

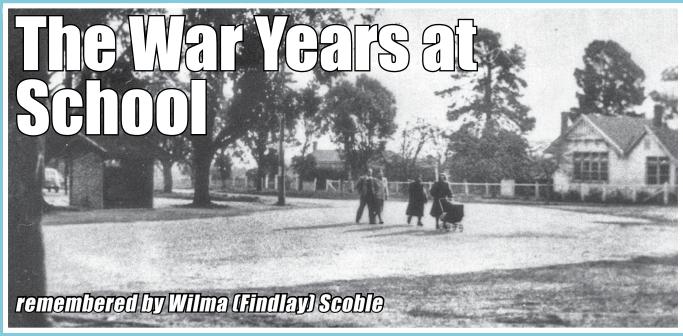
NEWSLETTER

Sarlas 32 No. 1

January-February 2024

ABN 44 352 041 634

Inc. AO 012235J



Vermont corner c1940 showing the State School

remember there were lots of rumours about the Japs landing in Sydney and Australia being invaded by submarines into Sydney. Parents got the School Committee to dig trenches over near the Church Hall and air raid shelters. we used to have Air Raid Practice - we never knew if it was fake or fair dinkum. We had to form a file and march across Mitcham Road to the trenches whenever the steam whistle at the Wunderlich factory went. On the way out of school we had to put a pencil in our mouths crossways so we wouldn't panic and bite our tongues off. I remember a lot of pushing and shoving when we got to the trenches and the teacher saying "What's going on?" Somebody replied "Sir, there's a bull ant in the trench". Here we were supposedly protecting ourselves from the Japs, and we were afraid of a bull ant!

We also had instructions, if we heard the Wunderlich whistle on the way to or from school, we had to lie down flat in an orchard or drain. Our curtains used to be blacked out at night and also, if you were lucky enough

to own a car, the headlights blacked out. You got fined if your windows were not blacked out at night. We all had kerosene lights in those days and no street lights.

We used to live two miles from Vermont and I was always running late. In those days the Dunny Man used to call to empty dunnies. He would often stop and say "Hop on", knowing we were late; but we always got him to let us off at the dairy so the kids at school wouldn't tease us.

Miss Arthur used to get sick of me being late, so would make me stand up in front of the kids and relate my reason for being late. Either I couldn't catch the goat to feed, the firewood was wet and the fire wouldn't light to cook the porridge, the cow was a mile away and lost – they were all true stories, but so varied. "These days I am always ten minutes early wherever I go – must have learned my lesson!

The girls always got a good spanking or whack or shake if bad at school. Because I wore glasses, if Mr. Roberts gave me a shake, my glasses (which in those days were horrible big thick things, not the variety

Continued on page 4

NEXT MEETING:

Saturday, 3 February 1.00pm General Meeting

A Schwerkolt Matinee at the Pictures

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK





(ABOVE) Toys from our Collection featured are the doll with the hat, the horse and cart, the model sewing machine and the toy stove; (BELOW) Sewing work box featured is made of paper mache with lid inlaid with abalone shell.



Dear Members.

ELCOME to 2024. The Wednesday Workers started back on 10th January and are easing their way into the work for the year.

Over the holiday break there were several activities in the Museum and Cottage. In December Council handed out recipe sheets and information on the theme of "Christmas in a German kitchen". We included a display in the Visitor Centre to support this theme and one for the two craft demonstrations in January.

Kerrianne organised the Spinners and Weavers Guild and the Tatters Guild of Victoria to demonstrate their crafts. As a member of the Tatters Guild I demonstrated tatting with two other members on Sunday 21 January.

Council has also organised traditional children's games for the Australia Day weekend opening hours.

Thanks go to Peter McPhee for stepping in at the last minute as our Speaker for the December meeting and to Judy Hall for the Christmas decorations. Of course, we followed up with a delicious afternoon tea and chat to follow.

For our first get-together this year we will be resurrecting our "Going to the Pictures" February Meeting. We held these a few years ago and they were a very enjoyable experience reliving what "moviegoing" was like when we had the national anthem and newsreel etc.

In January I visited the Old Treasury Building Museum to see their "Belongings" exhibition to which we have contributed several artefacts. It is a great exhibition and although not big it is well worthwhile visiting. The rest of the building and exhibitions are worth the visit too.

On Monday 22 January Kathy and I gave a presentation for the U3A Nunawading Summer School entitled Schwerkolt Cottage & Outbuildings. It was an hour-long session.

On Monday 19 February we will be holding our Annual Planning Day. Members are most welcome and if you would like to attend please contact Kathy. We provide morning tea and lunch so booking is necessary for catering purposes.

Vicki Jones-Evans

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DECEMBER MEETING REPORT

Searching for a Hero

Y writing group tells me I should write when the mood takes me. A busy lifestyle doesn't always fit in with this idea, so, when my editor asked me to "write something" about our last WHS speaker I took the advice of the group for once.

First, some background. Speakers for meetings are usually booked up well in advance, and if all goes to plan, get a confirming email from me with last minute details and requirements exchanged.

November rolled around – out goes a confirmation email for our December Meeting – our assigned speaker is unable to do the job. Oh dear! Thankfully, another speaker steps up. More emails are exchanged, speaker No 2 is also unable to speak, due to over-commitment at this end of the year. Help!

Up steps one of my personal heroes! He agrees to talk about Searching for a Hero at our meeting! A lifesaver, if not a bacon-saver! He treated us to a thought-provoking talk about his personal hero, with wonderful, gripping stories of ordinariness, interspersed with extraordinariness, involving his family, the community, and the world.

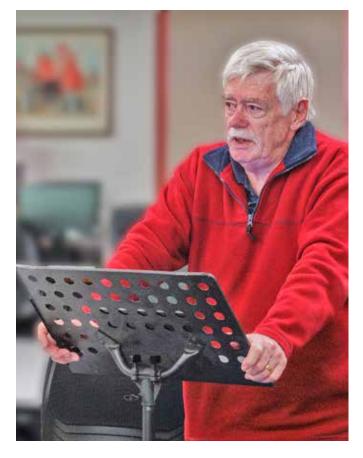
His hero was his dad, beautifully documented

and verbally illustrated for us down the years. We got to know his dad well.

My own hero on that day was WHS Vice-President, Peter McPhee, who, despite still recovering from a virus (not Covid, he assured us!) that took away some of his usual spark, spoke so well at our meeting.

A conjunction of heroes; and a reminder to look in the less obvious places for our personal heroes big and small.

Margaret Graham





The War Years at School

Continued from page 1

you have today) would go flying across the room. I remember Tuppy Closter always getting the strap and the boys soon learned that if they held their hands up high, Baldy couldn't get a good swing, so he then made them put their hands across the desk and they would get it across the knuckles.

I was monitor of cupboard and mice because I was good at Nature Study. I used to pack poison wheat in the shelves, and I remember one Friday, Miss Arthur used to come by train in good shoes and change into old flatties. We put a dead mouse down in the toe of her shoe. However, she went home in the old ones and that night got dressed up for a dance and when she went to put on her shoes found the squashed mouse in the toe. On Monday she wanted to know the culprit and promised there would be no hiding. She did see the sunny side, but she had got a good fright.

If you chewed gum, first time caught you put it in the bin, second time caught she would stick it in the top of your hair and squash it. You can imagine our mothers trying to get it out of our hair and you can imagine the letters that went back to the school about the gum in our hair!

Another teacher used to stick it across the bridge of our noses. I recall Doris Hamill having to sit in class with gum across her nose and when it was pulled off she had a big black mark for days. Imagine the uproar if this happened today!

One end of the school was quite high, with storage space underneath. Wood, cane chairs, cane baskets etc. were kept there. The boys used to pull the cane off and



smoke it (they had the matches) and I remember the girls under there at lunch times. Once we got Nellie Rooks (she was teacher's pet at the time, but a good sport) and we thought we'd get her into strife. The teachers were having a meeting in the "Bubs" room and Mavis Thompson was either "kept in" or helping them. Anyway, she saw smoke coming up from the floor boards. Mr. Roberts came bounding down and pounded on the door where we had locked ourselves under the school, and we had to try and crawl out to the other end. Nellie got stuck halfway and those that were stuck behind her got caught. The others got out. We were in real trouble for lighting matches under the school and smoking cane. I think that's why I have never smoked since.

Bruce Fisher was a good reader and used to take the poor readers to help them. The girls all liked Brucie, but most of the time was spent giggling. I don't think we did much reading!

There was also a sad time. We had a minister come for Religious Instruction once a week. I remember we used to give him a terrible time, and this day in particular, after the usual rigmarole, he lost control and got in a rage and stormed out of the room. He went to the Headmaster and that was the last we saw of him.

You'd never believe it, but the next day he died. I remember at the funeral as the hearse and cars went past, we all had to bow our heads. A lot of the kids felt terrible that they had caused his death and felt a lot of guilt. He obviously had a heart condition, but as kids it did affect us terribly.

Mr. Coughlan also taught my mother at Ringwood State School and he continually said what a lovely person she was and what a pity I wasn't at all like her. He used to dribble yellow tobacco down his chin.

When the inspector came to school I remember one time Miss Arthur telling us to go and get flowers – she said she didn't want to know where or how we got them, but *get flowers!* We then had to make the school look attractive for the inspector.

My workbooks were always pretty terrible. They used to get dog-eared etc. I would try and start off nicely, but that's how they would end up. I remember one teacher holding my book up by the corner to show the class and she said "This is an example of what your kitchen will look like". Sometimes I look at my kitchen and I think, she wasn't too far wrong.

Mr Roberts was a really hard task master, but he taught me a lot. I was a horror at school and disruptive, but he taught me to appreciate good music – he used to play the Sugar Plum Fairy and also read Australian poetry. He always said if you cut down one tree, replant two more. He taught us to grow gum trees from seed and some of those trees are still in the new school grounds. He saw good in all of us.

We had some rare and funny times at Vermont State School, and many have grown into fine and respectable members of the community.

From the

Plackburn & Mitcham Repurter

CIRCULATING IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BLACKBURN AND MITCHAM AND DONGASTER.

Vol. 49. No. 4

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourn for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper. FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1936

PRICE: TWOPENCE

Week of National Mourning

Victoria, during the week of mourning for the King has manifested its sorrow for the passing of King George and its loyalty for King Edward VIII. The services on Sunday in the Melbourne Cricket Ground and in the various churches, were fittingly continued by the minutes' silence on Tuesday midday.

BOX HILLS TRIBUTE.

Citizens of Box Hill paid tribute to the late monarch on Tuesday evening, when a memorial service was arranged by a City Council, the Ministers Fraternal and the Re-turned Soldiers and Sailors League. Nearly every sent is the Town Hall was occupied

A draped portrait of King George stood beside the platform on which were seated the Mayor (Cr. J. T Mahony, chairman), Rev. W. W Laidlay, (president of the Ministers' Fraternal), Chaplain A. E. Forbes. D.C.M., Cr. W. J. Boyland, M.L.A. Revs. A. S. Houston, A. E. Davey, G. A. Judkins Pastor Clark, Adjutant Blaskett, Mr. Bennett (president R.S.S.I.L.A), Crs. Young, Hogan. Ellingworth, James and George. The Town Clerk (Mr. H. J. R. Cole), supervised the general arrangements. Members of the Box Hill R.S.S.I.L.A. occupied the centre front rows in the Mrs. G. A. Judkins acted as accompaniste for the hymns.

The company stood for the National Anthem, followed by the hymn. "O God, our Help in ages past."

The Mayor, in opening the meeting, said they had met that evening in common with other loyal citizens to pay their final respects to the late beloved King George V. The King had been their leader within the Empire for the last 25 years. King George the Fifth was a Christian gentleman and his staple faith was the real source

of his greatness. It was because of his reverence for God and his knowledge of the Bible that he had spread over the Empire and the world such a far reaching and beneficial influence. In 1881 Prince George promised his mother that he would read a portion of the Bible every day and until his death he had never failed in that promise; this had been a never-failing source of strength to him in his long and beneficent reign. In all his speeches a great family note reflected his own home life. The Union Jack which draped the platform table was composed of red for the brave, white for the pure, and blue for truth - our nation was brave, pure and true. Mr. Baldwin said recently concerning the Crown of England that the power of that Crown was not force; it was a great moral power which must necessarily depend largely on the character and quality of him who sat on the throne. "So as our late beloved King looked to our Heavenly Father for Guidance, may we, as citizens, be inspired by his life and so prove worthy of the great traditions handed down to us. May God direct the British Empire; may God's guidance be sought by King Edward VIII to enable him to walk in his father's footsteps," concluded the Mayor.

A prayer for the Royal Family, the new King, and the nation, was offered by Rev. W. W. Laidlay, and Rev. A. S. Houston read a passage from the Book of Revelations. Prior to Chaplain Forbes' speech, the assemblage joined in the hymn, "Nearer, my God to Thee."

Chaplain Forbes, in his address, stressed the great personal loss felt by his subjects at the King's passing. 'As a nation, we have lost a great king, a wise ruler, but as men, we have lost a friend,' he said. This royal gentleman, now a beloved memory, drew his strength from the Divine Source. The na-

tion had reason to be thankful for rulers such as Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, King George V, and now King Edward VIII. From them was learned the secret of true Empire greatness, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation."

The hymn which followed was said to be the late King's favourite, "Jesu Lover of my soul." The meeting concluded with two minutes of silence, and the pronouncing of the Benediction by Rev. W. W. Laidlay.





RETIRING FROM BUSINESS

SPECIAL BARGAINS IN O.S. FROCKS, SMOCKS, BLOUSES AND HATS.

LADIES! SECURE YOUR WINTER CARDIGANS AND PULLOVERS AT BARGAIN PRICES.

MISS R. ROBERTS
32 MAIN STREET, BOX HILL.

:0:

LOST.

OST, in December, between Pendle street and Post Office, a Diamond Ring. Finder rewarded on return to 39 Pendle street, Box Hill.

Raleigh Armstrong: a quiet life of service



ALEIGH Armstrong's life could not help but be overshadowed by that of Norman Armstrong, (see WHS article in December Newsletter), his father. However, this would be to miss the contribution Raleigh made to local and civic life.

Raleigh was born 22 September 1922 at The Pines Hospital, Ringwood. Living in Scott Street, Vermont, he attended Vermont State School until age 12 and then Box Hill High School until the age of fifteen.

Starting work at Myers, he was taken into his father's real estate firm, Drake and Company, shortly thereafter. Attending night school to obtain his Real Estate and Valuer qualifications, his 47-year career was interrupted only by war service. (See: WHS article on Drake & Co. Real Estate).

Raleigh met his future wife, Pat, a primary school teacher, in 1940 in Deloraine, Tasmania. In 1941, on his 19th birthday, Raleigh enlisted in the AIF. He became engaged to Pat in 1944, but marriage had to wait until 1946. Raleigh had served 2 years in New Guinea and time in Borneo – five years of AIF service in all. Acquainted with many of the local boys who did not come home from World War Two, Raleigh was instrumental (with his father) in pushing for the naming of five streets in Mitcham after those 'lost boys'.

Raleigh married Pat on 22 February 1946 and set up home in Glenburnie Road, Mitcham, before moving to Mitcham Road, Vermont in 1953. By then they had welcomed three children: Ian in 1948, Gillian in 1950 and Susan in 1953. Family life brought many commitments to kindergarten, school and Guide

activities and committees. In 1961, Raleigh designed and built a new family home in Windouran Drive, Mitcham.

Raleigh's first voluntary job was with the Mitcham Auxiliary Fire Brigade at the beginning of World War Two. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Raleigh was instrumental in the development of the Mitcham shopping precinct and car parking between Britannia Street, East Doncaster Road, and north and south of Whitehorse Road. Raleigh served as Secretary of the Mitcham Chamber of Commerce and was actively involved in the Real Estate Institute of Victoria. He was also the Public Relations Officer for the Parents' and Citizens' Association of Nunawading High School and joined the Kiwanis Club of Nunawading in

September 1971, remaining a member for thirty-three years and being made a life member and awarded their highest award, the 'tablet of honour'. His social conscience saw him, through Kiwanis, and the Royal Children's Hospital become involved in the 'Calico Doll Project'; dolls were made and given out to children in hospitals in Australia and overseas. He took a keen interest in the State facilities at Allambee and Winlaton, visiting and assisting with programs to encourage disadvantaged children.

According to his daughter, Gillian, Raleigh loved jazz and attending jazz clubs, and did so until he was in his eighties. Gillian described him as a frustrated artist, whose consuming passion was photography. Necessity resulted in him entering the family business; however, Raleigh utilised his photography skills producing 'beautiful black and white prints' of houses which were put in the windows of Drake and Company. Gillian commented that Raleigh 'spent more time doing that, than selling houses'. In retirement he and Pat enjoyed travelling to many places around Australia and overseas – but with a special preference for the back roads of Australia.

Raleigh Armstrong died 3 June 2004. Pat Armstrong died on 30 September 2008.

© G. Bannister 2021

Sources:

Mr Ian Armstrong for personal recollections and corrections.
WHS Archives: ND 4923, 2276, 1541 for following articles:
Nunawading Gazette 11 March 1992, 18 May 1966, 22 June 1966
The Gazette 19 April 2004
Undated, unnamed newspaper clipping.
Order of Service for Raleigh Armstrong.

FROM THE COLLECTION.

What is this? (Number 4)

THIS is more of a response to an object in our collection rather than a *What is It?* Today, us Cataloguers were fast approaching the bottom of the box of items awaiting our attention. For those who don't know our acquisition process, items are usually donated to Whitehorse Historical Society by people who think we may find them interesting, or relevant to the City of Whitehorse.

Donated items then go into the Acquisitions Cupboard awaiting assessment by the Acquisitions Committee before they are taken into our collection.

The Acquisitions Committee meets regularly to make these decisions. The decisions are made on relevance, and space within our collection. I've often heard the "... not another wedding dress ..." statement about donations. Of course, wedding dresses are significant items within a family; they tend to be handed down until the family reaches the "... what do we do with this?" stage in their story caused either by downsizing or generational change. Whitehorse Historical Society is often thought of and contacted at this stage.

This donation was a little special. The donation was from a family whose Matriarch (Grand-Matriarch?) had been a gifted knitter and sewer whose work dated back to the 1940s. Many Items were gladly accepted and catalogued into our collection, and it has been a privilege and delight to manage, talk, think about and work with them. They are now safely available to all through Vic Collections.

One item was left in the bottom of the TBD (To Be Done) box. Carefully wrapped in tissue, it ended up on the very bottom. It was a bundle of human hair. More specifically, a bundle of child's hair. Beautiful golden curls, about 30cm in length. Accompanied by a handwritten note and the photograph of a girl. The note said they were "... mine, cut when I was about 6 – 9 years old. I assume the girl's hair had not been cut since birth.

My fellow cataloguers weren't keen on touching the hair, so I got the job. What a privilege! Lovely fine hair, curled still, possibly caused by wrapping daily in rags as used to be done. I don't find things like this creepy and have in fact similar 'body parts' kept from my girls' childhoods. Something very real from times past.

A Cataloguer



(ABOVE) NA 5324 The hair found in the bottom of the box; (BELOW) The girl from whom it was taken.



In the same vein as our cover story this issue, here is an announcement that appeared in *The Herald* of 3 September, 1939, forewarning citizens of the changed circumstances that war would bring.





(RIGHT) LEADING THE EMPIRE: Recent pictures of the King and the British Prime Minister (Mr Chamberlain).

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS IN BRITAIN ANNOUNCED

LONDON, Sunday

Immediately after Mr. Chamberlain's speech to the Empire, Daventry broadcast official air raid precaution instructions. These included:

The closure of all picture theatres until further notice.

Prohibition of all sports meetings and other gatherings, outdoor and indoor.

Requests that crowds do not gather unnecessarily.

Churches or places of public worship may remain open.

Then followed instructions for action in the event of air raids, with a detailed description of air-raid warnings, including that for poison gas.

Schools evacuated in England, Wales and Scotland will remain closed for at least a week from today.

There was a general warning to keep out of the streets as much as possible, and requests that everyone, particularly every child, should carry labels giving their names and addresses.

London tube railways, it was announced, would be required for traffic, and tube stations would not be availale as air raid shelters.

creating a digital record



T'S an ongoing story at WHS, the creation of a digital representation of items in the collection. As can be seen in our statistics (page 9) there is a lot to get through – artifacts, documents and photographs, all to be photographed or scanned so that they may be made available to the public on Victorian Collections.

Of the artifacts, a clear image is important so that accurate identification is possible when someone is searching for a particular item; likewise, photos and documents need to be exemplified in high resolution so that those researching can be provided with the best possible results for their project.

And, of course, the procedure creates a digital archive of items held by the museum, preserving them against the event of loss through misadventure, and also meaning that items can be made available without repeatedly having to be rescanned or re-photographed each time they are required.

We keep our original items in the best way possible, conforming, as we do, with the highest museum standards; but it's good to know that modern technology is at the service of preservation of the past.

2024 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 2 March Saturday 4 May Saturday 20 July Saturday 7 September Saturday 2 November

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

STATISTICS

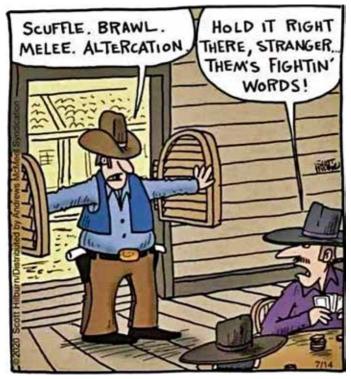
Photographs catalogued - 4554
Artefacts catalogued - 5368
Documents catalogued - 8209
Museum visitors Nov-Dec 2023 310

DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex

Saturday, 3 February 1.00pm General Meeting

A Schwerkolt Matinee at the Pictures



s this where you live?

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334 MITCHAM ROAD, MITCHAM. 'Phone: Vermont 40.

OWEN STREET, MITCHAM

. . . was named after Gunner Owen Spencer Loftus, Royal Australian Artillery.

Son of Adrian St. Mungo Loftus and Edith Beatrice Loftus, Owen was born on 16 December 1908 in Box Hill.

Owen lived at 334 Mitcham Road, Mitcham (now 514 Mitcham Road) and was the local Postman. Every afternoon he would trade his bike for a taxi, and would operate from Mitcham Station. It has been said that Owen was associated with the introduction of a hire car/taxi service in Mitcham in the mid-1930s. From a newspaper advertisement (see picture) it is known he was involved in selling new cars.

He married Jean McClelland, daughter of T.R. McClelland, who was the son of John and Eliza, remembered in the church's Nativity window.

Owen enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 20th June 1941 as a Gunner. He served with 2/1 Heavy Battery in Darwin and Timor until he was declared Missing on 22 February, 1942. This was subsequently changed to "Died of Wounds in 1945".

The sanctuary chair at Christ Church was given "ln remembrance of Gunner 0. S. Loftus, died P.O.W. 17-4-42".

Owen Street, Mitcham, is named in remembrance of him. He is also named on the War Memorial in Halliday Park.

Yvonne Fitzmaurice & Chris Gray



WHS Committee Contacts

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WHS website

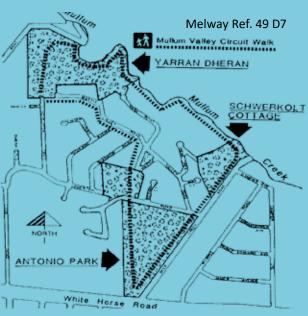
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PO Box 2092

Rangeview 3132



Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 6 March 2024



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."



REMEMBER

Whitehorse Historical Society Local History Collection

Open 10am to 3pm 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 Whitehorse City Council.



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

Sender: Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, VIC 3132

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