

Revival of a wedding dress

IN 2023 we received a donation of a beautiful wedding dress from the 1950s. It was a creamy white silk damask fabric but in need of a clean. The donor had offered to pay to have it cleaned, but the dry cleaners we used at Tunstall Square Donvale had closed during Covid. Patty and I had tried several other dry cleaners, but we were not confident that they could handle a vintage dress, so I volunteered to wash it.

The first hurdle was the weather. I needed a couple of days of hot, sunny weather without wind, and we all know that that sort of weather was in short supply until recently. The second hurdle was time to do it

Finally, on Friday 2 February, the weather was perfect and the time was available. Before starting I took photos to record the condition.

The dress has a full length circle skirt that includes an inserted train. There is a lot of fabric to manage. There are buttons down the back and down the sleeves, which all have metal shanks. First job was to remove the buttons. I started with a sleeve, snipping the buttons off but leaving the stitching so I could sew them back in the same place and have the original sewing intact. I put eleven buttons in a snaplock bag with “right” marked on it and then did the same with the eleven buttons on the “left”. I followed suit with the 26 buttons in a bag marked “back”.

At 11am on Friday I put the dress onto a white sheet to act as a sling and ran the bath. I measured the water into the bath in bucketsful, so that I could accurately measure the amount of liquid detergent (Earth Choice Woollens & Delicates) to use. After mixing it all I lowered the sling into the bath.

(Continued on page 6)



**NEXT
MEETING:**

Saturday, 6 April 1.00pm General Meeting

*Robert Winther OAM:
“Anything & Everything about the Repat”*



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Members,

IN February we held our Annual Planning Day and eighteen attendees discussed a range of topics including a review of items from the previous year's planning, displays for the next two years, handling private information on public records, replacing the prints on the walls in the Museum and celebrating the Society's sixtieth birthday in 2025.

We have recently been contacted by solicitors who advised us that former member Joyce Suto (25 March 1924 – 14 August 2021) has very generously left us a bequest in her will of \$2,000. The Committee will be considering how best we can honour Joyce's memory.

As we are down to the last fifty copies of *The Legacy of Johann August Schwerkolt, Pioneer*, a working group of Chris, Kathy, Margaret and I are currently revising Ted's book as, since publication 20 years ago, additional information has come to light and the Complex has undergone changes. Whitehorse City Council, as joint copyright holders of the book, are covering the cost of

the reprint, which will be in the larger size of A4. We have asked Valda Arrowsmith to launch it at our AGM in August.

Wednesday Workers are currently undertaking an audit of items in the Cottage, a room at a time, to check that all items are on the database. We are also cleaning everything, including airing and/or washing textiles, and dusting and polishing as appropriate.

Kerriane Stone, Arts and Heritage Officer at Council, has organised an Easter activity at the Complex. There will be an Easter Egg hunt on Easter Saturday, which is a pre-book event. The Complex has had a few closures over recent weekends, with a total fire ban, power outages (which have been corrected with power cable upgrades on site) and a security issue after the door to the Children's room was kicked in (everything is intact). Hopefully some nice autumn weather will boost visitor numbers back to normal levels.

Happy Easter

Vicki Jones-Evans

Seeking information regarding Blackburn South Primary School

– especially names of past pupils and teachers.

Please contact Robert Creek on 0488 053 218 (please leave a message) or email robertcreek45@gmail.com

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FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT



REMEMBER when our parents sent us off, usually on a Saturday afternoon, to the movies? Hundreds (or that's how it felt) of kids at the local 'pictures.' Flappy, noisy hard seats, the raked wooden floor – perfect for the rolling Jaffas competition, (aiming to have the hard little round sweets reach the front stalls faster than those rolled by the kids on the other side of the aisle), cartoons, a newsreel (usually boring) and the all-important Feature Films.

Wonderful memories!

Well, at our last general meeting, we were transported back in time to that place of learning and fun. Through the creative skills of a clever film producer, we saw the closed curtains' and waited excitedly for our own special show. First, the National Anthem. I remember this being at the end of the afternoon, but I'm doubtless wrong – expecting a theatre full of youngsters to respectfully stand (to attention!!) at the end of a rollicking movie (Tarzan or The Lone Ranger?) would have been unlikely. Our film maker decided respect should come before the rollicking fun we were about to enjoy!

The red velvet curtains parted. We were treated a young Queen Elizabeth II taking the salute at a Trouping of the Colour Parade in the 1950s. How much practise did it take to appear so relaxed riding side-saddle? How much training did it take for her horse to maintain its composure when being subjected to the passing military bands? Wonderful stuff!

Next, the cartoon. Again, the usual schemers and dreamers stuff, with the good guys winning over the bad guys, meanwhile enduring all sorts of twists and turns, batterings, and bumps. Wonderful to think about the artistry involved in making these animations.

The first Feature began. We were treated to the latest in 1955 kitchen design. Concealed cutting boards, lots of cupboards (painted assorted colours), the newest of appliances, double sinks, and linoleum bench tops. Fascinating to see just what has changed, also to reflect on advances in kitchen safety – those pull-out cutting board edges right at toddler head height. Ouch!!

Then, the second Feature, a film showing the Official Opening of Schwerkolt Cottage in 1965. So interesting to see the earlier days of the Cottage, the development of the outbuildings and grounds and again, just how much has changed, and how much has stayed the same. A wonderful record for us to enjoy and discuss.

We had a great afternoon – living history, and simply perfect for a hot Saturday afternoon in January. A great production by our own special Film Producer, Chris Gray!

Margaret Graham



Anzac Biscuits are not 'cookies' !



ANZAC BISCUIT RECIPE

(As published by the Department of Veterans Affairs)

Ingredients

2 tblsp butter or margarine
2 tblsp golden syrup
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda dissolved in 2 tblsp boiling water
1 cup rolled oats
1 cup desiccated coconut
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup plain flour

Method

Heat oven to 160°C.
Melt butter (or margarine) and syrup.
Add dissolved bicarbonate of soda and water.
Mix dry ingredients in a bowl, add the liquid mixture and stir.
Place small balls of mixture (about 1 tsp) onto a greased tray.
Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly brown.
Lift biscuits onto a cake cooling rack and wait for them to cool.

DID you know that calling an Anzac biscuit a “cookie” is officially regarded as un-Australian and could even result in a Federal Government fine? “Referring to these products as ‘Anzac Cookies’ is generally not approved, due to the non-Australian overtones,” says the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the use of the American word “cookie” is officially frowned upon.

The word ANZAC cannot be used by just anyone. The Federal Department of Veterans Affairs has set out strict rules for the description of the golden Anzac biscuit for over 100 years.

According to DVA guidelines, applications to produce Anzac biscuits commercially are “normally approved provided the product generally conforms to the traditional recipe and shape and are referred to as ‘Anzac biscuits’ or ‘Anzac Slice’”.

The DVA website states: “No person may use the word Anzac, or any word resembling it in connection with any trade, business, calling or profession.” Nor can the word be used in connection with any entertainment, lottery, as the name of any private residence, boat, vehicle, or any building without the Minister’s authority.

The DVA lists penalties for the misuse of the word Anzac under the Crimes Act, including fines of up to \$10,200 for a person, \$51,000 for a body corporate and even 12 months in prison!

Many comfort packages sent to Diggers serving in WWI included these biscuits made from rolled oats, golden syrup and flour; they had high nutritional value and kept well while being transported overseas.

Rather than eggs, golden syrup was used to bind the biscuits, which allowed the biscuits to survive the two- to three-month trip to troops in France. With many poultry farmers fighting overseas, there was also a huge impact on egg production.

Food packages from home supplemented the plain Australian Imperial Force (AIF) diet of tinned bully beef and hardtack.

Sources: abc.net.au; news.com.au

From the Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter

CIRCULATING IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BLACKBURN AND MITCHAM AND DONCASTER.

Vol. 49. No. 11

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne,
for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1936

PRICE: TWOPENCE

DERAILMENT.

Due, it is said, to an obstruction in the points, an electric locomotive, while shunting, became derailed shortly before midnight on Monday. Both lines were blocked, and road services had to be used to transport the passengers on the last trains over certain sections of their journey. A break-down crane was sent out from Melbourne, but the line was not fully cleared until 6 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

:o:

MITCHAM. FALSE ALARM.

A few nights ago, several of Mitcham's well known business men might have been encountered in various stages of undress attire cautiously scouting round in the inky blackness. The reason for their uneasiness was the ringing of the burglar alarm in one of the shops, and other strange sounds. A torch was suddenly flashed in the face of one of the adventurers, but this proved to be a staunch upholder of the law who was earlier on the job of searching for the intruder. With commendable foresight one young man appeared on the scene armed with a rifle, but was disappointed in his hope of finding a target. Peace of mind eventually restored when it was found that a "short" in the wiring had set off the alarm, and so rudely disturbed the slumbers of the unhappy residents.

NEW ESTATE AGENCY.

Owing to pressure in his estate agency business, Mr. Frank Parker announces that he is opening another office in a central position in Box Hill.

VERMONT. SCOUT NEWS.

As will be seen in their advertisement, the Vermont Scouts are holding a dance in their hall on Eight Hours' Night, 30th March. For the benefit of local patrons, it may be mentioned that Mr. R. H. Lewis, former scoutmaster, and a popular figure in the district, will be present. All arrangements necessary for a good evening's enjoyment have been made, and the excellent new floor should appeal to dancers. The hall has been painted, and this, with other improvements already effected, has made the building more worthy of the movement. Although numbers are smaller than could be desired, the troop, having been thoroughly reorganised, promises well for the future. Now that a lady has taken over the cubs, Mr. Ritson, who was formerly in charge of the juniors, has become scoutmaster.

:o:

AMUSEMENTS.



Reservations: 'Phone WX1418.
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY
MARCH 19, 20 and 21.

Lionel Barrymore

in
"Public Hero No. 1"
JIMMY DURANTE

in
"PALOOKA"
Matinee, Saturday, at 2.30.
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY
MARCH 23, 24 and 25.

AL JOHNSON
RUBY KEELER

in
"Go Into Your Dance"

WILEY POST

in
"THE AIR HAWKS"



SATURDAY, 21st MARCH
GEORGE O'BRIEN

in
"HARD ROCK HARRIGAN"
GEORGE RAFT

in
"STOLEN HARMONY"

*Approved by the Censor as Not
Suitable for General Exhibition. All
other features not so marked approved for General Exhibition.

MARS



Cleaning & Laundry Co. Pty. Ltd.

MODERN STEAM-ELECTRIC LAUNDRY.

Family Services—Washing by Weight, 3d. and 4d. lb.

HIGHEST QUALITY FINISH.

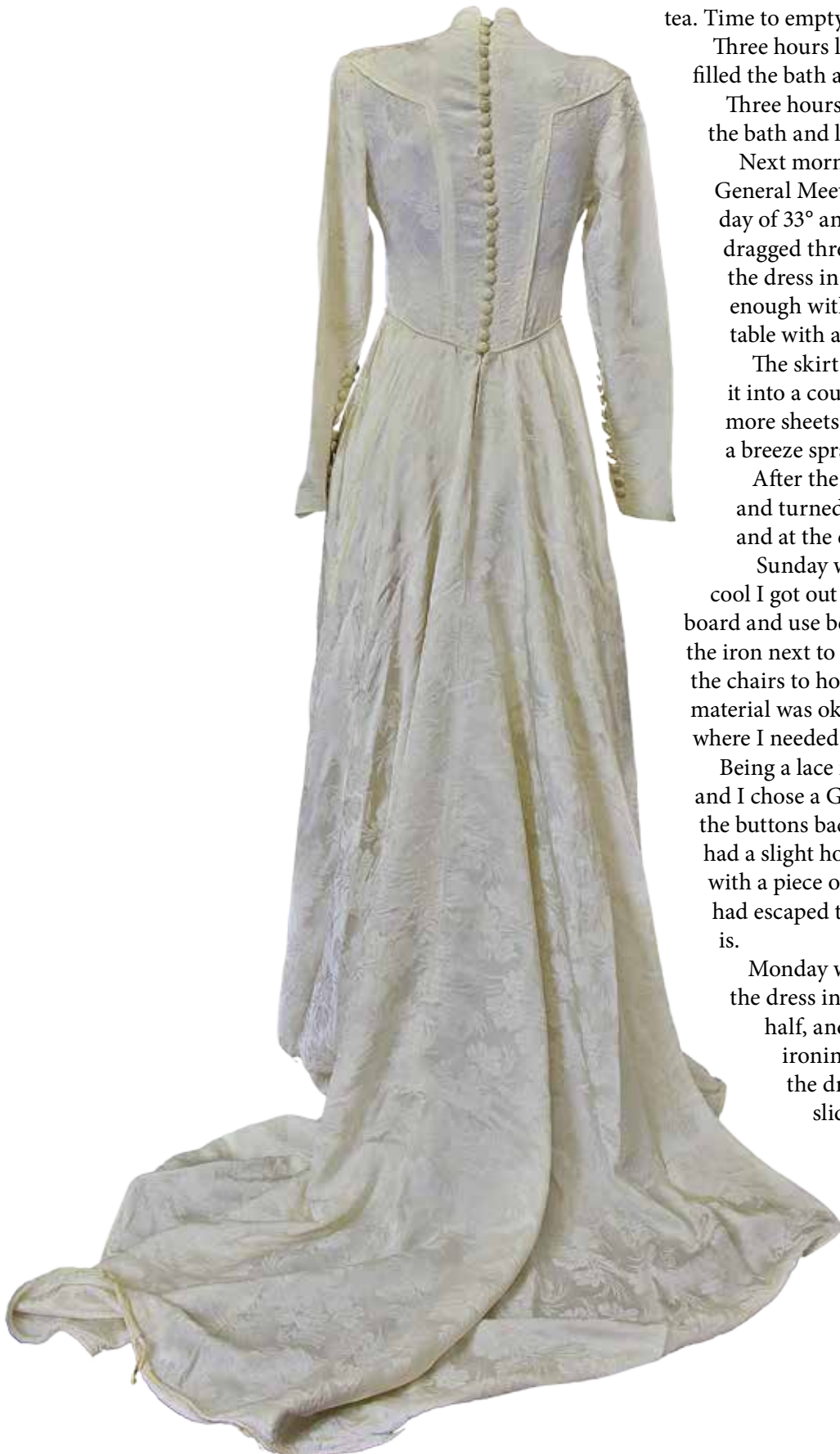
We are now operating throughout the District with Expert Service.

We Pick Up and Deliver. Just PHONE WX2662.

165-171 RAILWAY ROAD, BLACKBURN.

Revival of a wedding dress

Continued from page 1



Three hours later the water was the colour of milky tea. Time to empty and rinse.

Three hours later I emptied the rinse water and filled the bath again.

Three hours later the water was clear. I emptied the bath and left the dress to drain overnight.

Next morning was the day of our February General Meeting and it was a beautiful sunny day of 33° and no wind. Perfect drying weather. I dragged three clothes-horses outside and spread the dress in the sling over the top. Not long enough with the train, so I added the outdoor table with another sheet on top.

The skirt of the dress is so wide I had to fold it into a couple of layers to fit. I covered all with more sheets and pegged them down, just in case a breeze sprang up.

After the meeting I removed the top sheets and turned the dress, re-arranged the layers, and at the end of the day it was dry.

Sunday was to be very hot, so while it was cool I got out more sheets to cover the ironing board and use between the dress and iron. I set up the iron next to the dining table to use that and the chairs to hold the material. I checked that the material was okay with being ironed and pressed where I needed to sew the 48 buttons.

Being a lace maker, I have lots and lots of threads and I chose a Gutterman silk 60 thread for sewing the buttons back on. One button down the back had a slight hole in the material so I supported it with a piece of grosgrain ribbon. One button loop had escaped the seam on one side but I left that as is.

Monday was cool, so now it was time to iron the dress in total. It took about an hour and half, and was slow going when using an ironing cloth and manoeuvring the rest of the dress into position so it didn't end up sliding onto the floor.

On completion, folding the dress was the last challenge and required the whole of the dining table to achieve it.

All wrapped up in a sheet, it was back down to the Local History Room for cataloguing.

Vicki Jones-Evans

WITT STREET, MITCHAM

... is west of Heatherdale Road, which marks the boundary line between the Mitcham and Ringwood suburbs.

The Mitcham site is where William Witt's house (named "Heatherdale") and land were situated. An estate agent's map of 1919 shows where a villa and Heatherdale House were situated on the south-west corner of the junction of Whitehorse and Heatherdale Roads and adjacent to the present railway line and station.

In the files at WHS there is a long, detailed document, an autobiography written in 1900 by William Witt.

Briefly, it states that William Witt, a Justice of the Peace, was born in Salisbury, England, on 14 December 1833. He had trained as a pharmaceutical chemist before sailing to Australia. On arrival he and his party travelled to 'The Ovens' (Beechworth) by coach; there he continued his profession as a chemist and druggist. When gold was discovered he opened branches in the Indigo area, and his business thrived. William became the Mayor of Beechworth in 1867. In 1868, when he was elected to represent the extensive Murray District, the family returned to Melbourne where he opened a pharmacy in Bourke Street West.

Later, he purchased a property in Burwood where he lived for 11 years. Soon afterwards he became a member of the Nunawading Shire Council and was elected Shire President for a number of years. He died aged 77 at 10 Park Street, South Melbourne in February 1910.

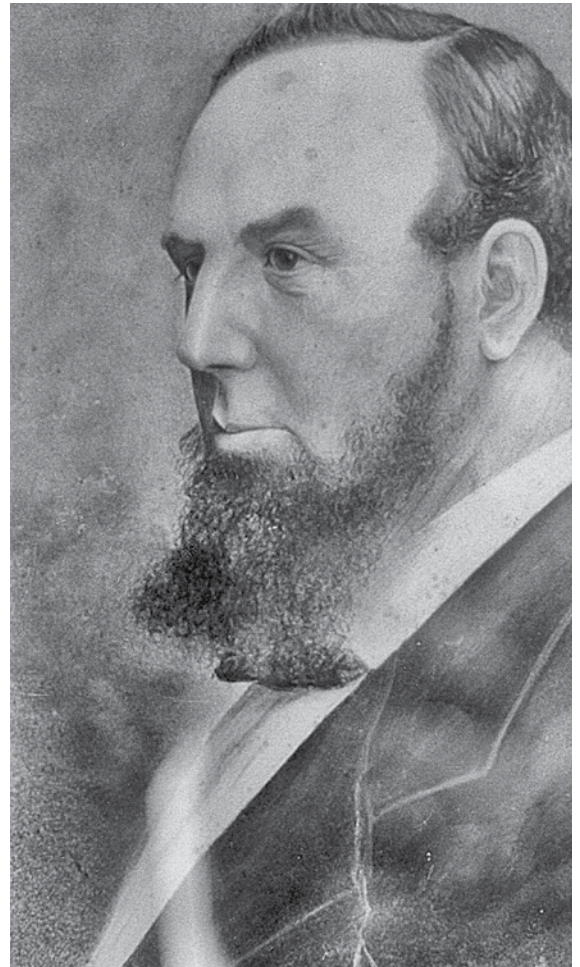
On 31 October 1856, William and his wife (who died in 1909) were in a party of eight persons, with an elder brother and his wife, a servant, plus three youths who were entrusted to his care by his friends. They travelled on the *Queen of the Seas*, an Aberdeen clipper which arrived in Melbourne on 6 February 1857, a journey of 99 days during which they 'spoke to' (i.e. passed within hailing distance of) ships destined for New Zealand.

The families' arrival in Melbourne, the difficulty of finding lodgings and their journey to Ovens (Beechworth) are described in some detail. Unfortunately there is a missing page, but a note that states 'it probably refers to being held up by the Kelly Gang'. Later in his autobiography he states, 'It was great wonder that I escaped with only one interruption - that to which I have previously alluded'.

Yvonne Fitzmaurice



Is this where you live?



(ABOVE) NP866 William Witt MLA, First president of Nunawading Shire (1873-1879, 1883-1884); (BELOW) A picture of Witt's house "Heatherdale", which appeared in the *Nunawading Gazette*, February 22 1984, when the property went on the market.

Memories of a Much Loved Neighbour

PETER Sigg moved to Glenburnie Road Mitcham around 1974. He lived at number 65, next door to the Brash family, Jenny and Ray, Martin 10, Richard 8, Marianne 6 and Alison 4. He was interested in the children and they looked upon him as their hero.

Peter was such a good neighbour and friend. He was always there to help out and we all enjoyed his company, but never after four o'clock. No one was welcome then.

Peter would say to us "Never throw out anything" and he never did. Many a time he came to the rescue of someone in the street with a bit of his junk.

Christmas presents were thoughtfully chosen for the children each year and they enjoyed it all greatly. He took great interest in these little kids and would say to the boys, "If I ever hear you giving cheek to your mother you are going to be sorry".

As the boys became teenagers they would have to work for Peter and this involved cutting his very large back yard with a big industrial mower. As there was stuff all over the place this was a difficult job, but while Martin enjoyed the good payment, Richard hated every moment of it. Peter made him complete the task as he said it was character building.

Marianne, aged about twelve at the time, was dying to cut the grass, but as she could hardly see over the handlebars her job was to wash the two cars each Saturday. The jobs had to be completed by 4pm as then it was time for a few tinnies.

Martin, the elder boy, was suspended from school for two weeks and Peter said "You're not going to hang around here doing nothing. You can come and work with me". At the time Peter had a contract with the army at Watsonia maintaining the roofs and spouts of

the buildings. Part of the working day included lunch at the pub (a T-bone steak – and a drink, of course). What a wonderful two weeks that boy enjoyed and it was with some regret he returned to school!

Up and down the street Peter was loved, and always there to help out. Myrtle Carruthers, an elderly neighbour, was having trouble moving her very ill husband around. When Peter heard this he gave Myrtle his phone number and made her promise to call him at any time of the night if she was in trouble. She deeply appreciated this gesture, and he set up an alarm system.

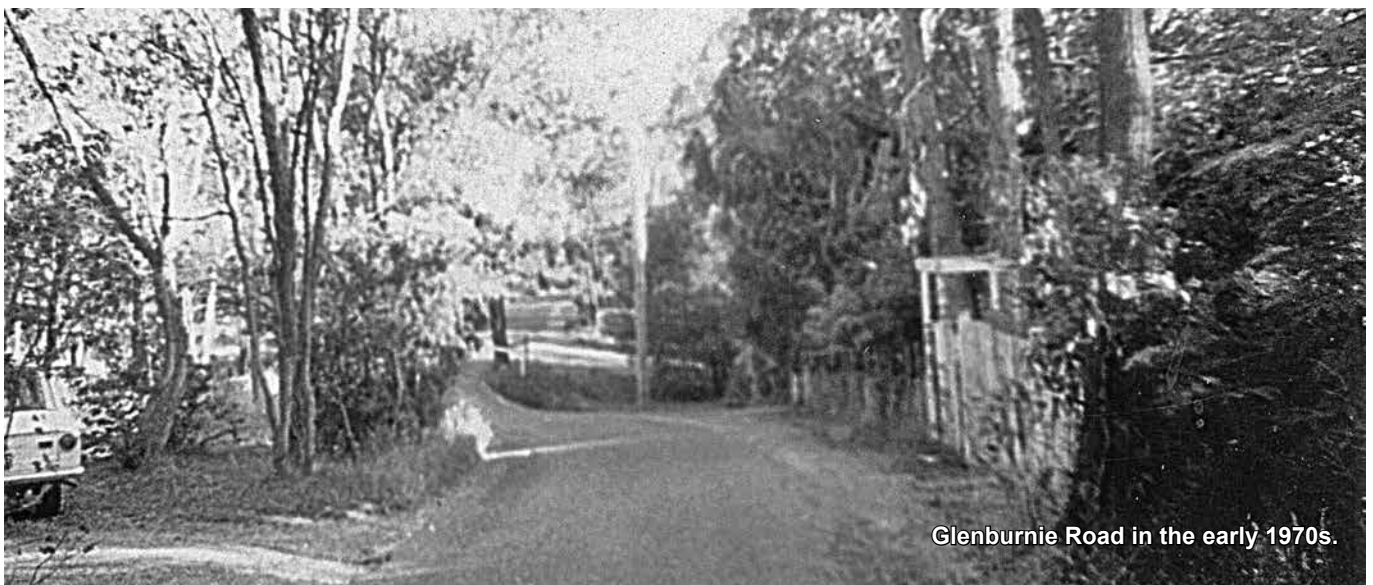
Peter grew a number of fruit trees in the backyard and one wonderful tree was a prune plum. Myrtle and I were invited to pick and use the crop, which we both looked forward to. Imagine my surprise one day to find all the fruit gone. I immediately thought, greedy Myrtle! The same with Myrtle who thought greedy Jenny has taken the lot. Then we all surmised that someone had climbed over the fence during the night and stripped the tree.

"Right," said Peter "If we can't have the fruit neither will anyone else!" And he put a chain around the tree, attached it to his truck and ripped the tree out. It was some years later that we realised that fruit bats had taken the lot in one night.

Living on an unmade, private road, which was maintained by the residents, Peter was great at organising materials and was a great worker for the street. He lived in the street for about ten years and was sadly missed when he shifted to Grantville, near Phillip Island. Those of us who have lived here a long time have happy memories of a caring friend.

Peter died in December 1998.

Jenny Brash



Glenburnie Road in the early 1970s.

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 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	-	4556
Artefacts catalogued	-	5433
Documents catalogued	-	8219
Museum visitors Jan–Feb 2024		463

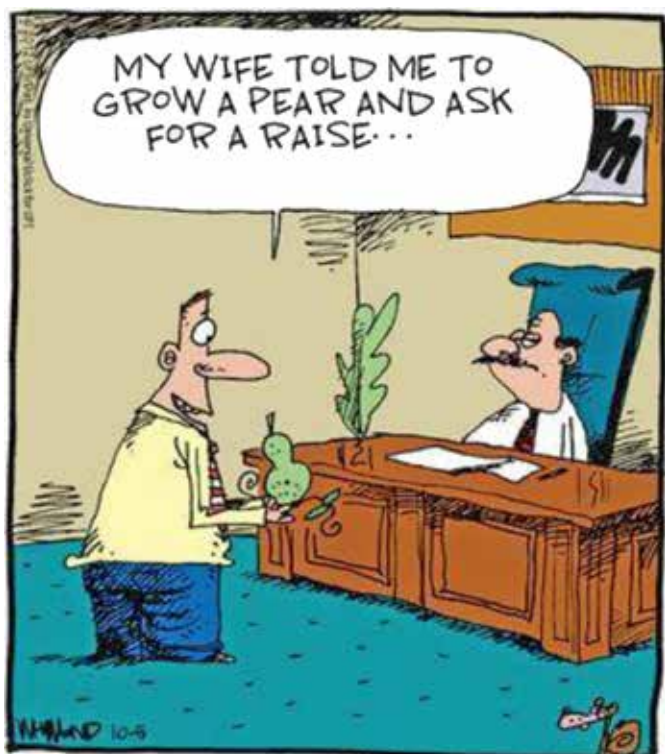
DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and
Museum Complex

Saturday, 6 April
1.00pm General Meeting

Robert Winther OAM:

“Anything & Everything about the Repat”



Blackburn and Mitcham Reporter - 29 April, 1938

ANZAC COMMEMORATION

Under the auspices of the Mitcham and District RSSILA and the Dad's Association, an Anzac celebration was held in the Memorial Hall, Mitcham last Sunday. The attendance was one of the best seen, and the interest shown by the public was very gratifying to the branch.

The returned soldiers, including several members of the Blackburn branch, representatives from the 24th Battalion and the Victorian Scottish, and Mitcham and Vermont scouts and girl guides assembled at the station. Headed by the Box Hill Salvation Army Band they marched to the Memorial Hall, halting en-route at the statue, on the base of which the branch president, Mr Frank Fisher, placed the wreath

On the platform with the RSSILA president were MLA Mr John Gray and various ministers from all local churches, a representative of the State Council and Mr G. Fankhauser from the Dad's. Mr Fisher thanked all those who attended on the day and those who helped the returned men whose health had broken down as a result of their service.

The men whose heroism they were commemorating that day, Mr Gray said, had not gone forth with the idea of glorifying war. They had felt that the liberty of the world was threatened by the uprising of the "Might is Right" monster. It was a gross insult to think that returned soldiers took pride in warlike demonstrations. Occasions like the present service were celebrated in the spirit of mateship, and helped to keep it alive. Such an idea of glorifying war was entirely erroneous, and of all people, returned soldiers were the most capable of appreciating to the full the horrors of war, and less desired to see a repetition of such awful years as they had gone through. The men of each section had borne each other's hopes and fears to the extent that could not be understood by people who had not experienced war. If the real brotherly love and comradeship they shared could be spread throughout the world, Mr Gray said, it would go a long way to improve better feelings on behalf of people and even nations. The men who had died had paid the supreme sacrifice for their country and for an ideal, and it is up to us to carry on their ideals."

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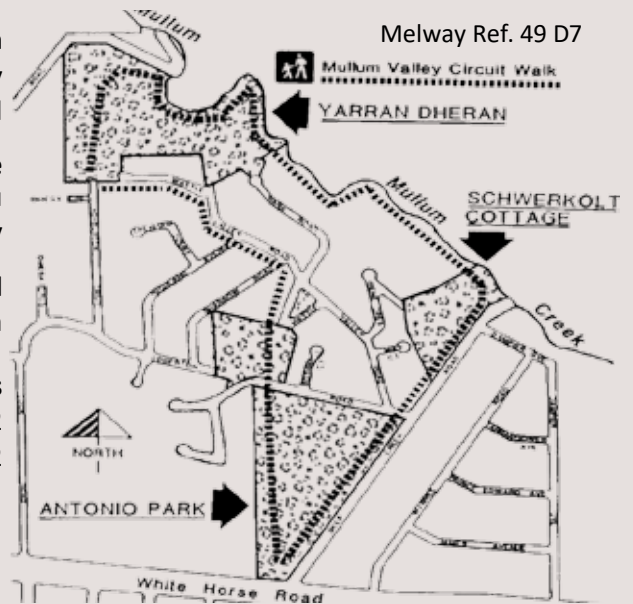
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Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 1 May 2024



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."



**WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL**

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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