

# *Nunawading and District Historical Society Inc. NEWSLETTER*



A0012235J ABN 44 352 041 634  
Series 9. No. 10 August 2001

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

## From the President

The Editors have included a photo of the Society's display at the "Whitehorse Arts on Parade" held at the end of June. The display attracted much interest. We were able to include a piece of "night attire" ranging from 1880 to 1950 (the latter loaned by Barbara Gardiner). We had good sales on the Sunday. Thank you to the members who watched over the display and to Barbara Gardiner and Peter Simmenauer for transporting the display. These community displays would not be possible without your time and support.

The Maroondah Singers are having a Concert on Sunday 29th July with a Federation Theme and have asked us to provide equipment and photographs. I feel it is important for the Society to be seen by the general public to be collecting and preserving the history of our municipality.

The Mayor of the City of Whitehorse held a Federation Dinner where some items and photographs from our collection were loaned for a visible reminder of the growth of the City of Whitehorse from its beginnings as the Shire of Nunawading over the past 100 years.

The protection of 360 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading - the former Municipal Offices and later the offices of VicRoads - continues to be of concern. The Society is appearing at the Victoria Civil and Administrative Tribunal again to try to ensure an appropriate setting for this heritage.

I guess reporting on the planning and building of the Eastern Freeway Extension and the Deep Creek Road bridge will be an continuing event. Presently the plans for the Ventilation Structures for the tunnel are on display at the VicRoads office, corner Whitehorse Road and Cook Road Mitcham for comment by the public.

Representatives from VicRoads are making a presentation to our meeting on 11th August. Remember friends and relatives who are interested in the project are most welcome. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.  
Valda Arrowsmith

## Learn CPR

Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation

### The Key to Survival

Your Society has arranged for a free training course of simple and easy instructions to:-

recognize whether a person is suffering a heart attack or cardiac arrest;

how to correctly call for ambulance assistance and

to provide assistance to the patient while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

The course will be held on Saturday 25th August between 2 and 4pm. We must have 10 participants before the course can be held. Please contact Valda Arrowsmith, 9874 1414 or Barbara Keene 9874 4919 by 18th August.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Saturday 11th August 2001 1.30pm**

Following the Annual General Meeting representatives from VicRoads will discuss the works programme for the construction of the Eastern Freeway to Ringwood and the Deep Creek Road Bridge.

**Please Consider** the nominations for the Committee and to renew your membership for 2001 - 2002. Relevant forms included in Newsletter.

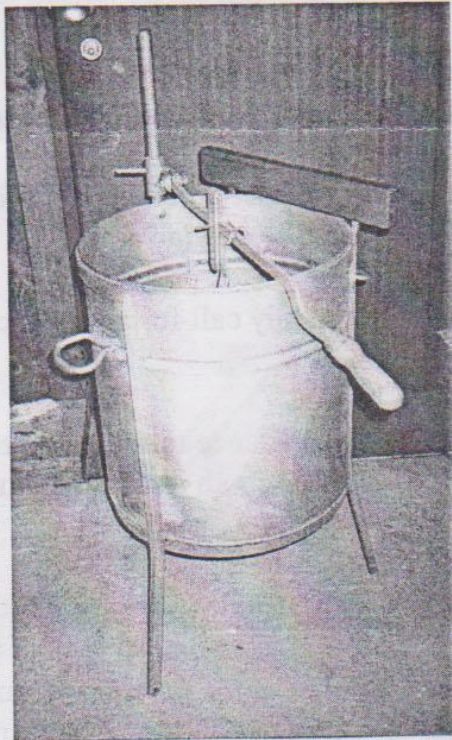
## MISSION STATEMENT

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.





*The Society's display at the "Whitehorse on Parade" on Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July. It featured nightwear and underwear for the period 1900 - 1950.*



#### RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Thanks to good spotting at the Lion's Den Opportunity Shop at Blackburn, by Margaret Skey, who is also a member of the Wednesday Group, we now have a new acquisition, a vintage washing machine ( pictured above). Thanks Margaret.

This acquisition will improve the collection in our laundry section. We would still like to obtain a very early Hoover washing machine. If you see one or know of one or if you see any item which may extend our collection, please contact a member of the Committee

#### JOHN LLEWELYN JONES

#### An Exhibition of Paintings & Watercolours

Until 2nd September from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday and 1pm - 4pm Sundays in the Box Hill Town Hall Art Space.

#### OUR BOB HAS DONE IT AGAIN!

Member Bob Gardiner joined 6000 athletes from 79 countries in Brisbane for the World Veteran's Athletic Championships. The competition covers age groups from 35 to 100 plus! Competing in the 65-69 age group, Bob gained a Silver Medal in the 5 Km Walk in a time of 26 min. 11 secs. and was placed fourth in the 2 km Steeplechase with a time of 7 min 51 secs. Barbara was one of the many supporters who cheered on their athletes and with Bob, was pleased to meet new friends and renew old friendships.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This years A.G.M. will be held on Saturday 11th August at 1.30pm. Nominations are required for President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and eight Committee members. Nominations should be with the Secretary, at 12 Lemon Grove, Nunawading, 3131 by Saturday, 3rd of August. A nomination form is enclosed. Please consider nominating for a position.

Membership fees for 2001 - 2002 of \$12 for an individual or \$18 for a family are due at the Annual Meeting or should be forwarded to the Treasurer at 11 Lemon Grove, Nunawading, 3131 or paid at the A.G.M.

After the business of the Annual Meeting has been concluded representatives from VicRoads will discuss works programmes for the construction of the Eastern Freeway to Ringwood and the Deep Creek Road bridge.

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

##### Saturday September 29th Working Bee. 9.30am.

We need to dust and clean in preparation for the Wisteria Party on 14th October and we would be pleased if you could assist. Many hands make for a quick job.

##### Saturday October 13th at 1.30pm, General Meeting.

Speaker, Jay Miller. The restoration of the Stonnington Stables in England and other aspects of her overseas trip.

**Sunday October 14th 2 pm - 4pm.** Our annual Wisteria Party- Bring the family along and enjoy our beautiful garden at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex

**Saturday December 8th at 12noon.** Annual Christmas Luncheon. Bring lunch to share. The meeting will commence at 1.30pm and the speakers will be new members, Charlie and Lorraine Findlay who will show

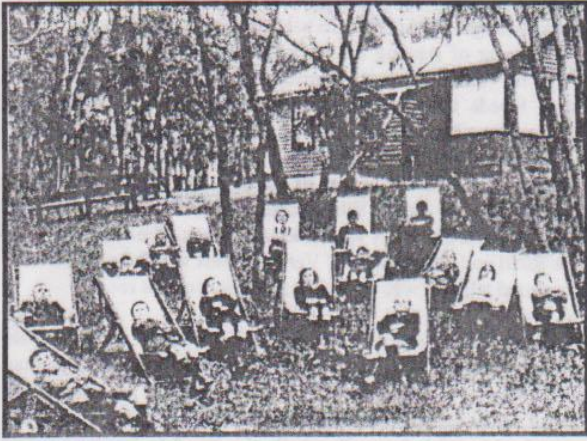
#### Cataloguing the Collection - Current Status

Artifacts 2855 Items catalogued

Documents 3167 Items catalogued

Photographs 2343 Items catalogued





*The photograph of the students having their rest, which is included on the panel in Furness Park*

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES.

*The following was researched by the then Archivist of the Society Keith Patterson and was included in the Society's Newsletter of October 1969. In view of the recent launch of the Heritage Trail in the City of Whitehorse with the Open Air School being featured on one of the first panel it is appropriate that it be reprinted.*

*Included with the article is a photograph of students during their rest period. This photograph can be seen on the panel in the photo of the unveiling of the panel.*

#### BLACKBURN OPEN AIR SCHOOL

Many local residents are unaware that Blackburn was the site of an interesting educational experiment, beginning more than fifty years ago, and continuing until recent times.

In 1912, a committee headed by Mr W. S. Keast, M.L.A. for Dandenong, began to raise money to build an 'Open-Air School'. Mr Burke, a member of the committee, and Mr K. Hart, the Secretary, had seen similar schools in England and U.S.A. and believed that great benefits could be derived from this type of school. Mrs Keast, as Treasurer, wrote about 700 letters asking for donations, and more than £300 was received.

Mr Keast then led a deputation to Sir Alexander Peacock, Minister for Education, in January, 1913, asking the Department to accept the money and run such a school. Sir Alexander pointed out that the Department was already experimenting with a similar type of school at Sandringham. Mr Frank Tait said that the children there were in normal health and that the Committee's proposal was that the new school should be for sickly children.

The Department agreed to go ahead, accepted £312/16/9 and began plans for this special school which would be attended by children selected by medical officers as markedly inferior in nutrition and general health, until they regained normal health. It was planned that these pupils would be given milk or soup and biscuit at 11 a.m., with a lunch of soup, stew, bread and butter and milk, or stew and pudding alternatively, at 12.30 p.m., and milk and biscuit at 4 p.m. It would be a 'country-type' school with 20-25 children to each teacher, in an open-sided pavilion.

The Department then searched for a healthy district and a site close to a railway station, as the railway authorities were willing

to allow concession fares for pupils. The blocks 17, 18, 19, 36, 37 and 38 of Blackburn Township Estate were purchased for £120; this was the southern part of Gardenia Street, running through to Main Street, approximately one acre in size. On 1st June, 1915, State School No.3850, Blackburn Open-Air School, was opened, with accommodation for 30.

On 5/8/1921, the western portion of the site fronting Main Street was exchanged for land fronting Gardenia Street - lots 17, 18 and 19, plus £50 were exchanged for lots 33, 34, and 35 which adjoins the northern boundary of lot 36 in the original purchase.

Apparently there was interest in the experiment overseas, as Spain enquired about it in 1919.

The greatest changes occurred in the twenty years after the Second World War. The building was improved with such additions as a glassed-in area and an extra rest-room with rubber mattresses, and playground equipment was supplied. Improved and nutritious meals were served, after a period of experimentation with various diets, including the Oslo Diet. Travel by rail was superseded by free travel in a special bus through Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond, to and from Blackburn. Various women's groups in Nunawading visited the school and assisted with amenities, and the City Council gave aid.

There was an enrolment of 24, and pupils usually made a stay of one year. The normal syllabus for Grades 3 and 4 was followed, with emphasis on personal hygiene, remedial physical exercises under the direction of the School Medical Service and trained Physical Education Staff, and constant medical supervision. Encouragement was given in Nature Study, with bird-observing, walks in Furness Park, and bird-tables for food; grass was not cut until the Spring wild-flowers had finished blooming, and many additional native shrubs were planted.

In 1964, in view of the increasing number of social welfare agencies and groups, and various Council services being developed, the Education Department decided to close this project. The building is now in use as a Psychology and Guidance Centre, whose officers attend schools and interview hundreds of pupils each year.

Future plans include provision of a specially designed building to house Psychology and Guidance and the Speech Therapy Centres for this area.

#### K. Patterson



*The Mayor, Cr. Bill Bowie with the Federal Member for Deakin, Mr. Phil Borassi, at the launch of the Air School panel in Furness Park in Main Street, Blackburn on 27 May 2001*



## The Reminiscences of a Bus Driver in the Mitcham District. Bill Glasson.

Having settled in Mitcham in 1949 I was offered a job of erecting a number of Quanset Huts at the Migrant Hostel in Rooks Road. At this time I was building our own home in Lucknow St and working at Rootes Ltd factory building Humber and Hillman cars so a job with no travelling time was too good to miss out on.

After completing my contract at the Hostel I managed to get other building jobs in the area and it was while travelling to one such job in Springvale Road, Donvale I was talking to the owner driver, Charlie Young of the Donvale to Mitcham bus service and mentioned that I had a background of bus operations as my father W.J.Glasson had a bus business in Ballarat prior to the second World War. Charlie then mentioned to me that he was about to start up a new service from Mitcham to Park Orchards so I offered my services to him. He said that he already had a driver in mind but thought he might give me a try to give him a break. The other driver lasted six weeks because he found it too hard to get out of bed in time to start work at 5.30am. Charlie had been running the Donvale service for about a year. That route was Mitcham Station via Whitehorse Rd to Cook Street then Burnett Street - Doncaster Road, Mitcham Road, Old Warrandyte Road- Catjump Road, Springvale Road and Mitcham Road. This service was using a 2nd hand Chevrolet bus with wartime austerity body (no doors no inside lining) was a 22 perimeter seat vehicle operating six days per week later extended to seven days.

The service I was to operate on Park Orchards run was from corner of Berringa road and Park Road (park Orchards) via Park road, Mitcham Road and Whitehorse Road to Mitcham station north side. The bus used was an early post war Reo which was originally a diesel fuelled vehicle which had been repowered with a petrol engine prior to Charlie buying it, this vehicle was a 26 passenger perimeter seater still no doors. The Park Orchards service operated six days a week with a broken shift starting first trip leaving Park Orchards at 6.10am Monday to Friday last bus leaving Mitcham 7.10pm except Friday when last bus left after the picture show at Mitcham Memorial Hall at the cnr of Whitehorse Road and McDowell Street and travelled until last passenger alighted.

Saturday service commenced a bit later in the morning and finished after arrival of last night train from Melbourne at about 12.45am. As driver I was message boy, paperboy, postman, and Telephone box serviceman. On occasions some of my passenger would board the bus without any money for the fare and ask to pay at end of the week (pay day) and I never ever had to remind them as they always paid. A lot of Market Gardens operated by Italian families were along the route and I was well looked after by them as they gave me a lot of vegies, some of which I had up to that time not heard of such as capsicums so they had to tell me how to use them. Names I recall from that time were Peligreno's, Italianos and Titotos. Whenever an Italian wedding took place I always received a small gift of sugared almonds (a great honour). Other families along the route were Auman's, Honeybuns, Pettys and Davies, all orchardists.

On one occasion I was travelling into Mitcham with a full load of passengers and noticed that it was a bit windy while going through the pine forest and on approaching the bottom of the hill saw a number of trees, mostly eucalypts across the road. So I got out to check and found the road impassible so decided to turn back and get to Mitcham via Ringwood but found I couldn't turn because of the branches littering the road, some too large to move so borrowed an axe from Mrs. Green who lived up the hill from the bridge to cut my way out finally arriving in Mitcham over an hour late.

Each year on one Sunday the Carmelite Monastery (Whitefriars) a festival was held, this was the Marion Festival and all busses from Jimmy Willis (Willis & Brockwell), Charlie Young and Clarie Bird were pressed into service to transport people from Mitcham Station, all loading and unloading was supervised by police. On one trip the

policeman was counting people off my bus and when he got to 105 he put his head in the doorway and asked if I had a backdoor open letting people walk through, all this on a 26 seat single door bus.

After about a year of starting the Park Orchards run, a twice weekly return trip for shoppers was started from Good Govers and Heatherdale Roads to Mitcham using Heatherdale and Whitehorse Roads. This eventually became a full service until Heatherdale Station opened and patronage declined by almost 90%. Instead of closing, the service was extended to the corner of Barbara Street and Canterbury Road and instead of using Whitehorse Road, Forster Street and Brunswick Road were used. A later extension was to the shop at corner of Beddoe Road and Centre Road, Vermont East which operated until Eastland opened when it was again altered to its current route.

Prior to Heatherdale Station opening Park Orchards and Donvale services were taken over by M.M.T.B. (Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board). This allowed Charlie to concentrate his services on Rooks Road which he had been building up. This service - Mitcham Station, north side Whitehorse Road, Rooks Road to Lorikeet Street being a fifteen minute peak hour service meeting every second train from Melbourne as many as 60 passengers on one trip was not uncommon, often more on school busses and still 26 seaters with no door. Vermont East to Eastland journeys were very popular with mums- many trips carried 26 passengers with 16 prams and some folded pushers- lots of fun when some prams from rear of bus had to be unloaded at Heatherdale.

Charlie Young,s fleet over the years consisted of: -

22 seat Austerity body Lend Lease Chevrolet

26 seat Reo

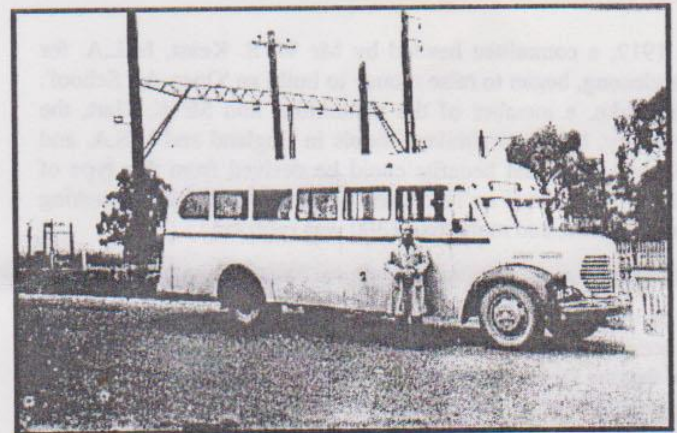
26 seat White

26 seat OB. Bedford built by Commonwealth Aircraft Co.

Ford V8 with 2 speed rear axle which had been used in Victoria High Country.

The only new bus was a 26seat Bedford built by R.E. Mee at Heidleburg North .

After 19 years operating, Charlie sold the services to Ventura where I remained as a Charter Coach Captain for 11 years before retiring in 1981.



Bill Glasson standing by the bus at the Mitcham Railway Station.

### Items for the Newsletter

Your editors are also busy on other Societies activities and would appreciate items from members for the Newsletter. Sometimes we have not the time to search for suitable items. Any member wishing to assist should have the item with the Editors by the 15th or with a suggested topic.



## GRAVEYARDS I HAVE SEEN

A recent holiday in Scotland gave me the opportunity to check some cemeteries and kirkyards in areas where some of my ancestors originated. Headstones and monuments in many cemeteries have not been transcribed, so personal inspection is the only way to find out much vital information not available elsewhere.

I was looking for traces of the ancestors of two maternal great great grandparents who separately migrated to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s and met and married in the vicinity of Clunes. These were Alexander Burnett, born in 1826 in Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire and Margaret McMurchy, born in Campbeltown, Argyllshire in 1838. While their parents' names were known, very little other information about them was available from the OPRs (Old Parish Registers) microfilmed by the Latter Day Saints and available in Australia through their Family History centres.

It was apparent from the records that a lot of Burnetts had lived in the area between Banff and Fraserburgh, both on the coast and inland, in the NE of Scotland. The McMurchys, on the other hand, seemed to be concentrated around the fishing and distilling town of Campbeltown, on the west coast. So in the limited time available, I planned three activities: visits to the Aberdeen and North-East Family History Society (ANEFHS) in Aberdeen; a brief car tour to some kirkyards in parishes where Burnetts had been recorded, and a bus trip to Campbeltown where the old cemetery (still in use) was known to contain the graves of at least two candidates vying for the honour of being one of my great great grandfathers. Both of these were named Daniel, of similar age, and had been seamen. One, a ship's captain, had died in Glasgow in 1854 and his body had been returned to Campbeltown for burial. But there was no record of his marriage to Catherine Maxwell, my great great grandmother, only to someone else, a few years after my great grandmother was born. Could he have been her father, in an earlier marriage? Well, as it turned out, he wasn't. The inscription on the tombstone of another Daniel McMurchy, described as a "superannuated mariner" who died at the age of 93, showed that he was the one who had married Catherine, and furthermore revealed the names of several of Margaret's siblings, some previously unknown. The captain's tombstone was also discovered, and from the family relationships mentioned on it, it was clear that his was a different branch.

Incidentally, both these graves were in the oldest section, which had been fenced off with "Do not enter - dangerous gravestones" signs. Having come all this way, I was not going to be put off, so I took the risk and was rewarded for my bravery!

I can't say that the inspections of the smaller kirkyards in Aberdeenshire were as fruitful, but they were very picturesque! (see photos - near Fordyce and Rosehearty). Of those visited, most were in tiny hamlets and in ruins; though well-kept, not many of the older headstones were legible, owing to 300+ years of Scottish weather.

Less picturesque, but much warmer, friendly and more helpful, were the members of the ANEFHS in Aberdeen, who provided a lot of information, advice and a stack of photocopied family history sheets which filled quite a few gaps. Unfortunately, I did not have time to visit Edinburgh, where unmicrofilmed records of Episcopalian BDMs are kept. Why didn't my people stick with the Church of Scotland!

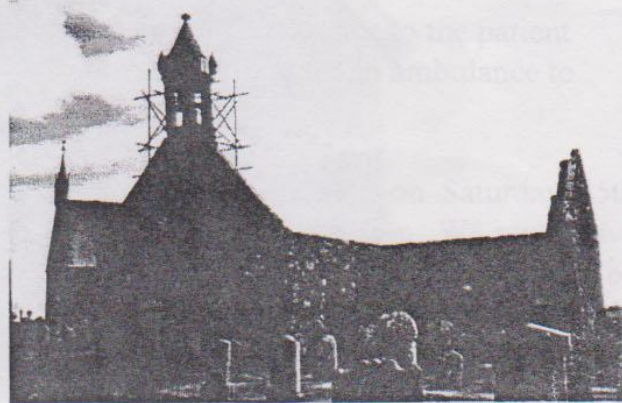
A few things I learnt on the journey:

- it may be sunny in Scotland, but there is always a freezing wind,

so wrap up well

- take several pens to record your data; this will save you having to continually sharpen a very blunt pencil on the tombstones when the biro runs out in the middle of your search
- go with a saintly person who tolerates cold well, is patient, a good navigator and is actually willing to get out of the car and share the task of scouring the kirkyard for headstones bearing the chosen name, and is still speaking to you by the end of the day
- consult, and preferably join, the local family history society which hopefully will have already done a lot of the hard work for you

Peter Simmenauer



### 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.



**President**

Valda Arrowsmith 9874 1414

**Secretary**

Barbara Keene 9874 4919

**Treasurer**

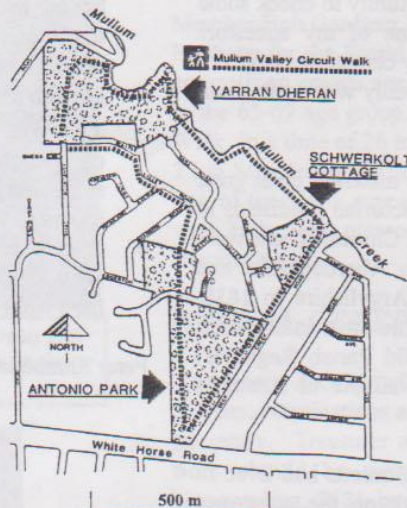
Barbara Rogalski 9874 4668

Editors Barbara Gardiner  
Ted Arrowsmith

Distribution Val Riches

Our Society on the Internet.

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



Melway Ref. 49 D7

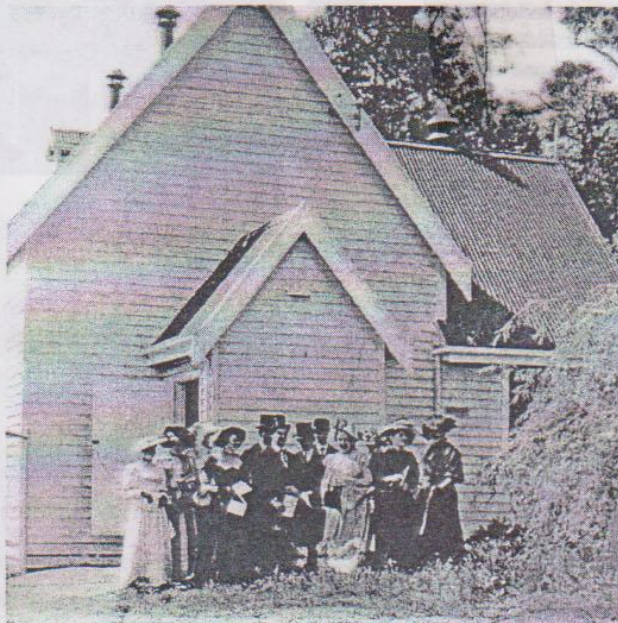


*Nunawading and District  
Historical Society, Inc.  
acknowledge the support  
from the  
City of Whitehorse*

Museum Accreditation Program

*MAE MAE MAE*  
Accredited Museum

ISSN 1328-2395



**CAN YOU HELP TO IDENTIFY THE OCCASION.**

The photo on the left was taken outside St Lukes Anglican Church, in Vermont. It is thought to be an occasion when a group of people were dressed up to celebrate an anniversary of a previous event.

Please contact the President or the Secretary if you can help.

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

Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, Vic, 3132 (Melway Ref. 49 D7)

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

Mr. Peter Simmenauer  
6 Stewart Avenue,  
Blackburn South  
3130

