



OUR BOOKS CELEBRATE LOCAL HISTORY

1919: 'I was eleven when we came to Mitcham'

From a recollection of Linda Petty in the 1990s

(excerpted from a story in our popular anthology *Spiders In the Loo*)

My first memory of Mitcham was living in a shop in Whitehorse Road while our new home in Mitcham Road was being built. Whitehorse Road was a dirt road in 1919, and the drovers used to drive their cattle along it at night to get to the Ringwood Market. My mother was very nervous; and I would often sit up with her at night because the cattle would bang against the big shop windows as they passed.

My mother didn't go out very much at all, and on my first day at Mitcham State School I had to take my brother Ron by myself. I remember being very nervous and going to the back gate to have a look, not being game to go in. The headmaster, Mr. Lee, saw me and sent a girl down to the gate to bring us in. It was quite a small school. As far as I can remember, the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were all in the one room. I eventually had to take all my brothers and enrol them in school when they turned six.



Mitcham State School when I was there in the 1920s

Although I was eleven when we arrived in Mitcham, I was often kept home from school so that I could go along to Ringwood and get coloured bark for my mother. She made some money by making baskets. When they were finished I had to take them back, and I remember being quite frightened and would hurry along Bedford Road until I came to the half a dozen houses known as the soldier settlement. I would rest there for a few moments, and then hurry on. It was the same coming back. I also remember that mother used to get quite sick with tonsillitis, and I was called on to do the housework. I can remember her calling out from the bedroom and telling me what to cook. As children, we did all the shopping and Mr Armstrong advised mother in her business affairs, but I think that until the day she died, not many of the shopkeepers knew her.

Before we moved to Mitcham we had all gone to Presbyterian Sunday school when we were old enough. However, at Mitcham there was no Presbyterian church so mother sent us around the corner to the Church of England. The first day I was promptly sent home again because I wasn't wearing a hat. I didn't even own one! Needless to say, I didn't go back there, but the funny part is that I eventually became a milliner (women's hat seller). The only other church around was the Methodist, so that is where I went to Sunday school.

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Next meeting: Saturday, 13 April,
1.30 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING

Speaker:

Jim Connor – 'Earth Building'

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FROM THE PRESIDENT – VICKI JONES-EVANS

Dear Members

I hope you have all recovered from our long, hot summer.

Our February meeting day was hot one, following our hot December meeting. Don Gibb was a very interesting speaker, especially for our committee members, with his analysis of 'What is Good Local History'.

At our April meeting we will have available our latest publication, *What They Did*, edited by Yvonne Fitzmaurice. In line with Yvonne's and our own wishes, the book will be just \$5.00 in order to keep history affordable. I would like to thank Yvonne for her work on this book and for her patience, as we held back the book so that it did not come too closely upon Pat Richardson's *Spiders in the Loo*.

On another very hot day, the Labor Day holiday, Dr Linda Young brought her students on the first day of their Deakin University Graduate Museum Studies course. After viewing the Cottage orcharding display and outbuildings, they were pleased to come into the cool of the Museum and the Local History Room. The Visitor Centre, where we welcomed them, warmed up with the addition of approximately 25 people. Here is the thank-you letter we received.

Dear Vicki, Valda, Rachael and Bob,

As someone worked out when we arrived on Monday, this was the eighth annual visit of Museum Studies students you've so generously hosted for Deakin. I do like to begin these starting-out students with a view of the voluntary sector of the museum business – it does put the big institutions we visit later in perspective. It's a salutary lesson to see how much and how well can be done by dedicated people.

So yet again, thank you very much for having us. I hope there will be a few 'likes' on the Facebook page by week's end!

With best wishes to all,

Dr Linda Young

Cultural Heritage & Museum Studies



Deakin University students visit Schwerkolt Cottage

Members may not be aware that the City of Whitehorse is undertaking a 'Whitehorse Housing and Neighbourhood Character Review 2013' with submissions to close on Monday, 8 April. The document can be viewed at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/hanc.review.html. If you wish to comment, you will need to act quickly. It is also available at the council offices and service centres.

Our working bee in March was yet another hot day, but with starting early the eight workers achieved a lot – including morning tea and a chat. Please come and join us at our next working bee on Saturday, 11 March, 9.30–12 noon.

I hope you will be able to come along to hear Jim Connor speaking on 'Earth Building' and to celebrate the launch of *What They Did* at our General Meeting on Saturday, 13 April, at 1.30 p.m. And of course attend the Association of Eastern Historical Societies meeting that we are hosting, where Barbara Rogalski will speak on 'An artist's impression of Schwerkolt Cottage'. This is in the Local History Room on Saturday, 20 April at 1.30 p.m. Hopefully, the weather will be kinder for these meeting days.

Vicki Jones-Evans



Another successful working bee

Cataloguing Statistics

Photographs	-	3948
Artefacts	-	4534
Documents	-	6474
Visitors to Museum Jan/Feb	-	303

Look for details of our new publication in the attachment to this newsletter!

February Meeting: 'What is good local history?'

The guest speaker for the February meeting was Don Gibb, a retired associate professor, late of Deakin University, whose subject was Australian History. He reviews articles received by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria for publication in *History News*.

It was fifty years ago that his interest in local history was born. He happened to read a book by Weston Bate that inspired him to research the subject, and subsequently to publish a local history of Canterbury, in Victoria. He discovered the many means of investigation – not only books and local history museums or societies, but (particularly these days) the internet, with its many websites that have sprung up providing both primary and secondary source material.

How should local history be presented?

The answer to this question is 'in such a way as can be identified by local people'. But ideally it should also interest outsiders in the life of the local area, and stories told ought to engage and enlighten the audience. Material has to be attractively presented, able to be widely understood, and all based on research from various sources. Electronic presentations must also be user-friendly, and able to be dipped into at will. A good way of creating 'chapters' is to make information 'bites' manageable. To achieve an engaging publication, the author must have a

personal connection with the community. Most publications also require a large amount of time, money and support.

Unlike some states, Victoria does not have a good general history. No centrally organised repository exists of the history of the state as a whole; it is there, but in fragmentary form. What information there is, is generally about certain eras, such as the gold rush. Now, however, digitisation should render a general history easier to achieve.

Local history can reflect what changes have occurred in homes (societal growth, and so on). What has gone on in households? A great help would be an old diary, which describes everyday things – toothache, girlfriends, holidays, schools, and the transport that was available. By taking a particular year and using the 'slice' approach, a narrative may be constructed that provides a snapshot of life in the community at a given time. Other source material might include local papers and publications, which yield the types of employment that were available as well as what was done for leisure; school records can give parents' occupations. And while speaking of schools, it is Don's contention that children in Grade 5 should be taught local history as part of their studies.

It is important people are aware that smaller organisations – such as local history societies – can be crucial in storing and supplying for research all manner of social and historical information and artefacts.

by Valerie Marshall

1919: 'I was eleven when we came to Mitcham'

(continued from page 1)

My brother Leonard didn't like school and every play-time he would be off, with either me or our neighbour, Mrs Kennedy, chasing him. Sometimes he was almost to Ringwood before we caught him, but eventually he grew out of it. I rather liked school even though I wasn't there often.

Our home was very close to the school, and when we had other schools visiting for sport, our school always gave them afternoon tea. Many a time, my mother's kitchen table was taken to be used on those occasions. I also remember what a good neighbour Mrs. Kennedy was. She had one son, Ken. One day, he and my brother Ron climbed a tall gum tree, and either wouldn't or couldn't come down. Mrs Kennedy got a ladder and went up herself and brought them down.

The new home that my mother built was very nice but it was small. We had tank water and a wood-fired stove, but no electricity. We had to have our baths in the troughs in the wash house, but that didn't seem to matter when we were young. It was about this time that I put my age up. I still feel guilty about it! A few girls from school decided to go for one afternoon a week to Swinburne Technical School and

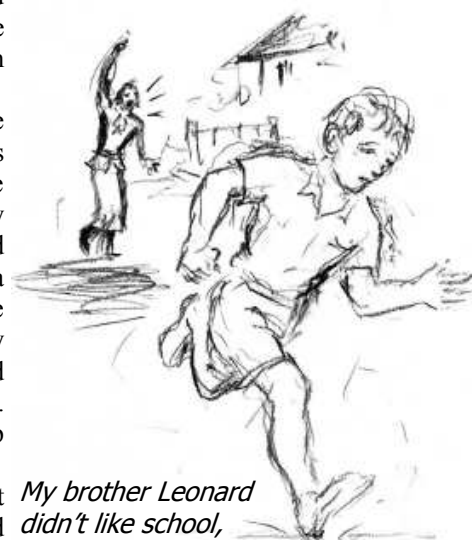
take millinery lessons. When I got to the school I had to fill out a form and I found that I was too young to enrol. One of the girls persuaded me to put up my age and I was sure I would be found out. Fortunately it never happened!

To earn some money while I was still at school I often worked after school and on Saturdays at the Red Store. This was a paper

shop on Whitehorse Road near where the Catholic Church is now. I also went to Mrs Taylor in Quarry Road and picked berries. I would get a penny a box. I had to work hard to earn my eight shillings and four pence each day, but it was a help. Mrs Taylor worked with a lady whose daughter was second in charge of the millinery warehouse of Brook, McGlashen and McHaig, which was in Flinders Lane in the city. A hundred girls worked in this warehouse, and when I turned fourteen my mother got me a work permit, and that lady got me my first millinery job.

My pay was 8/- a week. The first week's wages went on my monthly rail ticket, so I was only able to give my mother three weeks pay per month. In those days thee trains were steam trains and the journey took over an hour. I always had to wait another half an hour

on Flinders Street Station to come home, so I was never home before seven o'clock. Eventually I left the warehouse for six months and during that time I had a job in a florist shop in Blackburn and later at a milk bar in Mitcham.



My brother Leonard didn't like school, and used to run off.

From the

Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter

"QUALITY IN CLOTHES" Really DOES Count

J.G. Penson

THE CITY
TAILOR & MERCER

227 & 231 STATION ST., BOX HILL.



Whitehorse Historical Society Dates for your Diary

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

Saturday, 13 April, 1.30pm
General Meeting

Speaker Jim Connor – 'Earth Building'

Saturday, 20 April, 1.30pm
AOEHS meeting

*Barbara Rogalski –
'An artist's impression of Schwerkolt Cottage'*

Saturday, 8 June 2013, 1.30pm
General Meeting

*Speaker Elizabeth Banham
'History of Handkerchiefs'*

Saturday, 10 August 2013, 1.30pm
Annual General Meeting

Speaker Gerry Kennedy 'History of Cinema'

Working Bees 2013

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

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

Saturday 11 May

Saturday 14 September

Saturday 9 November

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

Friday 15 April 1938

MITCHAM.

ANZAC SERVICE.

As announced within, the Mitcham and District branch R.S.S.I.L.A. has arranged an Anzac commemoration service, which will be held in the Memorial Hall at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 24. The chief speaker will be Mr. John Gray, M.C., M.L.A., Mayor of Hawthorn. As is customary, returned soldiers, guides and scouts will assemble at the railway station at 2.45 p.m., and, headed by the Box Hill Salvation Army Band, will proceed by way of White Horse road to the Memorial Hall, halting en route to lay a wreath on the statue.

SERVICE FOR SCHOOLS.

Head teachers of the schools in its area have been notified by the Mitcham branch R.S.S.I.L.A. that arrangements have been made to receive and amplify on Friday, 22nd inst., the Anzac commemoration service broadcast from the Shrine of Remembrance by the Legacy Club. As will be remembered, this was done with great success last year. The children will assemble at the memorial statue in White Horse road on the Friday at 2.45 p.m., and the service will commence at 3 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, the Memorial Hall will be available. Although the service is primarily intended for the children, the attendance of any adults who desire to be present will be welcomed.

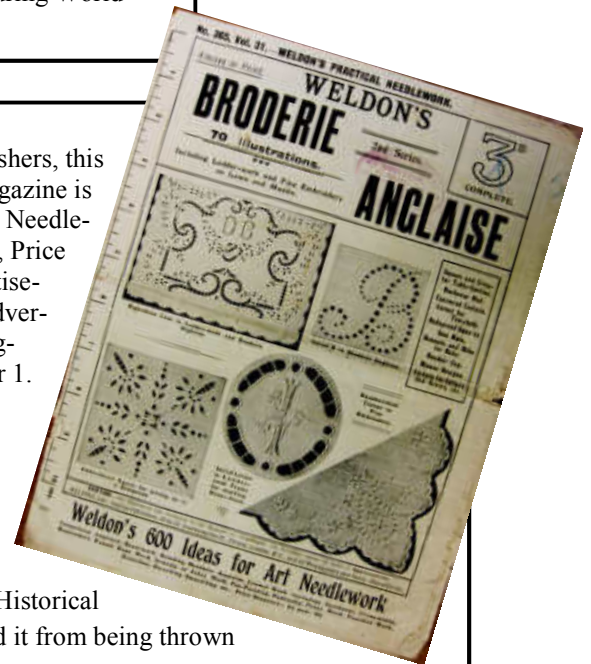


NA1614

Machined nurse's apron – white cotton with bib. Long skirt. One pocket at side. Buttoned waist. Used during World War One.

NA3349

Published by Weldon's Ltd, Fashion Publishers, this black-and-white 16-page needle-work magazine is one of a series entitled Weldon's Practical Needlework. This is No 365, Vol 31, 2nd Series, Price 3d. It contains 70 illustrations plus advertisements. One of the latter, on page 5 – an advertisement for Arden's Crochet cotton – suggests it can be dated to time of World War 1. This issue concerns Broderie Anglaise (French, 'English Embroidery'), a [white-work needlework](#) technique incorporating features of [embroidery](#), [cutwork](#) and [needle lace](#) that arose in England in the 19th century.



Given to Vicki Jones-Evans, Whitehorse Historical Society president, by a friend who rescued it from being thrown out by her mother's friend.



NA3085.1-2

Identity card – in black leather cover – issued to Isabel Campbell Mansell of 99 Corio Street, Shepparton during World War Two. The leather cover is a fold-over cover with diagonal corner pieces to hold the card. Belonged to the late grandmother of Sandy Robinson, wife of Tony Robinson MP, Member for Mitcham.

FROM THE COLLECTION

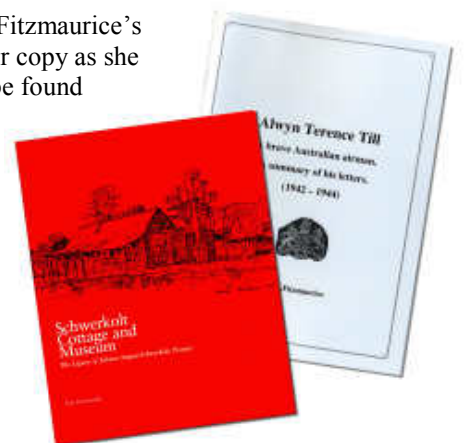
Our Books Travel Overseas

by Vicki Jones-Evans

In January we had a request from Pippa, a lady in Kent, England, for a copy of Yvonne Fitzmaurice's book *Alwyn Terence Till: A Brave Australian Airman*. Pippa was delighted to receive her copy as she is a friend of the Shoreham Aircraft Museum, which has an excellent website that may be found at shoreham-aircraft-museum.co.uk

In February we had an email from Lawrence Santeford in Mississippi, USA. He is married to Alice, daughter of Walter Jack, the grandson of August Schwerkolt. Marie Jack, whose death we reported in the December newsletter, was Alice's stepmother. Lawrence and Alice used to have a copy of our Schwerkolt Cottage book by Ted Arrowsmith, but lost it when their house was flooded with 9 feet of water during Hurricane Katrina. As a result of this we have posted them a replacement copy, and have put Rosalie Whalen (also a Schwerkolt descendant) in touch with Lawrence as the families have lost contact.

Lawrence and Alice have also been conferred with honorary membership, and will henceforth receive the newsletter by email.



WHS Committee Contacts

President: Vicki Jones-Evans
9873 3383

Vice-President: Peter Simmenauer
9877 0141

Secretary: Rachael Cottle
9724 9298

Treasurer: Bob Gardiner
9874 6592

Local History Room: (03) 9873 4946

Newsletter Team:

Chris Gray
Bettina Stevenson
Wendy Standfield
Valda Arrowsmith OAM
Vicki Jones-Evans
Peter Simmenauer

WHS website:

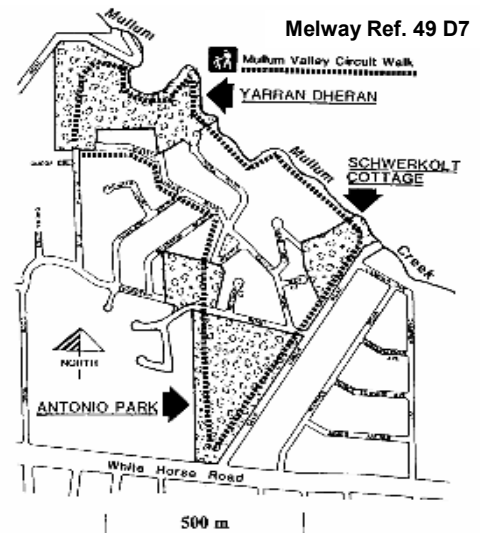
www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/
facebook.com/whitehorsehistory

Email:

whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 272
MITCHAM VIC 3132



Copy deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 8 May 2013



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

CITY OF



*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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