

## STORY PROMPTS RESPONSE

*Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian Saturday 11 March 1905*

RINGWOOD. [FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

A pretty wedding was celebrated last month at Mitcham Christ Church of England, by the Rev. H. S. Hollow, M.A. (of St. Augustine, Moreland), assisted by Mr. Friend, the contracting parties being Mr. H. A. Wilkins, eldest son of Mr. J. B. Wilkins, of Ringwood and Mitcham (late of St. Kilda), to Hannah Lillian Kemp, eldest daughter of Mr. G. Kemp, of Mitcham. The bride (who was given away by her uncle, Mr. J. Kemp) looked charming in a dress of cream *crepe de chene*, with chiffon trimmings, and wore the customary wreath and veil, and carried a shower bouquet. The bridesmaids, Misses C. and M. Kemp (sisters of the bride), and Misses Wilkins (sisters of the bridegroom), looked pretty in their dresses of cream *voile*, with lace trimmings. The bridegroom was attended by his cousin, Mr. Steedman, as best man. There was a large number of spectators present to witness the ceremony, after which guests made their way to the Mitcham Hall, where they sat down

THE story on the cover of our last newsletter drew a number of interested comments from readers, one of whom discovered the following article on TROVE. It illustrates the interest that used to be evinced in the minutiae of local social events (now superseded by far more pressing concerns, such as the current state of play with Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie).

You will notice the fact that wedding presents and their givers were itemised for all to see – surely an added pressure on those deciding what to give the happy couple!



to a sumptuous wedding breakfast. Mr. B. Champion proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom, to which the bridegroom suitably responded. A very enjoyable evening was subsequently spent in singing and dancing, and the party broke up in the early hours of the morning, many good wishes being tendered to Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilkins, who left by the first train for Melbourne, *en route* for Ballarat, where the honeymoon was spent.

The following is a list of the presents:—Mr. and Mrs. Ansell, silver teapot; Mr. and Mrs. Champion, silver butter-dish and cruet; Mr. and Mrs. J. Wilkins, dinner-service and fender; Mr. and Mrs. G. Kemp, table linen, &c.; Mr. and Mrs. Bergland, silver mounted ruby butter-dish; Mr. and Mrs. Steedman, pair pictures; Mr. and Mrs. Dagliesh, tea service; Miss V. Wilkins, hall-stand; Miss L. Wilkins, bedroom set; Mr. and Mrs. C. Kemo, silver-mounted ruby butter-dish; Mr. and Mrs. Wilson,

pair vases; Mr. and Mrs. Stephens, jardiniere and table-centre; Mr. and Mrs. Devlin, oil painting; Mr. and Mrs. Gay, pair vases; Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Town, tea-service; Miss O. Wilkins, dining room lamp; employees Australian Tesselated Tile Coy., bread board and knife, set carvers, pair vases, 1 doz. knives; Mr. and Mrs. Walker, glass-ware; Miss Buchanan, cheese dish; Miss Alexander, cake dish; Mr. F. Wilkins, pair vases; Mr. J. Corkhill, vases; Mr. R. Wilkins, biscuit-barrel; Mr. and Mrs. Mertens, glove and handkerchief sachet; Mr. and Mrs. Collings, water jug and glasses; Miss Collings, cushion; Miss McClelland; ruby glass sugar and butter dishes; Mr. and Mrs. Hansen, vases and glass-ware; Miss S. Kemp, pincushion.

**NEXT MEETING**

**General Meeting 1pm Saturday 1 June 2019**

*George Cox:*

*Nunawading: A walk through the 1960s*



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Farewell to  
Maurie

### *Dear Members*

**T**HE Working Bee in May was well attended, with eight members who cleaned the Cottage, Museum and Local History Room.

In May we applied for a Federal 2019 Volunteer Grant for a Significance Assessment of the Collection. The Mayor, Cr Bill Bennett kindly provided us with a support letter. The result will be known later in the year.

Our long- time volunteer, Maurie, has relocated to warmer climes. We farewelled Maurie over morning tea at the end of April and welcomed a new volunteer Judy-anne. Rosalie is training Judy-anne in cataloguing documents. We now have up to 24 volunteers working on Wednesdays.

*Vicki Jones Evans*

## VALE Dorethy Margaret Skey

### 28 May 1920 – 3 April 2019

**A**T All Saints Church in Mitcham on Monday 29 April Margaret's family and friends celebrated her life. Her son, John, had invited members of the historical society to attend as he knew how much our Society had meant to Margaret. She was passionate about her family as they were about her, including the many foster children who had been in her care. Mother's Union, church flower arranging and china painting were activities that occupied much of her time too.

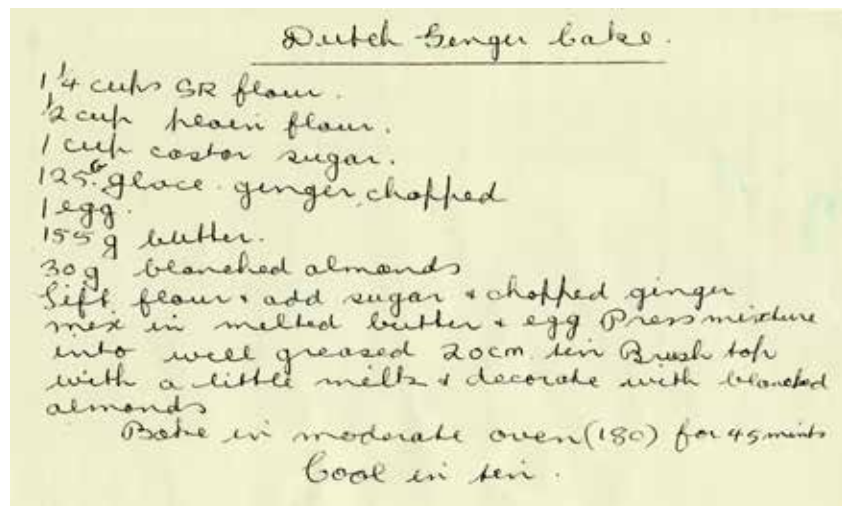
The speakers all mentioned that she told them stories; that is also what we remember in the Wednesday Working

Group. She told us some wonderful stories, such as being a Ten Pound Pom arriving in Melbourne expecting sunshine and having to keep warm in the wonderful red coat she had brought from England. It is in our Collection. Then her story of arriving at the Eastbridge Migrant Hostel in Rooks Road and being horrified at having to live in an awful tin shed. She removed the furniture, scrubbed it from top to bottom, bought new furniture and moved on as soon as possible to a share house in South Yarra near Como House. Margaret had extensive knowledge of sewing, materials and fashions; we found this invaluable when cataloguing items for the Collection. In her later years with us she struggled with macular degeneration in cataloguing but she came to work anyway. I am not sure how long Margaret was with our Society. I joined in 2001 and she was working here then.

It was a little after her 94th birthday, I think, that she had to move into care. The Wednesday Working Group has a tradition that you bring along a cake for your birthday. Margaret brought along her hand-made cake. Her speciality was a lovely Ginger Cake.

A big heart, forthright and good for a story was how her family saw her, and we did too.

*Vicki Jones-Evans*



Margaret's recipe for Dutch Ginger Cake, in her own handwriting.

## CONTENTS

President's Report	2	Nunawading Gazette front page	5
VALE Margaret Skey	2	Is This Where You Live? – Deakin St, Mitcham	6
April Meeting Report	3	Diary Dates	6
Mitcham Post Office 1924–1957 (Part Two)	4	Mitcham Post Office 1924–1957 (Continued)	7



# APRIL MEETING REPORT



*No female no uncertificated bankrupt or insolvent no person attainted of treason or convicted of felony or perjury or any infamous crime no person of unsound mind and no person not qualified as herein required shall be capable of being or continuing a member of the council of any borough.*

An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws  
relating to Municipal Institutions  
11 September 1863

## WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As one of the youngest members of Whitehorse Historical Society, an avid history buff and young woman, the idea of women in politics has been a reality for most of my life. It just seemed a given that women would be permitted to run for local councils much the same as their male counterparts. So when Helen Harris gave her marvellous talk on the history of the involvement of women in local councils, I came away with a new understanding of just how far we've come. Or, rather, how much further we need to go. Local government, particularly at the council level is not something I find myself regularly thinking about. State and Federal politics is always in our faces in the news and I've always assumed that the role of councils was limited. I've also made the terrible assumption that women had always been equally represented.

There were a few times during Helen's talk where I was completely lost, in large part because I didn't know the events she was referencing. In my defence, being all of eight years old in 1995 is a good reason not to remember the councils being fired. However, despite certain references flying right over my head, Helen's talk was incredibly informative and thoroughly engaging. I never thought I'd be interested in knowing obscure rules about who could and could not run for council!

After her talk, Helen was also selling copies of her book *The Right to Vote: The Right to Stand*, of which I purchased a copy. Quite a few other people bought the book as well, which just goes to show that an engaging speaker can make council elections interesting. I subsequently spent an informative evening researching the 1995 council sacking and the changes that came from it.

Meg Innes



Welcome to new members Patrice Jennings (who has joined our Wednesday Working Group), Judyann Buckler and Beverley Jones

**\* Do you have any memories of your past that we could share in the newsletter? We would love to receive anecdotes that paint a picture of how things were in days gone by – not just what has changed, but actual living memories!**



# The Mitcham Post Office 1924–1957

(remembered by Brian Millane, who lived there 1944 to 1957)

## The personal journey Part Two

IN 1939, after sewerage services and the town water supply had become available, Mr W. G. Tuck, plumber, of 698 Whitehorse Road, obtained on behalf of the Markhams MMBW approval of Drainage Plan No. 204510. This provided for the addition of an indoor toilet upstairs and the piping of waste water from the whole building to the sewer running along the right of way to the south. Mr Tuck received approval of the completed works in August 1940 (see Drainage Plan No. 204510 held by WHS).

In around 1951, my parents retained Mr Tuck to install an electrical storage hot water system. I believe that at the time of construction in the early 1920s the town water supply was either non-existent or of poor quality<sup>1</sup> because the Markhams had installed a large rainwater tank over the single-storied section to the rear of the building. This tank was mounted on a substantial platform and was replaced by the electric hot water service which was reticulated throughout the building.

My mother Mary Elizabeth Markham was born on 30 April, 1915. She recounted to me many times the life she had led as a young child at the 'old' post office. She also recalled vividly the year or so during which the new post office was being built; she was about eight or nine years old and the move was no doubt a major excitement in her life.

For about twenty years the Markhams continued their business pretty much as before in the new Post Office building. Bertha Markham operated the post office and news agency and followed her interest in photography, which she shared with Patrick. He continued his own pursuits in local affairs and as Secretary of the Henry George League; also Secretary of the Apiarists Association as well as consultant apiarist and honey judge and steward of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

Bertha and Patrick's daughter Mary became an elocution teacher, working at local schools and with private clients. She also was a photographer and specialised in child photography and wedding portraiture. Around 1937, when Mary was 22, the Markham's Photographic Studios business name was first

used, based in the post office. Mary left home around 1940, and in 1942 married Harold Millane, whom she had met in the amateur theatrical scene.

Bertha became quite ill in early 1942, so Mary was asked to come home to nurse her mother. Mary returned home and Patrick was by then the postmaster and shopkeeper. In fact, Patrick took some leave pursuing his other interests and Mary had also to run the post office and business from July to October in 1942.<sup>2</sup>

The exact sequence of events is unclear. However, I do have great sympathy for my mother: she'd volunteered to help her own mother in a time of dreadful sickness that she knew would end in death. At the same time, she was expected to keep house for both parents. By then she was engaged to my father and trying to conduct a courtship as well as pursuing her second passion on the stage – her first passion being teaching elocution.



Bertha Markham, pictured here in about 1930, was the Mitcham postmistress for over 30 years. She died on 31 May, 1944. Almost immediately after she died, Patrick himself became ill. He had been acting as postmaster for some while, a role he had undertaken on several occasions over the years when Bertha had gone away to visit family. My mother,

Mary Millane as she was by then, was appointed as acting postmistress.<sup>3</sup>

On July 3, 1944, Patrick died and Mary inherited the premises. She was not allowed to continue to operate the Post Office. The P.M.G. Department quickly took over operations and a month or two later had set up a more or less temporary service in a shop several doors to the east. Mitcham's postal services had grown with the population and the limited space at the rear

(continued on page 7)





# NUNAWADING

# GAZETTE

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ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS: Croydon Moorbank Gazette, Lyndon Store Express, Box Hill Gazette, Yarra Valley News, Knox Sherbrooke News, Ringwood Croydon Mail

# 'Exchange' future could be in balance

• By SIMON KINCH

The future of Nunawading City's two-year-old Learning Exchange now appears in the balance.

The council-backed service came under strong criticism from two members of Nunawading Council last week — Cr Bruce Atkinson and Cr Savas Athan.

Cr. Atkinson declared his opposition to any further council financial commitment to the Exchange.



CR ATKINSON

"I am not convinced that this is an idea of activity that we, as a council, should maintain," Cr Atkinson said. The Exchange, with council and federal Access cash aid, has operated to provide an exchange of skills service since 1974.

It received a \$3375 council grant in 1973-74 and \$3245 in 1974-75.

The exchange, which opened in council owned premises in Blackburn Rd, Blackburn, and this year moved to "The House" at Nunawading North Neighborhood Centre, also received a \$7,500 grant from Access in 1975.

But its latest application for a \$14,000 Access grant was rejected last month.

At last week's council meeting, Cr Atkinson said he wanted to make public his views on the subject in view of financial decisions which would have to be considered by the council in the near future.

He considered it unfortunate that the project had failed to obtain a grant from Access this year.

Cr Atkinson added that he was not impressed by the content and appearance of the exchange's monthly community newspaper, which, he claimed, looked more like an advertising pamphlet.

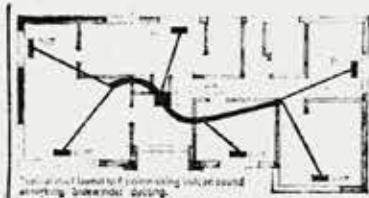
■ Turn to page 10



• The players of the Mississippi State University basketball team called in to meet some of the boys at Tally Ho Boys' Home, East Burwood, last weekend. Pictured is Wiley Peck showing Peter a ball-bouncing technique in the gymnasium. Wiley proved one of the USA stars when the visitors defeated Nunawading Spectres by 23 shots later that weekend.

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## A child could die here...

Don't throw out old refrigerators with the doors still attached...

It could cost a child's life:

Nunawading Council will issue this warning to all householders.

Cr Bruce Atkinson said the council should give the warning to avoid tragedies like those in other states, where children had died after locking themselves in discarded refrigerators.

Reserve refrigerators kept in garages by many householders posed a similar hazard for inquisitive children.

Many people stored liquor in these garage refrigerators, Cr Atkinson said.

The council will place a special warning on the notices issued to householders before free hard rubbish collections.



### GARY AUGUSTINI — CUTS HAIR GOOD

**SPECIALS THIS WEEK — FOREST HILL ONLY**

NEO PON (Wella Herbal Shampoo) Nor. \$2.95. Now \$2.50

SEBANE SHAMPOO (Oily Hair) Nor. \$2.25 \$1.95

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Now \$1.00

**GARY AUGUSTINI**

Forest Hill Shopping Centre 878-7341



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RINGWOOD — 870-0266

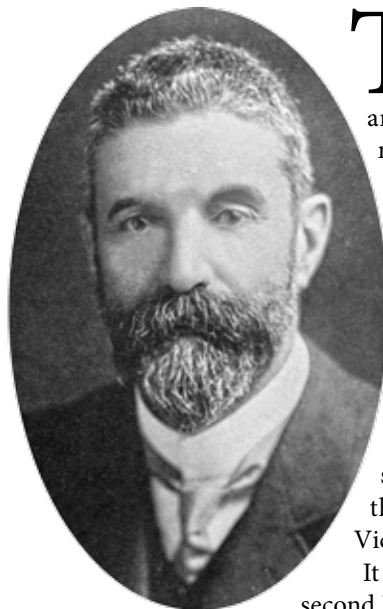
LMCT 1290

## See inside for OLD ORCHARD Shopping Centre's SUPER BLOCKBUSTER SALE



Is this where you live?

## DEAKIN STREET, MITCHAM



THE area bordered by the roads of Springfield, Whitehorse, Dunlavin and Mitcham have been named after politicians, other government officials or shareholders in the Springfield Estate Co Ltd which was registered 9 October 1888, in which Alfred Deakin owned 1250 shares.

One is Deakin Street [Melway 48J8], a residential street that connects with the avenues of Ormond and Victoria.

It was named after Australia's second Prime Minister, the well-respected Alfred Deakin, a lawyer, who

was born in Fitzroy, Melbourne in August 1856. He was the second child of British immigrants, William Deakin and Sarah. His father, after working as a storekeeper, water-carter and general carrier became a partner in a coaching business, and a manager of Cobb & Co in Victoria.

Alfred Deakin's education began aged four at a boarding school in Kyneton. This was followed by attendance at the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. After graduating from Melbourne University in 1877 he became a barrister where he had studied Law at evening classes while working as a school teacher and private tutor. During the difficulties of establishing his practice he met David Syme, the owner of *The Age* who offered him a position as a journalist where he wrote reviews and articles on politics, and in 1880 he became the editor of *The Leader*.

Deakin became prominent in Victorian politics from 1879. In 1901 he was elected to the first federal parliament as MP for Ballarat and became Attorney-General in the ministry headed by Edward Barton. When Barton retired Deakin succeeded him as prime Minister on 24 September 1903. He continued in the position until 1910 serving for three consecutive occasions.

During his lifetime he wrote prolifically about political issues for overseas and local newspapers. He was also an active member of the Theosophical Society until 1896. Although he tried to hide this from the general public he always had a deep religious conviction and read widely on the subject.

Alfred Deakin became an invalid and died in 1919 aged 63. He is buried in the St Kilda cemetery alongside his wife of 52 years, Elizabeth Martha Anne ('Pattie') née Browne [1863–1934].

Deakin University named in his honour was established in 1974, and has six campus and learning sites in Victoria; plus an on-line Cloud Campus.

Yvonne Fitzmaurice

## DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex

**Saturday, 1 June**

**1.00pm General Meeting**

*George Cox:*

*Nunawading: A walk through the 1960s*

**Saturday, 17 August**

**1.00pm Annual General Meeting**

*Patty Boxhall*

*Your Gift – Our Care*

**Saturday, 5 October**

**1.00pm General Meeting**

*Dr Gary Presland*

*The Economics of Aboriginal Society*

## 2019 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 6 July**

**Saturday 7 September**

**Saturday 9 November**

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

## STATISTICS

Photographs catalogued	-	4250
Artefacts catalogued	-	4901
Museum visitors March–April		372



Facebook New Page 'likes' to date 780

# The Mitcham Post Office 1924–1957

(continued from page 4)

of the shop was inadequate for the sorting and other procedures. So, the P.M.G. and local staff were pleased to move into a larger workplace.

Despite now having two babies (I'd been born in March 1944) my mother chose to retain the shop as a mixed business, selling toys (displayed in the former sorting room), magazines, tobacco products, stationery, haberdashery, fireworks and many other unclassified items.

My father, Harold Millane, had been a keen photographer since his teen years and worked in the Victorian Railways Photographic Section. He was also involved in the business and he and Mary took many sets of photographs of special occasions including weddings and school class photos. They also set up the main living room (upstairs front NW corner) as a studio and we remember bridal parties *en masse* traipsing through the house. They also photographed many local buildings and scenes, some of which were turned into souvenir post cards. Around 1945, Harold set up a film and print processing darkroom in the area that had previously been the postmistress's office, using the former barber's shop as a workroom.

Although she and Harold had a growing family, Mary persisted with the shop until 1957. By this time, our family was parents plus nine children and there was simply not enough space for us all in the residence. And the P.M.G. had been seeking to buy the property for several years. (Their temporary P.O. had not been satisfactory.) So Harold and Mary bought a bigger house in Burwood and sold them the former Mitcham Post Office. We moved out in June, 1957.

**Postscript:** Patrick Markham had been justifiably proud of the new building and had a large, decorative cement plaque affixed to the first storey wall, facing west. The photograph and architect drawing clearly show the plaque but the wording is not so readable: it proclaims "Mitcham Post Office 1925". When passing the Mitcham Post Office a year or so after the P.M.G. had taken it over, the family was bemused to observe that the Postmaster General had removed the wording although the plaque itself continues to decorate the building

Brian Millane  
Healesville  
January, 2019

## ENDNOTES

1. Photographs taken in 1925 show no water tower to the south of the Mitcham Station; those in the 1940's do show the tower.
2. Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, 28 October, 1942; appointment of Mary Markham as Acting Postmistress from 1 July to 28 October, 1942, while Patrick Joseph Markham was on leave.
3. Victoria Gazette No 129, August 2nd, 1944. Mary Millane appointed acting Registrar of Births and Deaths from 1 June, 1944, while Patrick Joseph Markham was on leave.



Bertha with Brian's mother Mary aged approximately 10. Circa 1925.

## Are you descended from a **David Clark** passenger?

To mark the 180th anniversary of the *David Clark's* dropping anchor in Hobson's Bay on 27 October 1839, a reunion is planned for Sunday, 27 October 2019, at **Gulf Station, 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen**. Descendants of those 229 passengers are invited.

To receive more information as plans progress, email now to: [davidclark1839@gmail.com](mailto:davidclark1839@gmail.com) (that should be easy to remember!)

**Please share this message with other descendants.**

## WHS Committee Contacts

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Peter McPhee

### Secretary

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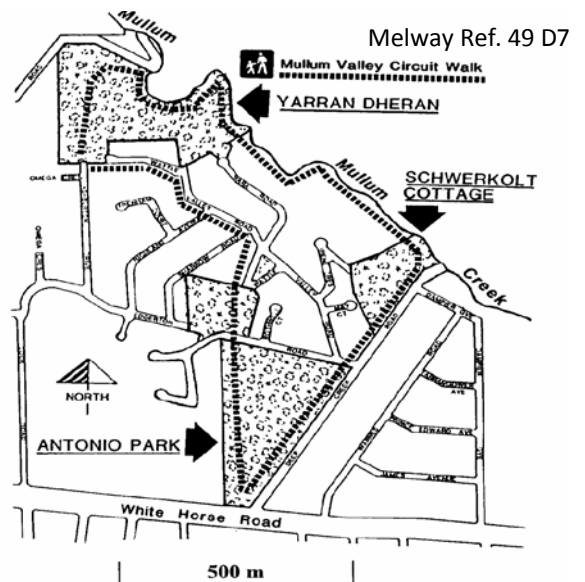
[www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/)  
[facebook.com/whitehorsehistory](https://facebook.com/whitehorsehistory)

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MITCHAM Vic 3132



**Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 10 July 2019**

## The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

### Mission Statement & Acknowledgement of Country



*"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 City of Whitehorse area."*

*"In the spirit of reconciliation, Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land now known as the City of Whitehorse, and pays respect to its elders past and present."*

CITY OF



### REMEMBER

#### Whitehorse Historical Society Local History Collection

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.*



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