



NEWSLETTER

Series 33 No. 2

March–April 2025

ABN 44 352 041 634 Inc. AO 012235J

1965–2025 Sixty years of local history

Vale Valda

VALDA Arrowsmith OAM passed away on 10 February 2025 aged 98.

If we go back a century Mr E E Walker of the Australian Tessellated Tile Company was considered to be Mr Mitcham for his contribution to the Community. Valda, I suggest, could be considered Mrs Mitcham for her services to the Community as her Order of Australia Medal for services to the community attests.

She served as a committee member of our Society for 22 years, including six years as President. She either instigated or was involved in most of the important changes made by the Society between 1991 and 2012, including accreditation under the Museum Accreditation Program.

Valda also served on the Committee of the Mitcham Residents Association and the Halliday Park Advisory Committee and made a valuable contribution to the All Saints' Anglican Church in Mitcham.

Then there was her service as Councillor in the City of Nunawading, which included a term as Mayor. She opened our Local History Room for which she had lobbied during her term as Councillor. She also provided ongoing support and mentoring for Women Councillors.

She was a supporter of the Arts in the area. We have a photo in the Collections of her as Mayor opening the Whitehorse Centre in front of the stained glass windows that her husband, Ted made. And to the end she attended performances, including at the new "Round" theatre.

During the years that I knew Valda these are just a few examples of her commitment to the Community. I am sure that there are many, many, more as the large attendance at her Memorial Service attests: a full church to overflowing and on-line attendance.

Valda Arrowsmith OAM, Mrs Mitcham, we, the Community, miss you.

Vicki Jones-Evans



(Below): Mayor Valda Arrowsmith and group at ceremony on completion of the bicentennial leadlight mural in the foyer of the Nunawading Arts Entertainment Centre, 1988.



**NEXT
MEETING:**

Saturday, 5 April 2025 1.00pm General Meeting

Glenys Williamson: Service Women and then . . .



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members,

OUR first meeting of the year was very enjoyable and we learned some more about the history of Yarran Dheran reserve from Gay Gallagher.

The annual Planning Day in February went well, as we reviewed our goals and achievements from last year's Planning Day and drew up a list for this year.

After hearing the sad news of Valda Arrowsmith's death, many of our members attended Valda's Memorial Service on Thursday 20 February at All Saints' Anglican Church in Mitcham.

On Saturday 22, March Committee members hosted an afternoon tea for new and existing Councillors so they could see how we contribute to the Schwerkolt Complex and to the keeping and sharing of the history of the area. As well as afternoon tea we premiered our new video on the life of Mr E E Walker, which has

subsequently been uploaded to our website and added to the videos shown in the Visitor Centre.

Our next meeting on 5 April will have a women's perspective for ANZAC Day, with Glenys Williamson of the Returned & Servicewomen's RSL Sub-branch speaking on "Service Women and then..."

We will have a display in the Nunawading Library foyer cases from 30 April until the 27 May. So, look out for our display on your trip to the library!

Kerriane Stone (Heritage Officer) has organised a Farm theme day for the Complex on Sunday 4 May called the "Schwerkolt mixed farm revival". This event will be part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival (Victoria) and we will be providing a cake and craft stall, and will serve afternoon teas in the Local History Room.

Vicki Jones-Evans

E.E. WALKER - THE EARLY YEARS

- Son of prosperous merchant/shipowner
- Orphaned & impoverished by age 12
- First job in Brunswick @ 6/- per week
- Started work at Cawkwell's Potteries, Malvern and learnt from ground up



Workers outside Cawkwell's Tile Works in Tooronga Road, Malvern around 1860

Courtesy of Stonnington History Centre

CONTENTS

President's Report	2	William's war (Part One)	6
February Meeting Report	3	Schwerkolt mixed farm revival	7
A seat for Barb	4	From the Collection	7
From <i>The Reporter</i> , 1923	5	About a boy	8
		Diary Dates	9
		Woodsy	9

FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT



Yarran Dheran

GAY Gallagher gave us a wonderful talk this meeting, reminding us of the many local people who campaigned successfully for the preservation of the Yarran Dheran area, and those who continue to work tirelessly now, documenting wildlife and conducting water quality surveys. It was good to be reminded of just how different this little bit of wildlife corridor is, and why we need these places preserved and protected into the future.

It brought to mind my own memories: I have known Yarran Dheran since 1972, as I live farther down the Mullum Mullum Creek. When we were new to the district, we often explored our locality and got to know its wonders. Only a few years before, in 1967, Yarran Dheran had been declared a nature reserve. It was, to us 'new' residents, an interesting walk up the Board of Works pipe track adjacent to the creek, over Quarry Road and into the bush above the old Mitcham Tip, to what was being developed as a special place.

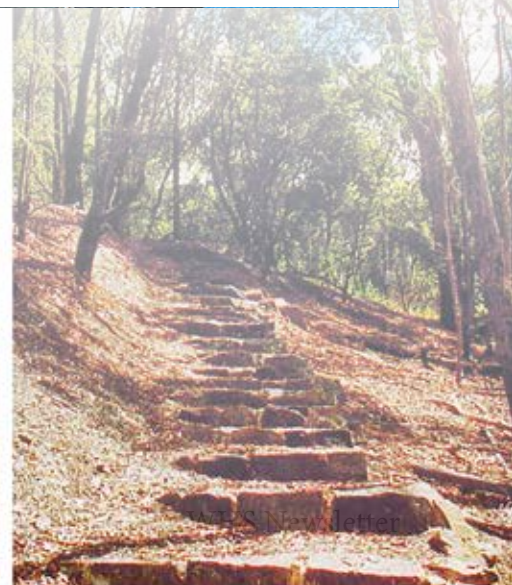
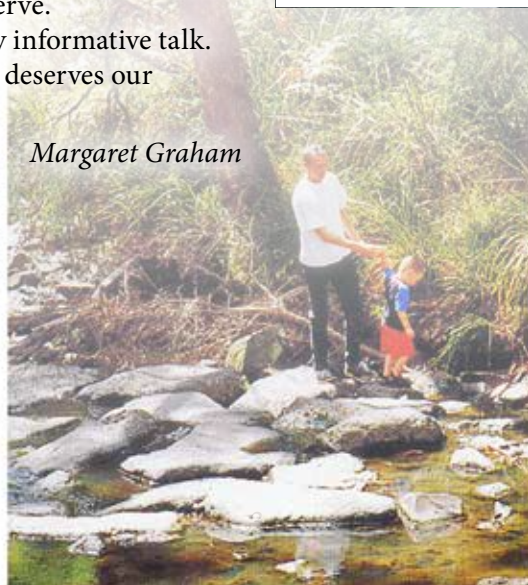
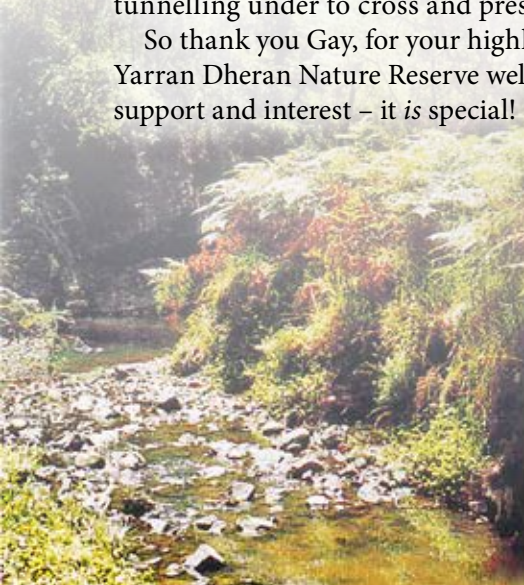
From memory, Yarran Dheran grew slowly but surely toward its official opening in the early 1980s. At around this time, there was the threat of mooted freeways and ring roads worrying this beautiful area and many wonderful people joined together to educate the local and broader community about the specialness of this small pocket of 'real bush' 20km from the CBD.

Younger then, I signed up to do an organised Walk the length (of the Mullum Mullum) from its source at the highest point of Croydon to its confluence with the Yarra River at Pontville, Templestowe. From memory this was a low-cost excursion over two weekends, two days' walk with guides and buses provided by the Yarran Dheran Advisory Committee and Whitehorse Council.

This was a magical experience. Our guide was wonderfully knowledgeable, and if participants were not sold on the idea of a tunnel under the creek and Yarran Dheran to preserve our natural environment before this walk, they certainly were after. We were introduced to the wonders of an incredibly special area, an area well worth the immense cost of tunnelling under to cross and preserve.

So thank you Gay, for your highly informative talk. Yarran Dheran Nature Reserve well deserves our support and interest – it *is* special!

Margaret Graham



a seat for Barb



IN October 2023, Bob Gardiner requested that Whitehorse Historical Society apply to the City of Whitehorse to approve the installation of a seat in the garden of Schwerkolt Cottage. This was to be in memory of Bob's late wife Barbara, a long-time member and administrator of the Society. That seat is now in place in the Schwerkolt Cottage garden, beside the barn and looking out to the Cottage and wisteria

Barbara's City of Whitehorse history

Barbara was always active in matters affecting the community. This included serving on the committee of Antonio Park school, volunteering at Yarran Dheran Reserve Information Centre, and communicating with councillors and staff of Whitehorse council on general matters of local concern.

In 1994, because of a council threat to fence the cottage and apply an entrance charge, Barbara became convenor of the Friends of Schwerkolt Cottage. Because of that association, Barbara joined Nunawading & District Historical Society, later renamed Whitehorse Historical Society.

She was instrumental in organising the first October Garden Party, which eventually became the Heritage Day, in conjunction with Whitehorse Heritage week.

At this time Barb was also completing her mature HSC certificate at Donvale Living and Learning Centre and through them volunteered assisting single mothers in City of Whitehorse.

Following is a brief timeline of Barb's "career" since joining our Society.

- **1995** – Barb became Secretary of N&DHS; Received Certificate of recognition for service to Mitcham Community House.
- **1996** – Recognised for five years' service to Golden Years and Meals On Wheels for Mountview Church in Mitcham.
- **2000** – Last year as Secretary, but continued as newsletter editor and Open Day organiser. President Valda Arrowsmith and Barbara oversaw the accreditation of the society with Museums Australia, Victoria. She also received a Whitehorse Neighbourhood & Community Houses award.
- **2001** – Received Certificate of Appreciation from Premier Hon. Steve Bracks.
- **2004** – Deakin Community and City of Whitehorse Australia Day Community Achievement Award
- **2008+** – Organised a number of sausage sizzles at Bunnings for Whitehorse Historical society.

PICTURES: (Above) Barb's seat, located next to the barn and facing the Cottage; (Below) Bob and Barb photographed on their 50th wedding anniversary.



From THE REPORTER

Issued in conjunction with the "Hawthorn and Camberwell Citizen"
THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SHIRES OF NUNAWADING, DONCASTER, AND CIRCULATING IN THE CITIES OF CAMBERWELL, HAWTHORN & K.E.W. SHIRES OF NUNAWADING, DONCASTER, FERN TREE GULLY, LILLYDALE AND ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES.

VOL. XXXIV NO. 19

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

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1923

PRICE: TWOPENCE

LICENSED GROCER CHARGED. DECISION RESERVED.

A case presenting peculiar features, the first of its kind to be heard in Victoria, was heard before Mr. W. G. Smith, P.M., at the Camberwell City Court on Friday last, and was regarded in the light of a test case to decide whether it was contrary to the provisions of the Licensing Act to supply liquor in a "dry" area.

The defendant was John MacPherson, a wine and spirit merchant, of Burke road, Upper Hawthorn, who was charged with "on 23rd November, 1923, at Camberwell, in the licensing district of Boroondara, the same being the licensing district where, in 1920, in accordance with the provisions of the Licensing Act, there had been carried a resolution by the electors that no licence be granted in that district, defendant did unlawfully supply to one, Madge Stewart, certain liquors of an intoxicating nature, to wit, beer and wine." In November last the police successfully launched a prosecution against Stewart, who was fined £50 on a charge of sly grog selling, and it was alleged that the liquor found on the premises had been obtained from MacPherson. Inspector Thompson conducted the case for the prosecution, and Mr. E. Gorman appeared for the defendant, who pleaded not guilty. Constable Jacobs, of Fitzroy, produced the "Government Gazette," containing the results of the Local Option poll in the Boroondara electorate on 21st October, 1920, when 2626 electors voted continuance, 783 reduction, and 5845 no-licence. On Friday evening, 24th November last, with Constables Davern and Scott and other constables, he went to 32 Sunnyside Avenue, which was within the Boroondara licensing district, with a warrant to search the premises, and, at 2 o'clock on the following morning, a raid was made, when 18 full bottles of beer, 110 empty beer bottles and two empty whisky bottles were found there. Davern found a receipt, which showed that the liquor had been purchased from defendant. In consequence of a

conversation with the occupier of the house, Madge Stewart, he called at defendant's premises on 1st December, and there saw a driver named Frank Hart, and, later, the defendant, to whom he showed the receipt, remarking, "I found this receipt at a house, 32 Sunnyside Avenue, Camberwell, on Saturday morning last, and according to it, you supplied the occupier with four dozen bottles of beer and one of whisky on 23rd November. The occupier stated that your driver delivered the liquor at her address, and was there paid for it. Your driver says that it is true." Defendant looked at the receipt, and said it was quite correct, adding that he did not know what class of people were in the house. Witness said that the place was situated in the prohibition area, and the Licensing Act made it an offence to deliver liquor in that area. Defendant replied that the Licensing Act did not say that. Witness said that it did. The driver said that the liquor was ordered over the telephone.

By Mr. Gorman: There was a previous case of similar character, but in that instance the party concerned was straight out charged with sly grog selling. He was convicted, but the conviction was quashed on appeal. It was a matter of common knowledge that large Melbourne firms were delivering liquor in no-licence areas.

Mr. Gorman submitted that the prosecution was entirely misconceived, and was wrong in the view that they had taken for the reason that no reference to delivery was made in the section of the Act under which the charge was laid. If that view were correct, and defendant was committing an offence by delivering liquor, which had been ordered over the telephone, then all licensed persons were committing the offence of sly grog selling, as all the large purveyors of liquor in the city were acting similarly to MacPherson, liquor being delivered every day in no-licence areas. He explained the system adopted by defendant, which was that all orders must be made at the shop. The goods were then appropriated to the purchaser, who signed an order con-

sented to such appropriation. Acting on legal advice, Mr. MacPherson was simply adopting the procedure followed by large purveyors of liquor in the city. It was a matter of common knowledge that they were sending liquor into "dry" areas every day. Had it been the intention of the legislature to prevent this delivery the Act would have provided that no person shall deliver liquor in licence districts. If the police contention were correct, he would be committing an offence if he lived in a dry area, and invited a friend to have a whisky. There was no code as to what could or could not be done in a dry area. In the New Zealand Act delivery in no-licence area was provided for under certain conditions, the purchaser signing a document setting out the place where it was required that the liquor should be delivered.

Mr. Gorman then called John MacPherson to prove appropriation of the liquor at his place of business. He explained that his system was that all liquor was sold at his licensed premises. The order was taken, and the goods immediately appropriated to the customer at the shop. If for delivery it was placed in a box, as was done in the case of Miss Stewart, and then handed to the carter for delivery.

Mr. Smith: The question then arises, was the carter the agent for the defendant, or for Stewart?

Mr. Gorman: We contend that he was Stewart's agent, as she took all risks. He said if it had been intended that liquor should not be delivered in "dry" areas, the Act would never have been passed by Parliament, as legislators would never have gone to such an extreme length. He submitted that as no offence had been disclosed, the information should be dismissed.

Mr. Smith said that the case was taken under a penal section of the Act, and there should be no ambiguity about it. He further added that as it was an important matter, he proposed to go thoroughly into the authorities quoted by Mr. Gorman, and would announce his decision at the Camberwell Court in four weeks' time.



William's War Part One

IN 2002, Mr George Cox of Blackburn donated to WHS an extract from his uncle's First World War diary. The extract contained details of the death of William Lionel Schwerkolt, with whom Mr Cox's uncle had served. Early in 2018, Mr Cox kindly loaned WHS for copying and digital storage a handwritten transcription made by his aunt of the whole diary. The original diary is thought to now be in New Zealand.

William George Hogg of Coimadai, Victoria enlisted on 19 August 1914 aged 19 years. He was a groom. His next-of-kin was his father, G.W Hogg of Toolern Vale via Melton. On enlistment at Windsor Drill Hall, William became a member of the 2nd Field Artillery, 4th Brigade, 1st Australian Division, initially as a driver (presumably of horses), but later being made a bombardier (gunner). On 21 October 1914 he, among 400 men and 300 horses, sailed from Port Melbourne on *S.S Shropshire*. The sea journey was enlivened when one of their accompanying battle ships, *HMAS Sydney*, left the convoy of thirty-eight ships to take on the German destroyer, *Emden*. Further excitement occurred when another vessel collided with them, necessitating all on board preparing to abandon ship. Fortunately, the damage was minimal, and the voyage continued to Alexandria. Following disembarkation, a train journey and a ten-mile march, William arrived at Mena Camp. His interest in horses is evident throughout his diary, noted in his remarks on the weakness of the horses after the six-week shipboard journey.

Another common theme throughout the diary is his observation on the countries through which he passed. Not always 'politically correct', they are the thoughts of a young, country boy experiencing the exotic for the first

time. He is scathing in his notes on Egypt, but censored the infamous Battle of the Wassir from his account. At 8am on 25 April 1914, William, his fellow soldiers, their horses and guns were lowered onto pontoons and made for the shores of Gallipoli. What William saw and heard was 'awful'. Unable to land due to the intensity of firing, his group was re-boarded. As a driver, William was compelled to stay on board to care for the horses. After a week off Gallipoli, William's ship was sent on a cruising expedition as a ploy to divert Turkish attention away from the carnage at Anzac Cove. Diverted back to Egypt and disappointed at not seeing action at Gallipoli, William spent the intervening months in camp outside Alexandria, before finally arriving in Marseille on 28 March 1916.

The French countryside left a favourable impression; but arrival in wet, muddy Flanders was not so welcome. William arrived at the Front on 17 April 1916 near Laventil. Over the next months he moved in and out of action, constantly relocating from one area to another. The tone of his writing changes, the intensity of warfare having taken over; there are frequent descriptions of destructive enemy attacks, the ruination of towns and poor relations with Flemish people in the area who were pro-German.

By 21 July 1916, William was in the thick of action around Poizieres; words failed him to describe the noise, the destruction of battle and the numbers of the wounded. He took time to describe the area of the Somme, especially the town of Albert, whose destruction aroused feelings of hatred towards the 'wily Hun'. He retained a similar impression of Ypres.

(To be continued)
Giselda Bannister

Creative Whitehorse Presents

Schwerkolt mixed farm revival

UNEARTHING the farming past at Schwerkolt Cottage, the Farm Day brings direct experience of the activities practiced on the property when it was a mixed farm, with an orchard and animals. Visitors may explore the family Cottage, grounds and outbuildings, and see remnants of the orchard and heritage farming equipment in the orcharding shed. Learn about the original cellar used for storing the wine and cheese produced on the farm.

Browse community stalls offering cakes and craft and take advantage of the coffee cart. Taste apples, and learn about keeping bees. There will be fun farm-themed crafts for kids. Take in the fresh air of a farming life and enjoy a Devonshire tea hosted by Whitehorse Historical Society.



Date/Time: Sunday 4 May 2025, 12pm-4pm

Location: Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex 2-10 Deep Creek Road, Mitcham

For bookings visit: www.creativewhitehorse.vic.gov.au/whats-on/schwerkolt-mixed-farm-revival or phone 9262 6333.

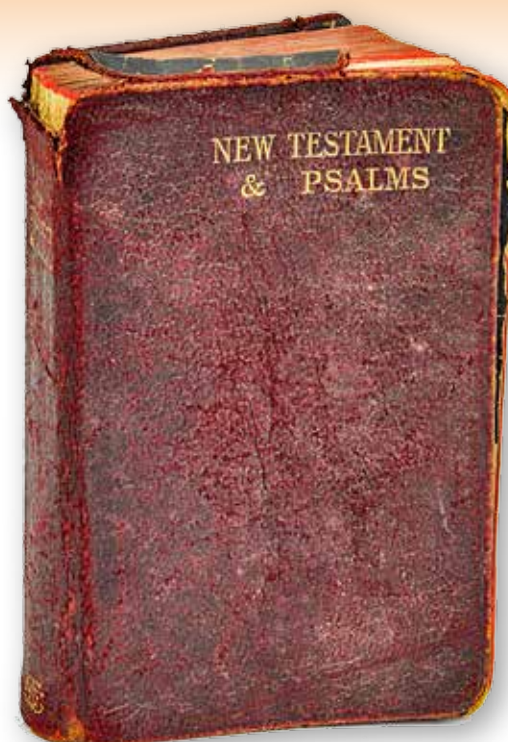
FROM THE COLLECTION

NA4852

EVERY British Empire serviceman was issued with his uniform, helmet, boots, and a Bible from the British and Foreign Bible Society. Between 1914 and 1918 the Bible Society distributed more than 9 million copies in over 80 languages, to members of the British Armed Forces, and also to prisoners of war on all sides.

This is the one presented to William Lionel Schwerkolt after he enlisted in WW1. There is a paper label inside the front end paper which carries the inscription Presented to Members of the Victorian contingent of the A.I.F. Melbourne 1914.

The dimensions are: Length: 12 centimetres, Width: 8 centimetres, Depth: 2 centimetres.



About a boy

PICTURES:

(Top) Henri with Edward Tovell; (Centre) Henri climbs into the oat sack that Private Tovell used to smuggle him onto the ship; (Bottom) Boxing at Hurdcott Camp.



HENRI (Honore) Hermene Tovell was orphaned in France at around the age of seven. His father, a soldier, was reportedly killed on the Western Front, and his mother died as a result of a German shell attack on their home in Seclin. Henri survived on his own for four years by attaching himself to various French and British units and scavenging food from troops near the battlefields of northern Belgium. However, on Christmas Day 1918, he wandered into Bickendorf Air Base mess hall during lunch and was adopted by the Australian Flying Corps No. 4 Squadron. The tiny French boy was just 11 when he was invited to join the squadron's table, and he earned his meal by captivating the airmen with his incredible story of survival.

He became their unofficial mascot, a joker and rat-catcher in the barracks, and was even taken for daredevil joyrides on the squadron's Sopwith Camel biplanes.

His unofficial guardian, air mechanic Timothy Tovell, looked after Henri during the war and ensured that he accompanied the squadron when they were sent to England. From England, Tovell smuggled Henri in a sack onto the troop ship *Kaisar-i-Hind* bound for Australia, only being discovered too far into the voyage to turn back and return the boy. Henri was granted permission to land in Australia and went to Brisbane to live with Tovell and his family.

When he turned approximately 16 (his exact age is unknown), Henri (nicknamed 'Digger') relocated to Melbourne to work as a mechanic with the RAAF. He applied to join the air force; however, as a French citizen, he was stopped from doing so by the French High Commissioner.

Henri continued to work as a mechanic until his untimely death in a motorcycle accident on Spring Street in Melbourne in 1928 at the age of 21. Despite not being a member of the air force he was buried with military honours. His death was widely publicised and *The Argus* newspaper ran a subscription service to pay for a memorial headstone to be erected over his grave. The memorial featured a bronze statue of the young Henri.

This headstone disappeared in the 1950s and a new stone was paid for by the RAAF Association of Victoria and the Federal Government.

Source: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P7208>

2025 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 3 May
Saturday 19 July
Saturday 6 September
Saturday 1 November

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

STATISTICS

Photographs catalogued	-	4578
Artefacts catalogued	-	5673
Documents catalogued	-	8521
Museum visitors Jan–Feb 2025	-	198

DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and
Museum Complex

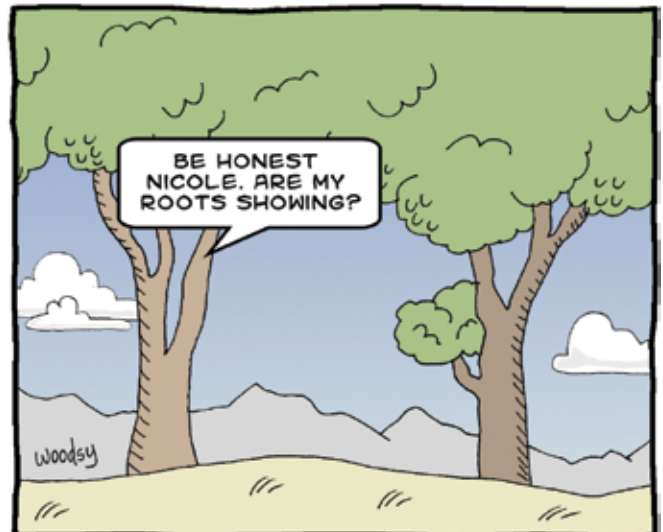
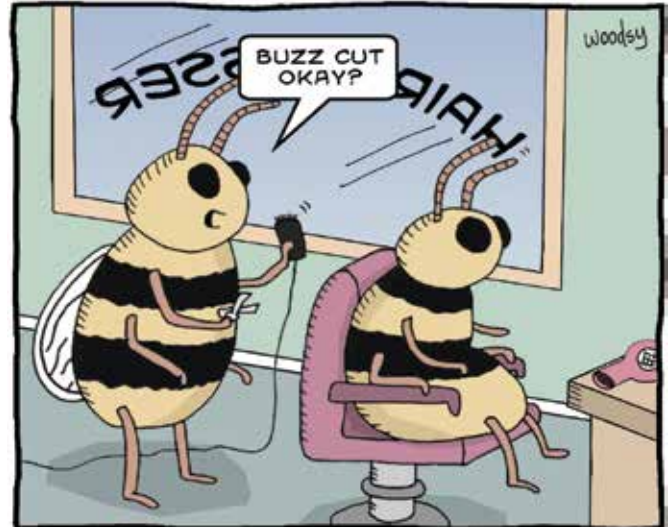
Saturday, 5 April
1.00pm General Meeting
Glenys Williamson:
Service Women and then . . .

Saturday, 7 June
1.00pm General Meeting
Gregory Hill:

*Nunawading's Earliest Potteries & Porcelain
Works*

Saturday, 16 August
1.00pm Annual General Meeting
Anne Payne:
History of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary

woodsy insert brain here



Do you enjoy your membership of WHS?
We encourage you to think about recommending membership to your friends.
<https://whitehorsehistory.org.au/membership/>

WHS Committee Contacts

President

Vicki Jones-Evans
0404 612 216

Vice-President

Peter McPhee

Secretary

Kathy Innes

Treasurer

Eddie Tan

Local History Room (03) 9873 4946

Rear Museum Building
Schwerkolt Complex
2 – 10 Deep Creek Road, Mitcham

Newsletter Team

Chris Gray
Wendy Standfield

WHS website

whitehorsehistory.org.au
facebook.com/whitehorsehistory

Email

whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com

Postal Address

PO Box 2092
Rangeview 3132



Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 7 May 2025



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."



The Whitehorse Historical Society, Inc. acknowledges the support of the 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.



**WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL**



Printing provided by **MICHAEL SUKKAR MP FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DEAKIN**

Sender: Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex

Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, VIC 3132

If undeliverable, please return to PO Box 2092 Rangeview 3132

**AFFIX
STAMP
HERE**