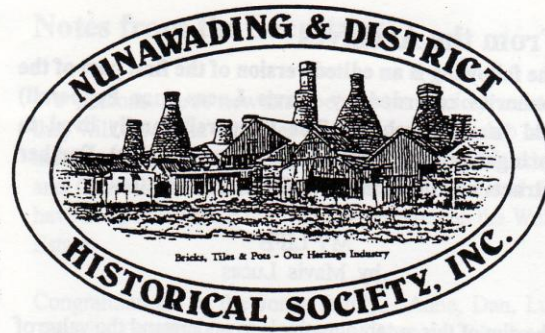


NUNAWADING & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. NEWSLETTER

President - Valda Arrowsmith 9874 1414
Secretary - Barbara Gardiner 9874 6592
Treasurer - Barbara Rogalski 9874 4668



Series 7. No. 4.

July 1998

All mail to be addressed to P.O. Box 272 Mitcham 3132 - Museum Telephone 9873 4946

From the President

Dear Members,

It is nice to begin my report to you with good news. The City of Whitehorse arranged for the painting of Schwerkolt Cottage both inside and outside. We think it is about 15 years since the Cottage was painted. Now the walls are repaired and painted and it all looks fresh. As you can imagine it was a big job for the Society to pack away all the movable items. The larger pieces were moved to the centre of each room, where they were covered by the painter. He then worked carefully around them. The painter was David Ryan of Heathmont who did an excellent job in difficult circumstances.

I extend our grateful thanks to the members who came late on a Sunday afternoon to pack, to move and to offer to launder the curtains, and to those who returned on Friday to re-instate the rooms. It was a sterling effort and a worthwhile contribution to the preservation of the Cottage.

Since receiving the grant for a conservation study, arrangements have been made with the Victorian Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Materials to review the collection on the 5th August. So we are moving along towards achieving our accreditation.

The work of the Society is proceeding steadily thanks to our willing workers on a Wednesday and Friday. We welcome a new member, Peter Simmenauer who is using his expertise as a librarian to input the photographic information into the computer. We are indebted to Dan Jones for being our voluntary computer expert. He has given a lot of time to our system and has now installed the scanner which will enable the printing of this newsletter and copies of photos for researchers. Also it will enable us to enter into the computer, drawings of the artifacts done by Frances Warren, and also any photographs of the artifacts.

We enjoyed the talk given by Syd Wright at our last meeting, titled the "Mystery in Mitcham 70 Years Ago"

I am sure some of us continued to puzzle over the extraordinary and sad circumstances of the people involved, and the tragedy of it all. It was a pleasure to welcome visitors at this meeting.

I would hope that members will be inspired by the story of the Pepperell family, written by Mavis Lucas. We should consider writing about our lives, no matter how brief the record is, as life is changing so quickly, it is important that we record our experiences for our descendants. So let's all begin writing.

As I am not nominating for the position of President at the Annual General Meeting, I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Society, the Committee and to Barbara Gardiner, our Secretary, for their support and their willingness to "go the extra mile" to ensure the success of the functions/activities and to provide a service to people interested in local history.

Valda Arrowsmith

STOP PRESS

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Nunawading and District Historical Society Inc. will be held on:

Saturday 8th August 1998 at 1.30pm

In the Local History Room, Schwerkolt Cottage
Museum Complex, Deep Creek Road, Mitcham.

Apology, if unable to attend to
Barbara Gardiner, on 98746592 or
Valda Arrowsmith on 98741414.

Please find a nomination form enclosed.

From the Archives

The following is an edited version of the first part of the memories recorded by Mavis Lucas (nee Pepperell) held in our Archives. The Pepperell family lived in Springvale Road Tunstall (now Nunawading). Further extracts will be included in future Newsletters.

MY LIFE

by Mavis Lucas

The aim of this autobiography is to understand the value of the life I have lived to those who follow me. It is my own testimony that life is worth living. I have lived through two world wars the great depression, severe drought and private tragedy and heartache yet no life is without its joy, humour, love and hope.

When we are very young everything is close, at arms length. Distance is where you are looking, the future is Saturday and everyday the earth yields up its treasures. Kids push and poke at everything that moves, cut worms in half to see it grow both ends. They taste and smell everything without fear - they never hear of germs - it's just diphtheria, meningitis, tetanus not germs. We experience measles, mumps, whooping cough, chicken pox, scarlet fever, tonsillitis, school sores, nits, hives and often broken bones all before the age of 12, then after that we grow up and face major things in our stride.

My earliest memories start about 5 years of age. The 1st World War had ended - Dad had been very ill with shingles, which necessitated our moving to Victoria from W.A. Dad bought land and a 4 roomed house in Tunstall (now Nunawading) and started a flower farm in 1920, growing and selling cut flowers to a group of florists in the Eastern market (now Southern Cross Hotel) - worked very hard from light to dark. They were days of hardship with a growing family, not much money, poor health for Mum followed by another baby in 1923, making 6. Len 11, Roma 10, Me 8, Bert 6, Win 4, then Nancye. We were a happy family with loving parents and looking back now had some wonderful times, very vivid imagination - great sense of humour, also felt a lot of resentment that we always seemed to work harder than others around. We had to rise early and before school pick violets, leaves thick with frost, 60 violets with 10 leaves lapped around the outside to make a posy, tied with frayed hessian, which we had previously unravelled into 6 inch lengths hanging from our belts. It was soft and didn't cut into the fleshy stems. Iceland poppies with frost hanging onto the little hairs growing up the stems, had to be pinched with finger nails at the bottom so as not to hurt the plant. 50's and 25's to the bunch. These had to be singed over the primus stove to seal the sap, ensuring longer life in a vase.

These were winter flowers and probably more vivid because of the cold we suffered - having to suck the blood back into our cold fingers. Flowers were always scarce in the winter so fetched a better price to support the 8 of us. They all had to be packed in wooden boxes, lined with damp newspaper and wheeled on barrows to the station, one mile away on our way to school, then the returned

empty boxes picked up on our way home. Believe me there were many fights as to whose turn it was today. Like all people who make their living from the land, they are always at the mercy of the elements, the cold winds and frost meant covering up fragile young plants, and hot winds necessitated picking sweet peas etc. before they got burnt. Dad was a great worrier and seemed to be negative about most things, balanced by Mum who being positive always looked beyond the problem. Despite poor health during our childhood days, she was always the hub around which the day revolved. Very clever with her hands - always undoing or darning clothes handed down to us. We always looked and felt nice - didn't have a lot of anything, but looked as good as our friends. I resented having to wear Roma's shoes. Remember shuffling my feet all the way home from school to wear them out, only to find another second hand pair to replace them. My one dream in those days was a pair of black patent leather court shoes (Nelly Kelly) which wasn't realised until I was 15 and bought with my own earnings. They were a disaster - bad fit and poor quality, but nobody knew the agony I suffered trying to keep them on, as my pride would not allow me to admit my feet were too narrow for court shoes.

The children of my childhood were lively, self reliant and trusting. Our society was rural, warm hearted, placid and generous. 50 years later - children are lively and self reliant too, but they live in a high speed world of commercial blandishments, materialism, cynicism and self assertion - doing their own thing regardless. Being children of the great depression we suffered deprivation in material things - accent was on food - always a good table - 3 meals a day, plain nourishing food finishing up if still hungry with bread and jam. 1 lb. of butter and 1 large loaf of bread was our ration for 2 adults and 6 children. The fire stove never went out and was like a breeding ground, hatching out batches of scones, jam and sultana buns, raspberry shortbread and date slice almost daily to cope with cut lunches, which always contained a surprise like 1 boiled lolly from the free paper cone of sweets the grocer included with our large weekly order. Once a month we were given 6 pence (5 cents) to buy our lunch - my choice was 1 pennyworth of grapes, 1 piece of fish and chips and 1 vanilla slice. The reason for this luxury was that Mum travelled to town by train to collect from the florists Dad supplied with flowers and there wasn't time to cut lunches. Would wait agog for her return about 4 pm. with 2 lb (1Kg) slab of Herbert Adams Rainbow sponge, a wonderful treat, in our eyes much better than home made cakes. We had a funny feeling about homemade anything being less attractive than bought things - maybe part of the deprivation we felt. Mum always made butter as we had our own cow but once a week would have to supplement with bought butter which we would fight over also brown bread which was part of Mum's diet over white bread. Living in a rural area we always had chooks, dog, cat, horse and cow and experienced a legacy that very few children appear likely to have again - a freedom, real freedom. In a sparsely populated rural world we could roam the place at will, learn from life around us, make our own decisions, live our fantasies and literally make our fun from from nothing. We were able to inherit the earth and

from nothing. We were able to inherit the earth and feel it through our toes as we went yabbing. We saw birth, life and death through birds and animals - remember watching the cow through knot holes in the shed wall, experience a breech birth with the help of the vet - disobeyed Dad's order not to watch and vomited our hearts out after the ordeal - watched our dogs die from poison bait people put down to protect their free run chickens - sometimes they would arrive home in time for us to give them salt water inducing vomiting which would save them - drowned unwanted kittens when one week old before their eyes were open, always leaving one for the mother - placing eggs under a broody hen and excitedly waiting for the chickens to hatch - everything had a name and was personal, each of us had ownership and responsibility over something, including our chores, which had priority over play.

.....School days - what can I say about them. We started school at 5 years of age and had to walk to Blackburn - about 3 1/2 miles as that was the nearest State school. I spent one year there, before a school was built at Tunstall, then within the next couple of years one at Forest Hills which was only half a mile from home. By this time we were well into the 1926-27 drought, which hit Dad, as the dams had dried up and to keep his plants alive he had to pay for water brought by tanker. With a growing family he had to supplement the income, borrowed money from the bank and bought a T model Ford bus and pioneered a bus route from Tunstall station to East Burwood cricket oval - a distance of 8-10 miles. With the new schools in the area, it was a much needed facility. We were very smug about free rides and it made life a little easier for Mum. This period also gave us electricity and extension to our house which was necessary. Two wired in sleepouts covered by a skillion roof and a separate sitting room, which previously had been Roma's and my bedroom. Len and Bert had one end of sleepout and Ro and I the other. We used to take turns in telling spooky stories when the light went out, interspersed with Dad "Stop your talking and go to sleep!" We also shared secrets and confessed our misdeeds - Bert pinching a pocket knife he found in the school yard instead of handing it in - couldn't sleep because Dad had forbidden the boys to have pocket knives, so when would he be able to use it. As I was the monitor of the school yard the next week, we devised an idea to get it back in the cupboard before it was reported missing. There were lots of instances like these, although not truly bad, were enough to get us into trouble, but we would cover for one another. I was always looking for anything anyone threw out. I made dolls clothes - furniture out of match boxes dolls houses from big fruit boxes - dolls from pegs. We were very creative and encouraged to use our hands and stretch our minds. I feel very grateful to my parents, they brought me into touch with life in all its facets ~ gave me a love of reading - a love of beauty - they opened so many doors - childhood is the most beautiful time of life when you can have your own enthusiasms.

continued in the next Newsletter.

Notes from the Secretary

We welcome three new members to our society and trust they will enjoy the activities and the companionship of our members. They are Peter Simmenauer of South Blackburn, and Claire and John Kelly of Mitcham. Claire and John have been involved in the valuable research on the Walker Estate.

Congratulations to the Jones family - Anne, Dan, Luke, Tim and Dominic on the arrival of Kate on July 1st. We look forward to watching Kate grow into a budding local historian.

We send our best wishes to our members who are suffering from ill health, and trust that they soon return to the best of health. We are happy to report that Bill Gray is recovering well after a short stay in Knox Private Hospital.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 8th August, 1998 at 1.30 p.m.. After the meeting we ask members to bring along a special family or personal artifact for "Show and Tell". We all have fascinating items which our members will be interested to see and to hear their history. This has been a popular event over the years. Please contact me on 9874 6592 if you require transport. I would urge members to give serious thought to nominating for the committee - I have found it to be an interesting experience and an opportunity to learn new skills in a friendly atmosphere. Our President, Valda Arrowsmith, will be retiring this year and I thank her for her support. Valda's experience and local knowledge have made a valuable contribution to our society's profile throughout the wider community, as many more researchers and family historians are now visiting the local history room.

Dates to Remember -

October 10th Meeting - 1.30 p.m. Speaker from Vic Roads regarding Freeway extension.

October 11th - Wisteria Party 2- 4 p.m. **MAD HATTERS PARTY** - Bring the family!

December 12th Meeting 1.30 p.m. Rosalie Whalen, a member and a great grand-daughter of August Schwerkolt, will share her knowledge of the Schwerkolt History.

Friends of Schwerkolt Cottage - Plans are going ahead for this years Wisteria Party - the theme will be the **MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY** - Next meeting - 4th August - 10.30 a.m. Local History Room. - all welcome.

Committee of Eastern Historical Societies - Four of our members will attend the Conservation Workshop on July 25th on Schramm's Cottage, Doncaster.

Our new scanner has been installed and we thank Dan Jones for the installation and Ted Arrowsmith for his perseverance in understanding the operation of the scanner. Ted will now be able to teach members how to scan photos and documents. What an amazing new world we live in!

Barbara Gardiner.

Our Schools



Photo shows Mr. Grimshaw, Fr. Allinco, Miss I'Anson, Miss Wales.

Nunawading Primary School. 4190 c1926 formerly Tunstall School.

The following is an excerpt from "The History of Nunawading Primary School 1923 - 1985" by Lesley May.

A public meeting was called and held at Tunstall on 10/5/23. At this meeting it was unanimously decided that the time had arrived when a state school should be established at Tunstall. A committee was formed with instructions to ascertain the names and ages of children who should attend the school when established and the same committee were also instructed to advertise in the local paper for suitable sites on which to build.

It is not until 1/3/24 that District Inspector W. Henderson finally makes up his mind between the 3 areas. "In my opinion the Education Department should purchase Site 2 on the plan known as Summerscales block and on the site erect a building to accommodate 150 pupils." This decision is confirmed in a letter from the Public Works Dept. on 14/3/24, signed by the Government Valuer, saying "that H. Summerscales will accept 950 pounds for the land, a reasonable price and purchase is recommended."

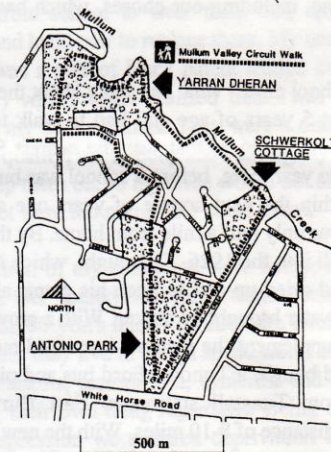
Mrs. E.W. Pepperell, 28/10/23 writes that "the Blackburn school is a splendid school but it is over 2 miles from our place which is on the south side of Whitehorse Road Blackburn, Vermont and Mitcham are all 2 miles at least.

In a second letterMrs. E.W. Pepperell suggests that because value of land is increasing rapidly, other blocks which could be suitable for a school have been sold and she is strongly in favour of purchasing an area quickly. She also points out the fact that the Methodist hall is unsuitable as there are already 60 children attending after being open for only one week.

REMEMBER

- ◆ *Nunawading and District Historical Society Local History Collection - open from 10.30 to 2.30 pm on Wednesdays, or ring 9873 4946 to make an appointment at other times*

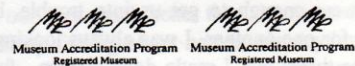
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