



LEST WE FORGET

William Schwerkolt is the grandson of August Schwerkolt and the younger son of Carl Benno Schwerkolt. He was born at Parkville, lived with his family in Prahran and attended Hawksburn State School, where he obtained his Merit Certificate in 1907.

He attended the Working Men's College, where he was trained in Turning and Fitting and Mechanical Engineering, obtaining his Engine Driver Certificate in December 1913. He had worked in the college engine room for 12 months and gained experience in the operation of engines, generators and boilers, as well as electrical wiring.

Although he was only 5 foot 5 inches tall (5 foot 6 inches was the minimum), on August 19, 1914 he was successful in enlisting for the war at the age of 19, stating his occupation as a horse driver. He was sent to camp at Broadmeadows, trained in Foot Drill, drafted into the 4th Battery and issued with horse and harness.

His qualifications were as Signaller and Telephonist and he set sail for Albany, where he arrived on October 25.

On 1 November he sailed for Colombo on the *S.S. Shropshire*, one of 28 troopships. On 17 November the ship left Colombo for Aden, and on 21 November he wrote to his mother as follows: "The following troopship *Ascanius* ran us down at 4.35am. We were hit astern on the starboard side and then amidships. The first crash crumpled in our stern bridge to pieces of mangled steel while the second bent our steel plate amidships and bent a large portion of the railing on the main deck. The

Continued on page 6



SCHWERKOLT, WILLIAM LIONEL, Gunner 816
2nd Brigade, Australian Field Artillery

(3/3/1895–9/11/1916)

CONTENTS

President's Report	2	From The Reporter / Diary Dates	5
December Meeting Report	3	The Gallipoli Medallion Confusion	6
End of an Era	4	Mementos of War	7
Your Committee in Action	4		

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members

There have been a few changes since the last newsletter. The most important one for members is that Peter Simmenauer has resigned as President and from the Committee, but is continuing his involvement as a Wednesday volunteer. On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Peter for his work as a member and officer of the Committee.

The Committee has decided to leave the office of President vacant at present and will consider the matter at the next Committee meeting. As Vice-President, I am covering the duties of President with assistance from the Committee, for now.

Pat Richardson has joined the Committee in the role of Secretary. The Committee is very grateful to Pat for stepping into this role and is providing her with assistance for this time-consuming position.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the acquisition of Schwerkolt Cottage by the City of Nunawading. If you



Deakin University students view the contents of a textiles box

have suggestions for marking this occasion, can you please let a member of the Committee know at the next general meeting.

The City of Whitehorse Heritage Week this year will be recognising the 20th Anniversary of the City of Whitehorse. The Heritage Week will be 11–18 September and our Heritage Day will be Sunday, 14

September, at the slightly different time of 11am to 4pm. We will be celebrating the anniversary of the Cottage as well as the anniversary of the City. Please note Sunday,

14 September, in your diaries for helping out.

Dr Linda Young brought her Museum Studies students for a tour of our Museum on their second day of the university year. It was the 9th time we have welcomed Deakin students. The group this year were enthusiastic and seemed to enjoy their visit to the Complex. As usual, the tour ended in the Local History Room with refreshments, followed by a showing of the contents of one of the large textile boxes. This year it was a box that contained women's wear from the 1920s to the 1940s.



Michael Sukkar (second from right) shares morning tea at WHS

On Wednesday, 12 March, we welcomed the Member for Deakin, Mr Michael Sukkar, who visited the Local History Room to announce that we had been awarded a grant of \$1500 from the GVEHO for administration costs. As well as congratulating us, Michael toured the Complex, showed interest in our volunteers' work and joined us for morning tea.

During the demolition and rebuilding of Mitcham Station we were in contact with staff regarding equipment that would be suitable for our Collection. We have acquired a small box which sent a signal to the next station, both up and down the line when trains were departing. It was used until fairly recently.

Thank you to those members for donations of very old street directories and for the loan of directories to be scanned. More donations and loans will be welcome, too.


Each year, the City of Whitehorse requests members from the historical societies to join their Heritage Steering Committee. Valda Arrowsmith will continue to represent Whitehorse Historical Society on the Committee, with me as her deputy.

The Society is currently assisting the Australian Institute for Genealogy Studies (AIGS) in researching service personnell for a booklet to commemorate the Gallipoli Campaign which they hope to produce later this year.

After the cancellation of our February general meeting due to the extreme hot weather, it will be nice to welcome you all to milder conditions for the meeting on Saturday, April 12.

Vicki Jones-Evans

Statistics

Photographs catalogued	-	4053
Artefacts catalogued	-	4605
Documents catalogued	-	6612
Visitors to museum Jan/Feb	-	240
 Facebook 'likes' to February	-	366

December Meeting Report

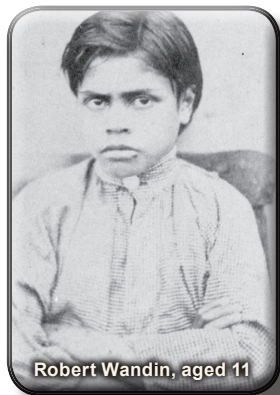
Aborigines in the Yarra Valley

A Talk by Paula Herlihy, Karen Phillips and Ian James (Mt Evelyn History Group)

There was little known from research about Aborigines in the Mt Evelyn area except that they travelled in groups throughout the region. The Wurundjeri groups spoke local languages, but understood each other because of intermarriage with neighboring nations.

Black Meets White

Robert Wandin (or Wandoon), 1854–1909, mentioned by William Deschamps as the first half-caste of the Yarra tribe (though this is in dispute, as by 1854 white settlement had been going on for almost 20 years), was known as the “Baby in the Bulrushes”. The (also disputed) story goes that he had been escorted by a body of blacks to the Wandin Creek, where he was thrown in. One Robert Brierty was by some means able to rescue him, and the child was brought up by his family till he was eight when he was sent to the Tyres Settlement. Brierty was on good terms with the Wurundjeri and learned their language. Wandin was the same age as Brierty’s sons and might have played with them. The Brierty family has no independent record of Wandin, but Brierty’s wife Violet had a box with snippets of blond hair and one strand of coarse straight black hair, thought to be Wandin’s. The present Wurundjeri elders are the grandchildren of Robert Wandin and his wife, Jessica Burns.



Robert Wandin, aged 11

Aboriginal Food

It was the work of the women to collect food – the staple food being Murnong (yam daisy), very like a dandelion but longer, with a long bent stem and a yellow flower – and the Cumbungi (indigenous bulrush), that grew in the Yarra Glen/Steels Creek area on a relatively dry slope. This has a long, thin, brown flower, approximately six parts of which can be eaten raw when young, very like bamboo shoots. Damper can be produced from the brown seed head; the rhizomes being apparently very like potatoes in taste. String was made from the fibres of the roots, twisted together into 2 or 3-ply thicknesses.

Aboriginal Tools

Tools were created from Mt William greenstone, which made excellent axe heads, spear points and scrapers. Stones from this quarry were sharp, hard and tradable (local limestone was too soft). Chips were used for spearheads, and larger pieces made the heads of axes. These were made using flexible wood over the head, reinforced with resin and fibre; the handle was also strengthened with other fibres. These were known as “Borak” axes, and were an effective piece of equipment. Implements such as these have been found as far away as Western Australia.



Hunting or farming?

“Fire stick farming” was used to manage natural resources. By controlled burning of the countryside, there were fewer shrubs and trees, and new growth of grasses after burning attracted animals like kangaroos, which were easier to kill in the more open landscape. Also the burning encouraged the growth of tuberous plants. When the women thinned out the plants with their sticks the plants produced larger tubers. Over a period of time, perhaps 3 years, the tubers would become smaller and burning would commence again.

The fire stick farming theory suggested that Aborigines not only occupied the land, they shaped its environment. This strengthened their claim to ownership. It provided an argument against terra nullius and in support of Native Title claims.

Valerie Marshall



“Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroos”
by Joseph Lycett c.1820, National Library of Australia.

End of an Era

THE Burwood History Group has decided to close after twenty-seven years. It was founded in 1987 by the late Mrs Jean Warland, a former editor of the *Burwood Bulletin*, and a group of residents interested in preserving Burwood's history.

Many of the History Group's significant milestones were dedicated to saving the former Burwood Primary School. They organised a Back to Burwood Primary School Day on 25 February, 1996, to raise community awareness of the building's state of disrepair.

Many of the families who attended had fond memories of their time spent at Burwood State School and signed a petition that resulted in the Government and Heritage Victoria agreeing to fund the restoration of the building, which had been closed in 1989.

The group then commissioned the preparation and printing of a book on the history of the school called *The Life of a School – The Story of the Burwood Primary School*

In 1998 the group organised another Back to Burwood Primary School Day on Sunday, 29 November, to officially launch the book. The day was declared a great success, as the compilation of the book had been a labour of love by all involved.

Valma Fell and her husband, Frank, both grew up in Burwood and were the driving force of the group. Valma has meticulously documented and indexed the group's work. Another of her passions was the Burwood Cemetery, where she has ensured the preservation of headstone

information for future generations.

The official records of the group have been transferred to the Box Hill History Society, which can be contacted by telephone on: (03) 9285 4808 or by email at boxhillhistory@gmail.com



Valma Fell

Jenny Trewin

(with thanks to the Burwood Bulletin for permission to reproduce this article)

Your Committee in Action

At the meeting in March the following items were reported:

- A signal panel from the old Mitcham Station has been procured as a result of the current rebuilding program.
- All the Society's VHS tapes were successfully transferred to DVD format. One of these, *The Wheel*, will be shown at the next General Meeting on April 12.
- Seven designs have been selected to restock the cards on sale at the museum.
- The preparation is underway of a History of the WHS for its 50th Anniversary next year.

(Camberwell, Surrey Hills and Box Hill News.)

From THE REPORTER.

CIRCULATING IN BOX HILL, SURREY HILLS, CANTERBURY, BALWYN, CAMBERWELL, DONCASTER, BURWOOD, BLACKBURN, MITCHAM AND RINGWOOD
FERN TREE GULLY, BAYSWATER, CROYDON, MOOROOLBARK, VERMONT, EMERALD, SCORESBY, SASSAFRAS, TALLY HO, BLACK FLAT, &c.

Friday, 4 January 1901

Bolt at Box Hill.

There was a bit of a sensation in Rutland road, Box Hill, on Saturday afternoon, when a pair of splendid draught horses, attached to a dray, became unmanageable, owing to the noise occasioned by a passing train, and bolted from where they were standing in Station street, and tore madly along Rutland road. When nearing Mr Horneman's butcher's shop a wheel of the dray struck the side of a gig, in which Mrs C. E. Husband, of Tunstall, and her father, Mr Main, were sitting. The sudden impact tilted up the gig, and the occupants had a very narrow escape of being killed. As it was, Mrs Husband was struck on the forehead with a splinter from the wingboard of the gig, and received a nasty cut, from which the blood flowed profusely. Mr Main got off lighter with a bruised leg and severe shaking. Mrs Husband was assisted to Dr Vaughan's surgery, where her injury was attended to, and we are glad to hear that now she is not

much the worse for the accident. The owner of the dray, who hailed from Warrandyte, did his best to stop the bolting team, and after narrowly escaping being crushed between the dray and the railway fence he was forced to let go. The runaways dashed along Rutland road until they came to its intersection with Rose street, where the dray came into violent collision with a lamp-post, which was torn down, and the dray upset. Assistance was speedily rendered and the horses extricated, and though considerably frightened appeared little the worse for their escapade.

Whitehorse Historical Society DIARY DATES

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

Saturday, 12 April, 1.30pm General Meeting

*Special screening of THE WHEEL (1952)
Melbourne University Experimental Film Unit
production shot in Blackburn*

Saturday, 7 June, 1.30pm General Meeting

*Speaker: Judith Fry
(President of the Nunawading branch of the Herb
Society of Victoria)
'Plants and Potions of the Early Settlers'*

OTHER DATES (Speakers TBA):

Saturday 9 August – Annual General Meeting
Saturday 11 October – General Meeting
Saturday 13 December – General Meeting



G. H. DICKASON,
UNDERTAKER,

HEAD OFFICE:
129 BRIDGE ROAD, RICHMOND.

Funerals to suit all classes
Polished Oak and Lead Coffins always on
hand.

Whitehorse Historical Society 2014 WORKING BEES

Please make a diary note and join us on the day.
Working Bees commence at 9.30am and finish
around 12 noon with morning tea.

Saturday, 10 May

Saturday, 13 September

Saturday, 8 November

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



The *Ascanius*

State Library of Queensland
John Oxley Library

Ascanius had one of her lifeboats smashed to pieces, her anchor smashed in half and the railing forward and amidships smashed to pieces together with big gaps midway between water line and the main deck, one extending through 25 plates in the port side. No lives lost, but 2 men had miraculous escapes.”

He arrived in Egypt and joined the Middle East Forces on April 8, 1915 and served on Gallipoli.

When the Anzacs departed Gallipoli on December 19, 1915, he joined the British Expeditionary Force in Alexandria and sailed for Marseille in March.

By July he was engaged in the Battle of the Somme and it has been stated that November was the most trying period ever experienced by the AIF on any front. Each infantryman now carried on his journey into the trenches

his greatcoat, waterproof sheet, one blanket, 220 rounds of ammunition and, when fighting was in prospect, two bombs, two sandbags, and two days reserve rations, besides the remnant of that day’s issue.

William’s responsibility was to keep the communication lines intact.

On 9 November they were heavily shelled; a dugout was blown in and a gunner buried. William and two other soldiers went to his aid and had almost dug him out with shovels when another shell landed in the same spot and killed them all. Both William’s legs were blown off.

His war grave is in Grass Lane, Flers.

He was awarded the 1914–15 Star, the British War Medal 1914–20 and the Victory Medal, along with the Anzac Commemorative Medallion and the Gallipoli Medallion.

Compiled by Rosalie Whalen 2014

Postscript

William’s Aunt Mary inherited Schwerkolt Cottage and five acres of surrounding land in 1909, but because she had married a German and they were in Germany visiting relatives when WWI began, her husband was conscripted into the German Army.

After the war, as part of War Reparations, the Australian Government confiscated her property. It took until 1963 (two years before she died) for her to regain title, and in 1964 the Nunawading Council purchased it from her and restored it as a pioneer cottage.

THE GALLIPOLI MEDALLION CONFUSION



Following World War I, the Australian Government produced a Gallipoli medal for Australians, but it was never issued. The reason for this was that the British Government did not agree to have a specific medal for Australians when other nations also were involved in Gallipoli campaigns. A more inclusive medal was produced: the 1914/1915 Star, which was often referred to by veterans as the Gallipoli Medal, or Gallipoli Star.

In 1967 a Gallipoli Medallion was produced, and all Gallipoli veterans – or their descendants – are entitled to claim it. The website www.anzacs.org/medallion.html states that many eligible people have not applied for it, but can and should still do so.

To the confusion of some, a “Gallipoli medal” appeared just prior to 1990 and was intended for distribution in that year to veterans and other personnel visiting Turkey to attend the 85th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. It was not an authorised medal, and was not intended for issue to all veterans. Apparently about 1000 were produced, 300 of which were distributed and the rest sold.

Information from an article in the Townsville Bulletin April 2010

MEMENTOS OF WAR



Trench Art




Trench art items made during the war were usually created at a distance from the front line trenches either by soldiers at rest, by skilled civilian artisans, by prisoners of war, or as handicraft therapy by soldiers convalescing from wounds.

This example, fashioned from a shell, was sent home by William Schwerkolt, and has the name "Ypres" incised in its centre.

(Above Left) The Dead Man's Penny was presented to the next-of-kin of the men and women who died during World War One. The bronze medallion features an image of Lady Britannia surrounded by two dolphins (representing Britain's sea power) and a lion (representing Britain) standing over a defeated eagle (symbolising Germany). Around the outer edge of the medallion are the words "He died for freedom and honour". Next to Lady Britannia is the deceased soldier's name, with no rank provided to show equality in their sacrifice. The Dead Man's Penny was accompanied by a letter from King George V, stating "I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War".

Pictured is the one received by the Schwerkolt family on the death of William in November 1916.

(Above Right) William's military medals: (from left) The 1914-1915 Gallipoli Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal.



Signal lamp in use
at the Battle of the Somme, 1916

WHS Committee Contacts

President

Vacant

Vice-President

Vicki Jones-Evans
9873 3383

Secretary

Pat Richardson

Treasurer

Bob Gardiner

Local History Room (03) 9873 4946

Newsletter Team

Chris Gray

Bettina Stevenson

Wendy Stanfield

Valda Arrowsmith OAM

WHS website

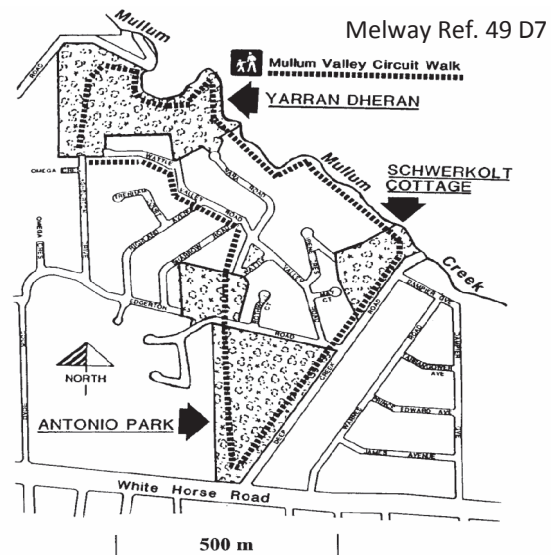
www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/
[facebook.com/whitehorsehistory](https://www.facebook.com/whitehorsehistory)

Email

whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com

Postal Address

P.O. Box 272
MITCHAM Vic 3132



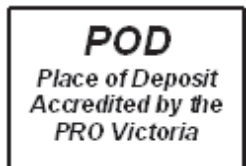
Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 7 May 2014

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.



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.

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



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

