

Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

Formerly Nunawading & District Historical Society Inc.

1965 - 2007



NEWSLETTER



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Series 15 no 5 September-October 2007

From the President

What a perfect day we had for Heritage Day. Thank you to all Historical Society members who assisted in making the day run so smoothly. In particular thanks to Barbara Gardiner, the organizer, and the members who helped. Following on from Heritage Day came the walks around Mitcham and Blackburn and a bus tour also proved successful. Thanks are due to Valda Arrowsmith and Ian Nethercote for their role as guides around the Mitcham and Blackburn areas.

At our August AGM a new committee was elected and details of the office bearers and committee members are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. We also enjoyed a very interesting account of T.R. B Morton's life related by his grand-daughter Dorothy Bullen. She drew on an extensive obituary from a contemporary newspaper account and has presented the Society with a photocopy for our references.

Such resources are very useful. Peter Simmenauer has prepared a short article for this issue which tells just how much we depend on such material.

On October 13th at our next meeting we will be opening the new Implement Shed. Thank you to all of those involved in bringing this project to fruition. Historical Society members have visualised for some 30 years the inclusion in the Schwerkolt complex of this historic piece of land on which the shed is built. So please join us for this long-awaited historic occasion!

Judith Fry

(Right) Mr. Noel Cutler demonstrates the bushman's art of whip cracking with great flair at the Heritage Day held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex September 2007. Mr. Cutler treated visitors to demonstrations of many other bush skills.

Invitation to WHS members & supporters

Saturday 13th October 2007
1.30pm

Please join us for the
grand opening of the new
Implement Shed

Refreshments will be kindly
provided by the City of Whitehorse



Photograph by Peter Simmenauer

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

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.

This portion of a file from our archive of articles was written by a foundation member and past secretary of our Society, when it was known as the Nunawading and District Historical Society and before the amalgamation of the cities of Nunawading and Box Hill in 1995 which then became the City of Whitehorse. Mrs Nancy Leach was a keen local historian, and these are her words.

A.Y.F

Nunawading in 1872.

When the Shire of Nunawading was established in 1872 its wealth and population was mainly concentrated in what is now Box Hill, as it had been since the 1840's. The area now known as the City of Nunawading was uninhabited, densely forested, with a few tracks winding through it to the more established settlement at Yering, or to the populous gold field at Warrandyte and the more open and settled area of Mulgrave and Dandenong until 1855, when it was first surveyed and the land was offered for sale.

Few people had much hope of seeing prosperous settlements in the new area. It was so heavily timbered that it would be impossible to do anything with it without spending much time and money on clearing, and when the land was cleared, it seemed most unpromising. The soil was reported to be extremely poor, and it was doubted whether it could be used to raise any profitable crop. Many who bought at the first sales were land speculators, who seemed to have trouble disposing of the land they bought in the hope of early profits.

A few, like **Holland** in South Blackburn, who had a dairy farm of 300 acres were doing something, but many of the speculators failed utterly because they tried to develop small villages in Nunawading, Mitcham and in Vermont. It was doubtful whether they sold any of the building allotments they advertised, but the streets they drew on their maps still survive and account for some very peculiar street directions.

Speculators did better when they sold out to local farmers, such as the **Schwerkolts**. A number of battlers gradually developed small mixed farms, learning by experience what could be done with the land, but their main crop for many years was firewood, as they cleared their land, and one of the most flourishing local industries was charcoal burning. A more hopeful sign was the activity of **Dr L.L. Smith's Farm**, in the triangle between Canterbury and Boronia Roads, Vermont.

These developments were slow, because nearly half the area was still crown land, and there was no demand for its sale.

Transport was very difficult - there was no railway and the roads were all unmade. Whitehorse Road was described as 'the worst in the Colony' and people in Ringwood were pressing for a better alternative route to Melbourne.

Changes in the land laws allowed men of small means to take up land on easy terms after 1865 and there was strong influx of farmers and farm labourers from surrounding areas such as Hawthorn, Box Hill, Doncaster and from Lilydale.

The centre of Vermont was taken up by **Moore, Jobbins, Bowen, Keenan and Madden**; a large part of Nunawading was taken up by **Boyle, Rooks, Voight, Geraghty, McArthur, Matters, McClelland and Sergeant**; and the central area of Mitcham was taken up by **Ainger and Cook**; and the northern area, reaching to Donvale, by **Simpson, Cummins, Quinlan, Brenock, Logan, Schmidt and Herr**. These with others who had come into the district at approximately the same time: **McGlone, McClare, Course, Mayne, Tainton and Fankhauser**, and a number of others, who by a combination of local knowledge, determination and hard work transformed the country, developing a series of well set up small farms and orchards.

Several of them were particularly noted as men of energy and initiative, whose leadership was key to changing a hopeless area into one of promise, deserving municipal status.

Nancy Leach



Amey Cook and Grace Clements, children of local "battlers" circa 1889 -1890

The new WHS Committee August 2007

Office bearers

President Judith Fry
Vice president Wendy Standfield
Treasurer Robert (Bob) Gardiner
Secretary Valerie Marshall

Committee

Valda Arrowsmith
Barbara Gardiner
Vicki Jones-Evans
Ian Nethercote
Janiece Plehn
June Ventouras
Kaele Way

Special mention and thanks was made to all outgoing committee members and in particular for the terrific contribution made by Mr Bill Gray, a past president and long-standing member of the Society.

Membership News

**A warm welcome to new member,
Mr Angus Watson of Blackburn.
We hope he enjoys his time at
the Society.**

**Most members have paid their subscription fees and we thank them. The few members who have overlooked their renewals will receive a reminder with this newsletter and we hope they will continue their membership and forward fees to the Treasurer at
PO Box 272 Mitcham 3132.**

Barbara Gardiner

Cataloguing the Collection - Current Status

Artifacts	3979	Items catalogued
Documents	6082	Items catalogued
Photographs	3402	Items catalogued

REMEMBER

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

Out and About with WHS displays

On Saturday 9th of September the Society mounted a photographic display for the German Fest held at the Immigration Museum. The display featured Schwerkolt Cottage from the 1900s to the 1960s, prior to acquisition by the City of Nunawading.

Ted Arrowsmith and Pat Richardson set up the display and were available to answer the many questions about the Cottage.

Heritage Day 2007

a perspective by Barbara Gardiner

In my opinion this year's Heritage Day was the best we have ever had. We attracted a large crowd who enjoyed themselves as they wandered amongst the various exhibits.

My thanks to all our volunteers who worked so hard on the day – it is tiring but very rewarding. Thanks also to the groups who demonstrated their skills and equipment as their contribution is central to the day.

Thanks also to Julie Jones from the City of Whitehorse who organized the attendance of the whip cracking expert – he entertained all day and demonstrated skills of the Bush.



One of the many exhibitors was the Yarra Valley Machinery Preservation Society

Photographer Peter Simmentaur

Diary Dates

Speaker for Saturday, 1.30pm December 8th
Christmas Meeting
Ms Dorothy Hall on the
Salvation Army, Box Hill

Whitehorse Historical Society, Inc.
acknowledge the support
of the
City of Whitehorse



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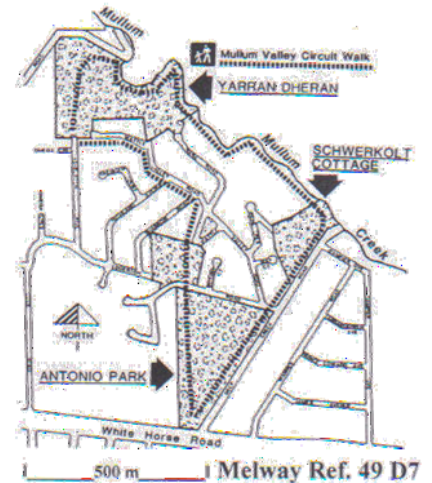
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Our Society on the Internet:
www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/
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THE DOCUMENT COLLECTION

Our collection of books, maps and documents currently numbers 6,100 items and continues to grow daily. It is housed in the Local History Room on shelves, in map drawers or in filing cabinets and can be accessed by a personal visit on Wednesdays 10 am to 3pm. Our catalogue of holdings can be consulted via our web site: www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/ or through the Whitehorse Council site:

www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au.

The collection is used for both reference and general information purposes. Reference books are regularly consulted by members of teams from our society who catalogue and care for the artifacts, documents and photographs in Schwerkolt Cottage and the Museum.

The other volumes are documents of a more general nature pertaining mainly to the history of Nunawading they include: newspaper cuttings, personal reminiscences, scrapbooks, family histories, business records, land care documents, books about the history of the area, many written and published by local residents. We receive requests for information from local people, and from interstate and overseas, which we satisfy from these sources if we can, otherwise, we refer people to other relevant repositories.

The maps are many and varied in size, age and type

and include originals, copies, some aerial photographs and many estate agents' plans. The larger maps and photographs are generally stored flat in the map drawers, while the smaller items are stored in the vertical files. Early maps we hold of Nunawading include Shire maps from 1853, 1862 and 1892, which have the names of the purchasers inscribed on each plot they bought, some of whom remained and developed their holdings while others subdivided their land and sold off the smaller plots.

The documents in the filing cabinets and shelves cover an enormous range of subjects, all dealing with the history of Nunawading and the personalities who by their influence or industry have helped shape the present.

After the purchases and donations of items for our library have been evaluated and catalogued, onto both the Society database and the Whitehorse Manningham Heritage Project catalogue, using Museums Australia standards, they are available for public use.

Most of our collection has been donated; we rely on your donations of material of historical interest to maintain its growth and usefulness to researchers. Please bear us in mind when you next clean out your cupboards or garage!

P. Simmenauer



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Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, Vic, 3132 (Melway Ref. 49 D7) if undeliverable please return to P.O.Box 272 Mitcham, 3132, Vic