

NEPEAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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THE NEPEAN

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 2009



INVESTIGATING OUR MYSTERIOUS SHIP'S FIGUREHEAD

In 1973 a ship's figurehead was donated to the NHS Museum by the Mitchell family. It had been in the backyard of a house in Rosebud for a long time. The figurehead consists of two hollowed out pieces of curved wood carved in the form of a stylised bird figure. Carved on the back is a crest consisting of a shield outline containing a heart pierced by an arrow. Our research shows that it may have come from a ship called the 'Sea', wrecked off Point Nepean in 1853 on route from Melbourne to Callao, Peru.

This year we received a significance assessment grant from Heritage Victoria to enable the Society to commission a professional historian to research the provenance of the figurehead. Robin Hodgson, a local expert in this field, is pictured with Jo Davie. She is taking photos, wood and paint samples which will be analysed and results sent around the world to help us discover the history of this curious object.

Joy Kitch

COMING EVENTS

September 4TH at 8.00pm MEMBERS' NIGHT

Members are invited to present items of interest. Contact Joy Kitch at the Museum. The DVD "Postcards from Sorrento" will be shown. *See back page.*

October 2nd at 8.00 pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Speaker: Ann Blainey

Topic: Dame Nellie Melba

See Notice of Meeting and Agenda on page 11

October 26th at 1 pm— NHS on radio 3RPP. *See page 6.*

November 6th at 8.00 pm— NOVEMBER MEETING

Speaker: Mr Stuart Hughes

Manager at Point Nepean National Park

Topic: **An Update on Progress at the Park, including the Quarantine Station precinct**

All visitors welcome

November 13th—closing date for material for December issue of "The Nepean"

December 4th—5.00 to 7.00 pm

MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS FUNCTION AT THE MUSEUM

WATCH FOR OUR CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

You are welcome to join us before all monthly meetings for a light meal at Buckley's Chance commencing at 6.15 for 6.30pm.

If you wish to join the group please advise the restaurant on 5984 2888.

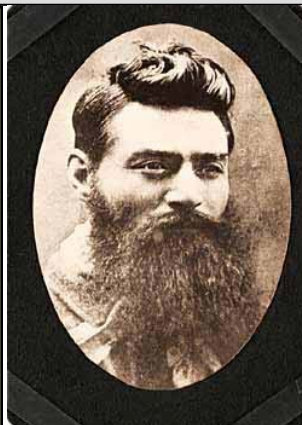
See page 7 for the dates of the Promotional Stalls.

Keep in touch on the website:

www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au

RECENT MEETINGS

In **June**, Jeremy Smith the Senior Archaeologist from Heritage Victoria spoke about the search he and his team conducted for Ned Kelly's body in the yard at the old Pentridge Prison. Despite careful research nothing was found, and it is thought the remains may have been removed and discarded during building works in the 1960s. *(The photo is Ned Kelly the day before he was hanged, in 1880.)*



In the Annual Luncheon in **July** Valda Cole told the story of Hobson's Christmas party at Arthur's Seat. Despite few amenities and comforts the men present seem to have had a jolly time!



Photo: speaker Colin Smith talking to NHS member Alan Kellock

Guest Speaker at the NHS **August** Meeting was Colin Smith, an oral historian from Murrumbena who has recorded the history of Merric Boyd and family in Murrumbena. The Boyd family also spent holidays on the Southern Nepean Peninsula, as reflected in a number of paintings. Alan Kellock is a long standing friend of the Boyd family.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Quarantine Station.

John Alexander's Education and Local History report refers to the Quarantine Station handover from the Commonwealth to the State Government on 8th June last, so Parks Victoria is now overseeing the development of the whole of the Point Nepean National Park. The NHS is working closely with Parks Victoria in relation to a new museum and the re-introduction of guided tours at the site.



**NHS
President
Dr
Robert
Barnes**

NHS Premises

Negotiations are under way with the Council to have the building's stonework repaired where it has deteriorated. We have also submitted grant applications to improve the building's airconditioning and obtain additional display cabinets. The side door which is now used as the entrance when the Museum is open on weekends and holidays, seems to be becoming generally accepted, helped by two banners which advise people of the changed access. The next step will be to upgrade the side lane leading to the door.

Community Radio

The NHS now has regular one-hour sessions on 3RPP, the community radio station on 98.7FM and 98.3FM, to keep the broader community informed on NHS related issues. The next session will be on Monday 26th October at 1.00pm. Stay tuned!

Speakers

The August speaker was Colin Smith who gave a most interesting talk on the Artistic Boyd Family. Not all realised that there was a Peninsula connection. We had 16 members at the pre-meeting dinner at Buckley's Chance who had the opportunity to meet Colin.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our September meeting will be devoted to members' input and we are preparing a fascinating presentation for the meeting on Friday 4th.

Don't forget the AGM on Friday 2nd October at which our guest speaker will be Ann Blainey, talking about her recently released book entitled '*I am Melba*', about Dame Nellie Melba who had a connection with Sorrento. Ann's husband, Prof. Geoffrey Blainey will be accompanying her.

Our November speaker on Friday 6th November will be the new Parks Victoria Manager of the Point Nepean National Park, Stuart Hughes, who will update us on developments at the Park and the Quarantine Station. All these meetings commence at 8.00pm after our light dinner at Buckley's Chance. Friday 4th December will be our annual Christmas break-up function between 5.00 and 7.00pm to give special thanks to our volunteers. We look forward to seeing you at one or more of these events.

Please consider either becoming an NHS volunteer or nominating for a position on our Executive Committee (or both!). The society heavily relies on this support to be able to function and provide the services it gives to both its members and the wider Peninsula community.

We are trying to improve our members' contact details and would appreciate having members' email addresses for special notices or reminders. Could you please send a very short email to Bev Baker at: nepeanhs@satlink.com.au so she can record your email address.

Correction

It was drawn to our attention that in the last edition of The Nepean, reference was made to Charles La Trobe being Governor of Victoria from 1839 to 1854. He was in fact Superintendent of the District of Port Phillip from 1839 to 1851, after which he was Lieutenant Governor until 1854. We thank Graeme Fraser for pointing this out to us.

Robert Barnes

THE NHS AND 3RPP



Photo: Valda Cole who was speaker at the Annual Dinner, with President Robert Barnes and Caspar Davies of 3RPP on June 22nd.

Every two months NHS President Robert Barnes and Committee member Margaret Broadhead visit Peninsula Community Radio Station 3RPP, 98.7 FM, with a guest, to discuss the Society's activities. The next NHS program is on October 26th at 1 pm.



Margaret Broadhead and Bergliot Dallas (*pictured*) attended the 3RPP Fund-Raising Expo on Sunday July 5th at the Peninsula Theatre in Mornington to help the station and publicise NHS.

GROUP VISITS TO THE MUSEUM

During the past financial year 450 people visited the Museum as members of 21 tour groups which varied from school excursions to Probus clubs, International Defence students, U3A groups, community groups, walking groups and groups of friends. All this involved 114 hours of work by willing volunteers. Many thanks to Margaret Broadhead, Richard Cotter, Rhonda Fitzjohn, Joy Kitch, Naomi Nicholson, Doreen Parker, Janet South, Natasha Wicks and Des Young.

On July 12th the new year kicked off to an excellent start with a visit from Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria. Thanks to Arthur Hicowe, we were able to show our highly commended DVD *Postcards from Sorrento* on the big screen for the first time to great acclaim. *Bergliot Dallas, Co-ordinator of Group Tours, 5982 0502*

PROMOTION STALLS—SATURDAY MORNINGS



<p>SORRENTO 12th SEPTEMBER</p>	<p>BLAIRGOWRIE 19th SEPTEMBER</p>
<p>SORRENTO 3RD OCTOBER</p>	<p>BLAIRGOWRIE 17TH OCTOBER</p>
<p>SORRENTO 14TH NOVEMBER</p>	<p>BLAIRGOWRIE 21ST NOVEMBER</p>
<p>SORRENTO DECEMBER 19TH</p>	<p>BLAIRGOWRIE 12TH DECEMBER</p>

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT

Quarantine Station

On June 8th some 100 people saw the Federal Minister Garrett hand over the 90ha Quarantine site title to the State Minister Jennings, and the DSE released the Point Nepean Park Management Plan. The Point Nepean Community Trust ceased operation at this time.

On June 10th State Minister Batchelor (representing Minister Jennings in the Lower House) introduced in the Assembly an amendment Bill to the National Parks Act 1975 to include the Quarantine Station site in the Point Nepean National Park and to enable longer term leases of up to 21 years and, in special circumstances, up to 50 years at the Park. In the second reading speech, Minister Batchelor stated that in 2009-2010 the State is providing \$10m for the 'upgrading of infrastructure at the quarantine station' with another '\$4m over 4 years for management and operation of the expanded park' (This was included in the current State Budget) He also indicated the Commonwealth government is immediately contributing approximately \$15m towards the 'remediation and rehabilitation of the site' (This is part of the \$27M fund not expended by the Trust and was included in the Federal Budget) He said the Management Plan would be the 'key guide for future decision making'

At a meeting on June 16th at the Medical Superintendent's house organized by DSE and Parks Victoria for local groups, an outline was given of their current plans for the Point Nepean National Park. At this stage public access to the quarantine area will be limited, as contractors will be on site to start with the service up-grade. This includes sewerage, water and gas reticulation, electrical services and telephony, roads and car park and public safety issues. (The Trust had allowed \$10m.) They wish to encourage visitors to the park and will provide picnic facilities and attend to public relations. Walking paths will be implemented such as from London Bridge to the Quarantine site and in the Range area. The *tractor train* is touring through the quarantine site but without any stops. The works will be outlined in plans to be ready in September and they will hold another meeting of the groups scheduled for October 13th. Future works will be outlined in a Master Plan expected to be available in 12 months.

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT

They have no plans for the Heritage Centre, and are hopeful the Respite Centre will go ahead on a separate title of 1.3ha at the eastern end of the reserve (not in the Park and Coastal Centre), yet want the area to be an education centre. (The Trust had allowed \$7m for the upgrade of buildings).

The suggestion made by local groups to Parks-Victoria and DSE at the meeting to publicise to the community their future plans for the Quarantine Station has seen advertisements in recent papers (*Age 4/7, Leader 21/7, Mail 22/7*). However, the photograph used in the local papers relates to the Defence area rather than the Quarantine area. It's in the future of the Quarantine site that the community has the most interest. PV has upgraded the Coles track from Gunners Cottage to the Point, a benefit to walkers. A draft 'licence' agreement has been provided for the NHS to operate the Quarantine Museum and for tours. A possible problem relates to the non-exclusive occupancy of buildings proposed for the Museum.

Police Point Shire Park

The Society has forwarded (3/6) comments to the Shire on the draft Management Plan for the Park. The concept of the need for a car park, toilet, kiosk, BBQ stations with fresh water, children's playgrounds and viewing platform to see Port Phillip is supported. The draft is deficient in that it has no plan for the location of these facilities, no timetable for their installation, some of which should be installed immediately, and no estimate of the costs. Without such information Council could neglect the report.

Sorrento Township

A report dated July 2009 by Consultant Hansen was released by the Shire for community comment by August 14th. The report doesn't cover traffic problems and the plan for the street would reduce parking locations in Ocean Beach Road. Canary Island Palms along the street seem to be unsuitable. The plan is exhibited in Stringer's shop window and at the Community Centre.

Tramway Terminus

The Conservation Group has completed this project with community finance (\$40,000 and \$20,000 by the Shire). It includes 5 signs on the history of the railway overlooked by our Archivist. All NHS members should visit this excellent improvement as well as recommending it to visitors.

EDUCATION AND LOCAL HISTORY REPORT

New Year's Eve

At the recent (16/7) meeting the Shire indicated it would continue its \$20,000 contribution to fund continuation of the recent arrangements. With the absence of problems over the last 3 years some suggestions were made to abandon the procedures to 'lock-down' the area and introduce entertainment activities. The old hands were aghast at this, and Neighbourhood Watch is to discuss.

Shire Councillor

Cr. Tim Rodgers has had meetings with local groups to select three major items that he will pursue in Council over the next year. These are improvements at the Community Centre, at the car park there and improvement or removal of the temporary fencing at Sorrento Pier. He has also had a meeting with NHS to discuss local problems such as repairs to our building and the traffic.

Collins Settlement

A letter has been sent to the Shire (24/7) requesting clearance of weeds from the Western Sister. The area is included in the Collins Settlement Heritage Area of the Shire (HO250) and the Victorian Heritage Register. This Foreshore is part of the Sorrento Foreshore that is controlled by the Shire.

The site was the location marked by Surveyor Harris as the location of Church Hill and of Execution Hill and probably the site of the 2 gun battery. It would also be the site of the flag relay station for messages to Collins of any shipping movements from the ocean lookout at St. Paul's. Such weed clearance would allow further examination of the area for evidence of these activities and the possible cemetery.

John Alexander (Convenor)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

ELDRED BYRNE, GERALDINE CARRODUS, JILL BRYANT

We look forward to meeting them at our functions.

Renewal notices are enclosed for those subscriptions overdue at time of going to print. Remember to add your email address for reminders and updates. If you wish to receive your copy of the Newsletter via email also, please tick the YES box.

Judy Walsh, Membership Co-ordinator

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Nepean Historical Society Incorporated will be held in the Museum's Heritage Gallery, Melbourne Road, Sorrento, on Friday, 2nd October, 2009, at 8.00 p.m.

AGENDA

Welcome

Apologies

Confirmation of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting, 3rd October 2008.

Business arising from the Minutes.

Reports:

President's Report

Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statement

Election of Office Bearers

President

Vice-Presidents (2)

Hon. Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Hon. Treasurer

Archivist

Committee (5)

Appointment of Public Officer

Appointment of Auditor

Guest Speaker: Mrs. Ann Blainey, 'Dame Nellie Melba'

Close of Meeting.

Nomination Forms and Proxy Votes

Should a member be unable to attend the AGM, the member may vote by proxy.

Forms are available on application to the Secretary. Please note that completed forms must be received by the 25th September 2009.

Don Ewart, Honorary Secretary

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Nepean Historical Society
Sorrento

INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

**COME AND VIEW THE HISTORY OF SORRENTO ON THE BIG
SCREEN.**

**SEE OUR WONDERFUL AWARD WINNING DVD "POSTCARDS
FROM SORRENTO" IN A NEW WAY,**

FOLLOWED BY SUPPER

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH AT 8.00PM AT THE MUSEUM

OFFICE-BEARERS

PRESIDENT: Dr Robert Barnes

VICE-PRESIDENTS : Mrs Doreen Parker, Ms Val Pepler

SECRETARY: Mr Don Ewart

ASSISTANT SECRETARY : Mrs Bev Baker

TREASURER: Mr Peter Nicholson

DUTY ROSTER CONVENOR: Mr Ian Bowers



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire



**COMMITTED TO A
SUSTAINABLE
PENINSULA**



BELEURA
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