

# Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

Formerly Nunawading & District Historical Society Inc.

## NEWSLETTER



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April 2004

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

### From the President

This year has commenced with many demands on our members time and talent. Demand is keeping our speakers busy and we thank Barbara Rogalski and Valda Arrowsmith for giving their time to promote the Historical Society. Our artifact cataloguers have spent several Wednesdays reboxing the artifacts so that like is stored with like – e.g. all wedding gowns together, all black items together. A job proceeding well.

The Heritage Open Day will be on Sunday 21st March from 12 noon to 5pm. As usual, there is plenty to interest all, but to make the day a success we need lots of helpers. There is a job for everyone, whether you have to sit or come only for an hour or so, we need you! Our newsletter is early due to the Open Day. This year is the 40th Anniversary of the restorations of Schwerkolt Cottage, and we will launch a book titled “Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum – The Legacy of Johann August Schwerkolt – Pioneer”, written by Ted Arrowsmith and to be launched by the Mayor, Cr. Jessie McCallum.

Our helpers will be installing Displays at the Nunawading Library - 31st March to 27th April and at the Vermont South Library – 7th June – 2nd July.

At the February General Meeting, the Mayor was our Guest Speaker. She told us of her surprise at being re-elected to Council, let alone serving a second term as Mayor. Her pride in this harmonious, multi-cultural City is evident to all as she entertains at civic ceremonies, community celebrations, Australia Day festivities and ecumenical breakfast, to name a few occasions.

We welcomed Bill Morrison, the new Parks, Recreation and Planning Manager and proudly showed him over our Complex. We are moving to preliminary discussions with the City of Whitehorse for Stage 2 of our extensions.

Our thanks to Yvonne Fitzmaurice for the donation of a book on Fans by Helene Alexander which she purchased at the Fan Museum at Greenwich, U.K. on her recent holiday.

The next General Meeting will be on Saturday, 3rd April at 1.30 pm. Our Speaker is Jock Ryan, his subject “Crooks, Cranks and Chaos in Early Melbourne” Whether you are into

crooks, cranks, chaos or just enjoy hearing about this interesting subject, we look forward to seeing you.

Judith Fry

**Saturday 13th March – Working Bee**  
**From 9.30 – Come along and spruce up the museum and cottage for the Open Day**

**Sunday March 21st Heritage Open Day**  
**Noon to 5 pm**

**At Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum,  
Deep Creek Road, Mitcham**  
**Attractions will be – Sausage Sizzle,  
Lacemakers, Spinners and Weavers,  
Woodturners, Tatters, Blacksmiths,  
Art in Bark, Stationary Steam Engines,  
and Historical Fire Fighting Equipment**

**At 3.30 pm, Cr. Jessie McCallum,  
Mayor of City of Whitehorse will launch  
our book “Schwerkolt Cottage and  
Museum – The Legacy of Johann August  
Schwerkolt”**

**Written by Ted Arrowsmith**

**Saturday 3rd April, 2004 Meeting at  
1.30 pm. Guest Speaker will be Jock  
Ryan, Subject – “Crooks, Cranks and  
Chaos in Early Melbourne.”**

**\*NOTE MEETING 1st SATURDAY AS  
EASTER ON 2nd WEEKEND**

### 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.

## From the Archives

### A Brief History of the Eastern Suburban Railway

By Andrew Hillier (1985)

The first eastern suburban railway From Melbourne to Hawthorn was opened in 1861 by the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay United Railway Company. Poor management, coupled with the high cost of track and station maintenance led to several accidents on the eastern and other lines, which posed a threat to public safety.

A rapidly increasing population to the east of Melbourne, and the financial difficulties placed on the private railway companies, forced them to sell out or taken over by the Colonial Government. By 1878, all private lines had come under Government control, and were extended and upgraded during the next decade. The growth in the population of these small rural communities, was a result of rapid subdivision by land speculators and real estate companies, so that by the early 1880's, suburban subdivision had stretched as far east as Camberwell and even Surrey Hills. The farming communities were forced to move further out to Blackburn, Box Hill, East Burwood, Mitcham and beyond. This move also meant they needed a solid and reliable transport network for their crops, their livestock and themselves, to be taken to the market of the rapidly sprawling City of Melbourne.

Seeing this practical need for a system of transportation to the east, as well as an easy way to win votes, the Government of the day passed a Railway Act in 1879, and the line from Hawthorn was finally extended, first to Camberwell in April 1882, and finally to Lilydale in December 1882.

The line was a single track only and the then "new" stations to be built initially, included Auburn, Glenferrie, Camberwell, East Camberwell, Canterbury, Chatham, Surrey Hills, Box Hill, Blackburn, Mitcham and Ringwood and so on up the line to Lilydale. Once the railway arrived, it began the transformation of the eastern region from farmland to a residential area, and assisted population growth with the establishment of the Brick and Tile industry. The heavy vein of clay soil deposits along the railway line from Box Hill to Mitcham, spurred many Brick and Tile manufacturing companies, some of which

were the Blackburn Brick and Tile Co. and the Tesselated Tile Co Limited of Mitcham. Blackburn brick was of a very high quality clay and well regarded by builders. The company did not last very long and folded with the depression of the 1890's. However, Mitcham's Tesselated Tile Co. in Rooks Road, \* was the largest along the line and at its peak in the years before World War One, it employed 1500 people. It was more secure than its Blackburn counterpart and survived until 1955, when in the face of economic competition from overseas it was forced to close down, being no longer profitable.

The other industry to benefit from the coming of the railway was the orcharding industry. Transportation was made much easier as cool stores, such as Blackburn's Blue Moon, could be built near the railway line where fruit could be kept, packed and transported to the lucrative markets of Melbourne, whilst kept fresh in packing sheds and with the introduction of refrigerated railway vans, arrived at market in a relatively fresh condition.

The subdivisional companies pushed further and further out through the course of the 1880's and Box Hill and Blackburn became their new targets. As they were several miles from Melbourne with limited facilities to offer, except perhaps unlimited space and rural living, these "land boom" companies devised incentive schemes to attract "city" people to the area. Free rail travel was often included in the price of the land purchased.

The eastern line was electrified along with many others in 1922-23 and double tracks were laid. It remained the principle transport and supply link with the rest of Melbourne until the post war period of the 1950's, when the motor car spread the suburbs still further, and orchards began to disappear. This increase in population from the time the railways line was originally built also saw several other stations built along the line, Tunstall in 1888 (changed to Nunawading in 1945), Laburnum in 1958 and Heatherdale in 1959.

#### *From the Editor*

*My thanks to Ted Arrowsmith, who found this article while searching through our collection for information on the railways – thanks to many of our past members, we are fortunate that we have so much information available.*

*Andrew Hillier was Secretary of the Society for some years during the 1980's.*

*\* Tesselated Tile Co was located in Richards St.  
\* Flower Growers within our district were also assisted by regular train timetables.*

## DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

The Whitehorse Historical Society is entirely staffed by unpaid volunteers, but there are unavoidable expenses in maintaining its services and collections, such as insurance, stationery and photocopying, postage, memberships and subscriptions, preservation items, services and photography.

The collection is mainly added to by donation, but occasionally items are purchased or need repair.

In addition to Council grants, we raise funds through holding events, applications to other bodies for funds, sales and membership subscriptions. Our efforts are limited by the amount of time that our volunteers can give.

Without your generous donations, the Society would be unable to provide the level of services that we currently do. We have arranged with the Australian Tax Office to have "Deductible Gift Recipient" status, that is, donations to us of \$2 or more will be tax deductible. We ask you to take this into account when considering donating to the Society.

## BEQUESTS

We are asking you to consider making a bequest to the Society in your will. This could be an item of value, a sum of money or the interest derived from a trust fund established for the purpose. Provision in a will is a good way of ensuring that your wishes are carried out. Please let a Committee member know if you are considering this possibility - we would be pleased to discuss it with you.

## MAKING A BEQUEST IN A WILL

The following wording is a guide. If in doubt, please discuss it with your legal adviser.

"I... .. give, devise and bequeath unto the Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. for its general purposes, free of all duties, the following: (as applicable)

- ... % of my Estate or the residue of my Estate
- the sum of \$... ..,
- property (details).....
- Other (details) ... ..

and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or other Proper Officer of the Society shall be sufficient discharge to my Executor for the Bequest which is to be applied to the general purposes of the Society".

Peter Simmenauer

The Mullum Mullum Festival – March 21st, 27th, 28th. Many activities on these days including a walk led by Valda Arrowsmith – leaving at 11 am on 21st from Yarran Dheran Information Centre to Schwerkolt Cottage Museum Complex. Check Whitehorse News.

On Saturday 8th May at 10 am, the Annual Conference of the Association of Eastern Historical Societies will be held at the Croydon Historical Society Room, which adjoins the Croydon Library, Civic Square, Croydon. Guest Speaker will be Shirley Jones and her subject will be the life of the artist, James Alfred Turner. Shirley who now lives in Croydon is one of our long time members and has made a great contribution to our society over the years as well as being a successful artist herself.

On Saturday 31st July, our Society will host a luncheon for Association Members at our Local History Room, where a speaker from the Railway Historical Society will inform us of the History of Railways in Victoria.

**Saturday 5th June, 1.30 pm, our guest speaker will be Mr. David Crowe whose subject will be "Parks of the City of Whitehorse".**

**Saturday 10th July – 9.30 am working bee**

**HAS ANYONE BORROWED OUR ORAL HISTORY BOOK? WE NEED IT URGENTLY!**

## Cataloguing the Collection - Current Status

Artifacts	3365	Items catalogued
Documents	4763	Items catalogued
Photographs	2926	Items catalogued

## THANKS:

for the provision to the Society of space to display our photographs.  
Stockdale & Leggo, South Parade, Blackburn

## REMEMBER

Box Hill Cemetery Records and Nunawading Gazette for 1964-1974 available on microfiche for research.  
Whitehorse Historical Society Local History Collection - open 10.30 am to 2.30 pm on Wednesday. Visitors welcomed. Ring 9873 4946 for an appointment at other times.

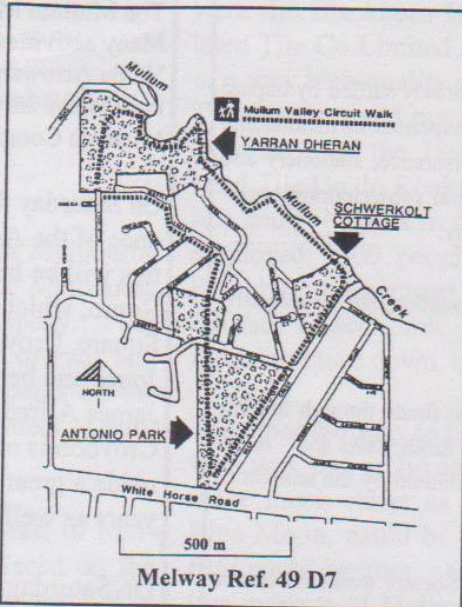
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**Our Society on the Internet.**

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



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*MHP MHP MHP*  
**Accredited Museum**  
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Vintage Train at Blackburn Railway Crossing May 1968

**Whitehorse 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

