



The 2014 Heritage Family Day started an hour earlier than in previous years. A week before there had been some concerns at the forecast, but the weather smiled on us from the start.

After taking the usual round of photographs for our archive, I asked eight-year-old Talia Peake what she thought of the Family Day. She liked the fact that there were all different things to see and do such as the face painting, where you got to choose the face you wanted to wear. Of course she had been down to see the animals, which she loved.

“I think the animals were my favourite – how funny they were,” she said. “like the llamas coming up to me and looking at my bag!”

Talia’s mother, Olivia, gave the grown-up opinion. “We’ve loved everything ... we’ve got a few different ages of kids, from eight to a baby, and there’s a good mix of things for everyone, and it’s a nice, safe environment where the kids can go off and play and the grown-ups can look at other things. All the kids loved the machines, walking along and looking at them, and the music in the background, and lots of things to do. We were coming for a picnic somewhere today and we saw the colour advertisement in the girls’ school newsletter—”

“It was a great idea,” put in Talia, “having a picnic and there’s this other stuff around you. We’re going to check out the playground after we’ve finished lunch.”

I asked her in conclusion if there were any other things she would like to see.

“Yeah – I’d like to see for next year something like a music thing where you could get up and dance”.

see more photos on page 9

Talia and Olivia Peake share their reactions about the Family Day with Chris Gray

“A great day!” says Talia



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Dear Members

We have had a highly successful Heritage Family Day this year with the official attendance of 800 visitors, an increase from last year's 700. The weather was perfect, and all the activities were



Vicki Jones-Evans with Dee Ryall at the Family Day

enjoyed enthusiastically by both children and adults. Many thanks go to Bob Gardiner for his organisation of the event and his hard work, always cheerful, on the day. I would also like to thank all members who helped to make the day such a success.

The Whitehorse Community Grant allowed us to have a variety of events and Council funded the Brumbies Bush Band, museum attendants and

parking supervision. I would like to thank Julie Jones, Heritage Programs Officer from Whitehorse Council, who organised this assistance.

I was pleased to welcome to our day Dee Ryall, Member for Mitcham and Tony Clark, Labor Candidate for Ringwood. Cr Philip Daw also was a welcome attendee; crs Ben Stennett, Helen Harris, Andrew Munroe, Andrew Davenport and Neil Angus, Member for Forest Hill, sent their apologies. Michael Sukkar, MP for Deakin, also was unable to attend.

Thank you as well to the members who came to the working bee on Saturday, 6 September. We had a good turnout, and the museum complex was looking sparkling in readiness for Heritage Day.



Showing 1st Nunawading Joey's how things used to be

On a recent evening we hosted a visit by the Joey's of the 1st Nunawading Scout Group – a group of 6- and 7-year-olds and their leaders, including Cr Ben Stennett. The Joey's enthusiasm and energy were very infectious. They enjoyed the Cottage, comparing the cooking, lighting, heating of their homes to that of the 1900s, and also wondered at the laundry display in the Museum. Visiting the Cellar and running around outside with their torches was also obviously great fun.

The AGM was conducted by the Mayor, Cr Sharon Ellis, and the resulting positions are Vice-President Pat Richardson, Secretary Rachael Cottle, Treasurer Bob Gardiner, myself as President and committee members Judith Fry, Chris Gray, Rob Innes and Valerie Marshall. Thank you to all of them for nominating. The Mayor spoke to the meeting on the benefits she has seen of the first 20 years of the City of Whitehorse.

I look forward to seeing you at the October meeting celebration of the 50 years since the acquisition of the Cottage. On that day Cr Sharon Ellis and Rosalie Whalen – as great-granddaughter of August Schwerkolt – will be planting a tree identified with a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion. We will also be having a birthday cake and hearing reminiscences from Rosalie and Barbara Rogalski.

Vicki Jones Evans

Your Committee in Action

- A replacement supply of cards has been bagged ready for sale in the museum.
- Investigation is underway of means to address the acoustic problems of the Visitor Centre.
- Judith Fry reports that the Speakers for 2015 have been largely confirmed.
- Heritage Day's success aided by contact made with schools, kinders, newspapers and radio stations.

August Meeting Report

Mayor Sharon Ellis speaks to gathered WHS members



Whitehorse Council United we stand . . .

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the amalgamation of councils in 1994.

Our guest speaker today, Saturday 9 August 2014, is Councillor Sharon Ellis, Mayor of the City of Whitehorse, who was elected to Riversdale Council 11½ years ago. When she was elected, Sharon had no preconceived notions of what the culture would be in Whitehorse. Coming as she did from the Box Hill end of the shire, she noticed definite differences in culture represented by the councillors who lived in different areas. And this, she feels, is as it should be now and should continue to be the case in the future. The merger brought with it some pros and some cons, but looking at it in terms of culture, she maintains that although some councillors are still protective of their local region, the amalgamation has been successful.

Sharon went on to speak of the scope that amalgamation has afforded for the holding of large festivals and events – and for the development of attractive utilities such as the Whitehorse Civic Centre buildings at Nunawading, able to be used centrally for community events such as on Australia Day, and for Carols by Candlelight celebrations.

In response to questions asked, Sharon spoke of when the Avenue Neighbourhood House in Blackburn had to close and transfer to Eley Road, Blackburn South; it has been a success there due to local input and action.

She acknowledged that although administration costs were originally supposed to be less, these in actual fact increased, as the area was much larger and required more staff to administer a larger section of the community. Tight regulations also are a much bigger problem than they were twenty years ago. The arrangement now is more complex and has to be approached differently. There are

many more areas of compliance with government, and also the need to liaise in the areas of public transport, housing, parks and so on, requiring extra meetings to allow for local expectations.

Sharon continued by outlining Council's interaction with neighbouring councils. When asked about the most important part of this last year of her mayoralty, she thought briefly and then mentioned the redevelopment of the Aqualink in Box Hill.

The enthusiastic involvement of volunteers in local communities helps to keep issues operating, with people contributing to many organisations, offering time, knowledge and enthusiasm. People take pride in local issues and are not afraid to tell Council if they think some ideas are good or not so good.

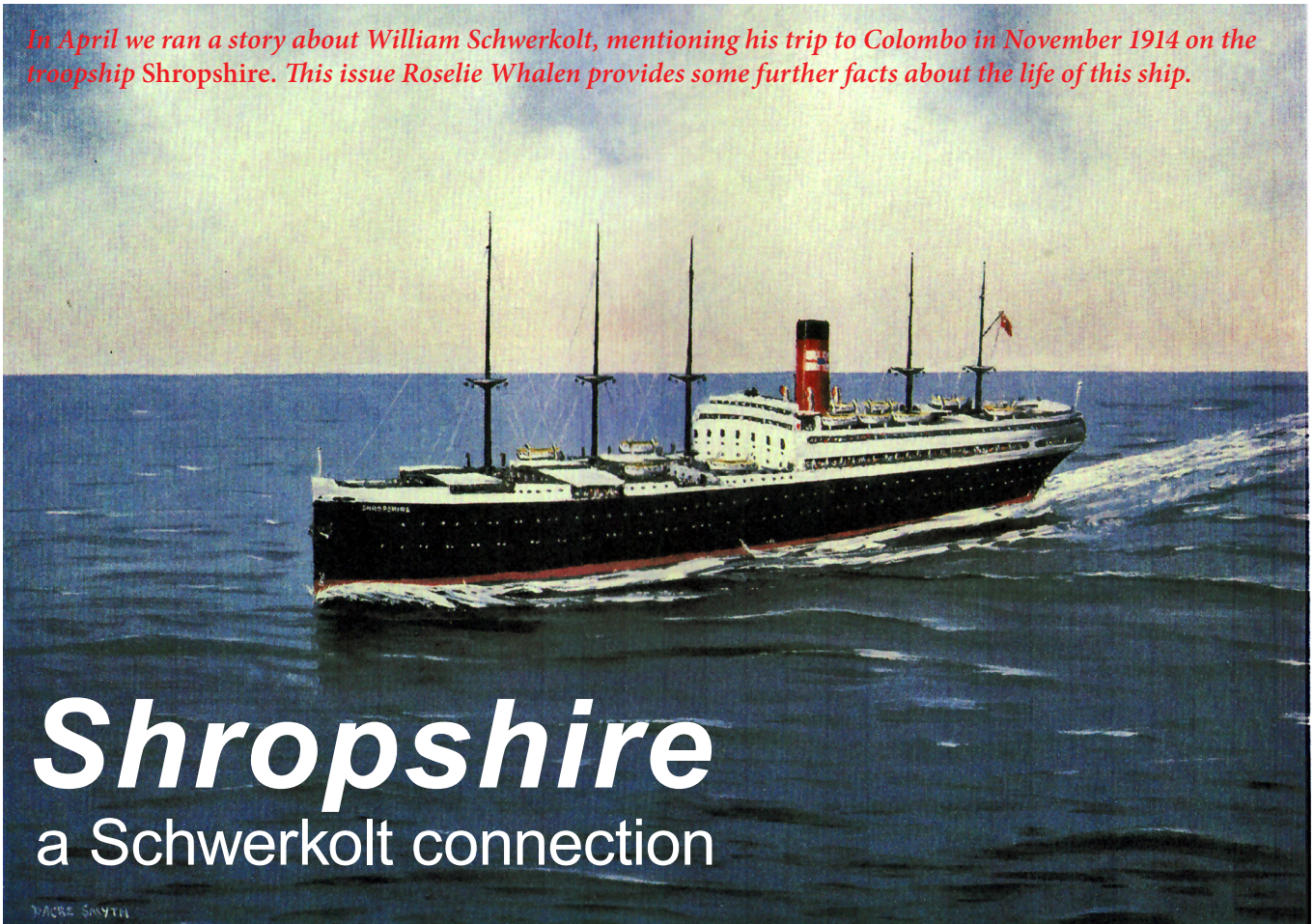
Sharon finished with the observation that Council relies on the public to have their say in affairs, as no councillor can be present 24/7.

Valerie Marshall



President Vicki Jones-Evans expresses our appreciation to Mayor Ellis

In April we ran a story about William Schwerkolt, mentioning his trip to Colombo in November 1914 on the troopship Shropshire. This issue Roselie Whalen provides some further facts about the life of this ship.



Shropshire

a Schwerkolt connection

*A long and varied life she led,
A name change too (bad luck, 'tis said).
Survived one war, sunk in the next;
A U-Boat's kill, with twenty dead.*

SHROPSHIRE 1911

Shropshire was the second of a trio of ships known as the *Argyleshire* class, built for the Federal Steam Navigation Company by John Brown and Company of Clydebank in 1910–1911.

Launched on 27 April 1911, she was completed five months later and sailed for Australia in September.

Of 10,890 tons, she was 544 feet (166 metres) long with a beam of 61 feet (19 metres) and a draught of 30 feet (9 metres). Quadruple expansion engines of 6500 horsepower drove twin screws to give her a speed of 14.5 knots. A crew of 300 looked after 130 first class passengers, 270 second and 270 third. She had, unusually, five masts, and four of her six holds were refrigerated.

In World War I she was requisitioned as a trooper, and was painted with the dazzle camouflage which was then popular. On 21 November 1914, whilst in the Indian Ocean as part of the AIF convoy to the Middle East, she was rammed by the *Ascanius*, another of the troopships, but both ships survived.

A year after the war, on 2 December 1919, still in her wartime role as H.M.A.T. *Shropshire*, she sailed

for Australia with a shipload of returning Australian servicemen and their dependants, including Private William Armstrong of the 41st Battalion who, whilst on leave from France in 1917, had met up with and married Ellen, a Durham girl whom he had known in his youth before he emigrated to Australia in 1913. With them on board was their five-month-old infant, Tony Armstrong, now a friend of the author and a well-known Melbourne architect.

In 1922 the *Shropshire* caught fire and was gutted whilst refitting at Falmouth, but the New Zealand Shipping Company, which had acquired a controlling interest in the Federal Steam Navigation Company, decided that she should be rebuilt; this she was, emerging in 1923 with her name changed to *Rotorua*. Under that name she continued until World War II when, on 11 December 1940, she was torpedoed in convoy off Scotland by a U-boat, sinking in 30 minutes with the loss of 20 of her crew.

Excerpted from *Immigrant Ships to Australia* by Dacre Smyth

(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, 16 August 1901

Telephone for Fern Tree Gully.

At the conclusion of the railway conference at the Gully on Saturday, 3rd inst., Cr Simpson grasped the opportunity to bring forward the necessity for telephone communication, in which he was ably supported by Cr Monk, who pointed out that at present the district was years behind the times in this respect. Even telegrams occupied two or three days for delivery, according to the "own sweet will" of the local official, whereby people were very often put to considerable inconvenience. As there was a line to Black Flat, he felt assured the shire representatives present would support them in obtaining an extension of that line. Cr Cotter expressed his willingness to assist in such a movement, and explained that the line was originally constructed to Notting Hill through the enterprise of the residents, the government finding the appliances and the district supplying the poles. The line was eventually extended to Black Flat on a guarantee of £15 being forthcoming. He considered that where such suitable timber was available they should have no difficulty in making similar arrangements. Cr Kerr took exception to the proposal, as it would only benefit the Centre riding by being carried direct to the local office. Cr Monk did not agree with Cr Kerr, as the line could be branched elsewhere if the service were once obtained, and he took exception to the means resorted to by a private deputation on this matter. It was ultimately resolved, on the motion of Crs Simpson and Collier, that the deputation appointed by the railway conference also wait on the postmaster-general and minister of railways, and make known their requirements. Cr Kerr only dissenting. Cr Collier moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Keast and the visiting councillors for their presence and support. This was seconded by the president and carried by acclamation, and suitably responded to.

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MITCHAM STATION

a fond memory . . .



NP333 Mitcham Station

Recently I visited Mitcham with my two daughters, Thelma and Jennifer, to see the long-awaited upgrading of Mitcham Railway Station and its very dangerous level crossings. The Mitcham Station we remembered is now a super-modern building, no longer on ground level, set in a cutting – now a clone of many other suburban railway stations. After our visit, I felt I must record how it was – as I remember it – when my father, who worked for the railways, was transferred to Mitcham in the mid-1930s.

Mitcham was first settled in the 1860s, one of the many areas where timber was felled for both building and firewood as Melbourne's growing suburbs began to creep eastwards. Small townships gradually developed along the recently surveyed "three-chain road" (Maroondah Highway) and into the mountains. Mitcham was then a small settlement of dairy, poultry, herb and flower farms as well as developing orchards, and grew slowly as the population increased with the arrival of more British and European would-be settlers looking for land where they could hopefully make a living and provide for their families. In the 1930s the descendants of many of these small farmers came to Mitcham Station every night, bringing their produce and cut flowers to be sent to Melbourne for selling the next day on Flinders Street and Spencer Street stations and at small flower booths in the city. The well-remembered perfume of these flowers was always a pleasant welcome for night-time train travellers.

With the coming of the railway line to Ringwood and

beyond, and the discovery of clay deposits in the area, brick and tile works were gradually established. Railway yards were built alongside the stations and were extended as the rapid development of Melbourne accelerated the need for building materials. Tile and brick works were established in the Box Hill, Nunawading, Mitcham and Vermont areas, where great pits were gouged out to provide the clay. Many tons of clay were processed daily as the tiles and bricks were formed, fired and packed by a large staff to be sent to Melbourne, its growing suburbs and farther afield. Over the years thousands of tiles and bricks were produced, as well, to a lesser degree, as various building decorations. The large workforce, including both

The well-remembered perfume of these flowers was always a pleasant welcome for night-time train travellers

Continued on page 8



NP1592 RY engine at Mitcham Station 1917

Fisherites

our homegrown sect

James Cowley Morgan Fisher (1832–1913) was born in Bristol, England. At 14, he ran away to sea and was later described as “utterly illiterate but not unintelligent”.

He deserted his ship for the goldfields in 1852, became a carter and labourer, and eventually settled in Nunawading as a charcoal-burner. In 1853 he married Caroline Chamberlain in Prahran, and they had two sons before Caroline died in 1855. In 1858 he married 18-year-old Emma Kefford at Christ Church, Hawthorn. They had four sons and four daughters.

His mother-in-law, Rhoda Kefford, had earlier founded the “New Church of the First Born”, and by 1863 James Fisher had become its leader. He taught that the end of the world was near, along with the restoration of Israel and the gathering in of the ten lost tribes by the spirit of God. On moonlit nights he led his followers through the countryside banging tins to exorcise the Devil.

He had about 100 disciples, who came from Nunawading, Prahran, Richmond and Ballarat. The “Nunawading Messiah” would have remained obscure if one of his closest followers had not prosecuted him in 1871 for obtaining money by representing himself as the Messiah. The suit failed, but the press had a field day because Fisher was also alleged to practise polygamy.

On 30 July 1871 he hired the Haymarket Theatre to justify himself, but the meeting ended in a meleé. Yet the debacle did not affect Fisher’s standing in Nunawading, where he served on school and roads boards. By 1900 the Fisherites had drifted into obscurity. Many of them went to the West Australian goldfields and settled at Wickpin; Fisher joined them in 1904, where he built a church and preached regularly. In 1910 he married again, to Ruth Rentil. After sustaining a head injury he became “a bit queer” and in 1913 he died aged 81.

The Wickpin settlement was an agricultural success, and although the sect had died out completely by the 1930s, many Fisherite descendants stayed on their holdings.



NP2876 Photo taken of the Fisherites c.1890

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, 8 November

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

Whitehorse Historical Society DIARY DATES

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

Saturday, 11 October, 1.30pm

General Meeting

*Speakers: Barbara Rogalski, Rosalie Whalen,
“Celebration of 50 Years
of the Opening of Schwerkolt Cottage”*

Saturday, 13 December, 1.30pm

General Meeting


Topic: “Pop-Up History”

Bring along your own local historical artifact and be prepared to share its history with us

2015 will include speakers on topics including:

- *History of the Mitcham RSL*
- *50 Years of WHS*
- *Another filmic trip down memory lane*

Statistics

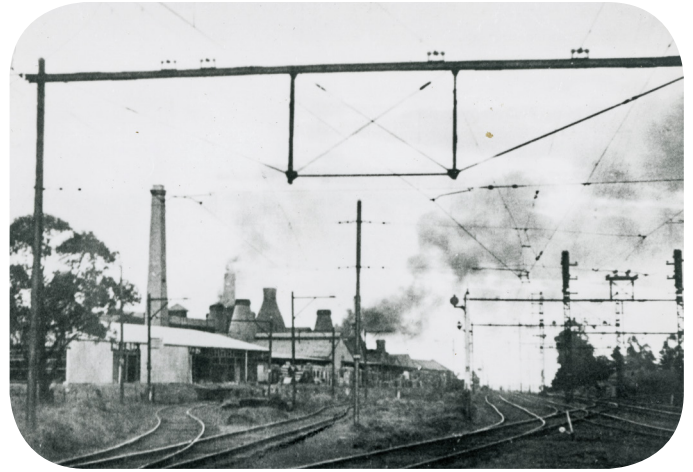
Photographs catalogued	-	4132
Artefacts catalogued	-	4665
Documents catalogued	-	6722
Visitors to museum July/August	-	353
 Facebook ‘likes’ to August	-	359

Continued from page 6

male and female, were either locals or came by train from nearby towns. Gradually the population of the area grew, Mitcham township expanding to accommodate its growing number of new residents.

We moved to Mitcham in early 1936 when my father, Frank Bawden, was transferred from Birregurra Railway Station in the Western District to Mitcham as Assistant Station Master. His job included the supervision and operation of the shunting and making up of goods trains, (the means by which most provisions traversed the country before road transport took over and eliminated much of the double handling). As the years went by, the increasing cost of roofing tiles and the diminishing availability of suitable quality clay eventually saw the return to galvanised iron roofing for some time. Tiles were still manufactured, but in lower quantities, and gradually the various brick and tile works in the area closed down. With their closing, the need for “spur” railway sidings mostly came to an end, just some being retained for the decreasing number of goods trains to and from all corners of the state and for the infrequent parking of trains. Over the years these large areas of land beside the Box Hill, Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham stations were gradually converted to the car parks for railway commuters.

When we moved to Mitcham, we lived in a large rented house in Thomas Street for about eight years until my parents built a house soon after World War II in Delhi Street, close to the railway line, just two or three minutes from Mitcham Station, on what was known as the Walker Estate, during the boom inland sales and house building after the end of the war. Living so near the railway line we were able to hear the familiar sounds of the passenger trains coming and going and the noisy shunting of goods trains at all hours of the day and night; they were ever-present, and sounds that I have lived with for most of my life as I married a Victorian Railways



NP336 Australian Tesselated Tile Company from Mitcham railway station 1940

motor driver, Norman Jones, in 1951. We travelled, with our two daughters, around the Victorian railway system until his early death in 1957 at 35 years of age. I returned with my two young daughters to the family home in Delhi Street, Mitcham, and eventually moved to Croydon after the death in 1984 of my parents, who died in their seventies within a few months of one another. The move from Mitcham to Croydon took me some distance away from a railway line for the first time in my life (apart for two years in the WAAAF during WWII). Though now some distance from the railway line, I am nonetheless able to hear the train whistles on still nights, a nostalgic and lonely sound that brings back so many memories of living beside railway lines and stations for so many years.

Shirley Jones (née Bawden)

P.S. My father was one of the first guides at Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum, and continued there until his sudden death in 1984. My mother (Irene Bawden) and I, along with a small group of local residents, were involved with the early furnishing of the nursery/children's room of the cottage as well as some of the garden restoration.

FROM THE COLLECTION

NA 4630

As every train left Mitcham, these switches were used to ring a bell at the next station, up or down the line.

The switch system was no longer needed when the station was rebuilt below the level of Mitcham Road in 2013/14.



Another great family day . . .



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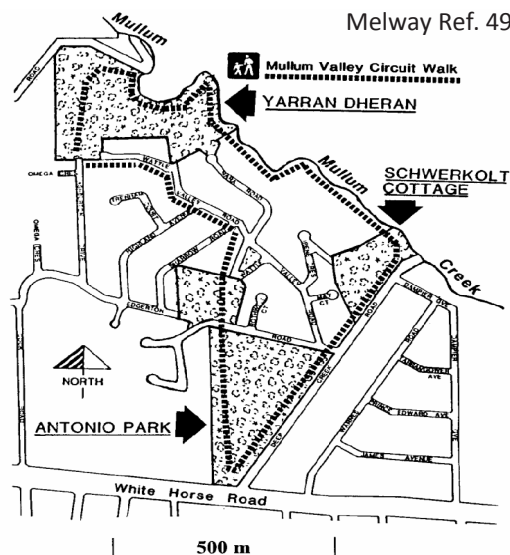
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Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 12 November 2014

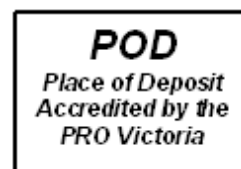
The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.



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.



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**Box Hill Cemetery Records &
Nunawading Gazette for 1964-1974**

available on microfiche for research.

*The Whitehorse
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