

NEPEAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
INC.
SORRENTO
3943

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THE NEPEAN

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 2009

QUARANTINE STATION COMMUNITY DAY SUNDAY DECEMBER 6TH 2009 10 am to 5 pm



The former Quarantine Station and Officer Cadet School will be opened to the community as part of the enlarged Point Nepean National Park on Sunday December 6th, the date coinciding with the 21st anniversary of the opening of the Park in 1988.

The free Community Day will feature guided tours with NHS Friends of the Quarantine Station, loads of children's activities, a souvenir booklet, bike and transporter rides, live entertainment, local produce and Ranger Roo.

See the NHS website or www.parkweb.vic.gov.au for more details.

"The Nepean" is also on our website

www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au

COMING EVENTS

December 4th—5.30 to 7.00 pm
MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS FUNCTION AT THE MUSEUM
(see back page)

December 6th—10.00 am to 5 .00 pm
Parks Victoria **Community Day** at the Quarantine Station

February 5th 2010—General Meeting at the Museum , 8 pm

March 5th 2010—General Meeting as above.
Speakers for both these meetings will be advised later.

PROMOTIONAL STALLS

Blairstown	December 12th	Sorrento	December 19th
Blairstown	January 23rd	Sorrento	January 9th
Blairstown	February 20th	Sorrento	February 13th

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

First prize—Christmas hamper

Second prize—Decorated Christmas cake

Third prize—Meal voucher from Buckley's Chance

Tickets—\$1 each or 6 for \$5

Tickets will be available for members to sell in bundles of 25—
butts to be returned to the Museum prior to December 16th.

Raffle drawn on Saturday 19th December at 1.30 in the Museum
after the Sorrento Street Stall.

Contact Bev Baker on 58984 0255 or 5988 8189 if you can help.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

**JANE ELDRED BYRNE, SUE MARTIN, PAUL AND DEBBIE O'GRADY,
ANN SKIRVING, BELINDA HAYBALL, PENNY DAVIS, DOROTHY
CHISHOLM.**

We look forward to meeting them and make them welcome at our functions.

REMINDER – overdue subscriptions – if there is a Red Spot on this newsletter it indicates that your subscription has expired and we can no longer support your membership unless your renewal is received

Judy Walsh, Membership Co-ordinator

RECENT MEETINGS

The Guest Speaker at the NHS Annual General Meeting in October was Mrs Ann Blainey, seen below signing a copy of her latest book *I Am Melba*, now in the Library.



The well-attended meeting heard a most interesting account of Melba and her life, made all the more relevant for both Ann and ourselves, by the fact that Melba sang in our building (it was then the Sorrento Mechanics Institute)

and we still have the piano used to accompany her.

Our November speaker was Stuart Hughes, seen below with NHS President Dr Robert Barnes.

Stuart is the ParksVictoria Manager of the Point Nepean National Park. He explained Parks Victoria's plans for the Park and the Quarantine Station and the challenges they have had to deal with in the process. He cleared up some misconceptions and answered many questions from the large and interested audience who attended.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Public access from the Eastern Sister to Sullivan Bay

The NHS is actively pursuing the establishment of a public pathway from the Eastern Sister down to the beach at Sullivan Bay. There is no path at present so we are pushing the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to negotiate with the new owners to create this path. We will also pursue the Minister for Planning if and when a development permit is sought to subdivide the estate, as it could allow the owner to preclude public use of the beach. The presence of middens on the land is also a consideration. We are encouraged by the Minister's response thus far. Our local MLA, Martin Dixon is orchestrating our political approaches.

The ultimate intention is for the public to be able to visit the Collins Settlement Visitors' Centre to learn about the first settlement, walk up the path to the Eastern Sister and take in the view of Cameron's Bight and Sullivan Bay, and then to walk down to the beach to Sullivan Bay to see where the Collins settlement actually was.

Correction

In the last edition of the Nepean, we mentioned that "the Conservation Group has completed the (Tramway Terminus) project." Actually the project was carried out by the Steam Tram Platform Appeal Committee, which represented a number of organizations – Nepean Conservation Group, NHS, Rotary Club of Sorrento, Sorrento/Portsea Chamber of Commerce, Nepean Rate-payers Association, MPSC and members of the community. Charles Cayless was quite right to point out this omission; we trust this confession will allow us back into the fold.

Grants

The NHS managed to secure nearly \$20,000 in grants over the past year, which has greatly facilitated acquisitions, repairs and equipment needed to improve the running of the NHS and the level of service offered to members and the public. We will continue to seek this form of vital funding to improve the Society's level of service.



NHS
President
Dr
Robert
Barnes

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Monthly Meetings

Our AGM was held on the 2nd October, and a report on the year's activities has been sent to all members, together with the audited accounts. It is pleasing to note a healthy financial position last year with a \$7000 surplus over expenditure.

See page 3 for reports and photos of our speakers in October and November.

Friday 4th December will be our annual Christmas break-up social function between 5.30 and 7.00pm at the NHS. This is a great chance to socialise over a glass of wine and finger food and provides the opportunity to say thanks to all our volunteers. Please note this date in your diary.

Appointments

We are still seeking someone to assist in running our shop at the NHS, mainly involving stock control and replacement. If you could give a small proportion of your time to help us in this regard, it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Bev Baker at the NHS in the first instance. We are also seeking the services of a member to fill the position of Treasurer to succeed Peter Nicholson, who has had to resign due to ill-health. We are deeply appreciative to Ian Bowers who has acted as interim Treasurer and has just seen off the audit of our 2008-9 financial statement. Please contact our Secretary Don Ewart if you can assist us.

Best wishes

On behalf of the NHS Committee, I would like to wish all members a safe and happy Christmas and New Year break and to thank all who have supported our endeavours along the way. We have had a busy and fulfilling year and the portents indicate another successful year ahead. However, we can only be effective if we have your continuing support, so we hope to see many of you at our 2010 functions, whether it be meetings, street stalls, excursions or as volunteers. Can you assist by joining our band of volunteers? You will have an enjoyable time if you do.

Robert Barnes, President

VALE : DR MARJORIE TIPPING 1917 -2009

How can we pay tribute to Marjorie Tipping for her great achievement in recording the history of the earliest European settlements on Port Phillip and in Tasmania? Her remarkable publication '*Convicts Unbound*' (Penguin 1988), the product of 35 years of research, is a masterpiece. No other Australian historical work is comparable. It traces the personal and family histories of a shipload of 308 convicts, dispatched to our far-off shores over two hundred years ago.

HMS 'Calcutta', accompanied by the supply ship, 'Ocean', made landfall at Sullivan Bay, Sorrento, in October 1803. A few free settlers, some public officers and a detachment of Royal marines swelled the population to approximately 460 persons.

After a brief sojourn camped between the Eastern and Western Sisters, Lieutenant-Governor David Collins transferred his charges across the stormy waters of Bass Strait to establish Hobart Town on the River Derwent, Van Dieman's Land, in 1804. They had left behind for posterity a couple of barrels, sunk in the seawater, and a few graves up on the hilltop.

On family holidays at Sorrento, Marjorie Tipping's imagination had been stirred by the haunting presence of those lonely graves of the first European settlers of Port Phillip. As she grew into adulthood, she determined to follow the footprints of those 308 men from their conviction in Britain to their fate and that of their families in their new homeland, new Holland (Australia).

And so she began the mammoth task (in pre-internet days) of following their stories through the earliest records in Great Britain and U.S.A. in Victoria, NSW, ACT and Tasmania. She pursued the research, despite her own family tragedy of the early deaths of her journalist husband, E.W. (Bill) Tipping and one of their three sons.

Eventually in 1988, '*Convicts Unbound*' was published. This beautifully written, extensively illustrated and meticulously researched work, set in the context of the times, is an essential resource for the early colonial history of Victoria and Tasmania.

The members of the Nepean Historical Society Inc. honour her for her unflinching dedication to the heritage of the First Settlement Site.

Vale, Marjorie Tipping. We are forever in your debt.

Edited tribute submitted by Barbara Hamilton-Arnold, a member of the Society .

GROUP VISITS TO THE MUSEUM & WATTS' COTTAGE

Since my report in the September *Nepean* we have had several enthusiastic groups of all ages.

On five consecutive Mondays groups of Mentone Grammar Year 7 students en route to a week-long camp at Shoreham visited us to learn about the history of the Bunnorong people on the Peninsula and their lifestyle as well as focusing on Collins Settlement, Shipwrecks and Watts' Cottage. We even managed to muster our resources, light the fire in the Cottage and treat one group to camp

-oven scones with butter they had helped to make.



The Victorian National Parks Association Walking Group came on 17th October as part of an excursion to Portsea and Sorrento. They enjoyed viewing our *Postcards* DVD on the big screen as well as having afternoon tea and a guided tour.

We look forward to a day of fun activities and learning when Sorrento Primary School Grade 1 and 2

arrive at the end of the month. We pray for fine weather as we continue to bring history to life outdoors as well as within our buildings. Many thanks to all our volunteers.

Bergliot Dallas, Co-ordinator of Group Tours, 5982 0502

Photo: Bergliot talking to the children at Sorrento Primary School prior to their visit

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT**1. Collins Settlement**

Heritage-Victoria has raised no objection to the proposal to subdivide the 1.2ha property at 3080 Point Nepean Road, Sorrento (Rand Estate) and issued (16/9) a notice to that effect. A third party cannot appeal possibly including the Shire. It appears Heritage-Victoria considers any heritage issues would be covered by the permit conditions in any building approval.

A letter (15/10) has also been sent to Peter Wilkinson, DSE Director of Public Lands regarding the apparent encroachment of the proposed titles across Sullivan Bay beach that could allow the owner to preclude public use of the portion of the beach. The letter also refers to another such encroachment by the Langford Estate Trustee at the Lentell Avenue beach.

A letter has also been sent (23/10) to Minister Jennings in regard to the problems raised by such a subdivision. The proposal has no provision for a walkway from the Eastern Sister to the Sullivan Bay beach, and has no restriction for building on the large aboriginal midden on the hillside of the Eastern Sister. Some fire-ash samples collected from the midden site indicate an age of over 1750 years and it is an important undisturbed midden in the Port Phillip region. In answer to a previous letter from the local State Member, the Minister indicated (19/10) the Departmental officers are considering such a walkway access. The local Federal member has also indicated (8/10) that he has sent a letter (2/10) to the Minister about the walkway.

The Shire Officer who is responsible for clearing the weeds from the Western Sister is to liaise with NHS, but progress may be slow as he has the responsibility for reducing the fire risk elsewhere.

2. Quarantine Station.

At the meeting (13/10) of local groups with DSE and Parks Victoria it was stated the site would be open to the public on December 6th. They will use a temporary kiosk and toilets and expect to have some signage erected, the Museum open together with tours of the site and the opening of the full Coles and the London Bridge tracks. There may be 3-4000 visitors. A review of the event with the groups is scheduled for December 15th.

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT

Over the next 12 months Parks Victoria will continue with completing the infrastructure upgrade and repair of the buildings together with preparing a modified Master plan. At that stage they consider they can invite proposals for use of the buildings. Discussions are still ongoing with the University of Melbourne and with the Respite Centre. No financial provision has been made for the jetty or Heritage Centre.

Bookings have been made for a number of events such as Polo, Music Festival, weddings etc, and the Victorian National Parks Association is to have a day there on November 22nd.

The next quarterly meeting of the Group is scheduled for February 16th, 2010.

3. Plan for Ocean Beach Road.

At the Sorrento Township Community Planning Committee meeting (15/10) the Hansen Plan was discussed with over 65 public submissions of which 50 objected to the use of Canary Island Palms in the centre of the street. Another submission was accompanied by a petition signed by 164 people against re-routing the bus although not part of the Hansen report. The principle of the need to unify the street was accepted and the Hansen proposal is to be modified before it is submitted to Council.

The meeting agreed it was urgent that the road arrangements at the Melbourne Road roundabout should be improved for traffic travelling to Morce Avenue and to Portsea.

An environment plan of DSE is to be discussed at a meeting (13/11) to use some of the State subsidies for collecting grey water and use of solar panels etc.

4. Sorrento Group

Together with Cr. Tim Rodgers and representatives from Conservation and Ratepayers a number of matters were canvassed (13/10). This involved the problem of tree removal for fire protection, encroachment on public land in the streets and beaches and the fence at the jetty. At a further NHS meeting (29/10) with Cr. Tim Rodgers it was emphasized the repairs to the stone work at the Museum should be expedited.

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT**5. VCAT**

A letter received (14/10) from the Chairperson Justice Bell acknowledging our submission to his VCAT Review. Both a newspaper report (*Age* 12/8) and an interview on ABC Stateline (23/10) indicated his review is considering the problem of inconsistent decisions and the need for some decentralization of operations. It will canvass more prescriptive planning Schemes.

6. Tramway Terminus

Our last report attributed completion of the project to the 'Conservation Group'. This should refer to the '***Steam Tram Platform Appeal Committee***' that included support from various groups such as the Nepean Conservation, Nepean Ratepayers, Nepean Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Sorrento Rotary, Mornington Peninsula Shire and other community members. It is a great improvement and a place to visit by all.

John Alexander (Convenor)

MUSEUM ROSTER

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have 'manned' the museum during 2009. However, we need more volunteers as some people have had to withdraw because of family commitments or ill health. So, if you can spare three hours to be at the museum on either a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, or during the holiday periods, your help would be much appreciated. It will help to spread the workload for our regular volunteers.

You will not be thrown in at the deep end. You will be rostered with a current volunteer who will show you what has to be done for as long as you think necessary.

If you are interested, and I hope you are, please leave your name and 'phone number on the museum 'phone 5984 0255 and I will return your call as soon as I am able.

Thank you. I am looking forward to hearing from some prospective volunteers. With all best wishes for the festive season.

Ian Bowers, Roster Co-ordinator

COLLECTION AND DISPLAY NEWS**The Main Street- Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento: 1800's to the Present**

We are planning a display over this summer. We hope members and friends will help us collect photos of shops, parades, auctions, people enjoying the street, eating ice creams, drinking coffee etc. We will copy and return all photos and documents. Photos of the 1960's – 1980's are of particular interest.

If you are willing to lend the Museum artefacts of any age from shops - posters, notices, advertisements - we'd be most grateful.

Our Significance Assessment – what stories are important ? How can we improve our displays?

A significance assessment is a tool to study the value and meaning of a collection. It can help promote awareness and identify priorities in what is collected, removed or displayed. After acquiring a grant from the National Library of Australia we were able to employ a professional historian, Emma Russell, to conduct an assessment of our Museum collection. After many communications, Emma came down to work at the Museum for four days in August. She interviewed key volunteers and examined our collection of artefacts, documents, maps, books and photographs, in the light of the history of this area. Following this very busy week Emma has written a detailed 31 page report. The NHS Committee is now studying this report and will discuss the recommendations and ideas in detail. We'll keep you informed

Funding from Museums Australia (Vic) has enabled us to improve displays in Room One with some metallic signage and glass shelves to enable more light while castors on display cases in the Gallery allow more flexibility. Improving lighting is an ongoing project.

Shire funding is being used to improve the display in Stringer's window, soon to be installed we hope.

Coming in February 2010 – *Out of the Dark* – a photographic exhibition by the Public Records Office of Victoria depicting Aboriginal entertainers from a performance in 1951.

Jo Davie and Joy Kitch, Collection Co-ordinators

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Nepean Historical Society
Sorrento

MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

FRIDAY 4TH DECEMBER AT 5.30 PM AT THE MUSEUM

COST—\$6 EACH, PAY AT THE DOOR

PLEASE RING 5984 0255

OR EMAIL nepeanhs@satlink.com.au

if you are coming.

ALL WELCOME!



OFFICE-BEARERS

PRESIDENT: Dr Robert Barnes

VICE-PRESIDENT : Ms Val Peppler

SECRETARY: Mr Don Ewart

ASSISTANT SECRETARY : Mrs Bev Baker

TREASURER: position vacant (see page 5)

DUTY ROSTER CONVENOR: Mr Ian Bowers

ARCHIVIST: Mrs Janet South

DISPLAYS AND COLLECTION CO-ORDINATOR : Mrs Joy Kitch

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY : Mrs Judy Walsh

The Nepean Historical Society appreciates the support of -



**COMMITTED TO A
SUSTAINABLE
PENINSULA**

