

## A Cottage addition

A very special wooden dresser came our way recently. It was donated by Kerry McGill, daughter of Arthur Schwerkolt; but was originally owned by her grandfather, Ernest Schwerkolt. She remembers the dresser in her grandfather's bedroom, and later in the bedroom of her parents. Ernest always said that the dresser was "from the old place", the timber house that was built after the 1905 bushfires had destroyed the original stone building. Arthur spoke fondly to his daughter about playing under the palm tree (which still stands) near where the timber house stood.

Many houses will have had a similarly-designed piece, common in the 19th and early 20th centuries. An interesting feature of these was the deep centre drawer, which was designed for the purpose of holding a hat – an ubiquitous part of everyday costume right up until the 1960s.

*Pat Richardson*



## Schwerkolt Family Business 50th Celebration

On Saturday 11 February a large celebration for 380 invited guests took place at the Sofital Grand Ballroom on Collins Street, hosted by Waverley Forklifts, which is operated by Charlie Schwerkolt, fifth generation of the Schwerkolt family in Australia.

The first generation was established by the arrival of August Schwerkolt and his wife Pauline in 1849 and he eventually moved his family

to Mitcham by 1865 and began a productive farm, winery and quarry on 63 acres.

This was where his youngest child was born, Carl Benno Schwerkolt, who was one of the second generation. He was disinherited because he would not pick apples on a Sunday for the Monday market. (He was a binge drinker).

However, he lucked out in marrying a daughter of August's

*(continued on page 4)*

**NEXT  
MEETING:**

**Saturday, 1 April 1.00pm General Meeting**  
*George Petruo – The Art of Sacrifice*



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

*Dear Members*

I would like to invite you to attend our Official Opening by Cr Prue Cutts, Deputy Mayor, of the new Panels in our Visitor Centre as part of the National Trust of Victoria's Australian Heritage Festival.

“From Then Until Now – Exploring the stories of the Whitehorse Area”

2pm – 3.30pm on Saturday 29 April 2023.

We will be serving afternoon tea, so for catering purposes, can you please let Kathy know if you would like to attend.

With the Opening of this permanent display we will finally be acquitting our Whitehorse Council Community grant from 2021.

On Saturday 15 April we will be hosting the Association of Eastern Historical Societies' meeting at 1.30pm in our Local History Room.

Our Planning Day was very successful and our Volunteers are all very busy working and researching.

Our General Meeting on Saturday 1 April will feature George Petrou on the Art of Sacrifice. I hope to see you then.

I hope to see you at our next meeting on Saturday the 4th February when Ray Peace will be speaking on the 1812 Theatre at Upper Ferntree Gully.

*Vicki Jones Evans*



Planning for the future

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## Behind the Curtain

the story of the 1812 Theatre, Upper Ferntree Gully



On a cold, blustery early February day for our first meeting of 2023, we were treated to a heart-warming talk by Ray Peace exploring his latest book, *Behind the Curtain: the story of the 1812 Theatre, Upper Ferntree Gully*.

As a member of Knox Historical Society and the author of nearly 30 publications on historical subjects, Ray gently parted the heavy theatrical curtains enabling us to peek inside a long established local theatre, with all its to-ings and fro-ings, intrigues and scandals, and even helped us try to glimpse the resident ghost!

Ray has spent many years researching this, his latest book. At afternoon tea following his talk, a few of us were curious to learn just how he goes about his depth of research. Ray explained his laborious process of gathering snippets of information from old local newspaper cuttings via Trove; then on to personal recollections from past and present members and performers, audience, and associates. Naturally, where there is a theatre there is always a drama – or two – or three! Ray's book certainly doesn't fail in sharing all these intriguing stories and insights.

For those who wish to read more, Ray's book is available through the Theatre's website, [1812 Theatre.com.au](http://1812Theatre.com.au) or directly from the Theatre, 3 Rose Street, Upper Ferntree Gully, phone 9758 3964.

Think I'll buy a copy to learn a little more about that ghost . . .

*Margaret Graham*



PICTURES: (top) image from 2022 production of *Steptoe and Son*; (right) Ray gives a great presentation of his subject.

# Schwerkolt Family Business 50th Celebration

(continued from page 1)



second wife Wilhelmina and she set him up in a Bottle Merchant business in Prahran, and the third generation of three children were born, the eldest being Charles, the father of Rosalie Whalen. He operated the business until 1952, when he became ill and his son Charles, fourth generation, ably took the reins at the age of 19.

My brother successfully moved the Bottle business from Prahran to Waverley when the Housing Commission acquired his land for housing, but the days of recycling bottles slowly came to an end.

He had a few forklifts at the time, which he would lend to a neighbouring business as required until he suddenly realised that this was the direction to go to restore business profitability. So he invested in 50 of them, which he hired out. When his son Charles, (fifth generation) began work with him, he computerized the business, which left my brother with nothing to do! So in 1988 the business was handed over to his son and my brother decided to establish a Car Museum at Arthur's Seat: which, at the age of 89, he still opens daily to the public.

His son, who is known as Charlie, wasted no time in turning the forklift business into a Nationwide operation and currently has 5,000 forklifts on hire – making Waverley Forklifts the largest privately owned forklift company in Australia.

Charlie now has his son and daughter working in the company – making up the sixth generation.

The celebration was a huge success! During last year a five-minute video had been made of Rosalie at the Cottage and it was shown during the evening. My brother and I were on stage briefly answering questions.

A large book of the family business was also commissioned and written by Paul Daley and it was launched on the night.

The fleet of forklifts are mostly Toyotas and to mark the occasion Toyota presented my nephew with a new one on which was hand-painted images of my brother and nephew. This is now proudly on display in their Waverley Forklift showrooms.

Needless to say it was a fabulous celebration!

*Rosalie Whalen*



**PICTURES:** (top) Rosalie and Charles;  
(left) The Anniversary forklift from Toyota.

## FROM THE COLLECTION . . . .



NA5160

### **Soft Forklift Toy.**

On 11 February this year Waverley Forklifts marked 50 years since establishment by Charles Lionel Schwerkolt, and a large celebration took place at the Sofitel Hotel for 380 guests. Each place setting had one of these forklifts as a souvenir.



# 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.

VOL. XIII. No 39

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1902

ONE PENNY.

## "A Bleeding Country."

"The price of bread, and another threatened rise in meat are occupying more attention in the city and suburbs than politics or the coming coronation. As for politics their very name has come to be synonymous with an unblushing effort to retain—and increase—pay, place, and power at any price, that the only interest felt in our legislators is a speedy reduction of their numbers, and the affording of financial relief to this much-bleed country. Regarding the coronation, pomp and pageantry in London will not attract attention from poverty and privation here. A slender purse and a scanty cupboard are apt to make the most conservative of us feel very radical at times, and after all, some of the ceremonies that attend the coronation of the sovereign seem rather archaic in this age. The ceremony might surely be curtailed by half, and the 'oiling' of his majesty, as if he were a sewing machine, or an engine's piston, abolished. It is stated that in New Zealand the millers and bakers have combined to raise the price of bread, and although this may be only rumor, such things have been done. It behoves parliament and the people to keep their eyes open regarding this matter in Victoria, lest greed and grab should induce such a step. Some of our millers, most of them, in fact, are enormously rich, and live very much as our most opulent pastoralists, and highly paid civil servants—the judges, for example—do. There is evidently a fortune in flour for some of them, and the slightest suspicion that anything in the shape of a combine exists should be the signal for legislative interference. The man who makes his money by obliging the people to buy bread at prices they can ill afford is a worse enemy to the country and a greater traitor to it than all the pro-Boers put together. The real reason of the dearness of meat—as far as this article of daily food is concerned—would seem to be the over exportation. It was elicited from a man the other day, connected with the stock market, that he had bought 800 head of bullocks at £14 per head, and that they were all for freezing and exporting purposes. It is the same with butter. This is sent away and sold at a moderate price in London, while we are paying through the nose for it here. It reminds the writer, and no doubt it is the same now, of years ago, when it used to be said that the dearest place to buy fish was Queenscliff, since as soon as it was landed by the fishermen, it was at once sent off to Melbourne and the larger inland towns. As regards prices, rice is down, and potatoes may drop a little. If these two commodities were reasonable poor people might be able to do with less bread, since potatoes especially are very sustaining. It is sincerely to be hoped that some of our daily food will be obtainable at average prices during the coming winter."—"Observer," in "Essendon Gazette."

**NUNAWADING.**—Impounded at Nunawading Pound, 19th April—

Alderney Cow, G T off rump.

If not claimed and expenses paid to be sold on May 13th, 1902.

S. J. BENNETT,  
Poundkeeper

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## The Monbulk Shooting Case.

At the Melbourne general sessions on Wednesday, a middle-aged and mild-looking individual named Jesse Carter was presented on a charge of wounding two men with intent to do grievous bodily harm. The story told by David Dobson and David Burns showed that the accused, acting on the impulse of angry resentment at supposed insults and petty annoyances, took violent action to secure revenge and prevent a repetition of his fancied wrongs. All the parties resided at Monbulk, near Fern Tree Gully. Dobson and Burns were wood carters, and they got up early on the morning of 6th March to commence work. While harnessing their horses, Carter suddenly confronted them, and breathing threatenings and slaughter, proceeded to discharge his revolver. His first shot struck Burns in the leg, and Dobson, adopting a conciliatory tone, inquired, "You didn't intend to shoot him, did you?" "Yes," angrily replied Carter, "and I'll shoot you, you —— dog." He fired, and the bullet struck Dobson under the arm. Carter fired again, but his pistol was knocked on one side, and no damage was done. Dobson then returned to the scrub, and while hiding, he heard Carter, on the outskirts of the trees, "walking about as if he had shot a rabbit, and was waiting for it to come out." Eventually the injured men got assistance, and Carter was arrested. It transpired that on the night before the attack Carter had complained of the noise made by Dobson and Burns, and threatened to 'do for them.' Both men are still suffering from the effect of their wounds, and Burns has to use a stick to assist him in walking. Mr Gaunson, who appeared for the accused, sought to elicit from the crown witnesses some justification for the conduct of his client, but was not very successful. On the charge being altered to one of unlawfully wounding Dobson, Carter pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment.—"Age."

## Doncaster Doings.

The folks in and around Doncaster cannot work under the eight hours' system, but they admire it all the same, and therefore many of them kept up the holiday on Monday. While a few journeyed citywards to view the procession and "have a night at the Royal," the tennis enthusiasts had a day on the court. A concert party, organised by Mr Ritter to assist the club, also joined in the sports, and gave an exhibition of fancy strokes, which were enjoyed immensely by all present, especially as the funny man of the party gave full directions and explanations of each stroke attempted by the novices. After tea (kindly provided by the Doncaster ladies), a start was made for the Athenæum, where a very successful concert was given. Mr T. Petty, J.P., presided, and again proved himself a model chairman. His introductory remarks were few, but to the point, and he got the programme through early enough to allow time for a couple of hours' dancing before the drag arrived for the Melbourne performers. Much credit is due to the hon. sec., Miss Petty, and the others who worked so enthusiastically throughout. They at any rate deserve an asphalt court.

## Local Teacher Complaints

An enquiry was held at the Upper Gully state school on Friday, 18th inst, when a number of charges were made against the head teacher. The local board of advice was represented by Crs F. G. McIntosh, H. Monk, and Mr A. Lording. The charges consisted of alleged neglect of duty, alleged insulting conduct towards Mrs Murdock, of Menzies' Creek, and alleged neglect of duty at the Upper Gully state school. Inspector Curlew went into the whole facts, and did not miss any matter of importance, the enquiry lasting some 3 hours. In reply to questions regarding the alleged insulting behavior towards Mrs Murdock, the head teacher admitted making use of an expression complained of, but was angry at the time, believing that Mrs Murdock was the person making the complaints against him. The other complaints were made by Mr Gilmore (who stated that he had sent his children to school on a number of occasions and the teacher was not there), and Mr Wills, of Menzies' Creek (who made similar complaint re Menzies' Creek school. After hearing the whole of the evidence Mr Curlew expressed regret, and remarked that the head teacher was about to leave the district, and he hoped that with the new teacher the parents would have nothing to complain about. The parents thanked the inspector, and trusted that a better condition of things would result in the future.

## Severance of Surrey Hills Riding

In connection with the movement for the unification of Surrey Hills, a petition was presented to the commissioner of public works on Saturday, accompanied by the required deposit of £20. On Wednesday the substance and prayer of the petition were published in the "Government Gazette." The petitioners purport to constitute a majority of the ratepayers in the portion of the shire of Nunawading described in their petition, and they desire that the area so described may be severed from the shire of Nunawading and annexed to the shire of Boroondara. The area proposed to be severed comprises the whole of the Surrey Hills riding of the Nunawading shire. The petitioners state that the progress, improvement, and economical working of the public, municipal, and social functions of the residents of Surrey Hills district depend largely on incorporation under one municipality, and uniform administration, its present division being the cause of great inconvenience in electoral, municipal, state school, and social affairs. The petitioners therefore ask the government to sever the Surrey Hills riding from the shire of Nunawading, and annex it as a separate riding to the shire of Boroondara. Mr F. Jeffries, "Bona Vista," Surrey Hills, will accept notices on behalf of the petitioners.

**J. MCGILL,**  
CASH & FAMILY BUTCHER,  
Begs to notify the residents of Ringwood, Bayswater, Croydon,  
Fern Tree Gully, and surrounding districts, that he has  
Commenced Business in  
**MAIN-ST., RINGWOOD,**  
TWO DOORS FROM CLUB HOTEL.

# THREE SCORE YEARS AND TWO

(The Denise Moorhouse articles)

## FACTS AND FABLES OF MITCHAM AND DISTRICT

THE LOCAL ADVERTISER, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1962



No record is available for the number of delivery points when deliveries were first made by the Mitcham post office, but today mail is delivered to 3,189 points and, to aid the local residents, 21 letter receivers are provided at various points within the area.

Very little is known (officially) about the early staffing of Mitcham's post offices, but older residents remember a Miss Thomas who was post mistress when the post office was down in what used to be the Harvest Home Hotel. The little, old weather board cottage can be seen today on the south side of Whitehorse road, just west of Mitcham. She married a Paddy Markham, and continued as post mistress when the post office moved to its present site in 1924. Here

**D**ELVING back into the history of Mitcham we get some very interesting comparisons on its growth generally.

Comparing figures of the postal advancement and the district from other main sources of supply we find that Mitcham has become one of the most favoured towns of the Eastern Suburbs.

The history of the post office makes it necessary to go a further score backwards to include the more colourful episodes to be found in the past.

Prior to the opening of the railway between Hawthorn and Lilydale on December 1, 1882, the Harvest Home Hotel was the "Dropping spot" for mail brought up by coach. The residents would call and enquire for any mail. However, if a letter was marked urgent the hotel would see that it was delivered. Mr. John McGlone delivered mail free to residents for many years, and his son carried on the work after his death.

The first official mention of Mitcham in the Post and Telegraph Guide of April 1886, was a brief two lines: "Mitcham railway post office. - Mails closed G.P.O. 5.30 am, arrive Mitcham 6.58 am".

The Postal Report of the same year gives a staff of one postmaster (unnamed) at a salary of £13, and with a total of 4,252 letters posted by residents within the area.

Mitcham post office today has a staff of fourteen, and last year 531,232 letters were posted by residents within the area, (996,664 were delivered.)

The Postal Report of 1890 lists a Mitcham post office as well as a Mitcham railway post office, and was definitely the senior office because the postmaster of the Mitcham post office was paid £74.

is an anomaly. The present building was built to post office specifications, yet three-quarters of the building was used as a draper's, with only one corner conducting post office affairs. All this while the post office was an "unofficial" one, and it continued so when it moved to Grey's second hand shop in 1946.

At that time a Mr Gordon Woods was post master. In 1947 the P.M.G.'s Department took over the mail deliveries from the contractor and became an official post office. As late as 1969 the post office moved again, and this time into the building built for it 35 years ago - the present site.

The tradition of the Markhams was carried on when Mrs Markham retired, because the daughter kept the post office before it moved to second hand shop.

Residents wanting telephones may be interested to know that the Mitcham telephone exchange was built in 1941, and there were 145 subscribers. Today there are 3,539 subscribers, and many on the waiting list. A new exchange was built within the last year, and there is plenty of room in the exchange for the new telephones. The cables are the worry, but work is being done on this.

To help those without telephones there are 26 booths within the area, and more to come this year.

Before Mitcham exchange was opened, local residents used the Ringwood exchange.

As a guide to the growth in population, or perhaps the ease of writing with a ball point pen, the figures to remember are:

In 1886 4,525 letters (as distinct from parcels and second class mail) were posted within the area, and 531,232 letters in 1961.

*Denise Moorhouse*

## DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex

**Saturday, 1 April**

**1.00pm General Meeting**

*George Petruo – The Art of Sacrifice*

**Saturday, 3 June**

**1.00pm General Meeting**

*Max Beck – A Different Earth*

**Saturday, 12 August**

**1.00pm Annual General Meeting**

*TBA*

## 2023 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 May**

**Saturday 15 July**

**Saturday 2 September**

**Saturday 4 November**

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

## STATISTICS

Photographs catalogued	-	4510
Artefacts catalogued	-	5168
Documents catalogued	-	7915
Museum visitors Jan.–Feb. 2023		312



Facebook Page 'likes' to date 1198

Is this where you live?

## Original street names to present day (Part Four)

**Langford Avenue, Mitcham.** Formerly Delaware Ave.

**Lawson Street, Blackburn.** After Councillor Lawson. Changed by Shire Council from Laurel Street or Lilac Street, 1932.

**Mitcham Road, Mitcham/Vermont.** Formerly McGhees Road.

**Morack Road, Vermont.** Formerly Railway Road (rail plan not followed)

**Mt Pleasant Road, Nunawading.** After original name of Forest Hill, from name of properties of Husband family.

**Myrtle Street, Blackburn.** Changed by Shire Council from Musk Street, 1932.

**Peel Street Mitcham.** Changed by Shire Council from Purches Street, 1932.

**Peter Avenue, Blackburn North.** Changed by Shire Council from Almer Ave. in 1932

**Somers Street, Mitcham.** After Victorian Governor. Changed by Shire Council from Stanley St. in 1932.

**Tennyson Street, Mitcham.** Changed by Shire Council from Railway Ave. in 1932.

**Terrara Road**

**Vermont/Vermont South.** Formerly Station Street.

**Victory Street, Mitcham.** Changed by Shire Council from Station St. in 1932.

**Springfield Road Blackburn/Nunawading/Mitcham.** Changed from Walkers Road.

**Wellington Avenue, Blackburn.** Changed from Stanley Road in 1934.



Lord Somers, c.1926

*Yvonne Fitzmaurice*

Whitehorse Historical Society Newsletter



## WHS Committee Contacts

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0404 612 216

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Wendy Standfield

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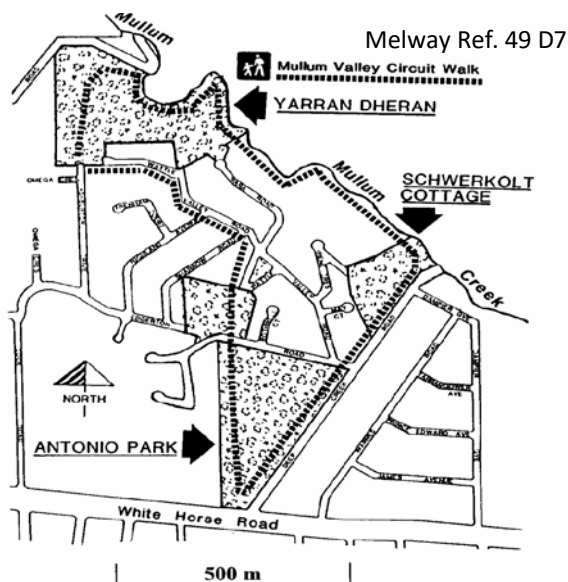
whitehorsehistory.org.au  
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### Email

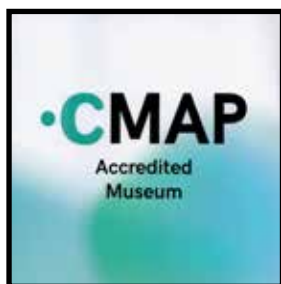
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**Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 3 May 2023**



## 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."*

*"Whitehorse Historical Society acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Wurundjeri connection to this land dates back more than 40,000 years, and evidence of this connection still exists today."*

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.*



THE WHITEHORSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF MICHAEL SUKKAR MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DEAKIN

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