



## The Whitehorse Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Series 17 no 5 Oct-Nov 2009

ABN 44 352 041 634 Inc A00122351

### The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

#### 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.

#### Contents

- Presidents report.....2
- Report on the Heritage Festival .....2-3
- Flappers.....4-5
- Diary dates.....5
- Deco and the Collection..5
- From the Collection....6



**POD**  
Place of Deposit  
Accredited by the  
PRO Victoria



The Whitehorse  
Historical  
Society, Inc.  
acknowledges  
the support of the  
City of Whitehorse



### Spring Cleaning - Heritage style

As Spring arrives our thoughts turn to the age old tasks of cleaning the dust and dirt of winter away.

WHS members Bob Gardiner and Maurie Wyatt together with Barb Gardiner have helped us utilise some of our external display area. It is now sheltered and accessible via the inside of the Museum.

The team has organised a space to display our heritage collection of laundry and cooking equipment.

Ranging from the troughs and washboards needing much elbow grease to the "high tech" kerosene multi-burner stove and oven, the display is a good reminder of how fortunate we are in the truly labour-saving devices we have in our homes today.

The display was one of the key new display features opened to the public on the September Heritage day.

There will be more articles about some of the key pieces of equipment in our newsletter next year. The temporary display case featured a display of teenage technology of the 50's and a display of 1950's house plans to support the heritage theme a 'Suburban Dream'-1950's"

**Next meeting : Saturday 10th October 1.30pm**

**Speaker: Ray Galloway on the  
"History of Ventura Buses"**



## From the President

Dear Members

As your continuing President I would like to welcome our new Committee Member, Keith Hancock. Keith grew up in Mitcham and has provided valuable information on people, places and events to add to our Collection. Peter Simmenauer has stepped down from the position of Secretary but remains a Committee Member. Peter served for seven years as Secretary. A very valuable contribution to the Society. I would like to welcome Kaele Way AM JP as our Secretary. Kaele has served on the Committee for two years and brings her experience as a former Councillor as well as her business skills which will be an asset to the Committee. I would also like to thank all the Committee members who have continued in their roles.

Once again under the direction of Barbara Gardiner we held a very successful Heritage Open Day. The weather kept us guessing in the morning but we had sunshine in time for the children's races on the Cottage lawn. My thanks to all members and their families who helped make the day so enjoyable for participants and visitors. Thanks also to Julie Jones, Heritage Program Officer from the Council for her help on the day and in providing the minstrel singers to add to the atmosphere. The Community Grant we gratefully received from the City of Whitehorse enabled us to provide plenty of attractions.

As part of Heritage Week the Society contributed many items to the 50 x 50 display in the Whitehorse Art Space. Jackie Nicholls-Reeves, Art Curator for the City of Whitehorse and Gillian McCarthy, her assistant, presented a very polished exhibition.

The afternoon tea featured Professor Graeme Davison speaking entertainingly on the 1950s and for those members able to accept their invitation to the Opening that 1950s favourite lemon meringue pie. The exhibition in the Box Hill Art Space was open for the month of September.

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September the Blackburn Walk took place. Thanks to Valda Arrowsmith for conducting the walk and to both Valda and Ted for their extensive research for this Heritage Week activity.

Our new Laundry display was opened on Heritage Open Day. Thanks to Robert Gardiner, Maurie Wyatt, Jenny Walker and Barbara Gardiner for their work on the display. We have received many compliments. The display also features Mrs Hooke's bicycle which members will recall was donated by the Hooke family last year. Our Teenage Technology of the 50s display has also been of interest to visitors.

We have been in discussion with Melissa Hayes from Whitehorse Council regarding the feasibility plan for the Museum Extension. The Council are keen to have the plans drawn up for this budget item.

*Vicki Jones-Evans*

## Heritage Festival 2009 By Bob and Barb Gardiner

Our Heritage Open Day on September 13<sup>th</sup> was a great success despite the coolish weather – we packed our groups under the verandah or in the History Room as the weather looked threatening during the morning.

We must express our thanks to the City of Whitehorse for their financial assistance and to our loyal friends who attend each year demonstrating their skills and displaying their interesting items.



Special attractions were Jamieson's Run Animal Farm, Tip Top Tom's Magic and Balloons, and the Crescent City Serenaders – all most entertaining! (pictured above)

Special thanks to Julie Jones from the City of Whitehorse for all her hard work on the Heritage Festival program.

Our members were kept busy from 10 am until nearly 6 pm and I personally would like to express my appreciation to these wonderful people who are members of the Whitehorse Historical Society, Inc.

Barbara Gardiner

## WORKING BEE

**November—Saturday 14th**

**Last one for the year  
9.30 am until 12 noon**

***Please come along and lend a hand.***



## Flappers & Women's independence in the 1920s

By Jenny Walker

When we think of the term 'flapper' it is often only the distinctive women's fashions of the 1920s that come to mind, along with a bit of jazz and Charleston-style dancing. The flapper girl's image was defined by a boyish look - loose-fitting, knee-length skirts and dresses that disguised her womanly figure, oversized jackets and jumpers, and a very short 'bob' haircut. In fact the name 'flapper' itself derived from her modish attire - that is, from the sound of fashionably loose boots flapping on the footpath (Johnson 2009).



But flappers represent much more than a bygone era of style in terms of the new freedoms sought and experienced by women of the so called roaring twenties. During World War One many women of the flapper generation had experienced an independence not available to their mothers and grandmothers. As soldiers departed for the war, young women began taking on jobs previously reserved

for men. This may be one of the reasons flapper attire was 'boyish' and loose-fitting - it was better suited to the working world than long petticoats and corsets. It was also considered acceptable for women to socialise with soldiers in public places. The result of both war-time activities was a growing presence of women in the public realm (Smart 2001: 2).

Flappers have also been associated with the rampant consumerism of the 1920s, as middle-class girls who worked found they had a disposable income of their own. To illustrate, the amount of money spent on cosmetics in the US during the 1920s has been estimated at somewhere between \$750 million and more than \$2 billion (Johnson 2009). Meanwhile in Melbourne a tram traveler 'contributed to *Aussie* a 'study' of the 'amazing geographical array' evident in the Flapper's dress, remarking on her French gloves, American shoes and silk stockings, Italian hat, German handbag and Swiss handkerchief' (Forth 1929, cited in Conor 2002: 46).

With all this newfound independence, however, came accusations of immodesty and flippancy from the more conservative sectors of society. Public commentators criticised the apparent exhibitionism of flappers. A writer for the *Bulletin*, for example, wrote "our streets and public places are filled with women who are apparently trying to see

how much they can leave off without being arrested" (cited in Conor 2002: 51). Young women also struggled with the older generations of former suffragettes. These women had fought for recognition of women's rights in part by driving attention away from women's sexuality and so many were aghast at the favoured leisure activities of flappers, which included "suggestive films, smoking and drinking alcohol in public, dancing till late in the night, courting in public, and 'lolling' on the beach in swimsuits" (Smart 2001: 6).

There was a darker side to these accusations of immodesty. A common belief flourished that flappers invited the sexual attentions of men through their dress and behaviour, and were consequently to blame for any assault they suffered as a result. They were characterised as a "menace to young men of the community", and "Courts were advised to be 'very sceptical about even the biggest certainty of any flapper when it comes to a question of identification and a man's liberty'" (Truth 1920; Beckett's *Budget* 1927, cited in Conor 2002: 53).

These attitudes reveal the limitations on women's independence that still existed during the 1920s, despite their improved personal freedoms. Historians reflecting on the period have noted that regardless of the flapper's image as a sexual creature, sex outside of marriage was still considered highly unacceptable. Furthermore, while women were able to work in clerical occupations previously reserved for men only, they generally found these positions to be "dead-end jobs", and they were not able to ascend the ranks of authority as their male counterparts did (Johnson 2009). The flapper's eventual demise came with the Great Depression of the 1930s, as 'frivolity' went out of fashion and was replaced by a new conservatism brought about by the hardships of the time.



### References

Conor, L (2002). 'The Flapper in the Heterosexual Scene', in GT Espak, S Fatmowina & D Woods (eds), *New Talents: Jumping the Queue*, University of Queensland Press: 43-58.

Johnson, RL (2009). 'Flappers', *American history for Australian schools*, viewed online 26 May 2009, <[http://www.ancasa.arts.usyd.edu.au/ahas/flappers\\_overview.html](http://www.ancasa.arts.usyd.edu.au/ahas/flappers_overview.html)>

Smart, J (2001). 'Feminists, flappers and Miss Australia: Contesting the Meanings of Citizenship, Femininity and Nation in the 1920s', *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 71.



### History Week 2009

#### 25th October—1st November is History Week

To celebrate History Week 2009, the Royal Historical Society has provided information on History Week activities on their web site: [www.historyweek.org.au](http://www.historyweek.org.au) Information on the week's celebrations can also be obtained by calling the RHSV on 9326 9288

The Whitehorse Historical Society will celebrate this special week on **Wednesday 28th October** with an **Open Day at the Local History Room** from **10-30am-12 Noon**.

WHS members will showcase the volunteer work undertaken by the Wednesday working group highlighting the cataloguing and collection policy of the Society and the Museum.

The WHS received a grant from the RHSV towards the purchase of a banner which will be used in the promotion of the Society at festivals and events.

### Celebrating Seniors Week

The Blackburn Library will present an opportunity to reminisce over photos from bygone days in Blackburn on **Monday 5th October** from **10-00am-12-00pm**.

Bookings are essential. Coffee and Cakes will be served. To book your place call 9878 6851

### Any Deco in your attic or garage?

Deco has proved to be enormously popular in recent years with the amazing exhibition last year at the National Gallery of Victoria.

The WHS welcomes donations of memorabilia and in particular clothing that dates to the Art Deco era.

An important era for the evolution of the City this period is unfortunately not well represented in our Collection and we would like to be able to explore more fully some of the aspects of local life during this time.



### Whitehorse Historical Society Dates for your Diary

#### 10th October 1-30pm General Meeting

Guest Speaker- Ray Galloway on the "History of Ventura Buses"

#### 28th October

**Open Day at the Local History Room**  
10-00am-12pm

#### 14th November

**Working Bee 9-30am-12pm**

All welcome—come along and lend a hand.

#### 12th December 1-30pm General Meeting

Christmas Meeting Speaker Laurie Bunn on the "History of the Puffing Billy"

Meetings are held at the Local History Room  
Schwerkolt Cottage & Museum Complex Deep Creek Rd  
Mitcham

### Member News

**We offer our warmest congratulations to Kaele Way** who this year was appointed an AM in the Queens Birthday Honours list.

Kaele attended an Investiture ceremony on the 3rd of September at Government House Melbourne. At this year's WHS AGM, Kaele was elected to the role of Secretary of the Whitehorse Historical Society.

Thanks to all members who have paid their dues for this year. To all those who have been too busy to forward their fees please do so as soon as possible—your membership is important to us.

### WHS Sausage Sizzle

#### Bunnings Nunawading

**Sunday 4th October**

Volunteers needed to help with this important fund raiser for WHS.

Please call Kaele on 9877 1901

### Cataloguing Statistics

Photographs	-	3578
Artefacts	-	4216
Documents	-	5885

### REMINDER

**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**



#### WHS Committee Contacts

**President:** Vicki Jones-Evans  
9873 3383 - [vicki@xi.com.au](mailto:vicki@xi.com.au)

**Vice. President:** Valerie Marshall  
9803 4434

**Secretary:** Kaele Way AM JP  
9877 1901: [kaeleway@bigpond.net.au](mailto:kaeleway@bigpond.net.au)

**Treasurer:** Bob Gardiner 9874 8592  
[boobbarb@iprimus.com.au](mailto:boobbarb@iprimus.com.au)

Local History Room: (03) 9873 4946

#### Newsletter

Editor: Jay Miller 8344 7158 (BH)  
email: [jmil@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jmil@unimelb.edu.au)

#### Newsletter support group:

Yvonne Fitzmaurice  
Kaele Way AM JP  
Wendy Standfield  
Peter Simmenauer

#### WHS internet site:

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



Melway Ref. 49 D7

**Copy deadline for WHS Newsletters first Saturday of the month preceding the meeting month.**  
**Next deadline : 1st week of November 2009**

#### From the Collection



This building located at the corner of Mitcham Road and Victoria Avenue was originally known as Davin's Dairy which was later bought by Model Dairy.

This photograph dates to circa 1977

NP 1389



ISSN 1328-2395



Sender: Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwenkolt Cottage and Museum Complex, Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, Vic, 3132 (Melway Ref. 49 D7) If undeliverable please return to P.O. Box 272 Mitcham, Vic 3132.