



## and the MITCHAM POST OFFICE . . .

The building at 528 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham (originally 678 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham, changed in about 1953, I think) was erected in 1925 as a large, double-storeyed brick residence with two shops facing Whitehorse Road. The entry to the residence was in Station Street.

One shop was quite small and was rented out as a hairdresser and tobacconist. In the larger shop Bertha and Patrick Markham (whose one child, Mary, was my mother) operated a mixed newsagency business and the local Post Office. Bertha Markham was the appointed Postmistress.

The postmen's work, such as mail and parcel sorting, was carried out in a room to the rear of the post office "shop" area – this area was linked by a wide passage to a narrow path that led to a gate opening onto the footpath immediately to the east of the barber's shop; this was how the "posties" accessed their workplace and where they parked their bicycles.

In the late 1930s a range of photographic products including Kodak film and processing services was added to the mixed business. The Markham's daughter Mary had matured and become interested in photography and undoubtedly enjoyed discounted goods and services from her parents' shop. She had her own side business as a child photographer – at weekends and evenings, as I understand it.

The Kodak Film sign pictured above was originally mounted outside what had been the barber's shop; then in around 1950 it was moved into Station Street above a new toys display window. I remember the local boys

trying to touch it, leaping up and making quite a bang when they succeeded – although sometimes this was aided by a stick or a piece of metal, which is part of the reason the sign is now so scarred.

In 1944, both Bertha and Patrick died and the premises were inherited by Mary and her husband, Harold Millane. They were not able to continue with the Post Office, although Mary was appointed Acting Postmistress and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for a few months while the PMG Department set up a somewhat temporary service in a shop several doors to the east. The local postal services had grown with the population and the limited space at the rear of the shop was inadequate for the sorting and other postal procedures. So the staff were pleased to move into a more commodious workplace.

But Mary chose to retain the shop as a mixed business (using the former sorting room) selling toys,

*continued on page 6*



Bertha and Patrick Markham - standing at right  
- on front lawn of P.O. residence circa 1940

## CONTENTS

President's Report	2	From The Reporter	5
Your Committee in Action	2	Diary Dates	6
December Meeting Report	3	Kodak and the Mitcham P.O. (continued)	6
		From the Collection / Our New Camera	7

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

*Dear Members*

I hope you all enjoyed the season's festivities and are now enjoying the New Year.

The Society will be having a very busy time this year with a very long list of activities. The first task will be to do some more work for reaccreditation following the report from the managers of the Museum Accreditation Program (MAP).

This year we are participating in the Heritage Festival being run by National Trust Victoria from 18 April until 26 May. The theme is Conflict and Compassion, and Mary Schwerkolt's story – as told by Rosalie Whalen in her article in the last newsletter – is a very fitting subject for our display during this festival.

We hope to again host a visit in March by the students of Museum Studies from Deakin University on the first day of their course.

April will see the centenary of Gallipoli (and the 101st year of ANZAC), and our speaker will be Peter McPhee, talking on the history of the Mitcham RSL. This year, as we are hosting the Association of Eastern Historical Societies (AOEHS) in April, our meeting will be on the third Saturday of the month, 18 April, to combine the two meetings. Thanks to Peter McPhee, we have acquired some very interesting artefacts from the Mitcham RSL, and will be cataloguing them in order to have some on display for this event.

Later in the year the Society will also be holding displays in libraries and at the Spring Festival, as we usually do.



**Deakin students visiting in March last year**

The City of Whitehorse Heritage Week will again be in September. As well as running our Family Day, we will be involved with the Council, Box Hill Historical Society, Surrey Hills History Group and others, in a display to commemorate the Centenary.

And of course we will have Working Bees and General Meetings for you to attend. At our February meeting we will have a relaxed start to the year with a film from 1971. In keeping with that year, we will take you back to the time of "going to the pictures" with cartoon and supporting program; not forgetting jaffas – and more.

*Vicki Jones Evans*

---

### ERRATUM

In our September issue of the newsletter we ran a story about the Fisherites. In this there were some inaccuracies, and a reader, a direct descendant through Samuel Richard (a son of James Cowley Morgan Fisher), has kindly written to us to point these out. He very helpfully provided a link (see below), to a site which provides a correct record of this sect. Thanks, Peter, for providing this link:

<http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/13812/39617.pdf;jsessionid=8F207A6F637E2E132684E0948C58FE85?sequence=1>

---

## Your Committee in Action

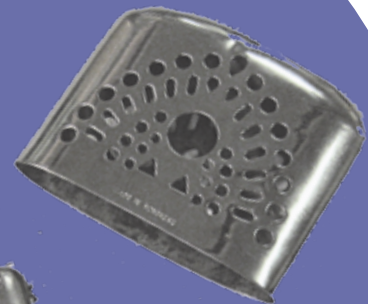
- The owner of the building to house the Rob's Bicycle Shop plaque has accepted a quote from Signorama.
- The visit by the Museum Accreditation Program went well, with the result that WHS has been officially reaccredited.
- The committee is participating in the National Trust Heritage Festival, and agreed on a display for its theme of Conflict and Compassion based on the story of Mary Jackschowski (nee Schwerkolt).

## POP-UP HISTORY

The last WHS meeting for 2014 involved a concept different from the usual run of events: for this meeting, instead of having a speaker, we invited members to share information about items of their own that might be of interest to the rest of the membership. And what a success it was!

Unfortunately space precludes our being able cover all the fascinating objects brought (a couple of which the owners were unsure about what they were!); here is but a random selection (a fuller album is on our Facebook page!).

Brought by Christine Pitt was this silvered metal handwarmer, Peacock brand, that had been used by her family as far back as the 1930s when bushwalking. The top is perforated on both sides with a pattern of circular and elliptical holes, forming the Peacock logo. Produced since 1923, this pocket warmer makes use of the chemical principle that vaporized benzine (hydrocarbon) generates heat when in contact with platinum. The heat generator neither ignites the benzine (not benzene) nor produces flames. It requires the use of a match solely for achieving the necessary temperature to allow platinum to begin catalysis.



Ray Meagher's family had a dairy in Thomas Street, Mitcham. A relic of this is the item he brought to show: a gill (pronounced Jill). Carrying a government stamp guaranteeing the veracity of its measurement, the gill was a unit of measurement for volume generally equal to a quarter of a pint. It is no longer in common use, except in regard to the volume of alcoholic spirits measures, but it is kept alive by the occasional reference, such as in the cumulative song "The Barley Mow". In some areas, a gill came to mean half a pint for both beer and milk.



# December Meeting Report

Bob Gardiner's contribution was a story that started with his father Bert's winning the Australian 7-Mile Walking Championship in 1925 (*figure 1*). Bob shared Bert's sporting interest, himself commencing competition in 1953. This led to his participation in two Olympics – Japan 1964 and Mexico 1968. The then City of Nunawading struck medals for the three of its citizens that competed in Mexico – the second of Bob's items for sharing (*figure 2*).

The third item was shown by Barb Gardiner (Bob was too shy!) – the torch that Bob carried along Springvale Road for the Sydney Olympics in 2000 (*figure 3*).



Fig 1



Fig 3



Fig 2

. . . AND there were many more – some of which your reporter was unable to cover as the memory card of his camera ran out of space! However, here are a couple of items brought by Leonie Martinson about which we would like to ask:

## CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THEY ARE?



From the

# Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter

CIRCULATING IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BLACKBURN AND MITCHAM AND DONCASTER.

Volume 51 Number 1

Friday, 7 January 1938

Price Twopence

## BLACKBURN.

### RETURNED SOLDIERS' DANCE.

The arrangements for an enjoyable dance conducted in the Blackburn Hall on New Year's Eve by the local branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A., were in the able hands of Mr. Tom Pearce (hon. secretary) and a strong committee. Tamblyn's orchestra provided the music for a good company of dancers, who all pronounced the effort a great success. The Monte Carlo was won by Miss Skinner and Mr. G. Clarke. A streamer dance at the conclusion provided much amusement. A delicious supper was provided by the ladies, who had adorned the supper tables with beautiful floral decorations.

### PERSONAL.

Mr. and Mrs. T. E. C. Cummins, of Hartwell, are being congratulated on the arrival, on Christmas Eve, of a daughter (Marion Jean). Congratulations are also extended to the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. George Mackinlay, of Laburnum street, Blackburn.

Mr. C. G. Williams, shire secretary of Doncaster and Templestowe, Mrs. Williams and two friends returned this week from a motor tour of over one thousand miles. They travelled via Bairnsdale to Canberra, taking in Mount Kosciusko, and returned by the Hume Highway, spending a night or two in Wangaratta. While in the Federal Capital they were conducted over the Houses of Parliament by special permission.

## MITCHAM.

### DISCARDING THE JOKER.

The mirth which was caused in Mitcham on New Year's Day did not take the turn which it was intended to by some practical jokers. They made the rounds of most of the shops decorating the windows with hieroglyphics and slogans in whitewash. Although they carried out their operations in the quiet hours, an alert representative of the law discovered one of the jokers putting the finishing touches to his artistry. The watcher quietly followed up and allowed the brush wielder to finish his rounds before pouncing on him. The humiliating sequel for the artist (and the amusing part for the on-lookers), was that the former was fully employed for several hours, with rags and Bon Ami, in the task of removing the "jokes." A joke is all right when it "comes off," but the coming off process proved very trying for the individual in question.



DILWORTH'S have been appointed Sole Agents for the Shire of Doncaster and Templestowe and Warrandyte for the

### Lehmann Washing Machine

Before accepting this agency, we made extensive tests with all types of Washing Machines, and we definitely found the Lehmann to be the best machine regardless of price. The Lehmann sells at only

**£4/19/6 cash**

or easy terms can be arranged. You can have one in your home for a trial washing, and you are under no obligation to purchase.

## DILWORTH & SON

PTY. LTD.

67 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe.

Phone: Ivanhoe 375.



magazines, tobacco products, stationery, haberdashery, fireworks and many other unclassifiable items. Of course she retained the sale of photographic supplies and services, including operating as a Kodak agency.

In addition, Harold had been a keen photographer since his teen years and worked in the Victorian Railways Photographic Section. He also was involved in the business, and he and Mary took many sets of photographs of special occasions, including weddings and school class photos. They set up the main lounge room (upstairs front north-west corner) as a studio, and we remember bridal parties en masse traipsing through the house. One of Mary's special talents was the colouration of photographs – a valued service for clients in the days before colour prints. Harold and Mary also recorded many local buildings and scenes: some of these pictures were turned into souvenir postcards, and WHS has quite a few of these in its collection.

Harold set up a film- and print-processing darkroom in the area that had previously been a post office storeroom (by then, the barber's shop had long been closed). This enabled him to do a lot of high-value developing and printing (D & P) in-house, which was an important additional source of income later, as the children came along. Customers who brought in their own films for D & P were offered the choice of Kodak or Millane. Kodak were a bit more expensive and took at least two days while the slightly cheaper in-house service was guaranteed overnight, if required.

Although she and Harold had a growing family, Mary persisted with the shop until 1957. By this time the family consisted of parents plus nine children, and there was simply not enough space for them in the residence. And the PMG had been pestering them for a few years, seeking to buy the property. (Their temporary P.O. had not been a satisfactory long-term proposition.) So Harold and Mary found a large enough property in Burwood and sold the former Mitcham Post Office to the PMG in mid-1957.

All the stock items remaining from the shop, plus a number of fittings, including the Kodak Film sign, were stored in a shed at the new Burwood home. When this property was sold in 1984, all the contents had to be cleared out. I rescued the sign from a very large skip as it reminded me of many days in the shop writing up D & P orders, and of nights in the darkroom helping Harold, my father, with his processing work.

*Brian Millane,  
December 2014*



**The Post office circa 1928**

## Whitehorse Historical Society 2015 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 14 March**

**Saturday 9 May**

**Saturday 5 September**

**Saturday 14 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, 14 February, 2015**

**1.30pm General Meeting**

*Film:*

*"Nunawading – City of Contrasts" (1971)*

**NOTE: The February meeting will not take place if the temperature exceeds 33°**

**Saturday, 18 April**

**1.30pm General Meeting**

*Speaker: Peter McPhee*

*Topic: "History of the Mitcham RSL"*

**Saturday, 13 June**

**1.30pm General Meeting**

*Speaker: Bill McAuley*

*Topic: T.B.A*

## Statistics

Photographs catalogued	-	4133
Artefacts catalogued	-	4692
Documents catalogued	-	6774
Visitors to museum Nov–Dec	-	356
<b>TOTAL MUSEUM VISITORS 2014</b>	-	<b>2261</b>
 Facebook 'likes' to December	-	390

# Our new camera!

The Society has purchased a second camera – a Canon IXUS145 – for use at Society gatherings and for photos in the Whitehorse area. Many thanks to Kirk's Camera Supply, Ringwood, for giving us an excellent discount and courteous service.

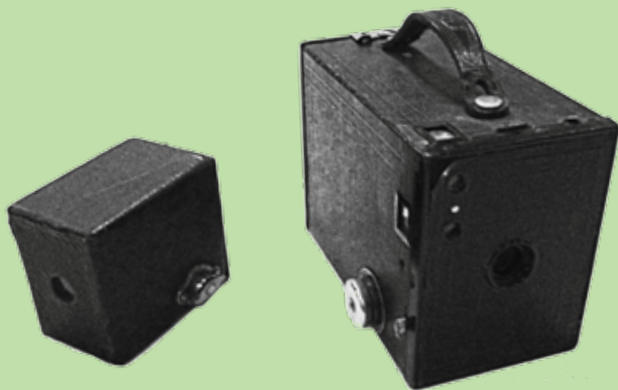


CALL (03) 9870 4644

86 Maroondah Hwy  
Ringwood VIC 3134



## FROM THE COLLECTION . . . . .



NA614

This simple type of camera had a fixed focus lens and a single shutter speed.. It was first offered for sale in 1888.

Shown here are the standard size, and to its left a "baby" version



Folder in which photos and negatives were delivered to the customer circa 1940



NA606

In 1913 George Eastman released the Brownie with the folding bellows, which was popular and affordable until the 1960s. Shown here is a Kodak Brownie Nm. 2 circa 1930

## NEW(ish) MEMBERS

We have had several new members join our Wednesday work group in 2014, and they have quickly become indispensable members of the team.

- **Dan Jones** has taken responsibility for the digitising of our photograph collection.
- **Harley Hall** has joined our maintenance crew
- **Judy Hall** works with the artefacts team
- **Lin Chan** has been working with the photographs team
- **Graham Brown** has joined the administration team.
- We welcome them all and hope they will be with us for a long time to come!

## WHS Committee Contacts

### President

Vicki Jones-Evans  
9873 3383

### Vice-President

Pat Richardson

### Secretary

Rachael Cottle

### Treasurer

Bob Gardiner

Local History Room (03) 9873 4946

## Newsletter Team

Chris Gray  
Bettina Stevenson  
Wendy Standfield  
Valda Arrowsmith OAM

## WHS website

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

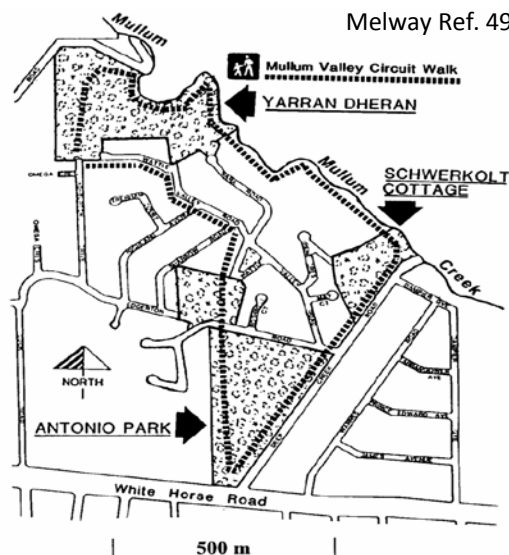
## Email

[whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com](mailto:whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com)

## Postal Address

P.O. Box 272  
MITCHAM Vic 3132

Melway Ref. 49 D7



**Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 11 March 2015**

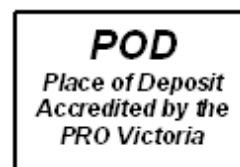
## The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.



### 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



## 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

