

# WHITTLESEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

ABN 46019570463

Welcome to the big 100th year of commemorations to Gallipoli. It has been a busy time for lots of Historical Societies all around the nation to apply for grants and funding for projects related to the events of World War 1. Some are restoring Honour Boards and others are placing Information plaques on Servicemen and servicewomen's graves. The ideas are endless.

Whittlesea too has a project.

## **Anzac Book Project**

To acknowledge the World War One centenary, Yarra Plenty Regional Library is facilitating a project to collect local World War One stories from the Banyule, Nillumbik and Whittlesea areas. Have you researched a local World One soldier? Are you descended from local men and women who enlisted? Do you have letters and photos you would like to share?

The library will publish a collection of stories in 2016.

For more information, please contact Liz Pidgeon (Local and Family History Librarian) at [lpidgeon@yprl.vic.gov.au](mailto:lpidgeon@yprl.vic.gov.au) or phone 9401 0765

Although this year sees the focus on the Gallipoli Campaign, who could forget the incredible display of ceramic poppies around the Tower of London last year marking the 100 years from the start of the Great War. Each poppy represented a death of a fallen soldier from the Commonwealth.



## **NEWSLETTER Number 21 May 2015**

*Editor Wendy Lowry*

## **CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF THE UPPER PLENTY COMMUNITY HALL**

**By Ross Mugavin**

The Upper Plenty Hall Committee of Management wanted to recognise and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Mechanics Institute Hall at Upper Plenty.

Ideas to mark the occasion were tabled at the first planning meeting in October 2013. Having firsthand knowledge of the most successful “Big Pond” performance that the Woodlands Players were presenting at Yan Yean Reservoir Park, I suggested that the Players might be worth approaching to write and present a play that illustrates the story of the hall and the community that has been associated with it.

Sue Wright from the Players was provided with some background material on the hall and with this in mind immediately felt a play could be written and performed. Hours of searching additional historical fact was gathered and a script for the play - *“The Hall That time Remembered”* was pieced together.

Additional performers other than those from the players were sought and this is where members of the Whittlesea Historical Society rose to the challenge – Lindsay & Margaret Mann, John & Phyllis Waghorn & Wendy Lowry all did the society proud and showcased another dimension of the society’s members.

The story line begins in 2012 a few days before the official re-opening of the Upper Plenty Hall after a year of refurbishment. A visiting reporter struggles to find how the hall (now 98 years old) and community connect in the modern age.

In a chance meeting, the reporter hears of the story of the challenges the hall faced in early 1919. The hall committee felt that now the Great War was over, life in Upper Plenty would be back to normal. They embark on an optimistic scheme to stage an event that will attract a big crowd. The resulting profit will help them attack the debt on

the hall that mounted while they supported the war effort.

Then unexpectedly, local and world events threaten their plans, their valley, their homes and lives. In the space of a single month, the place of the hall within the community is never more important.

Some lively and poignant letters about Upper Plenty during this difficult month come to light, and the reporter (and the audience) are drawn back in time to 1919. The events of the past answer the questions of the present.

The story line celebrates ordinary things like overdue library books and presents for friends as well as the reality of birth and death in the community. And central to this is the well-known weatherboard hall, nestled in a bend amongst the trees on the road between Wallan and Whittlesea. The celebration also marked the unveiling of an updated history board display that was previously in the hall. This new display depicts life in the Upper Plenty area from the early settlers to the present day.

The day's celebration commenced with the unveiling of the boards and was then followed by a spit roast lunch enjoyed by many past and present people of Upper Plenty.

***"The Hall that Time Remembered"*** was performed in front of an audience of ninety eight people. At one point they joined in with a sing along lead by the performers. The performance concluded with a loud and enthusiastic applause. Many favourable comments about the performer's ability to deliver their part and the plays storyline message of just how significant the hall has been to the Upper Plenty community over the past 100 years was undoubtedly achieved.



**Crowd enjoying their lunch**



**Lindsay and Margaret Mann**



**Phyllis and John Waghorn**

## ***"VALE"***

***Lindsay WILLIAMSON*** - 84 years  
worked at the Epping, Mernda and South Morang  
Fire Brigade. Helped with the Oral History.

***Sylvia CHILDS*** - Wife of Bob, lived at Yan Yean  
near the Aqueduct. A Whittlesea identity.

***Ronald FORDHAM*** - Collector of Old Motor  
bikes, whose collection was lost in the 2009  
bushfires.

***George CROUCH*** - Ex policeman and RSL  
member. Courthouse volunteer.

Correction from Newsletter No 20 Oct 2014  
Under the notes for Ray MITCHELL, it was Ray  
and his twin brother Laurie who managed the  
Grocery store.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By John Waghorn

### VEARINGS ROAD , EPPING

*Vearings Road*, Epping has been around for a long time and even *Beatrice VEARING* did not know when it was officially named. Sadly Beatrice died last year a few days prior to her 99th Birthday.

I can do no better than to quote from a letter she wrote to me in June 1996 as follows.....

My husband's father *William VEARINGS* bought the property, 'Hendon Park' in April 1930. It remained in the family since then and now is in the fourth generation. The property fronted an unnamed Government Road. It was eventually named after our family when the Shire decided to name all of the Government Roads. The actual road runs from Cooper Street to just north of Craigieburn Road. The only part formed (1966) is a short section of gravel road north from O'Herns Road to our property and that of the Metropolitan Gun Club.

## AGM 2014

The Whittlesea Historical Society held its Annual General Meeting in October 2014 at the Whittlesea Bowling Club. The guest speaker was Deidre Hawkins who spoke on the publication of the book titled the History of Kinglake. Her talk was supplemented with a wonderful pictorial display of photos used in the book.



Deidre with president Bruce Batten

## WOODSTOCK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE AND HALL

In 2000 Pam Baragwanath published her book titled '**If Walls Could Speak- A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria**'

Last year Pam was revising the book for reprinting and upgrading her entries with Mechanics' Institutes that were not included in the first edition. One of these was the Mechanics' Institute of Woodstock.

Here is an excerpt from her entry.

The Woodstock Mechanics' Institute and Free Library formally came into being in 1910 at a meeting at the Post Office. The weatherboard building was erected by Mr J.D.Marshall a Northcote builder and it was opened on 5th 1911 on land purchased and owned by Cr McCormack. It provided a venue for district functions for the first time.

The building was leased by the Education Department for school use for the period 1924-1929. In 1953 with the Hall still in debt and ex-Councillor McCormack now in his ninetieth year, the new trustees realised the importance of paying off the debt, In 1955 out of desperation, Arthur Yann , hall caretaker paid the money from his own pocket.

In 1954 the offer of the local branch of the Country Women's Association to wire the Hall for electricity in exchange for free use was gratefully accepted. The Woodstock Young Farmers began meetings in 1956 and the Hall was hired constantly for community groups.

Unfortunately in February 1968 the Woodstock Hall , formerly the Woodstock Mechanics' Institute and Free Library was destroyed by a bushfire.

A new building was erected in the 1980's and still is serving the local community.

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# DONNYBROOK CEMETERY TOUR

Last Year as part of the Whittlesea Cultural and Heritage Program, a tour of the Donnybrook Cemetery was conducted and led by Historian David Weatherill.

On the 10th September 1857 a request was made to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Victoria for land to be set aside for a proposed Cemetery at Donnybrook. Following this request and a favourable response from the Commissioner, a further communication was made on the 18th August 1859 by the then newly identified Trustees for the proposed cemetery noting that two acres of land for use by each denomination have been set aside, plus a further two acres held in reserve for "**the internment of Strangers**", making a total of 10 acres of land for the cemetery.

The cemetery has been known over time as the Donnybrook Cemetery, the Kalkallo Cemetery and on a few occasions the Mickleham Cemetery.

The original Trustees appointed were :

William Wilson	Presbyterian
Edward Wright	Methodist
George Abbot Snr	Episcopalian
John Trainor	Roman Catholic

Over the years the cemetery was used on a regular basis but by 1922 only four burials occurred in that year. The cemetery slowly fell into disrepair with the land being used to graze sheep on to keep the grass down. In June 1980 The Public Health Department put a recommendation to approach the Shire of Whittlesea to see if they would take over the Trustee role or have the cemetery closed. The Shire of Whittlesea's policy was to promote local responsibility for cemeteries. Following a public meeting held on the 11th August 1980 a new Donnybrook Cemetery Trust consisting of five members was set up.

With the new cemetery trust, the cemetery itself was cleared up and cared for and is currently being well used.

## WHITTLESEA CULTURAL AND HERITAGE PROGRAM 2015

Here is some great events you should put down in your diary for this year.

### *City of Whittlesea Historical Ghost Tour*

When- Friday 21st August  
Time - 7pm - 9pm  
Where - Mill Park Library  
Cost- Free  
Info - 9437 8189

### *Yan Yean Cemetery Tour*

When - Sunday 4th October  
Time- 2pm - 4pm  
Where - Yan Yean Public Cemetery  
Cost - Free  
Info - 9217 2174

### *City of Whittlesea Historical Tour*

When - Sunday 11th October  
Time - 10.30 am - 12.30 pm  
1.30 pm - 3.30 pm  
Where - Bus tour departs and returns  
to Mill Park Library.  
Cost - Free Bookings essential.  
Info - 9437 8189

### *Tour Whittlesea Township's Churches*

When - Sunday 18th October  
Time - 2pm - 4.30pm  
Where - Tour will depart from Whittlesea  
Uniting Church at 26 Forest St  
Cost - \$5.00  
Info - 9716 2215

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# PLACES TO VISIT

## **BUNDOORA HOMESTEAD**

In 1899 John Matthew Vincent Smith ( 1857-1923), a prominent identity in the horse breeding and racing industry, acquired the property known as "Bundoora Park" consisting of some 606 acres.

The homestead was the result of a design competition. The owner John Matthew Vincent Smith advertised in the Argus and attracted 16 designs. The first prize of 50 Pounds was awarded to Sydney Herbert Wilson for his design of a double storey asymmetrical plan ,red brick mansion.

The fourteen bedroom mansion was built in 1899 and included stained glass by Auguste Fischer, plaster work , mantels and a grand staircase with pyrographic panels. Bundoora Homestead remains one of Wilson's most distinguished works and a prominent example of the English Queen Anne style.

After the Smith family , the Commonwealth Government bought and it became the Bundoora Convalescent Farm for returned service personnel from World War 1. In 2001 , the Darebin City Council opened Bundoora Homestead as a centre for Contemporary Art.

It has the Gallery along with a lovely Cafe.

It is located at 7-27 Snake Gully Drive, Bundoora. Enter from Prospect Hill Drive off Plenty Road. (Mel Ref 19 G2)



## *WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?*

*There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London, which used to have a gallows adjacent to it. Prisoners were taken to the gallows to be hanged .The horse-drawn dray, carting the prisoner, was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoner if he would like "ONE LAST DRINK". If he said YES, it was referred to as **ONE FOR THE ROAD**. If he declined ,that prisoner was **ON THE WAGON**.*

*Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "**Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!**"*

*Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "**The Upper Crust**".*

### **My Little Wet Home (1915)**

I've a little wet home in a trench,  
Which the rainstorms continually drench.  
There's a dead cow close by,  
With her hoofs towards the sky,  
And she gives off a beautiful stench.

Then bully and biscuits we chew,  
For it's days since we tasted a stew,  
But with shells dropping there,  
There's no place to compare  
With my little wet home in the trench.

**A Parody by a Tommy at the Front from the People's Friend Magazine.**

# ODD SPOT

By Lindsay Mann

Article found in the Caulfield and Elsternwick Leader Saturday 29 December 1894.

## *"The History of Little Jack Horner"*

'Little Jack Horner sat in a corner eating some Christmas Pie. He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum, saying what a good boy am I.'

This is the nursery rhyme that has been so often repeated however this is the origin of the story -

When Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries and drove out the old monks from their nest, the title deeds of Mills Abbey including the sumptuous Grange were demanded by the commissioners. The Abbot of Glastonbury determined he would send them to London. As the documents were valuable and the roads were infested with thieves he devised a plan to get them there safely.

He ordered a pie to be made, as fine as ever seen on the rectory table . Inside he placed the documents which created the rich filling. He then entrusted this to a lad named Jack Horner to carry up to London and deliver safely into the hands for whom it was intended,

The journey was long and the day was cold , and the boy was hungry. The pie looked so tempting. The boy broke off a piece of the pie . To his surprise he beheld the parchment. He pulled it out innocently and wondered how it got in there.

Tying up the pastry he journeyed on and when he arrived in town the parcel was delivered, but the title deeds were missing. jack had them in his pocket, the juiciest plums that had ever been made into a pie.

Great was the rage of the commissioners. heavy the vengeance they dealt out to the monks. Jack kept his secret and when peaceable times were restored he claimed the estates and received them.

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## *Old Advertisements and Receipts*

From Bruce Batten

This appeared in the Sun Newspaper in October 1954. It is of a new gas cooker of the time. A modern piece of kitchen furniture. Every household must have had one. Did you ?

These are receipts from 1886 and 1918 for coachbuilders and ironmongers. Lost trades now.

# ***LONDON DAILY SKETCH NEWSPAPER***

Continuing with our World War 1 theme, we have included some more photographs that appeared in the Newspaper in October 1917.

The papers have come through the courtesy of Ross Mugavin from his family's memorabilia.

# **SOUTH MORANG** **TRAIN STATION**

Way back in the Spring of 2008, the Whittlesea Leader reported on their front page The South Morang Future Transport Network Plan. This outlined the scheduled and proposed road and rail works for the suburb.

In the article written by Mark Smith, he mentions the proposed new South Morang Rail station would be located along McDonalds Road and between Ferres Boulevard and Civic Drive.

The old South Morang Train station was closed in 1959 at Williamsons Road. The Council document revealed two proposed railway stations would be north of South Morang and be part of the overall Epping railway extension to Mernda scheduled for completion by 2027.

The Council's Transport Network Plan highlighted also a number of major road upgrades for the suburb.

1. A four lane divided road extension of Bush Boulevard connecting Plenty and McDonalds Roads.
2. An extension of the Lakes Boulevard from Gordons Road to Plenty Road.
3. An extension of Findon Road through to Gorge Road.
4. The widening of Plenty Road to make way for a future tram line to Westfield Plenty Valley via Bush Boulevard and along Ferres Boulevard and the Lakes Boulevard before rejoining at Plenty Road.

It just goes to show how long things take to get done. Although a hundred houses could be built within a year the infra- structure needed to support the community takes decades.