



NEWSLETTER

Series 33 No. 3

May-June 2025

ABN 44 352 041 634 Inc. AO 012235J

1965-2025 Sixty years of local history

SCHWERKOLT MIXED FARM REVIVAL

ON Sunday 4 May we took part in the Schwerkolt Mixed Farm Revival that was hosted by Creative Whitehorse. We provided a cake stall and children's craft activity and an extremely popular "Café" in the Local History Room where we served delicious Devonshire Tea and cakes.

Whilst the number of visitors was small, those who attended had an enjoyable day.

The hit of the day was seeing a cow being milked and butter being made. A big thank-you to all who assisted and worked hard on the day to make this a successful fundraiser.



PICTURES (Clockwise from top): Making butter; Wood turners at work; WHS cake stall; (Background) Milking the cow.

**NEXT
MEETING:**

Saturday, 7 June, 1.00pm General Meeting

Gregory Hill:

Nunawading's Earliest Potteries & Porcelain Works



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members,

GLENYS Williamson of the Returned & Servicewomen's RSL Sub-branch gave us a great insight into the contribution of Service Women at our meeting in April.

Thank you to our members who helped with our cake and craft stall and Devonshire tea café for the "Schwerkolt mixed farm revival", which was part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival (Victoria). Our contribution was a great success and the Council recorded about 150 attendees.

Heritage Family Day planning is underway in preparation for Sunday 14 September and the theme this year is "Changing Fashions". As well as the Wedding Dress exhibition in the Whitehorse Arts Space in Box Hill Town Hall we will be hosting a special display in the Museum and Visitor Centre.

Thomas Cook Boot & Clothing Company of Station St Nunawading are celebrating their 100th year of operation and the Company are providing items from their archives for display. They provided clothing and footwear for the films *Man from Snowy River 2* and *The Dressmaker*. This will be a special collaboration between the company and our society.

Kathy has contacted all our usual community group contributors to Heritage Family Day and applied for the Council Community Grant to fund our paid

entertainers. Please keep Sunday 14 September free to assist if you are able.

The project to display better quality photos in the Museum is almost finished. Snap Print Solutions of Ringwood advised us of the best board to print our photos on and did a great job printing them. The friendly staff admired and commented on the subjects, such as the football team photo. Emily and Patty are busy installing them in the Museum. Thanks also to Richard for his great skills in preparing the photographs for printing.

You may recall that we have had many discussions with Council about pruning the bay tree in the Cottage garden in front of the children's room door. Council did trim the top of the tree, but it was still a mess of suckers along the verandah. Thank you to Harley and Bob, who have cleared all the suckers away so that now the area is a much more open space and much less of a security issue. It was very hard work and took them several Wednesdays.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, with our guest speaker Gregory Hill on the subject of Potteries – which are, of course, are a very important part of our history.

Vicki Jones-Evans

(BELOW): 100 years of Thomas Cook Boot & Clothing Co.



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APRIL MEETING REPORT



Glenys Williamson: Service Women and then . . .

IT is a task to find interesting speakers for our General Meetings. For April we sought something with a military taste, due to the proximity of ANZAC Day. So much of our military history tells of this battle or that landing; we therefore looked for a different aspect of war history.

Glenys Williamson from the Returned Service Women's Sub Branch told the intriguing story of the work done by the various Women's Services in the War.

So much of the work for many was extremely secret, and for years they were forbidden to talk about how their efforts contributed to the success of so many war operations. One of these was Operation Jaywick, where a group of our men sailed and rowed from Darwin to Singapore, wreaking much havoc on enemy ships.

Stories included one of a cryptographer hearing the Blue Danube in Morse Code, then discovering, at a reunion 40 years later, that a signaller in New Guinea had left his Morse key open and was typing the tune to fill in time. Another spoke of a highly secret group in Queensland who were told, "We are so secret that there will be no medals or honours in this unit".

The Australian Women's Army Service is usually referred to as AWAS and was formed 13 August 1941 to release men for combat duty. The first AWAS served on HQs and Base Installations; but by the second half of 1942 their employment had extended to cover the majority of units within the Australian Army.

AWAS worked as drivers and maintenance staff in car companies and regimental establishments. They drove cars, three-ton trucks, Jeeps, Bren gun carriers, amphibious vehicles and ambulances, as well attending to vehicle maintenance. Often they transported vehicles across country to where they were needed.

Women also worked in watercraft workshops and in AEME (Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) repair shops. There were around 3,600

AWAS attached to the Signals Corps, many of whom served not only in Australia, but in the Middle East, England and New Guinea.

They filled roles in broadcasting, entertainment and photographic units. They were also in Field Trail companies: 3,618 AWAS were attached to the Australian Artillery, where they manned anti-aircraft guns and searchlights, plus other fixed defences from Hobart to Cairns, and over to Perth. The Catering Corps had AWAS as mess and kitchen staff, including cooks and several butchers.

Among special duties performed were those provided by an anthropologist, linguist and interpreters, a veterinary surgeon, a sculptress; also as guards for Italian female internees in hospital. Women assisted in courts, and in one mental home during an emergency.

Total enlistment of the AWAS was 24,026 with the maximum strength being 20,051 in January, 1944.

I am sure that most military students or historians were not aware of the efforts of these remarkable women.

Peter McPhee





William's War

Part Two

THE winter of 1916 was bitter; mud up to the men's knees, horses bogged in shell holes, having to be destroyed because there was no way to get them out, and the enemy fire was unrelenting. William Hogg witnessed the death of William Schwerkolt (and others) on 9 November 1916. Their dismembered remains were buried by William and his fellows that night after shelling had stopped. The men developed Trench Feet – being totally unable to keep dry, light fires or obtain hot food and drink; added to which was the misery of lice infestations. Some relief was provided by a rest period in the pretty town of Amiens, but William was struck by the large numbers of women dressed in mourning black. He recorded that Delville Wood, once a fine little forest, was transformed into a shattered graveyard of poorly buried remains. '... there is not a man living, who can give the slightest idea of the conditions out here.'¹



A view of Delville Wood as William saw it.

The monotony of freezing cold, snow, the deaths of admired officers and men, and the shortage of rations, depressed William; although he was conscious of his luck in surviving several near misses. On 15 April 1917, armed only with a shovel, he captured a German prisoner, noting that it was impossible to tell who was the more frightened.

1. Hogg, William George, *Personal Diary*, p. 38.

On 3 May 1917 William went to England on leave, relieved to be away from war and the 'chats' (lice). Interestingly, he doesn't write about his leave. It is as if he didn't want to spoil happy memories by including them in his diary.

On 8 July 1917 he recorded the unveiling by General Birdwood of a cross in memory of the 1st Australian Division men killed at Poizieres. Poignantly, William commented on the numbers of 'lads' who were moved to tears by the impressive ceremony. On 21 July 1917 he was sent to the Casualty Clearing Station suffering from Trench Fever, a legacy of the 'chats' which infested all the men. With a temperature of 103 degrees, he was entrained to Boulogne, where he was bed-ridden for a fortnight before being sent to convalescent camp,



An example of a Casualty Clearing Station.

then on to the Australian Base at Harfleur, before returning to the Front.

Returning to the front was demoralising. So many of William's friends (whom he named in the diary), had been killed. A mood of fatalism takes over the diary. William noted that a wounded man was 'the luckiest man in France. He gets away from this Hell'. Each man looked at his fellow, wondering who would be next. On

Continued on page 6

From THE REPORTER

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

VOL. XXXIV NO. 22

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne,
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FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 1923

PRICE: TWOPENCE

BOX HILL COURT.

A DANGEROUS PRACTICE.

At the Box Hill Court on Friday last the bench consisted of Messrs. Sneddon (chairman), Tweedie, Ellingworth, Tully, McAlpin, Foy and Jolliffe, J's.P.

Robert James and Wilfred James were charged with having, at East Burwood on March 30, discharged a pea rifle on private property without the consent of the owner.

Sergeant Olney stated that on Good Friday the defendants entered certain property at Burwood East, when the pea rifle was fired. Showing how dangerous was the practice, a lady was struck on the head with a bullet; but, fortunately, was not seriously injured.

Mrs. Hurst, of Wellington road, Box Hill, stated that she was on their own property at East Burwood on Good Friday. She heard a rifle shot fired, and afterwards was struck on the head with a bullet. It was necessary for her to see a doctor to have the missile removed. Witness did not know who fired the shot.

Frederick James Hamilton, Vermont, said the mother of the defendants saw him, and asked that the lads be given permission to camp in a paddock for a day or two. Witness gave his consent, but did not know that firearms were to be used.

Constable Barber said that he interviewed the defendants. They stated that they had put a fish tin on a tree, and each had four shots at it. The paddock was thickly covered with timber, and the defendants said they did not know there were any other people on the property. The rifle belonged to another lad, who was appearing in the Children's Court.

Defendants stated that their parents went out with them, and got permission for them to camp on the property. The occupier was asked if there were rabbits and fish there, and he said yes. When they first got there they had six shots at a fish tin. Then they pitched camp, and afterwards started shooting again. They did not see the lady who had given evi-

dence. There was a very thick scrub, and they did not know how close they were to the road.

Sergeant Olney said a heavy penalty was not desired. At the same time, it was necessary to take action, as the practice of shooting was dangerous and must be stopped. The lads had given the police every assistance. A similar charge was being preferred against another lad in the Children's Court.

The chairman said a dangerous proceeding had been followed, but the bench had taken all the circumstances into consideration. The defendants would each be fined £1, with 10/- costs. At the same time, it was felt that the lady who had been struck by a bullet, should be recompensed the expense incurred.

VANDALISM BY BOYS.

Four small schoolboys entered the Methodist Church at Heidelberg and caused damage to the extent of between £40 and £50 (says the local journal). Almost every window in the building was broken. Hymn books were found about the floor, some had pages torn out, and others were destroyed beyond repair. A fine upright grand piano, valued at over £100, was taken to pieces, notes, strings and other valuable working parts being thrown on the floor about the instrument. It is stated that the boys responsible for the destruction (whose ages range from seven to nine) were members of the Sunday School, and their parents are well known and respected in the district.

CONCRETE CHANNELS.

In his recent wanderings through New Zealand, Cr. Oldis, chairman of Northcote Works Committee, observed that the street channels were constructed of concrete, thereby saving an enormous amount of labor in keeping clean. Last week he took the first step with a view of having the same practice adopted here.

DON'T NEGLECT THAT COUGH.

Many a slight COUGH or COLD, if neglected, develops into Bronchitis or Pneumonia. Don't delay, but keep in the house a bottle of the well-known—

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—:0:—

William's War

(Continued from page 4)



William in 1923, when he won his Valour Badge.

2 November 1917 William commented that he wished the next shell would get him. Only fear of what his fellows would say about his further absence kept him from going to hospital having been gassed. The effects were such however, that days later he was hospitalised. On 10 November 1917 he joined twenty-three other men, all gassed, none of whom could speak. It was ten days before William regained his voice and was discharged for six weeks' rest.

Desperate shortage of men and no reinforcements meant that William was back at the Front ten days after his six weeks were to have started. Conditions were so dire that each man was issued a rifle and ordered to stand to the last man. But on 24 February 1918, William had three weeks leave, which again he didn't record. The tone of his writing is resigned; there is no choice but to return to action and 'Bully and biscuit'. His descriptions of the fates of some of his comrades in the fighting around Hill 60 are not for the squeamish; there is no romance or glory in war. William's mood cannot have been helped by his comrades telling him that it should be his turn next. Rumours of the successful 8 April 1918 German offensive led him to note that the Allied

forces believed they were 'playing a losing game' and that the 'lads were downhearted'. The men were further depressed that after three years of hard fighting any gains made had been won back by 'Fritz' in three days.

On 8 August 1918 William's brigade was in the region of Villers-Bretonneux; after days of hard fighting the battle seemed to be turning in the allies' favour. William noted on 23 August 1918 that 1600 prisoners were captured. On 17 September 1918 he noted enviously that some of the original gunners had been granted 'Anzac Leave'.² Finally, after more hard fighting, William received news on 21 September 1918 that his 'Anzac Leave' had been granted. While deeply regretting leaving his comrades, especially those who would never go home, William could not hide his relief.

The remaining five pages of the diary described the train journey through France and Southern Italy (which William noted as 'lovely'), greatly helped by the cooked meals provided on board. Egypt's fierce heat was appreciated as a relief after France's bitter cold. On 2 November 1918 word reached the men, in port at Colombo, that the Armistice was soon to be signed. Interestingly, this is the last mention of the war. William's focus is on the pleasures of the journey. Even being quarantined in Fremantle, checked for Spanish Influenza (and the same again in Portsea), cannot dampen the pleasure at being finally home. William was discharged on 31 January 1919.

What became of William after the diary ended? He joined the Victorian Police force as a constable in 1919, initially based at Russell Street, Melbourne. Country postings followed: to Watchem in 1921 and to Gunbower in 1922, where he was the honorary Inspector of Fisheries. While still at Gunbower he was appointed as a bailiff at the County Court at Kerang.

In 1923 he was awarded the Valour Badge for bravery and devotion to duty in the apprehension of one Nathaniel Baker an escapee from the Castlemaine Reformatory Prison.³ From 1924 to 1935 he was based at Clifton Hill, then from 1935 to 1949, as a Senior Constable, he was based at West Brunswick. Along the way he married Adeline. By the time of his premature death aged 57 in 1953, he had been appointed a Police Superintendent and was stationed at Swan Hill. His name appeared on the Queen's Medal List on Coronation Day. His funeral cortege was led by the police band, mounted troops and motorcycle patrols on its way through Melton township to Melton Cemetery. William's eventful life ended where it started.³

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1. **Ancestry.com, Victoria, Australia Police Gazettes 1855, 1864-1924, Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2016.**
2. **For information about Anzac Leave see www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/anzacleave**
3. **Ancestry.com, Victoria, Australia Death Index 1836-1988, Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2018**
 - **Ancestry.com, Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980, Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.**
 - **Anon, Police Funeral, *The Argus*, 9 June 1953.**

A Meeting with Mr Jiang

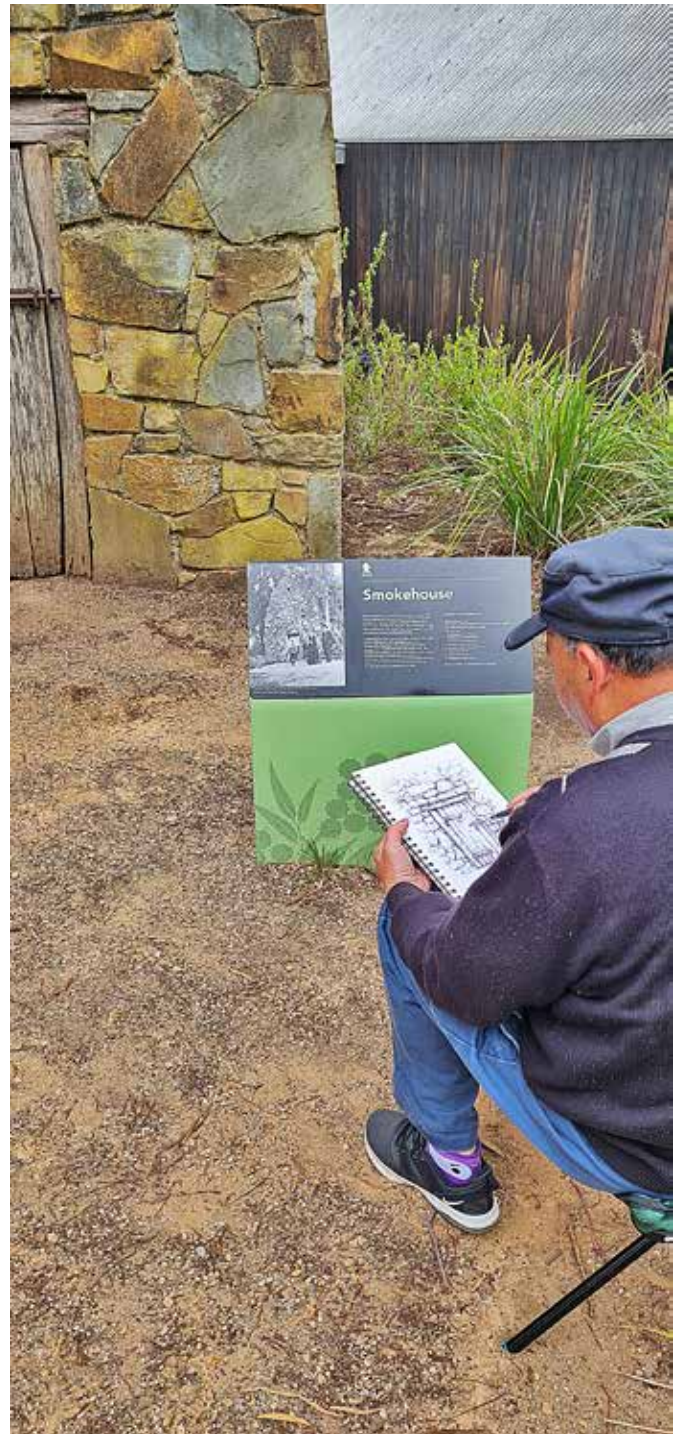
It pays to do the vacuuming. Returning from attending to the slaughter of spiders, bugs and cobwebs in the cottage recently, I noticed a gentleman seated on a stool in front of the smokehouse. Even at a distance I could see a beautifully-detailed drawing of the smokehouse taking shape on the gentleman's sketchpad. Vacuum cleaner returned to its rightful place, it dawned on me that this was a wonderful opportunity to capture a photograph of someone enjoying interacting with the cottage and museum complex.

Mr Jiang kindly allowed me to take several photographs. But my ability to speak Mandarin is as good as my ability to draw. Non-existent.

Recruiting the assistance of my fellow-volunteer, Lin, we returned to Mr Jiang and out of the resulting conversation, we invited him to visit us the following week accompanied by his daughter, Jenny.

Jenny is now a permanent resident, as are her parents who followed eight years ago. The attraction for Mr Jiang and his wife being the Chinese community in Box Hill, but more importantly the environment – parks, gardens, birdlife and the opportunity to create their own garden. It was Mr Jiang's frequent walks in Whitehorse's parks that led to his discovery of Schwerkolt cottage. As Jenny notes: 'With a passion for historical buildings, this beautiful old cottage, in its unique setting, showed him a genuine piece of Australian history. He finds it so attractive and this place constantly draws him back to do a series of sketches.'

(Continued on page 8)



A Meeting with Mr Jiang

Continued

Mr Jiang's love of drawing began when he was quite young, while living in Hunan Province, China. Mr Jiang has been fortunate to make his love for art, his profession. Completing a postgraduate program at Guangzhou Fine Arts College, he became a Professor in Fine Art and Design at Changsha Social Work College.

He works in traditional Chinese-style, using ink and watercolour, finding his inspiration in his love of old buildings, nostalgia for China and Australia and Australia's beautiful scenery. As Director of the Chinese Landscape Painting Association and Director of the Hunan Fine Arts Association, Mr Jiang is a well-known artist in China, where people are still interested in original artwork and view art as an investment.

Mr Jiang has had exhibitions of his work in a regional Mayoral Arts Exhibition and in Whitehorse-Manningham Libraries *Storymakers* Exhibition.

Mr Jiang wants his art to 'speak' to people, including fellow-artists. Mr Jiang's artwork 'spoke' to us and we were thrilled by his gift of one of his original drawings of Schwerkolt cottage. We look forward to putting it on public display shortly and welcoming it into the collections of Whitehorse Historical Society. It is emblematic of the interactions that occur between the community and the inclusivity that can develop where there is shared appreciation of all that we have inherited and wish to preserve for future generations.

Giselda Bannister

FROM THE COLLECTION . . .



NA4694 Butter Churn

This Swedish-made butter churn is believed to have been owned originally by Alice and Arthur Fisher who had a 16-acre property in Mullum Mullum Road, Ringwood. They had a mixed farm including an orchard of fruit and nut trees, and a dairy cow. Alice milked the cow much to the amusement of her English family, who delighted in visiting.

When the property was sold the butter churn went to Red Hill on the Mornington Peninsula. Arthur Lunt, donor, has memories of its use in Red Hill, where his parents had a mixed farm. That property was sold c. 1950, and the butter churn returned to the Ringwood/Croydon area, where it remained unused for 65 years until being donated to the WHS collection in 2015. It is typical of manually operated equipment in use on small properties 100 years ago.

ABOVE: NA4694 Physical description: Cylindrical container, brown, mounted on board with a handle underneath. To one side is a wooden handle and drive gears to spin the cylinder. The cylinder has a tight-fitting lid and a maker's metal label on the side; the opposite side has a direction arrow embossed. Mounted on a wooden base. Cream was put into the churn and the handle turned to spin the drum until butter was produced.
Measurements: Length: 44 centimetres, Width: 43 centimetres, Depth: 27 centimetres.

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 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	-	4583
Artefacts catalogued	-	5725
Documents catalogued	-	8527
Museum visitors March–April 2025	-	554

DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerholt Cottage and
Museum Complex

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

Saturday, 4 October
1.00pm Annual General Meeting

Nick McGowan:

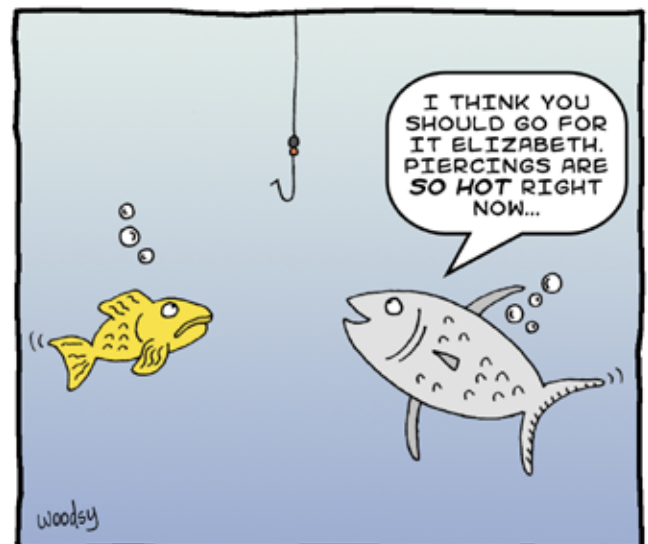
Life Before Politics

Saturday, 6 December
1.00pm Annual General Meeting

George Cox:

60 Years of Whitehorse Historical Society

woody
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

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Chris Gray
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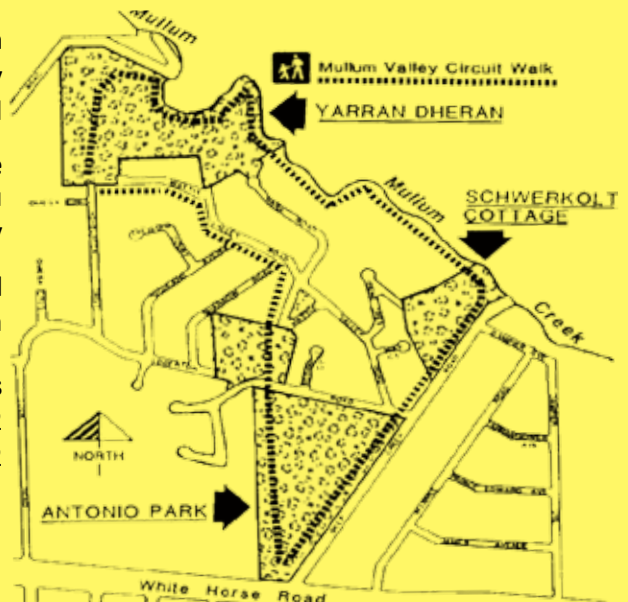
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Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 2 July 2025



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.



Sender: Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex
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If undeliverable, please return to PO Box 2092 Rangeview 3132

AFFIX
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