

# *Nunawading and District Historical Society Inc. NEWSLETTER*

Mr. Peter Simmenauer  
6 Stewart Avenue,  
Blackburn South  
3130

Series No. 7

FEB 2001

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

## **From the President**

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year - 2001. I do hope the Society will also progress and achieve our aims for this year.

The Wednesday working group re-commenced their regular weekly meetings on Wednesday, 24th January, prior to you receiving this Newsletter. I need to say again that we desperately need volunteers. Please remember our need when friends and/or neighbours retire or have time available. We will be happy to guide them in our systems.

This year we will see a Heritage Trail installed by the City of Whitehorse, and also the completion of the Heritage Study. The Conservation Study for the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex will have recommendations for the correct methods of preservation of the buildings. Hopefully our bid for an extension to the Museum will also be developed by the City of Whitehorse.

We have acquired a wedding gown, c1980 and two gowns, c1880, recently. They will be excellent additions to our collection. They have been stored in Archival Boxes as we have limited space for displaying such items.

We have moved the photo-copier to the other side of the Local History Room and the desk and computer to the space the photo-copier occupied. This leaves us space for a 36 inch square table for the telephone etc. We are asking if you have a surplus table, slightly smaller would be O.K., to donate to the Society.

Enclosed in the Newsletter is a list of the origin of street names. This is for your information and we are hoping you can provide us with additional "how streets got their names". Thanks to Peter Simmenauer who compiled the list.

Unfortunately the Mayor, Cr. Jessie McCallum, is unable to be our speaker at the February meeting as Council has

programmed its planning weekend then. However one of our members, Anne Munro has agreed to speak on her experience as a volunteer at the recent Olympics. This will give a different perspective to the talk given by Bob Gardiner on the thrill of being a competitor. Hope to see you on the 10th February.

Valda Arrowsmith

## **National Trust Heritage Festival**

**OPEN DAY Sunday 1st April 12 - 5pm**

**Schwerkolt Cottage & Museum Complex  
The Re-enactment Society will help us to  
celebrate Federation. There will be dis-  
plays of craft and demonstrations, etc and  
a sausage sizzle.**

**Supported by the City of Whitehorse**

## **NEXT MEETING**

**Saturday, 10th February, at 1.30pm. Our  
speaker is one of our members, Anne  
Munro, who will speak on volunteering at  
the Sydney Olympic Games.**

## **Please Note**

**The April meeting will now be held on  
Saturday, 7th April, as the next Saturday  
falls during the Easter Weekend. Speaker  
will John Lahey, former "Age" feature  
writer, who will speak on "Scallywags of  
Federation"**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Society is to foster historical interest and knowledge. To collect, document, research, preserve and exhibit items that show how people have lived and worked in the development of the Whitehorse area from human settlement to the present day.

## McCRACKEN'S ORCHARD, ORCHARD GROVE, BLACKBURN SOUTH.

Blackburn South was predominantly an area of small farms - fruit growing, flower growing, poultry, etc., until after the end of World War 2, when growing demand for land for housing forced up land values and council rates, and many farmers found their operations had become uneconomic. By the 1960s, most had sold their land for subdivision into housing blocks.

A typical small orchard was the one owned and operated by the McCrackens for some 50 years. The family were early landowners in the area. Nunawading Roads Board Rate Books show John and William (*Gardeners*) as owning and occupying land on Delany's Road (re-named Canterbury Road in about 1885) in 1863. This was part of Crown Portion 96, originally part of a Crown Grant of 200 acres to Edward Wilton. By 1883, each had built a house on their 10 acres of land, and had been joined by William Henry (*Gardener*), with 23 acres and George (*Wood Carter*), with 9 acres. By 1888, it appears that William Henry and George had disposed of their holdings, as did William at a later date, but John continued. His orchard of 10 acres as registered in an 1898 Certificate of Title, occupied the land now bounded by Orchard Grove and Hunter Drive (formerly Hunter Street), its northern boundary being between Horkings Street and Stewart Avenue and southern boundary south of McCracken Avenue. His son George is listed as joint ratepayer with John in 1921 and in Sands & McDougall Directory as an Orchardist from 1920 until 1962, resident at Orchard Grove. He inherited John's land on his death in 1927. It is not known when fruit production finally ceased on the site.

An Electoral Roll of 1946 lists the McCrackens in Orchard Grove eligible to vote as George (*Orchardist*), Mrs Ethel May (*Home Duties*), George Jnr (*Fitter*), and Kenneth (*Turner*). At this time, they shared the east side of Orchard Grove with the Horkings, Herbert, Hone, Moran and Brewer families. A number of these families, some of whom were also orchardists, had local streets named after them, as did Lawrence Henry Barns. McCracken Avenue was not formed and named until after 1955, when subdivision of George's land into 47 blocks had commenced. Most were sold to developers such as Avondale Subdivisions or Evandale Estates between 1955 and 1957. Land to the north, nearer Canterbury Road, had been subdivided and sold earlier, to developers such as Kenneth Wright. Council Rate Books show that Unimproved Capital Values of most of these blocks ranged from

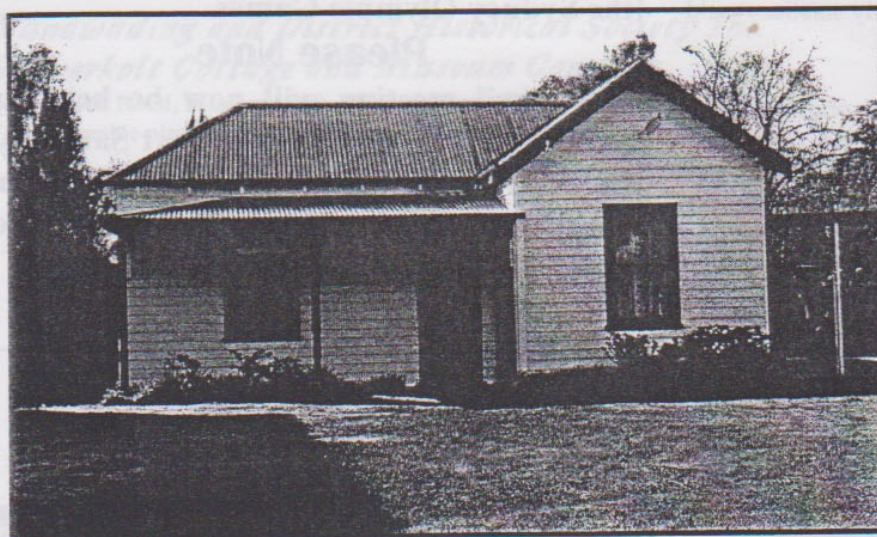
200 to 275 pounds in 1955. George McCracken died in 1961, aged 80, leaving his remaining property to his children George Jnr and Nellie (Mrs Kiely).

Directory entries after 1951 show that houses were being built in Orchard Grove, and street numbers started to be allocated by 1953. The street number 43 was not allocated to the McCracken home until the late 1955, by which time the Presbyterian Church had purchased four adjoining blocks for a church (now St Ninians Uniting Church) and the Blackburn South Pre-school. An additional block was acquired in Lawrence Street for a Manse, and the McCracken family home, now named "Orchard House", was also acquired for church activities in 1962. Land was given to the 2nd Nunawading Scouts in 1960, and their hall still stands near the corner of McCracken Avenue and Hunter Drive.

Early residents of the area recall that all the trees had been bulldozed, so there was no shade and houses were very hot. Roads were graded, but basically dirt, with "a bit of gravel thrown on" from time to time. No footpaths, and muddy roads in winter meant that many people wore gumboots down to Canterbury Road, shedding them for their journey to work, shopping or taking the kids to or from school. Cars got bogged in Hunter Street. Water was first piped through a private line, replaced by mains supply when the roads were made in the early 'sixties. Gas was not available until the mid 'sixties, the only power initially was electric. The pan service was not replaced by sewerage for some years in parts of the subdivision, and most houses still show evidence of an outside toilet. Gardeners were often frustrated by the furrows left from the old orchard, and seedlings of plum, lemon and cherry trees continued to sprout up. After Gedye's poultry farm closed in the late 'fifties, horses were grazed in the paddock on the land south of McCracken Avenue, where there was also a large dam. A small park, Hunter Knoll, now occupies land between the Scout Hall and Shawlands and Crimson Avenues. Most houses in the area are still the originals, predominantly weatherboard, except on the larger blocks on Orchard Grove.

The Society holds copies of McCracken's Certificate of Title, and of the subdivisions that took place south of Canterbury Road, which are available for perusal. Anybody who recollects the family, the orchard, has photos or any details of the area, or of similar activities, please let us know, before knowledge of the recent past of Blackburn South disappears altogether.

Peter Simmenauer



*McCracken's house  
43 Orchard Grove Blackburn South*

*Now Known as Orchard House  
and part of St Ninians Uniting  
Church*

*Photo taken by Peter Simmenauer  
20th August 2000*

## Federation and Happenings in 1901

**January 1st , 1901** - The Commonwealth of Australia was established when the Federal Constitution was proclaimed in Sydney's Centennial Park, by the new Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun in front of a crowd of many thousands. Mr . Edmund Barton was sworn in as Australia's first Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet took oaths of allegiance to the first Federal Government. Mr. Barton has been installed as caretaker leader until the general elections are held in March.

**January 23rd, 1901** - Queen Victoria passed away peacefully at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight at 6.30 pm.

**January 30th, 1901-** The State of Victoria has granted a pension of one shilling per day to Victorians aged sixty and over, who have lived in the state for 20 or more years.

**March 15th, 1901** - A review of Mr. Henry Lawson's latest offering, "Joe Wilson and His Mates" is published in the Sydney Morning Herald.

**March 15th, 1901** - State Historical Society of NSW is established

**March 31st, 1901** - Australia' s first simultaneous census records the population at 3,773,801.

**April 1st 1901-** Caretaker Prime Minister, Mr. Edmund Barton, has been returned to office by the people of Australia, in their first Federal Election. He pledged that railway gauges would be standardised between the eastern capitals and to pave the way for a trans-continental railway from NSW to W A.

The Shire of Nunawading covered two electorates - Kooyong included Surrey Hills and Box Hill with the rest of the Shire being in Mernda. William Knox won Kooyong and Robert Harper won Mernda - both representing the conservative side of politics as no Labour candidate stood in Nunawading.

**May 5th, 1901** - Australia's first ship-to-shore wireless message is exchanged in Victoria between H.W. Jenvey in Queenscliff and the Duke of York's yacht when it enters Port Phillip.

**May 9th, 1901** - The first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia was opened in Melbourne by

the Duke of Cornwall and York. Melbourne will play host to the first Parliament until a national capital is established. More than 12,000 VIPs from all over the nation crowded into the Exhibition Building to witness the midday ceremony. Thousands of people braved cloudy and windy weather to watch the Royal Procession. The Duke wore the gold uniform of a rear-admiral, while Princess Victoria, in mourning for the Queen, wore black.

**June 12th, 1901** - Eighteen Victorians were killed and forty-two were wounded at Wilmansrust in South Africa in a surprise early morning attack by members of a Boer contingent.

**September 28th, 1901** - Miles Franklin, a 22 year old girl from the NSW bush is gaining literary acclaim for her first novel "My Brilliant Career".

**December, 1901** - Mr. William Farrer has released a new strain of wheat which is strongly drought resistant. To commemorate the momentous events of 1901 , he has named this variety "Federation".

**Shire of Nunawading** - In 1901, listed in Andrew Lemon's "Box Hill" are the following Councillors of the Shire of Nunawading at the time of Federation:-

Aspinall,	Joseph. W.
Bailey,	Leonard. S.
Bishop,	Edward.
Blood,	George. jnr
Cox,	Charles. J.
Frankhauser,	George.F.
Hall,	Charles. D.
Hunter,	Alexander.
McGhee,	Samuel.
Morton,	Thomas. R. B.
Rawlings,	Alfred.
Smith,	Alfred. L. James
Town,	William. George.
Wilson,	William.

It can only be assumed that as Thomas Morton was invited to the Federation celebrations (see photos of the invitations in the collection), that he was the Shire President and represented the Shire of Nunawading.

*From "Australia through Time" 125 years of Australian History and "Box Hill" by Andrew Lemon. Compiled by Barbara Gardiner.*



This elaborate invitation is typical of the era of Federation. The "Who's Who" of Australia must have had a very busy time attending the various celebrations - "Mr. T.R.B. Morton & Lady" are the recipients.

### Dates for your Diary

**February 6th - 29th April.** - An exhibition of Hungarian embroidery "Threads of Tradition" will be held at the Immigration Museum, Old Customs House, 400 Flinders Street Melbourne. Magdelana Bogner, who was our speaker at a recent meeting of the Society, will be exhibiting some of her exquisite work.

**Tuesday, 13th February** - This is a rare opportunity to see three of the modern liners at anchor at Station Pier, Port Melbourne - they are the *QE2*, the *Silver Cloud*, and the *Regal Princess*. The Port Melbourne Light Rail will take you straight to Station Pier.

**Saturday 24th February 8am - 10am** The Mayor Cr. Jessie McCallum will host the first Annual Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast to be held at the Box Hill Town Hall. Cost will be \$20. Guest speaker will be Andrew Bolt, feature writer for the Sun-Herald, and his subject will be "How the Christian Faith Serves Australian Society". Contact 9262 6333 for bookings.

**Saturday 24th March** - from 9.30 am - Working Bee to spruce up complex for the Open Day.

### 29th March to 8th April Heritage Festival

Theme is "Federation and Gold". Details on front of this Newsletter. **Open Day At Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex will be on 1st April.**

**Saturday, 7th April Federation Ball** The Box Hill Historical Society will be holding a Federation Ball as part of the Federation Celebrations during the Heritage Festival. The Ball, to be held at the historic Box Hill Town Hall on 7 April. Tickets will be \$35 a head, with Dinner served in the Lower Town Hall and dancing in the Main Hall to the famous Denis Farrington Orchestra. Come dressed in Federation Style clothes or just wear your best gear. Contact Barbara Gardiner on 9874 6592 if you would like to attend,

**Saturday 7th April.** At the next General Meeting of the Society, our speaker will be John Lahey who will speak on "Sallywags of Federation". **Please note the change of date.**

**Saturday 9th June.** Speaker at the June Meeting of the Society will be Doug Watkins who will speak on "Lighthouses".



### GREETING CARDS

Reproduced above are black and white copies of Barbara Rogalski's water colours of Schwerkolt Cottage which have been produced in colour on greeting cards available from the Society at \$2.00 each. The proceeds from the sales help in funding the Society's activities.

### VOLUNTEERS

We are urgently in need of volunteers to help in cataloguing the collection on Wednesday between 10am and 3pm, and on Tuesday evenings between 7pm and 9.00pm. Can you help or do you know of anyone who has an interest in our work? please let us know if you do. Training and guidance would be available.



Raising funds at a recent Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings Hardware are Barbara Gardiner, Valda Arrowsmith, Peter Simmenauer and Judith Fry. Frances Warren and Barbara Rogalski also helped. Thanks for another wonderful effort.

### RAFFLE

The painting donated by Barbara Rogalski and raffled in 1999 which was won by our member, the late Max Grant has been donated to the Society by his executors and will be raffled over the next few months. It will be drawn after the Heritage Festival.

It is proposed that the funds raised be used to purchase a lasting memorial to Max.

### Cataloguing the Collection - Current Status

Artifacts	Items catalogued	2780
Documents	Items catalogued	3082
Photographs	Items catalogued	2267

### THANKS:

for the provision to the Society of space to display our photographs.

John Cybula, Estate Agent, 108 Canterbury Road Blackburn South, and

Ian Armstrong of Drake & Co, Estate Agents 483 Whitehorse Mitcham

### REMEMBER

Box Hill Cemetery Records and Nunawading Gazette for 1964-1974 available on microfiche for research.

Nunawading and District Historical Society Local History Collection - open from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm on Wednesday Visitors welcomed. Ring 9873 4946 for an appointment at other times.

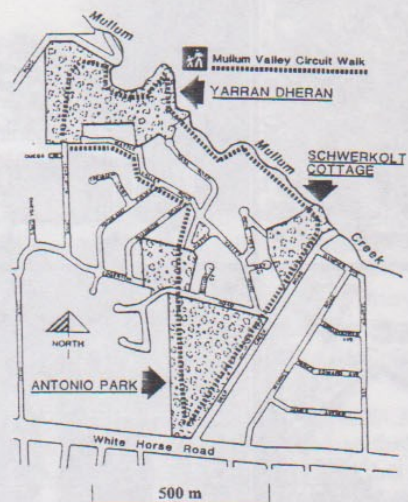
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**Our Society on the Internet.**

[www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/)



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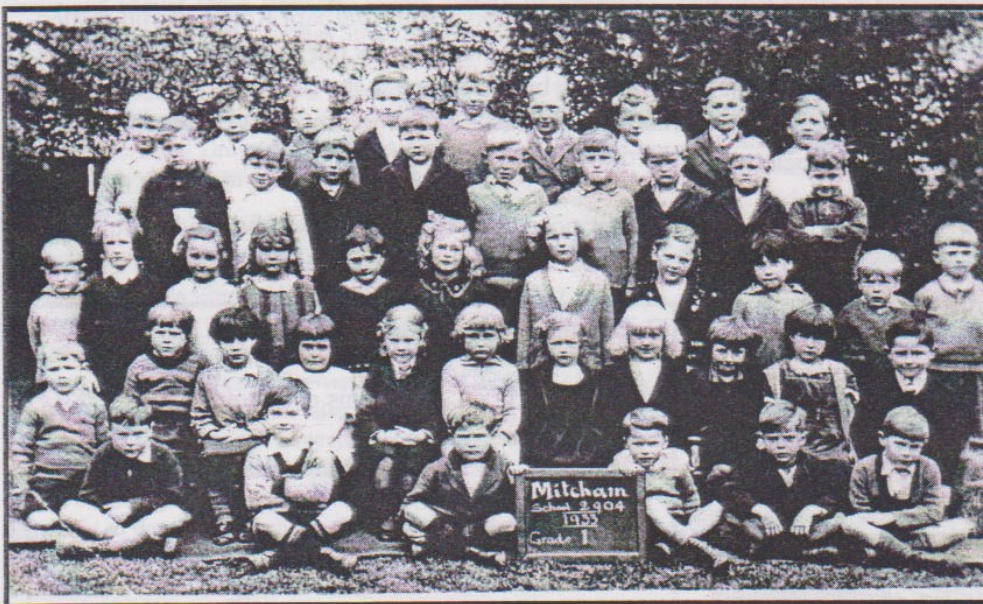


*Nunawading and District  
 Historical Society, Inc.  
 acknowledge the support  
 from the  
 City of Whitehorse*

Museum Accreditation Program

*MAR/MAR/MAR*  
 Accredited Museum

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**Who do you know?**

This photograph is of pupils  
 in grade 1 at Mitcham State  
 School in 1933.

Please let us know the  
 names of anyone you  
 recognize

***Nunawading and District Historical Society Inc.  
 Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex.***

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 if undeliverable please return to P.O.Box 272 Mitcham, 3132, Vic

