



NEWSLETTER

Series 33 No. 4

July–August 2025

ABN 44 352 041 634 Inc. AO 012235J

1965–2025 Sixty years of local history

Jenelle moves on



I was fifteen minutes early for our lunch meeting. I let her know I was there and sat down near her checkout lane. In those fifteen minutes I heard “Good Luck ... where are you going?” ... and more comments like that than I have heard in ages.

Jenelle was, and has been for thirty-six years, a Mitcham institution. She was a Customer Service Officer at Coles Mitcham. Until Friday, 6 June, that was. Coles Mitcham closed, one of many long-existing businesses to do so in the so-called refurbishing of Mitcham. This refurbishing has its pros and its cons; but that is a story for the future, and we have an interest in history here.

Usually, our interactions with staff on supermarket checkouts is cursory. “Hello” and “Thank You”. I have had more staff interactions recently due to my many mistakes, as I learn to deal with the intricacies of the dreaded new self-checkouts. Not so with Jenelle’s checkout. Many of her customers are old friends, as she happily and efficiently swipes along their purchases and answers their questions and even packs their groceries (NOTE: those self-checkouts cannot and do not pack!).

Lunch with Jenelle was fun. Again, lots of interruptions from passers-by and, of course, lots of love and good wishes. Recollections of her best and worst customers, including memorable moments and good support from Coles. She talked about her “famous” customers – football players and even Neighbours stars! A true local identity! You will be missed in the area, Jenelle. Customers at another Eastern Suburbs Coles Store are going to be winners though, and we all do wish you well in your new location, and their gain is our loss. Thank you for being an important part of local Mitcham life for so long.

Margaret Graham

**NEXT
MEETING:**

Saturday, 16 August, 1.00pm Annual General Meeting

Anne Payne OAM:

History of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Vicki and Kathy show Matt part of the Museum.

Dear Members,

ON Wednesday 9 July we welcomed the new member for Deakin, Matt Greg MP, to morning tea and a tour of the Museum and Visitor Centre. Matt has kindly offered to do the photocopying of our newsletter.

At the beginning of July, I visited the NGV Exhibition at the Ian Potter Centre, Fed Square, to view the exhibition of the Paris-based fashion designer Martin Grant. Martin is from Blackburn originally. It was a wonderful exhibition and it is on until 26 January 2026.

Back "home", the large photographs have now all been installed in the Museum and are looking good.

Our excellent guest speaker at our June meeting was Greg Hill on the subject of the Potteries in the Whitehorse area. We purchased for our Collection Greg's latest book, which won the 2024 RHSV History Award "Victoria's Earliest Porcelain Works".

In preparation for the Wedding Dress Display at the Whitehorse Art Space, we are busy matching mannequins to dresses and getting everything ready for the opening on 13 September.

We are also in touch with the Thomas Cook Boot & Clothing Company in preparation for their display in our Museum from 1 September.

Heritage Family Day is coming up and will be on Sunday 14 September. If you are able to help on the day, please contact Kathy.

Vicki Jones-Evans

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JUNE MEETING REPORT



Superb stoneware



GREG Hill's talk was, to me, a reflection on current times, and just how different things were one hundred years ago. Just unpacking my week's groceries today reinforced this – so much plastic!

One hundred years ago domestic food storage was a hugely different thing. Greg gave us a great insight into those (usually brown) salt-glazed stoneware jars, bread crocks and even the stone hot water bottles, with their cork stoppers, that we associate with colonial Victoria. I have a small jar in my pantry (see right) that now holds chopsticks and satay sticks!

When my jar was created it could have been storage for all sorts of things: pickles, beetroot, who knows?

Our City of Whitehorse had, at the time and until quite recently, many important clay and kaolin quarries, all contributing particularly to the expanding domestic scene of Australia. Greg reminded us of our drainage and sewerage that was dependent on clay, kilns, and glaze until the mid-1980s, when clay pipes were replaced by plastic. Many local potteries employed tradespeople who had learnt their skills in England, and these were in great demand in a young Australia.

Greg Hill has a vast and comprehensive knowledge of colonial pottery, gained through technical and historical interest. I have just started to read one of his books and have found it remarkably interesting – again being amazed by the past quality and quantity of the now largely art-only industry. Judging by the number of questions at the end of his talk at the meeting, many of our members also enjoyed our afternoon with early pottery as well!

Thank you, Greg, for introducing us to the local stories of pottery, and the many, many uses colonial and early Australia found for these seemingly simple, but very functional, objects.

Margaret Graham



Two birds of a feather!



A fleeting reference while researching material relating to the Tessellated Tile Company brought to light another forgotten accomplished woman of Whitehorse. Two in fact!

Ellen Margery O'Neill was born on 23 April 1930 at Belgrave, Victoria. She married Peter McCulloch in 1951 and spent most of her married life living in Bulleen Avenue, Mitcham. It is unclear when she developed her interest in birds, but a burgeoning interest in ornithology developed. With her family, many holidays were spent in national parks and reserves, birdwatching.

Ellen became a volunteer at the Melbourne Museum, working for Allan McEvery in the Ornithology Department for thirteen years. At some point, Ellen became acquainted with Tess Kloot, also a keen amateur ornithologist and a fellow volunteer at the Museum.

Tatiana (Tess) Bulatova was born to Russian parents who had left Russia after the 1917 Revolution. Unable to pursue their careers in Australia, they took up poultry farming in Preston. After marriage to Bernard Solomon Kloot, Tess and her family continued to live in Preston until the early 1970s, when they moved to Shannon Street, Box Hill.

Like Ellen, Tess began volunteering at the Museum. She continued this twice a week for six years before taking on voluntary work at the Herbarium.

Having identified 65 species of birds common to suburban areas within her own garden and surrounds, Ellen needed an outlet for the knowledge and interest she had amassed. She and Tess were encouraged by Tess's husband, Bernard, to collaborate in writing a book, which would showcase their knowledge and make it accessible to others interested in the birdlife of the area.

The book took two years to complete and included sketches done by Melbourne artist, Rex Davies. The final result, *Some Garden Birds of South-east Australia* was published in 1970. In a review written by Ellen and Tess's 'employer' Allan McEvery, the book was described as 'a guide to identification of those birds commonly seen in the main cities from Sydney to Adelaide'. He went on to comment that the inclusion of poems about a few species was an 'innovation'. While noting that serious ornithologists might object to this 'feminine touch', McEvery felt that it made a 'light contrast' to the 'purely informative prose'. He went on to describe the authors as 'amateur ornithologists and busy housewives who were to be congratulated on producing a bird-guide of such a standard that they should be encouraged to produce more.

An overview of both women's accomplishments makes for inspiring reading.

Ellen was a long-term member, Honorary Secretary (1975-1982) and Public Relations Officer of the Bird Observer's Club of Australia (BOCA). She and Tess authored a further book together, *Birds of Australian Gardens*, which included paintings by Peter Trusler.

(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. 24

Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne,
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FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 1923

PRICE: TWOPENCE

DISORDER AT MITCHAM.

YOUNG MEN BEFORE THE COURT.

POLICE MAGISTRATE'S REMARKS.

At the Box Hill Court on Friday last, before Mr. W. G. Smith, P.M., and honorary justices, Thomas Gilchrist, David Marsh, Henry Brown, and James Rigney were charged with offensive behaviour at a public place on May 19. Sergeant Olney prosecuted.

Peter O'Brien, tile worker, stated that he was at the Mitcham Hall on the night of May 19, and was in charge at the door. He was some of the accused there, and heard some argument, but there was nothing in it. A football match had been held, and some of the lads had a few drinks. He saw no hit struck, and heard no offensive language.

Doubt was expressed as to whether the witness was telling all he knew, and he said that such was the case. He denied having made a certain statement to Constable Graham.

Eventually, Sergeant Olney asked the bench to regard the witness as hostile.

Thomas B. Ward, driver, said he was among those at the hall and saw defendants there. There was "a bit of argument," and witness was asked to go out and try and pacify those who were making the disturbance. Some of the defendants were in the attitude of fighting. Witness took hold of Rigney to get away, when he was rushed at him and further on witness was pulled by the collar. He hit Gilchrist, when they were "all on top of him." Marsh ran into him, but never attempted to close. Someone hit witness on the back of the head.

Replying to questions, the witness said there was no fighting about it. The men had been drinking. Witness had had a couple of drinks.

Constable Graham said that at 1140 p.m. he heard noises in the direction of the hall. When he got there he saw well up to 50 people. He was told that there had been "a little bit of a mix up," and that he should scatter those responsible. Marsh struck Ward on the mouth.

Witness dispersed the crowd, and followed them down the street. Rigney then wanted to fight any of the other three, and suggested the constable as referee. It was a general mix up. Defendants were all more or less under the influence of drink. O'Brien had made a statement him.

Sergeant Olney, in closing the case, said the bench could see what the police were up against.

The police magistrate made scathing comments on the way in which evidence had been given, and said the difficulties under which the police were carrying on their duties, were quite apparent. There were those who ran to the police for protection, and then were afraid to tell what they knew. It was quite plain as to what went on. Young fellows, after a football match, took too much liquor, and then made themselves a perfect nuisance to others. If they wanted to behave in that way, they should go into the scrub, and not molest decent people, who went to public halls for entertainment and enjoyment. He hoped the case would act as a warning to offenders in this way, as they did not know where such disturbances would end.

Each of the defendants was fined £2.

Vaccination Law.

At the Hawthorn Court on Tuesday, Mr. L. L. Philpott, chairman of the bench, said he looked upon the Vaccination Act as a perfect farce, when dealing with offenders who had failed to have their children vaccinated. "The Act ought to be repealed or altered," he continued. "We have been fining people £2 for the offence, but we have been fining them not for non-vaccination, but for not sending in notices that they were conscientious objectors." Two offenders against the Act were each fined 10/-

Slow Postal Delivery.

Complaint was made by Cr. Bowley at a meeting of the Camberwell Council on Monday evening of the slow way in which postal matter was delivered. He produced a letter posted on Friday, which he received on Monday evening. He moved that the department be asked for an explanation. The department was making a tremendous profit, and the public should receive some attention. The motion was seconded by Cr. Howie and carried.

RINGWOOD EAST.

PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS.

As an outcome of the agitation for a railway station at Ringwood East, a strong Railway League was formed some weeks ago. Data was collected, and presented to the Railways Commissioner on the occasion of his visit to the proposed site, and the prospects for a station are considered very bright, on the completion of the electrification of the line to Lilydale. In the immediate vicinity of the proposed station, are some of the best residential parts of the district, and much building activity would follow on the establishment of a station. At a meeting the Railway League was amalgamated with the East Ringwood Progress Association and the two bodies will now carry on their activities in conjunction.

Following on representations to the Education Department, the matter of a school for Ringwood East, was brought to a head. A letter, under date of May 31st, was received by Mr. E. Lindsay, who has been very actively associated with the school movement, stating that the Minister of Education had approved of the erection of a school, and that the matter was now in the hands of the Public Works Department to have the work carried out as soon as possible. The school will prove a great boon to the residents, as there are upwards of 100 children waiting to attend, many of whom have at present to walk three miles to school.



GILL BROS
General Carriers
Station Street, Box H 1
Furniture Removed and all kinds of
Carting Done. Piano Parties. As
tended to. Charges Moderate.
PHONE 73 BOX HILL.

Two birds of a feather!

Continued



Ellen continued to write and lecture regularly. She ran tours for the CAE (Council of Adult Education) for more than ten years. She was an inaugural member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Field Investigations Committee and was instrumental in the establishment of the 'Land for Wildlife' project. She became a non-government advisor on the Australian-Japan project for migratory birds' protection scheme and was a member of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology experimental ethics committees. In addition, she was a BOCA delegate to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands; organised bird and butterfly surveys and was a member of the advisory committee of the Australian Bird Environment Foundation.

Author's note: Any gaps in this account are due to lack of available information. WHS will always welcome any additional material to add to our archive of information on the people and places of Whitehorse.

Sources:

- Nunawading News 8 September 1970, WHS ND 796.
- McEvery, A.R 'Book Review', Literature, <https://www.publish.csiro.au/mu/pdf/MU971090> accessed 6 December 2023.
- www.birdlifemelbourne.wordpress.com/2016/12/11/tess-kloot-a-tribute accessed 13 December 2023.
- www.aum.gov.au/collection/C2640949 accessed 7 January 2024.
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- Australia, New Zealand, *Findagraveindex 1800s-current* www.ancestry.com accessed 7 January 2024.

In 1978, she was instrumental in the presentation of 'Birds in Victoria from 1770-1978' exhibition held at Ripponlea.

She was awarded Life membership of the BOCA in 1985. In 1987, her book *Your Garden Birds* was published and in 1990, she was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion. In 1991, she was recognised for her achievements in the field of Ornithology by the award of an OAM. In 2000, her book *Birds in Your Garden* was published. As if this were not enough, she had also been a volunteer at the Mitcham Opportunity Shop and served on the Community Aid Abroad committees.

Ellen died on 13 November 2005.

Tess was also a prolific and energetic contributor to many organisations. She was an active member of the three bird organisations centred in Melbourne: RAOU, BOCA and VORG. She was archivist for the RAOU in the 1970s and a library volunteer for BOCA, as well as a member of the latter's publication committee.

Tess contributed to bird surveys and organised the VORG 1988-1991 survey on the birds of Box Hill. She worked for the Australian Conservation Foundation 'after the children went to school'. She also wrote prolifically, authoring and co-authoring several books. *The Birds of Box Hill* was published by the VORG in 2000. In 2005, she received the BOCA Distinguished Service Award.

Perhaps her greatest single achievement was to collect first-hand information on the lives of all ornithologists connected with Australian birds. She contributed these biographies to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, noting that her concentration on ornithologists was because 'you can't spread yourself too thin!' In 2003, the State Library of Victoria accepted this collection of work. It is stored as the 'Tess Kloot Collection'.

Tess Kloot died, one day short of her 93rd birthday, on 10 November 2016. She was interred in the Jewish Memorial Cemetery at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.

G. Bannister © 2024

The Story of Poultry

Part One: The wider story: a general introduction

IT is realistic to believe the earliest European settlers in the area would have kept some hens for a home-grown source of eggs and meat. Two newspaper articles, one written as early as 3 July 1879 for the *Cumberland Argus*, and the other in the *Argus* of 18 March 1899 both extolled the advantages of rearing hens and how, if wished, a good living could be made.

To skip a few years, in 1916 a Poultry Farm School was commenced in Perth at West Subiaco. The intention was to give disabled ex-servicemen who were incapable of heavy work, a means of obtaining a practical and sustainable occupation. Hatcheries and egg producing then became a serious farming prospect. At this same time a Poultry Keeping Restriction by-law was passed to restrict the number of birds that could be kept in a back yard. (This did not prevent a Preston poultry keeper from conviction in 1930 for 'failing sanitary conditions').

Information regarding this new venture stated there was serious competition from the Chinese and that the Minister for Trade and Customs, Mr Tudor, had asked for protection from the threat. There were concerns that speculators were being allowed to 'dump' eggs from China. However, the Grocer's Association was in favour of importing these eggs, and suggested they only needed to be branded, because an analysis had shown there was no objection to them from the health point of view.

In 1932 egg standards were again reviewed. 'Eggs should be sold by weight with minimum of 1¾ ounces. The present weight of 2½ to 3 ounces was too big for practical purposes' (*The Argus* 7 Dec 1932 'Egg Standards').

From the 1930s and in particular post WW2, the export market increased when the Australian eggs were highly praised by the British Ministry of Food and by the representatives from Poland, Eire and Denmark.

On 1 March 1933 an advertisement in *The Victorian Poultry Journal* gave a rallying cry to all egg producers:

ENGLAND WANTS OUR EGGS.
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POUNDS
WITHIN THE GRASP OF THE POULTRY
FARMERS OF AUSTRALIA.

Mr Jennings, an English buyer, wants 30,000 cases. Mr P.J. Lassen representing the Associated British Importers' Federation, London, wants to buy eggs to the value of at least £250,000. Last year Australia sent to England £575,701 worth of eggs.

These figures should be sufficient to prove what enormous opportunities there are for our Poultry Farmers. If they can capture the English market, success is assured for this

great industry, for exporting of their eggs will allow a better price to be obtained for those used for local consumption.

Poultry farmers should not lose this great chance. They should drop all matters of a trifling nature, and organize and work with the main object of supplying all the eggs wanted for export and capturing the greater portion of the English market.

Once this is obtained, there should be no difficulty in holding it, providing the goods are up to the usual English standard.

Also, in March 1933 Victorians were encouraged to consume more eggs with this advertisement reprinted from *The Victorian Poultry Journal*, 25 Tattersall's Lane Melbourne.

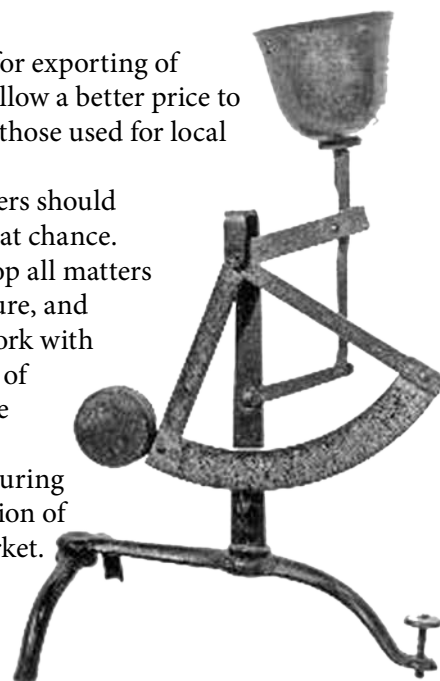
EAT EGGS FOR HEALTH. The value of the Egg as Food.

A well-known Melbourne Doctor says: 'One egg furnishes 75 calories of energy, which is as much the average serving of meat.'

Eggs contain many substances essential for health. For instance: PROTEIN: The chief body builder. FAT an excellent source of heat and energy. VITAMINS: All of them in varying quantities, but especially A and D. D being the one that prevents rickets. MINERALS: Such as iron (the best source of iron there is), which is needed in the blood, and calcium, which is essential in the formation of bones, teeth etc.

For children and invalids, eggs are much better than meat, as they are more easily digested, and contains the same body building elements.

(Continued on page 8)



ABOVE: NA1757 German egg scales. The egg sits in a bowl attached to a swinging pendulum. This item belonged to John Philip Bennett, uncle of Barbara Gardiner. The family had a poultry farm in Elgar Road, Box Hill. In 1926 he moved to Thames Street, Box Hill where he kept 'chooks' until about 1994.

The Story of Poultry Continued

Post WW2.

'Troublesome times for Poultry Farmers' was the headline in the *Argus* of 16 August 1946. The Minister for Agriculture, Mr W G McKenzie, told the poultry farmers at a meeting in the Assembly Hall [Melbourne]: 'There must be unity between State organizations so the industry could speak with one voice. Cut-throat competition between States must be eliminated'. This was to be discussed in Canberra; however, I could find no further comment in later copies of newspapers viewed on 'Trove'.

Other local problems arose in June 1948, when Carter Bros at Werribee, the largest poultry farm in the southern hemisphere, was blacklisted by the Storemen & Packer's Union. *The Argus* reported the dispute was caused by workers not leaving the houses supplied by Carter when

they took employment elsewhere. It was month before it was settled. In the meantime, the family continued to deliver 30,000 eggs a day to the various depots.

By February 1950, the cost of poultry feed had risen to unsustainable levels and applications were made by farmers for egg prices to rise.

As well as the information reported in the newspapers that deals with the general concerns of poultry farmers, there are some local stories of this period to be found in the WHS files. These are experiences told by farmers who kept flocks of approximately 1,000 birds – a number that appears to have been a viable and manageable number for a sole owner.

These stories appear to indicate that the main local area for commercial poultry farming was in and around Blackburn, present day Forest Hill and nearby Vermont and Mitcham.

Yvonne Fitzmaurice

FROM THE COLLECTION . . .



NA5434

GLASS tumbler, previously belonging to the donor's mother, Ethel Lilian Shepherd, with flying bird and leaves etched on the exterior. Also a small map of Australia with "Souvenir Centenary Exhibition Melbourne 1934" and "From Mum to Ethel". It is one of the souvenir items made to celebrate the Melbourne centenary. Measurements: Width 19 centimetres, Height 10.6 centimetres.

As Victoria reeled from the severe economic and social fracturing of the depression, its Centenary celebrated progress and community cohesion. Held between October 1934 and June 1935, the Centenary firstly commemorated Edward Henty's Portland settlement in November 1834 as Victoria's founding, then John Batman's pronouncement of Port Phillip as 'the place for a village', and thus the city's foundation, in June 1835. The Centenary Celebrations Council co-ordinated over 300 events held across Victoria, including 'Centenary editions' of the Royal Agricultural Show, the Melbourne Cup and other sporting events.

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 6 September

Saturday 1 November

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

STATISTICS

Photographs catalogued	-	4587
Artefacts catalogued	-	5738
Documents catalogued	-	8538
Museum visitors May–June 2025	-	551

DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerholt Cottage and
Museum Complex

Saturday, 16 August

1.00pm Annual General Meeting

Anne Payne OAM:

History of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary

Sunday, 14 September 11am–4pm

Heritage Family Day

PART OF WHITEHORSE HERITAGE WEEK

Saturday, 4 October

1.00pm General Meeting

Nick McGowan MP:

Life Before Politics

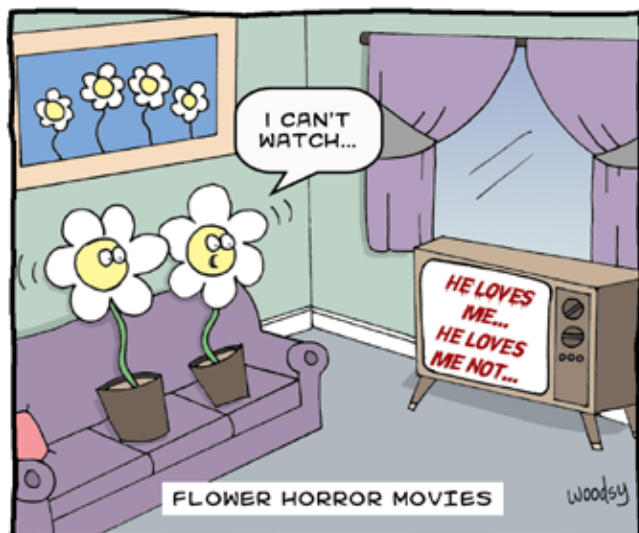
Saturday, 6 December

1.00pm General Meeting

Hon. 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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Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 3 September 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.



Proudly printed by **Matt Gregg MP** Federal Member for **Deakin**

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