

NEPEAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC.
SORRENTO
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THE NEPEAN

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VALE—ANNA ALEXANDER



We mourn the passing on October 12th of our dear friend and Honorary Life Member of the Society, Anna Alexander. At the same time we celebrate her life which was lived to the full. Her generous spirit enriched us all in so many different ways.

After she and John joined the NHS in 1990, Anna embarked on many years of active membership. She worked tirelessly to raise funds with her legendary jams and marmalade and her beautifully-dressed dolls

which exemplified her skills as a needlewoman. Watts' Cottage will be forever as much a memorial to her as to the pioneer family who lived there. Cushions, mats, wall-hangings and nightwear were all made by Anna. She even knitted the lace for the cloth on the mantelpiece and meticulously restored the rug that graces the rocking-chair.

Over many years she hosted activities for school groups in the Cottage where the children learned to make scones in the camp oven on the fire and to churn butter while listening to Anna's stories of bygone days.

She leaves a lasting legacy to the Society and will be sorely missed. We extend our deepest sympathy to John and their family.

Bergliot Dallas

COMING EVENTS

December 3rd - Members' Christmas Function from 5.30 to 7pm
(See notice on back page)

December 18th — Drawing of Raffle (see below)

January 16th (Sunday) - Sorrento Historic Precinct Walk 11 am
(See page 5)

February 4th General Meeting at the Museum at 8.00 pm
Speaker: Ms. Pamela Warrender

Topic: 'Growing up in Melbourne as a member of the Myer family'
The speaker will be joining us for dinner at Buckley's Chance prior to the meeting.

March 4th General Meeting at the Museum at 8.00pm
Speaker to be announced

PROMOTIONAL STALLS

December 11th	Sorrento	December 18th	Blairgowrie
January 15th	Sorrento	January 22nd	Blairgowrie
February 12th	Sorrento	February 19th	Blairgowrie

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

First Prize – Christmas Hamper

Second Prize – Decorated Christmas Cake

Third Prize – Meal Voucher from Buckley's Chance

Tickets: \$1.00 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 15th.

The Raffle will be drawn on Saturday December 18th at the
Museum after the December promotion stall.

**Contact Bev. Baker on 5985 4860 or 5984 0255 if you are
able to sell tickets or wish to purchase some.**

**Please support this annual raffle to assist the work of
the Museum.**

THE QUARANTINE STATION



Stuart Hughes, manager at Point Nepean, (*pictured with President Robert Barnes*) was the guest speaker at the September meeting. He talked about the consultations following the recently released Draft Master Plan, revealing a wide range of activities planned for the site. Improvements to the water and electricity supplies, further building renovations, the installation of displays in Accommodation Block 3 are all under-way. A consultant to lead the development of the “interpretative infrastructure” telling the story of the site will be appointed soon. NHS members from the Friends of the Quarantine Station group will be associated with this work. Admission to the Park is now free, and the “transporter” travels through the quarantine area on each trip. The Final Master Plan will be released shortly.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND SUMMER HOLIDAY READING

The NHS sells a number of books and DVDs. Recent publications include:
A new updated edition of the best seller Tram to Sorrento @ \$20 from the

Sorrento Museum Shop or send a \$23.50 cheque for mail order

Beyond the façade: Flinders Street, more than just a railway station by

Jenny Davies @ \$60 (or the special price of \$50 to NHS members) plus \$3.50 for packaging and posting

The DVD Boon Wurrung by Richard Cotter and Lavender Hill Multimedia @ \$15 plus \$3.50 for packaging and posting

For a full list of books and DVDs available from the NHS click

www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au/documents/

[Booklist2November2010.pdf](http://www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au/documents/Booklist2November2010.pdf)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

SPEAKERS

Our recent speakers have provided us with liberal doses of interest, variety and information. Last September, Stuart Hughes updated us on the latest developments and plans for the Point Nepean Park, while our AGM speaker from the Mornington Peninsula Regional Library explained the wide range of services it offers to the peninsula community. On 5 November last, Ian McCaskill gave us a most informative session on the Port Phillip Pilot Service.

Our next meeting on Friday 3 December will be our annual Christmas social get-together from 5.30 to 7.00 and we look forward to seeing you there.

On Friday 4 February 2011, we will be hearing Pamela Warrender talking on her childhood experiences growing up as part of the Myer family.

Don't forget that some of us meet for a convivial light dinner at Buckley's Chance at 6.15 before each of our monthly meetings.

AGM

The list of the elected office-bearers is on the back page.

Thank you to Janet South who has retired as Archivist after many years in this position but we are pleased she continues as a committee member. Thank you also to Barbara Stephenson for her contribution over recent years. We are still seeking a new Treasurer and Shop Manager.

ACTIVITIES

The society is playing an ongoing role in community activities. As well as securing a pathway around the Eastern Sister connecting Cameron's Bight with Sullivan Bay, the NHS is closely monitoring developments at the Point Nepean Quarantine site as well as commercial development projects in Portsea/Sorrento to ensure that Heritage and Council requirements are complied with.

The NHS was the venue for a moving tribute to Anna Alexander in October. The meeting room was overflowing and all present were given a small tree to plant in remembrance of her.

On Australia day, 26 January 2011, there will be a lunch sponsored by the Nepean and Rye Historical Societies to be held at the Rye Hotel. The guest speaker will be Dr Andrew Lemon, President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, who will talk on the role of the horse in Australia's development. Enquiries to the Rye Hotel, 59 85 2277.

On behalf of the Committee, may I extend Seasons Greetings and best wishes for the New Year to all NHS members and we look forward to welcoming you to Society activities next year

Robert Barnes, President

VALE—BETTY COLLINS

We were sad to hear of the recent death of Betty, an early and stalwart supporter of our Society. Betty and her late husband Peter were both running pharmacies in Sorrento before they decided to join forces in both their professional and their personal lives.

Their acquaintance with local residents led to an interest in local history, and they amassed an enormous amount of information about families and the general development of Sorrento. This was passed on to us in the form of copious notes, an indexed local newspaper collection, and the Betty and Peter Collins photograph albums on display in the Museum.

We owe them both a great deal and our sympathy goes to their family.

Janet South

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Paul Coleman, Blairgowrie; **Jenny Davies**, Mt Macedon;
Robyn McColl, Rye; **Kay Mohr**, Byawatha;
Jenny Tomkins, Rye; **David Woodford**, South Yarra;
John and Julie Wauchope, Mt Macedon.

We look forward to making them welcome at our functions.

Judy Walsh, Membership Co-ordinator

SORRENTO HISTORIC PRECINCT WALKS

The NHS was approached by the Sorrento Chamber of Commerce to provide guided walking tours of the Historic Precinct during the Fiesta which covered the first ten days of October. The walks commenced at the Rotunda on the Sorrento foreshore and visited the restored Tram Station, historical limestone buildings on Ocean Beach Rd and concluded at the Mechanics' Institute with a tour of Watts' Cottage. There was a great deal of interest from the public and a total of 30 persons participated over the seven occasions. As a result we will be offering a tour once a quarter.

The next walk is planned for Sunday 16 January at 11am.

Many thanks to our guides Doreen Parker, Natasha Wicks and Des Young

For further information and bookings phone me on 5982 0502

Berghiot Dallas

FROM THE ARCHIVES—THANK YOU JANET

Janet South has held the position of Archivist of the NHS for more than 13 years and I have been fortunate to have worked with her for the greater part of that time.

She has the most amazing store of knowledge and her work in researching queries from the public is invaluable – she stands in a class of her own. So we are delighted that, despite handing over her title to Doreen Parker, Janet will continue to deal with research and enquiries and help with the indexing of documents.

Doreen now heads up the department where her computer skills and past experience in administration of libraries and management of staff are proving most valuable.



*Archives
and other Volunteers at
work:
From left: Bergliot,
Janet, Natasha, Jo, Joy,
Doreen, Margaret*

Bergliot Dallas

ORAL HISTORY

The NHS Archives are expanding their Oral Histories and looking for people who would be interested in being interviewed about Sorrento's past. We are looking to cover themes of sports and recreation, local industry and commerce, religion, the depression era, transport, clubs and associations and local identities. So if you or anyone you know who has something to contribute and wouldn't mind being interviewed, please contact the Archives team at archive1.nepeanh@vic.chariot.net.au or drop into the museum!

Brendan Guy

(See our website for an interesting story about Brendan's recent meeting with royalty : www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au)

NEWS FROM WATTS' COTTAGE



A delightful mantle clock belonging to John Francis and Jane Watts has come home to the Cottage. The donor is their great-granddaughter, Noela Clark. She is the granddaughter of Henry who drove the Steam Tram and the daughter of Cyril, who drove the Horse-drawn Tram.

Noela was able to give us insights into the lives of both her grandparents and her great-aunt, Hetty Watts. As a child she visited her regularly with her parents on a weekly basis. Hetty lived alone in the cottage on an acre of land in Holyrood Ave. and Noela remembers her from that time as a kind old lady, her "Aunt Ettie". Noela also told us about her grandfather's woodwork skills. He made a cribbage board and a box resembling a book that lived on the bookshelf and contained his collection of coins.

Along with the precious clock, Noela has also generously donated a bean slicer which she remembers using with her Aunt Ettie, a delicate metal letter scale, 2 little evening bags, post cards and some interesting documents including a hand written journal. Archive volunteers will investigate these documents further.

EXCURSION TO SOUTH CHANNEL FORT

Two boats from Dive Victoria took 40 NHS members and friends to the South Channel Fort on the 15th November. The Fort was part of the defence lines for Melbourne. The artificial island was constructed in the 1880s to illuminate the channel at night and electronically explode mines under any attacking ships coming through the Heads. The remains of the system of gun emplacements and tunnels are a feature of the island which is now a refuge for seabirds.



Doreen Parker

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT

Athenaeum Theatre

As reported in the local press, Sorrento's Athenaeum Theatre has been placed on the Victorian Heritage Register. The citation refers to its significance as a rare example of a largely intact theatre associated with the late 19th century development of a premier Victorian holiday resort. It also has *Moderne* remodelling reflecting its use as a cinema from the 1930s.

Ocean Beach Road Sorrento : maintenance

1. A list of complaints, with accompanying photographs detailing inadequacies in the upkeep of Sorrento's main street, has been forwarded to the Shire Council for action. The report was prepared by the Sorrento-Portsea Chamber of Commerce, following discussions with community groups. Concerns include street lights, sub-standard paving, rubbish bins, street furniture, and landscaping.

2. Following discussion between ratepayers and conservation groups, the Shire is planting bottlebrushes to fill gaps in vegetation in the main street.

Shelmerdine v. Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

1. As a party to this matter NHS received from VCAT (5 October) advice that further hearings will start on 29th November. Following the previous hearing, the Panel published an Order, setting out its concerns that the parties had come with mistaken assumptions, and that they (the Panel) were not convinced about the 5-block sub-division proposed by the owners. This is the so-called Rand land at 3080 Point Nepean Road, part of the heritage-listed Collins Settlement site.

2. The owners of this property have now submitted to the Shire Council a new application for sub-division. In this proposal the boundary between Lots 4 and 5 has been removed, but the five building envelopes remain as before. There is a concern within NHS about development on the upper slopes of the property which could compromise or destroy the underlying 1,750-year-old middens site. This eastern-most lot is immediately adjacent to the existing public heritage reserve. Building in this area would almost certainly have excessive impact on the heritage-sensitive Sullivan Bay which it would overlook.

Creating a Sustainable Sorrento

Council officers for this project were introduced by Cr Tim Rodgers at a Four-Community-Groups meeting at the Museum on 9th November. An application is underway for a grant to introduce to the town, for example, environmentally friendly energy and water usage systems.

VCAT reforms

The group continues to keep itself informed about developments in the way VCAT operates. Following Justice Bell's Inquiry a 3-year strategy plan for the reform of the Tribunal's operation has been published. *Transforming VCAT* (available on the VCAT website) contains 77 initiatives to improve public accessibility to VCAT and providing a fair and efficient dispute resolution service. Some reforms have already been implemented, including action on some matters raised by NHS to the Bell Inquiry last year.

Shire Park at Police Point, Point Nepean

In response to questions raised about plans for the \$60,000 allocated in the Council budget for Police Point Park, Cr Tim Rodgers arranged for appropriate Council officers to attend the Four-Community-Groups meeting hosted on 12 October. Simon Lloyd, Heritage Planner, stated that projects such as construction of a children's playground would require permits that would be dependent on a Conservation Heritage Plan which is to be prepared for the site. The meeting accepted this view and requested that such a plan (for which \$45,000 has already been budgeted) become a priority. It is noted that Police Point when added to the Point Nepean National Park forms the one Point Nepean area designated in the Australian National Heritage List. Agreement is being sought about various matters between the two title holders, Council and Parks Victoria.

Frank Hindley, Convvnor

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE**INTERESTING TIMES ...**

How can museums change people's lives and attitudes? What should we be collecting? How can young techno savvy people be involved? With the generous assistance of a bursary from Museums Australia (Vic) I was able to attend this 6 day conference recently. Held at Melbourne University, museum specialists from around Australia and the world presented papers on the challenges and opportunities facing museums.

Inviting visitors to respond to items and community members to collaborate in creating displays is now happening in museums of all sizes. Young people expect to have a voice and possess many technical skills – shall we ask them to help us record contemporary themes at Sorrento?

Presenters from some of the most prestigious museums in the world to the smallest community ones like tiny Woodsdale in Tasmania, just an old school 6 years ago and now a complex of buildings, offered ideas,

questions and inspiration. Zu-Chun Liao from Taiwan's National Museum described involving her community in interpreting 230,000 photographs.

The Black Saturday project of Museum Victoria is an emerging and very moving collection helping to make meaning of this disaster. The 21st

century museum will be 'a house full of ideas with glass walls.' It was a fascinating six days.

Joy Kitch

BREAKING NEWS.....SORRENTO IN 1910 !

As 2010 draws to a close let us pause for a moment and turn back the clock one hundred years.

It's Sorrento in 1910 and what were the issues that confronted the locals during the course of that year? Copies of the 2d. weekly edition of the Mornington-Dromana Standard held on microfilm at The State Library of Victoria provided Peter Munro with an wide array of information.

Here are some juicy fragments:-

Sorrento Police Court: Drunk and disorderly behaviour was dealt with by the standard fine of 5/- or 24 hrs. The researcher is not sure which option John Morce took on Jan.22.

Vandalism: Four valuable windows of the Catholic Church were broken in early February. Police are no closer to apprehending the perpetrators.

Vagrant Cattle: This item reared its head a few times during the course of 1910. The wandering stock nuisance became rife with numbers of cattle and horses seen daily wandering about the streets.

A Citizen's Objection : The pound fence was deliberately sawn down by a disgruntled local. Two cows were led out but were recovered by the ranger. During the year there had been at least four other incidents of vandalism to the pound fence. It seems that 'mum's the word among the locals'.

Coal at Sorrento: In July 1910, the mines department are employing a coal boring device at the recreation ground to ascertain the existence of coal. The boring has reached a depth of between 400' & 500' but with no result.

Beach Debris: A new cabin door was found by a Mr. E. Ogelby washed up on Sorrento back beach in early May. It was supposed to be part of a ship belonging to the Loch Line.

New Tennis Court: Undoubtedly one of the highlights of 1910 in Sorrento in early October was the establishment of a new asphalt tennis court situated near the Mechanics Institute Hall at a cost of 70 Pounds by the Sorrento Tennis Club.

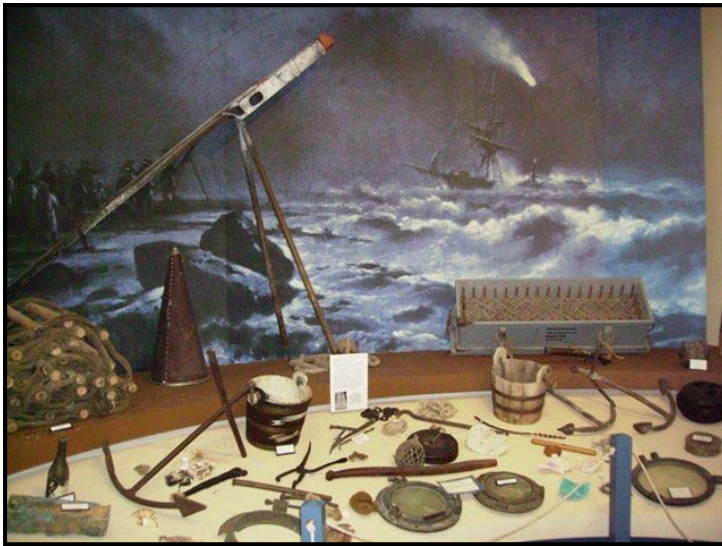
Mrs. Rawlings, the wife of the local Police Officer who was also Secretary of the tennis club supplied the afternoon tea. A ball was held later that same night in the Athenaeum Hall.

Life Saving Practice: The Life Saving Rocket Corps established in 1889 has been refitted with the latest rescue equipment. Regular training drills were held in November 1910. The Corps are now in good position to render services on the beach in the event of a wreck or a marine casualty.

....."and so dies this year"

(Georgiana McCrae from Georgiana's Journal)

Peter Munro



The Rocket Display in the Sorrento Museum

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Nepean Historical Society
Sorrento

MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

Friday 3rd December at 5.30 at the Museum

Cost - \$10.00 per person, pay at the door

Please telephone 5984 0255
or email nepeanhs@satlink.com.au
to register your name for catering purposes.

ALL WELCOME!

OFFICE-BEARERS 2010—2011

PRESIDENT: Dr Robert Barnes

VICE-PRESIDENTS : Doreen Parker, Natasha Wicks

SECRETARY: Don Ewart

ASSISTANT SECRETARY : Bev Baker

TREASURER: position vacant

ARCHIVIST: Doreen Parker

DISPLAYS AND COLLECTION CO-ORDINATOR : Joy Kitch

COMMITTEE: Bergliot Dallas, Brendon Guy, Jenny Nixon,
Margaret Broadhead, Val Pepler, Janet South

The Nepean Historical Society appreciates the support of -



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