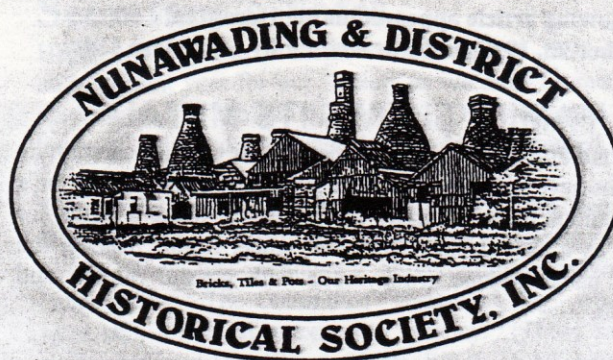


NUNAWADING & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. NEWSLETTER

President - Barbara Keene 9874 4919
Secretary - Barbara Gardiner 9874 6592
Treasurer - Barbara Rogalski 9874 4668



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From the President

Welcome back to the Wednesday group who have returned to work, proving that the holiday season is over and momentous year of 1999 has well and truly begun.

A joint effort by the Box Hill Historical Society and our Society members, headed by Bruce Reynolds, decorated the stage in the Box Hill Town Hall for the Australia Day Dinner. The theme was a Debutante Ball and a very glamorous setting of chandeliers and swathes of aqua and silver fabric highlighted the (dummy) figures of a Mayor in his robes and his Mayofress with a Debutante and her partner being presented to them. The Australia Day Committee and guests were delighted with the display and many favourable comments were made on the night.

We thank Ferrari Hire Co. of Whitehorse Road, Mitcham for the loan of two male mannikins, and heartfelt thanks to our volunteers who worked long and hard during a very hot day.

Remember to put Sunday, 18th April in your dairies as our Open Day, which is part of Victoria's National Trust Heritage Festival, promises to be bigger than ever this year. Whitehorse City Council have asked to be involved and will pay for demonstrations of Clydesdale horses, a steam-driven hay-baler and possibly sheep-shearing. As well as our usual demonstrations of lace making, wood turning, paper making and a working artist, we will have demonstrations of patchwork and quilting, spinning and weaving and possibly embroidery.

As part of the Heritage Festival, Whitehorse City Council, will have a display of historical costumes, on loan from the National Trust, in the new Artspace in the Box Hill Town Hall. Julie Jones, of Whitehorse

City Council, is calling for volunteers to watch the display and we have agreed to "people" the display during the week beginning 11th April and we are asking society members for help. If you can assist could you ring either Barb Gardiner on 9874 6592 or myself on 9874 4919.

We have a new display case in the Museum featuring local history. Do make a point of having a look at this attractive and interesting display sometime during the February meeting.

Thanks you for your support in the purchase and sale of the raffle tickets for the rocking chair. The money raised from the raffle and the sausage sizzle will be used for improvements and repairs. Please give the same support for the raffle of Barbara Rogalski's painting.

Barbara Keene

STOP PRESS

**Saturday FEBRUARY 13
at 1.30pm Local History Room**

Cr. Helen Buckingham, the Mayor of the City of Whitehorse, will be our speaker at this meeting. She will tell us about her year as Mayor and future directions for our City.

Saturday March 27th at 9.30am

Working Bee at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex.

The following article appeared in the Herald Sun on the September 23, 1998, and was written by Genevieve Lally.

FAMILY SHOWS ITS METAL

When John Furphy built his trademark water cart last century, he could not have imagined his name would be remembered for a more dubious reason. Furphy had hoped to make a name for himself as a skilled blacksmith and wheelwright. Instead, the family name became synonymous with gossip, rumour and innuendo.

Great-great-grandson Adam, who now runs the proudly Victorian family business, explains. The seemingly simple water cart became the life-blood for Diggers during World War 1 when it was used to carry water to the troops. "The drivers of the carts were notorious sources of information and gossip for the men as they moved from camp to camp," Adam said. "As could be expected, not all their news was reliable and so it was that the word 'furphy' rapidly became a synonym for suspect information and rumour."

While Adam Furphy is proud of his family's contribution to the country's vernacular, he is quick to point out that the company has progressed well beyond water cart manufacture. Adam is the fifth generation Furphy to run the company, now a multi-million dollar operation. On October 2 it celebrates its 125th anniversary.

These days the company supplies custom-made wine tanks to Sunraysia, Barossa Valley, Riverina and north-eastern Victoria wine-makers. The company's four divisions - steel supplies, engineering, galvanising and laser cutting - make J. Furphy & Sons unique as the only "one-stop metal trade shop" in Australia. John Furphy summed up his family's endurance when he coined the company motto all those years ago: "Good, better, best, never let it rest, until your good is better and your better, best." The motto remained emblazoned on the company's water carts for more than 100 years.

John Furphy never met Ken "Muscles" Johnston, but he would probably have approved of the local football hero hired by his sons, William and George, as an apprentice 60 years ago. "Muscles", who retired at 65 from the Shepparton foundry, was still determined to better his best when he returned to the foundry last week. He picked up a sledgehammer with the same effortless ease he had done every day, eight hours a day, five days a week, for nearly 40 years. Now 80 he showed he was not a quitter.

Neither, it seems, is the Furphy family. Next month the company, set in the heart of the Goulburn Valley, and trading not only in the region but interstate and overseas, celebrates a milestone. The past 125 years have seen the company become a front-runner in the metal trades industry, building on the name it forged with the distinctive water carts last century.

The carts, which remained in production until 1984, have now become collectors' items worth thousands of dollars. Local collector Ivan Barber, who works at Shepparton's Big Shed Antiques, said rare versions of the water cart could fetch as much as \$3000, but they generally sold for about \$500. He said there were hundreds of collectors of Furphy fare throughout Australia, many of whom were expected to attend the company's open-day celebrations at the plant on October 2.

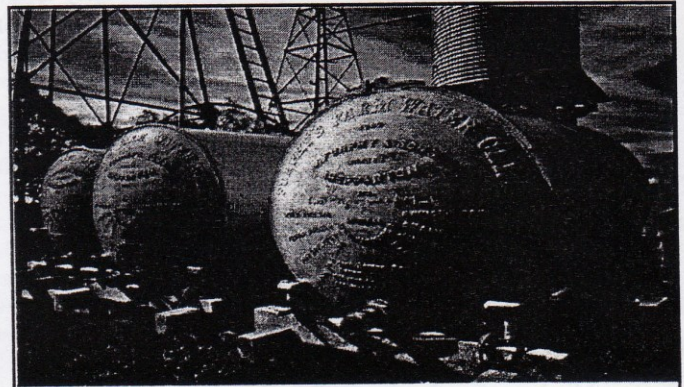
open-day celebrations at the plant on October 2.

Despite the anniversary, J. Furphy & Sons is more than 125 years old. John Furphy, an experienced wheelwright and blacksmith, established his first business in Kyneton in 1866 but soon realised there was a market for stainless steel and metal products in the burgeoning food and dairy industries in the Goulburn Valley. He set up shop in Shepparton in 1873.

Today, the company is clear mix of old and new. A museum, displaying the many variations of the famous cast-iron water carts, sits alongside the fully operational Furphy Foundry - now a separate company owned by Adam Furphy's uncle, Roger. Furphy's Foundry, where Ken Johnston worked for nearly four decades, has just completed a significant order for more than one thousand tree guards and grates for the Sydney Olympic Games site at Homebush.

And the newly established market in landscaping products has led to the creation of another Furphy family enterprise - Roger's son, Sam, runs Urban Maintenance Services, which produces, maintains and services landscaping supplies.

With such intense history as a foundation, it would be easy, perhaps, for the descendants of J. Furphy & Sons to rest on their laurels. But Adam Furphy is too keenly aware of his heritage for that. "We're constantly looking for new niche markets. There's always room for improvement," he said, echoing his great-great-grand-father's vision:



Courtesy of Federal Trust of Australia - Victoria

J. FURPHY & SONS - FOUNDRYMEN
Furphy Water Carts



Furphy Water Cart in action.

good, better, best ...

Additional comments from Ted Arrowsmith.

The article for the Historical Society, for which we must thank Ian Nethercote, aroused my interest on John Furphy. I tried the Nunawading Library and the Internet and found a lot about Joseph Furphy, but none about his brother John. I did find out that Joseph was one of Australia's acclaimed classic authors.

It was Norm Foun who enlightened me on Joseph Furphy's book "Such Is Life", which I must make a point of reading, and provided me with the photos of the Furphy Water Tanker. I found articles relating to the Furphy's with some information on the early life of John and Joseph. The following extracts are from a Victorian State Library pamphlet (supplied by Norm) and from Mick Woiwod "Kangaroo Ground- The Highland Retaken" which is in the Society's Library.

Extract from Victoria Library Pamphlet.

John Furphy, his elder brother, provided a job in his foundry at Shepparton. The only member of the Furphy family not to settle on the land, John had been apprenticed as a blacksmith, and now had a flourishing business, selling farm machinery. His was a success story of hard work, initiative, and intelligence directed to a particular need. John Furphy adapted farm implements designed for other countries to suit the conditions in the Goulburn Valley.

He was to secure a lasting place in Australian pioneering history with his water-cart, a simple construction consisting of a galvanized iron tank with cast-iron ends, mounted on shafts so that it could be drawn by a horse. Especially useful for carting water in dry areas before irrigation was introduced, the cart was in widespread demand throughout Victoria and the Riverina, and even beyond, by the end of the century. (With the name 'FURPHY' painted on the side in large letters, it was easily identified, and started to become known by the maker's name. In the First World War, when it was used by the Australian Army, the drivers of the carts were regarded as sources of rumour and misinformation, and the name itself came to signify false rumour. In this roundabout way the family name of an upright and pious man, with a very strict regard for the truth, became part of the language.)

Extract from "Kangaroo Ground- The Highland Retaken" by Mick Woiwod.

The Furphy family, for instance, had departed; they moved to Kyneton. Kangaroo Ground offered few opportunities for the sons of those without land! On the other hand, Kyneton was a go ahead place on a goldfields road with excellent prospects of employment. Samuel, the father, opened a grain store and John, his eldest son, was apprenticed to the local blacksmith. This proved to be a fortuitous break since it placed John in good stead to later fulfil his role as an iron-founder of note. It was the same with Joseph, the future writer. In a way, he received his apprenticeship in a knock-about world of travelling the country in charge of a mechanical thresher. Later he acquired a bullock team, and furthered his education in outback camps of the Riverina water-holes where he was able to gather the yarns that one day would see him a successful writer.

Secretary's Notes

Happy New Year to all members and readers! 1999 will be an important year for our Society as we must be ready for accreditation by the end of the year. This will entail many hours of dedicated work checking the details required.

Those members who were unable to attend the December meeting have not heard about our very successful sausage sizzle which was conducted at Bunnings Hardware at Nunawading. The Committee "seized the day" when we were able to fill an unexpected vacancy. (These sausage sizzles are booked well into 2000) We thank all those who valiantly helped over that weekend. We cooked about 1000 sausages and 27 kilos of onions and used 48 loaves of bread. (A special thank you to Valda Arrowsmith who spent the Saturday evening slicing up 12 kilos of onions and to Bunnings for the opportunity.) Our profit for the weekend was \$1,176.00.

Our raffle for the Child's Rocking Chair was won by Norrie Tanner, a friend of Jess Barnes she was absolutely delighted. Our profit was \$238.50.

Our treasurer, Barbara Rogalski, has just completed a painting of our beloved Schwerkolt Cottage, which she has donated as a raffle prize - tickets will be available at our February meeting. It will be drawn at 4pm on 18th April on the Open Day.

Our December meeting was well attended (despite the very warm day) with members very interested to hear Rosalie Whalen's talk on the Schwerkolt Family History. Our sincere thanks to Rosalie.

Our best wishes to all those members who are unwell at the moment - we hope you can stay cool over the hot weather.

Barbara Gardiner

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 27th February 1999, Meeting Eastern District Historical Societies, 1.30pm at Schramms Cottage Doncaster.

Saturday, 10th April 1999, General meeting 1.30pm. Speaker to be confirmed.

Sunday, 18th April 1999, Heritage Festival, Open Day, Call Barbara Keene, 9874 4919 or Barbara Gardiner, 9874 6592, if you can help on the day.

Saturday, 24th April 1999, Conference, Eastern District Historical Societies, at Healesville Memorial Hall.

Saturday 29th May at 1.30pm A special fund raising day. Ann Dixon will display of her collection of antique gowns.

Saturday, 31st July 1999, Workshop on the conservation of artifacts/documents. Local History Room, Schwerkolt Cot-