where we spent an hour, then home through Flowerdale, Whitfield and Bundoora.

This brought to an end an interesting and varied weekend, organized with great care by Christine Gray.

Rae Matthews

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

Blackburn East Primary School No. 4800 which was established on a five acre site between Bindy and Vicki Streets, South Blackburn in 1957, was closed in December 1993. The land was purchased from Home Renovation Finance Co. Pty. Ltd. at a price of £12,118 (\$24,236). The school in 1969 had 750 pupils but numbers had declined to 150 when the school closed. Blackburn East Primary School will make way for a new prep to year 12 school merging Forest Hill Secondary College with Burwood Heights and Orchard Grove Primary Schools.

Heatherdale Primary School No. 4904, corner Purches Street and Good Governs Road, Mitcham was established in 1960 and closed in December 1993. The school is merging with Verdale Primary School in Churinga Avenue, Mitcham and the school will have a new name - "Rangeview".

From information in our Archives "it was in the 1880s, after a request by Mr. William Witt to the Education Department, that the first Heatherdale Primary School No. 2242 was opened. The Education Department rented a building belonging to Mr. Witt on a four month trial basis. Among the students were five Witt children.

On May 22nd, 1880, Mr. Witt offered to sell an acre of land fronting the main Lilydale Road at £25 an acre (or £15 a half acre) on a hill site, or £20 for an acre (or £12 for a half acre) on a flat site. The site is now at the corner of Witt Street and Maroondah Highway on the Melbourne side of Heatherdale Road and on the south side of the highway. It is now occupied by the Special School.

In it's nine years of existence, three changes of location were made, and the school eventually closed in 1889. The site was later used as a street, now called Witt Street. "

The name "Heatherdale" was used on the letterhead of the letter written by Mr. William Witt to the Education Department.

## MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Lillydale Museum - CHILDSPLAY - Until June 1994  
A light-hearted look at children's toys and games from the 1920s to the 1950s, featuring games and toys from the homes of local residents and photographs of children at play from Scienceworks.

Heritage Hill - Dandenong Laurel Lodge - LABOUR AND LOVE:  
BECOMING A MOTHER IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.  
Until April 1994

This time saw changes in ways mothering was perceived and experienced and the exhibition focuses on what was both an intensely private experience and one of public and even national interest, with objects, photographs and oral histories.

TREASURER - We still need a Treasurer. Can you help ?

This newsletter prepared for publication by Val Riches  
and Beryl Gray