

# The Whitehorse Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Series 20 no 4 - July-August 2012

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In the current issues of the newsletter we are printing extracts from the 1877 diary of immigrant Jabez Edwards (see page 5 for Part 2). How much did the experience change in the ensuing years? Following is an extract from Joyce Suto's book *Horsehair Worms and a Shark*, in which she describes her trip to Australia in 1955 as a

## “TEN POUND POM”

My application was speedily processed and I was interviewed at Australia House in London. I sailed from Tilbury on November 15, 1955, aboard the P&O ship *Orion*, which was due at Sydney just before Christmas (just over five weeks). Thus I was one spared the mixed blessing of travel on a migrant ship, one of a fortunate few selected to occupy cabin space made available by P&O. 'Space made available' was somewhat different from that of regular full-fare-paying passengers, with most of our cabins eight decks down, on H-deck, soon dubbed, though affectionately, Hell-deck! However, we could enjoy the fine food, entertainment, sports and all other amenities available. I add that for most of us it was all part of 'the great adventure'; this was the 1950s and we had lived through a War.

Our cabin for four had bunks in two tiers; the 'door' was a curtain; hanging space for clothes a few hooks (you needed your own hangers); there was one small drawer chest with one long and one short drawer each; and one folding seat. The cabin measured eight feet by seven and a half feet. I was fortunate with my cabin mates. Soon we had worked out a route to baths on a higher deck, which seemed to be generally free when we needed them. By going there in turns, congestion in the cabin was relieved while the business of finding and changing clothes for dinner was taking place. I remember how, while in turbulent waters, the bath water would change sides. One side of you would be immersed, the other high and dry, then the sides changed. This 'rocking' was quite soothing.

One wall of the cabin appeared to have the ship's engines on its other side. We grew used to the noises, but were rather alarmed when what looked like engine oil seeped through onto one of the bunks! This we reported. Shortly there appeared a very large seaman carrying a very large rag. He spoke no English. We lay low to see what would happen. Very efficiently he mopped up the oil, then with a broad smile, departed. We were too dumbfounded to speak! Later we had a good laugh, deciding that what didn't worry the crew need not worry us. Soon there were more exciting things to worry about, like what to wear to the fancy-dress party or would we win deck quoits . . .

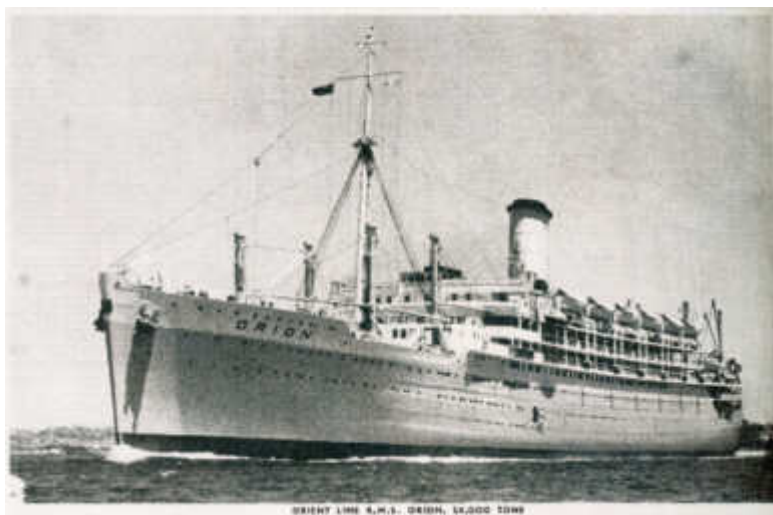
There were exciting trips ashore at various ports.

There were dolphins and flying fish, glorious sunsets and a social life. At Naples we saw Pompeii, at Gibraltar the Rock Apes, there was Malta, and for me, Colombo.

The second half of the voyage offered views more of sea than of land. Many found this tedious. But first there was Colombo. I was fortunate to be met there by an engineer friend who had been at Stafford under the Colombo Plan. We drove to Kandy to the Temple of the Tooth (Buddha's), saw many beautiful tropical gardens, elephants working or being washed in a river, and more. I fell in love with Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, all of it such a new experience. After this, the Indian Ocean was a great stretch of sea with no ports. And then we reached Perth and the country of our destination.

We all loved Perth and seeing, after the month-long voyage, many English-style homes, shops, and parks with English trees and flowers, though it was sad farewelling many passengers who disembarked there. Adelaide likewise. I retrieved my typewriter from storage, and, as I'd planned, posted from Adelaide letters to three libraries, one being to Sydney saying that I would call there on Monday or Tuesday, which I did.

Joyce Suto



**Next meeting: Saturday, 11 August 1.30 p.m.**

**Speaker:**

**Historian, Gerry Robinson**

**'The Value of History'**

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT – VICKI JONES-EVANS



Archway in hall  
of Strathdon House

### *Dear Members*

In our last newsletter I reported that in April, on that bitterly cold and very wet Tuesday when winter arrived, Valda Arrowsmith and I met with Council Parkside staff at Strathdon House to inspect the grounds in order to follow up members' concerns regarding the state of the property. In May Valda and I met with councillors and council officers, again on a very cold and wet day, at Strathdon House to inspect the inside of the house. Overall it is in sound condition, though there are some areas that need repairs. There are two hurdles to be overcome; one is to ascertain the plans VicRoads has for the adjacent property that was the Healesville Freeway Reservation and two, what practical use can be made of the building and grounds after the VicRoads plans are known. Council will be happy to consider ideas that the Historical Society can provide.

Our visit to Bundoora Homestead was a very successful and happy day. It is a beautiful property in a very pretty bush park and I recommend it for an outing (do book for lunch at the house, as it is very popular). The display of pottery from the Brunswick pottery works was most informative.

The City of Whitehorse will be providing the Brumbies Bush Band for our Open Day on Sunday, 16 September. Don't forget to mark the dates in your calendar to help on that day and on Saturday, 8 September for the working bee. Please ring Barbara on 9874 6592 or Rachael on 9724 9298 to offer the times that you are able to assist on Open Day. The event is officially 12 noon to 5 p.m., but we need assistance for set-up, pack-up and clean-up on either side of these times too.

I would like to offer condolences from the Society to Rosalie Whalen on the death of her husband, Bill. For those members who do not know, Rosalie is a Schwerkolt descendant and a dedicated member of the Society.

*Vicki Jones-Evans*

### THESE TWO ITEMS SHOW THE DIFFERENCE IN DOLLS FROM AROUND THE TIMES OF THE TWO VOYAGES PRINTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER.



NA953  
(c1850)

This doll has hands, feet and face made of wood and a body made of leather. She is dressed in a grey wool jacket, a striped apron and an underskirt, with a pink flowered overskirt and bonnet. The rest, as they say, is up to the child.



NA3387  
(c1965)

This doll, made from plastic, has long blond hair made of nylon. She is dressed in a red-and-black check skirt with lace trim and a blue blouse with red buttons down the front, and has red shoes. Unlike the earlier doll, she can walk and sit up, and has brown eyes that can open and shut.

### FROM THE COLLECTION . . . . .

#### Cataloguing Statistics

Photographs	-	3916
Artefacts	-	4500
Documents	-	6428
Visitors to Museum May/June	-	271

#### New Members

*A warm welcome to our  
new member*

**Gwenda Ottrey** (of Doncaster), who has already joined the Wednesday working group.

*We hope she will enjoy her  
time with the Society!*

*Barbara Gardiner*

**Membership Officer**

## June Meeting: THINGS WERE DONE DIFFERENTLY THEN

Keith Rooney, former councillor and mayor of the City of Nunawading, was our guest speaker at the Society's General Meeting on 9 June.

Keith has always been an activist for the community. Before successfully standing for Council in 1965 he was instrumental, with the Progress Association, in acquiring land for the establishment of sporting clubs and park reserves in Koonung Park. He related how when he was on Council, the councillors used to tour the municipality, identifying sites for sporting facilities and parks, using contacts with the MMBW chairman to reserve land for those purposes, and compulsorily acquiring properties where needed. Council was very conscious of the need to have a vision for necessary development to the year 2000. As a result, action was taken in the 1960s that enabled the provision of many sporting facilities and parks all over the municipality that we enjoy today. The same period saw the building of a new council chamber (replacing the old, crowded one in Whitehorse Road), improvements to Burwood Highway and the appointment of the first full-time local government social worker for the City of Nunawading, Shirley Ramsay. He paid tribute to her and to the engineer, Bill Sewart, whose work in planning the development of the Vermont South area was crucial.

Keith developed many personal contacts who cooperated with Council to fulfil its vision. After his resignation from Council in 1971, he continued – as we would say today – to network energetically and effectively to achieve developments in the community, particularly in social welfare. He and his wife, Betty, who had been active in the Nunawading Benevolent Society for many years, devoted much time to dealing with social welfare cases, and Keith established the warehouse for the Eastern Emergency Relief Network in Mitcham, which serves an area ranging from Boroondara to the Upper Yarra. Their work was recognised recently by way of Whitehorse Council awarding them the Keys to the City, a unique honour.

A book of Keith's oral history interviews and other historical accounts has been recently published, reflecting his strong interest in local history. Not included, but related by Keith, were stories ranging from the supposed high rate of arthritis in East Burwood residents to the days when the gypsies of Junction Road would read palms at the Blackburn Hotel. A fascinating talk, by someone who claims that 'Otherwise, I haven't done too much in my life'.

*Peter Simmenauer*

## HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2012

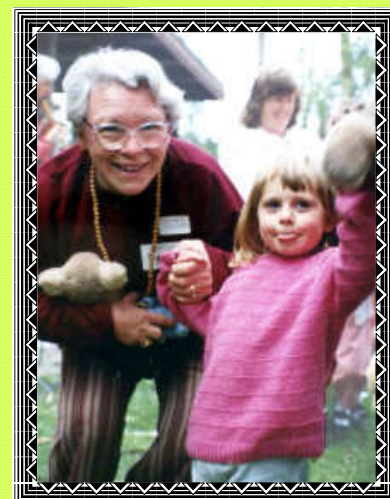
**Sunday, 16 September, 12 noon to 5 p.m.**

### SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

- ✓Brumbies Bush Band
- ✓Tip Top Tom's Magic  
(1 p.m. to 3 p.m.)
- ✓Old-fashioned Picnic Races  
(3 p.m.)
- ✓Sausage Sizzle  
(Rotary Club of Forest Hill)

**RAFFLE DRAWN AT 4 p.m.**

*Bring along family and friends  
to our treasured Heritage Site*



### OTHER ATTRACTIONS

- ✓Face painting ✓Animal farm ✓Fun with Bubbles ✓Games for children
- ✓Electric train display ✓Lace making ✓Meccano Club ✓Koonung Wood Turners
- ✓Yarra Valley Machinery Preservation Society ✓Spinners and weavers
- ✓Vermont Lioness Club ✓Art in Bark ✓Blacksmiths

Tea, coffee and cordial provided by the Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.



## **We learn more about William Cook**

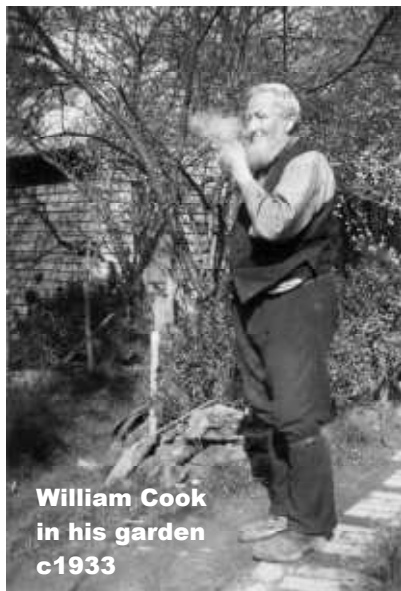
Ray Meagher wrote this article in response to the article in the Whitehorse Historical Society newsletter of June 2009 about William Cook.

I remember the Cook family living on Whitehorse Road about midway between Cook Street and Antonio Park. From the east side of Cook Street back to Burnett Street there were orchards, except for a small house with rough timber siding on the corner of Cook Street and Whitehorse Road. Cook built his attic-roofed house, with a balcony, on the west side of Thomas Street near Whitehorse Road, Mitcham (the information regarding the two houses was given to me in April 2010).

In one of the two 'history of Nunawading' books it was said that William Cook donated the Quarry Road land to the Nunawading Council. This would not have been possible, as land that became Quarry Road belonged to my great-grandfather, Philip Cummins. He not only gave the land, but employed sailors (who had spent all their money at Schwerkolt's winery) to help make the road, and then gave them enough money to get back to their ship.

If you look at early survey maps, you see that Cook only had about three or four house blocks abutting land that belonged to Philip Cummins. Cummins' son, Philip Jnr, lived until his death in the early 1930s in a one-roomed hut on the land that abutted Quarry Reserve.

My mother and father bought a house on the Cummins land after it was subdivided and lived there for a short period. When the Depression began they had to sell the property – which is another story.



**William Cook  
in his garden  
c1933**

## **Working Bees 2012**

**Please make a diary note and join us on the day.**

- ♦ September 8 – Saturday
- ♦ November 10 – Saturday

Working Bees commence at 9.30 a.m. and finish around 12 noon with a great morning tea.

**Please come and help even if you can only offer an hour of your time.**



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WHS Members and friends are advised that subscription fees for 2012–2013 are now payable. Fees are unchanged. Kindly complete the Application Renewal form enclosed with this newsletter and return it ASAP to our membership secretary, Barbara Gardiner.**

**AGMAGMAGMAGMAGM**

It is time once again for our WHS Annual General Meeting. If you would like to join and assist on the committee, please fill in a Nomination form (enclosed), which is to be returned by **3 August 2012.**

For more information contact Rachael Cottle, Secretary.

**AGMAGMAGMAGMAGM**

## **Whitehorse Historical Society Dates for your Diary**

Meetings are held at the Local History Room  
Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex.

**Saturday, 11 August, 1.30 p.m.  
General Meeting**

Speaker Gerry Robinson – 'The Value of History'

**Saturday, 13 October, 1.30 p.m.  
General Meeting**

Speaker Anne Dixon – 'Costume Parade'

**Saturday, 8 December, 1.30 p.m.  
General Meeting**

Speaker Dr Linda Young – 'House Museums'

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# *Excerpts from a traveller's diary*

## *(Part the Second)*

*In March of 1877, 25-year-old Jabez Edwards (cousin of Arthur Edwards of Forest Hill) boarded the ship 'Northumberland' to make the eight-week journey from England to Melbourne. In this issue of the newsletter we present the second of three extracts from the diary he kept on the voyage.*

**Tuesday May 1st** – Sea much calmer wind not so strong which goes much against us than steam they killed a Bullock to day so there will be a bit of fresh beef for some one very cold to day miles run 260

**Friday 4th** – Sea rather rough, wind going down towards night, at dark we drop Screw and steam again a great number of birds about the Size of a Sparrow appeared to day Some Gray on the Back and White under side when the sheeps bellies are thrown overboard they settle on the water like a lot of ducks and eat it up it is market day to day with us we have to get our weeks grocery in to day and there is quite a Scrab at the Stores it is not very pleasant as it is wet on the deck miles run 157-

**Sunday 6th** – we had a very near escape of a storm about 11 o'clock and all hands were at their posts but it cleared in another direction We had a sermon from the words "lo I am with you always even to the end of the world" 28 Matthew last verse We have a Harmonium & peiano on board So it makes it very pleasant after dinner there was Speaking in the third cabins and afterwards we had a lot of Sankeys & Hymns which helps to cheer one up miles run 221

**Friday 11th** – a very fine day – Southern Lights seen at night in the sky one would think day was beginning to Break the Stars seem to shine with a Greater Briliance in the Southern Hemisphere than at home all people that believe the world to be flat should go on a long voyage and if that will not convince them they must be put down as heathens Miles 248-

**Sunday 13th** - A good steady wind Blowing the sailors get more rest as the sails do not want moving so often. The evening service in the Saloon Sermon on text from the first chap of Romans & 16 verse "for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ" Me and another young man and the sail maker had a good sing at some of the old tunes Mother and Father used to sing years ago we got in a nice warm spot & had quite a nice time of it we had it fine singing How Beautifull upon the Mountains we were singing for some time Wind cold we need our over coat on – miles 200

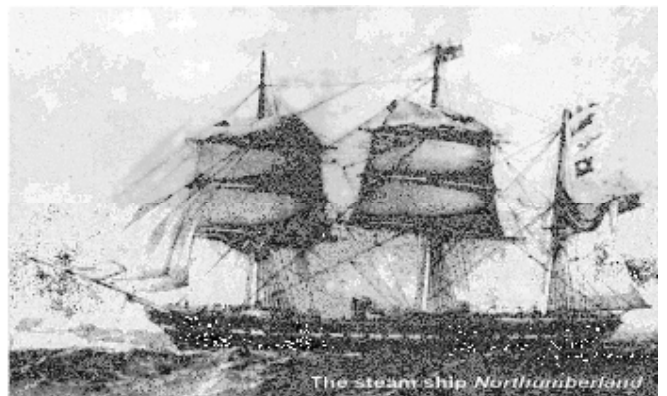
**Wednesday 16th** – a strange kind of bird made its appearance this morning it hovered close to the ship So we said it was a sea hawk it is my birthday to day the ministers wife is holding a womans meeting today so that we are not left without spiritual influence we have three Services on Sunday and two in the week I hope much good may be the result of them my birthday pudding a peice of bread & jam miles 174

**Friday 18th** – The sea became calm in the night so when we came on deck the Ship was almost at a standstill. Sails flapping against the masts like clothing out to dry and no sign of steam either so we hove to till we got a breeze about dinner time a lot of Swells going me of on all fours ship is lying to her side and it being market day there is quite a Scramble to carry anything Miles 35

**Sunday 20th** – a fair wind and all canvas set went to Service in the Saloon-Sermon from 2d chap of Acts and 4th verse after which there was a collection for the Building fund of the Melbourne Cathedral and the Sacrement of the Lords Supper was administered to any Cristians. Great number of porpoises around the Ship miles 153

**Monday 21st** – very little wind which gives our captain anxious thoughts as we ought to have landed in Melbourne to day he has made 11 voyages but had not been so unsuccessful in catching the wind before miles 174

**Thursday 24th** – a fine day but cold it being the Queens Birthday I expected to see the ship flaged up in Style but they used the flags for decorating the Saloon. The Captain gave a fancy Ball and Banquet at night in honour of the event I saw the guests in their dresses they represented different nations ancient and modern our first mate was dressed like an Irishman with his shelaley and he had for his lass a young Lady dressed like an Irish milk maid with her pail on her arm. Another young lady was dressed like a house maid and she had her brush in her hand a gentleman took the Shah of Persia of, another the Duke of Buckingham & one the executioner one an Egyptian queen and two like Yankey niggers a lot of others their dresses were got up well, I don't think they could have done better on land they kept it up till about ½ past 12 o'clock and in the third cabin they had some of the tables took down for dancing but nothing like the saloon the night was grand I never saw the moon so beautiful upon the water or the vessel travel better miles run 226



## WHS Committee Contacts

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**Vice-President:** Peter Simmenauer  
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**Treasurer:** Bob Gardiner  
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bobnbarb@melbpc.org.au

**Local History Room: (03) 9873 4946**

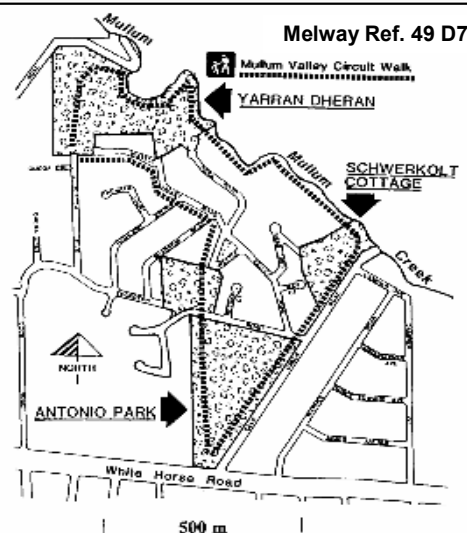
## Newsletter Team:

Chris Gray  
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P.O. Box 272  
MITCHAM VIC 3132



**Copy deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 12 September 2012**



## 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.

### POD

Place of Deposit  
Accredited by the  
PRO Victoria

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



## REMEMBER

**Whitehorse Historical Society  
Local History Collection & Place of Deposit**  
Open 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. 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.

**Sender:** Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex  
Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, VIC 3132  
If undeliverable, please return to P.O. Box 272 Mitcham, VIC 3132

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