

Newsletter Number 9

April 1992



and Hills Historical Society

The AIM of the Society is to preserve and record the HISTORY of the
SHIRE of MUNDARING

NEW MEMBERS WITH AN INTEREST IN LOCAL HISTORY ARE
WELCOME TO JOIN

* NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.
MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF
EACH MONTH AT 7495 GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY,
MUNDARING, AT 8 P.M.

* A RESEARCH MEETING IS ON EACH 3RD
THURSDAY AT 7495 GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY,
MUNDARING, AT 7.30 P.M.

BRINGING YOU UP TO DATE.....

Firstly, apologies for the long gap between Newsletter No.'s 8 & 9.

I was overseas after No.8 - and though now retired, find there is a lot to do in addition to Historical Society matters.

I find that the MHHS has been very active in my absence. A great deal of material in the way of photos and written history has been accumulated, and what is even better, filed away for ready reference in the newly acquired filing cabinet. This, with a new electric typewriter and a tape recorder came to us from the Lotteries Commission, to whom we are grateful. We were granted \$724 from the Commission.

Our "home", Temuka, is looking every inch a Historical Society HQ. and this has come about with steady work acquiring furniture, placing pictures and collections of magazines. Secretary Val Martin has been responsible for a lot of this - I found it was altogether more workable and welcoming when I returned. Thanks Val!

The routine of keeping our guest speakers for the Research Meetings (thus saving them the possible tedium and late night which might follow if they had to wait till general business was concluded in General Meetings) has been kept up. But the 5-Minute History Spots in the General Meetings, where members enlighten us on a topic they have researched, is proving popular with us all.

I understand that the History walks undertaken round Mundaring on Saturday afternoons once a month have also been popular - a report on the most recent one appears under the title HISTORIC HARTUNG STREET later in the magazine.

With our householder status have come duties in the way of gardening and housecleaning, plus of course responsibility for suppers twice a month for our meetings. Please check the roster - and if you feel discriminated against because your name is not there, let Pres. Maureen know.

We are now a much more visible force in the community, with members continuing interviewing senior citizens and recording their memories, speakers from our society speaking at functions and with official invitations to be present at Shire functions. You will note other "firsts" which have happened in the last months as you read this newsletter. If there was ever any doubt that this Society would wither away, we have proved we are here to stay and will only get stronger.

OLD MUNDARING PRIMARY SCHOOL UPDATE.

3.

Newspaper reports recently tell us that the proposed shopping centre of developer Mr John Mair, (which will of course affect the fate of the old school)is again considered imminent. In the current economic climate the proposal must be hedged about by many "ifs" and "buts", but it could be under way this year. All who signed our petition asking Mr Mair to allow the venerable building" to remain on site and to assist its passage into the care of the MHHS - and to make it into a living museum as a tribute to our pioneers and their descendants" may still need to be vigilant to ensure that the old school meets the fate they wished for it.

In this connection, the Shire Council has made it clear in the report of the President on Page 3 of its 90/91 Annual report that it has been "able to persuade shopping centre developers not to demolish the old timber house" (presumably this means the old school, since the old schoolhouse has already been demolished), but that",it will become part of the shopping complex, although its use has not yet been decided."

This clearly doesn't ,and can't, preclude moving of the school building from its site - or from some unsuitable alteration in structure or use.

In addition,the War Memorial and the Memorial Rose Garden may well make way for a driveway. Is this what should happen ?

We have recently learnt that the Bilgoman Well had an accompanying stone building (convict Depot) still in one piece long after the convicts had departed, but that officialdom decreed it was a bit of a blot on the escutcheon and had it demolished in the '30s. Though we are lucky in having Mundaring Shire Council's support in our aim to retain the school, we must all be vigilant and active.

NEW MEMBERS.

We were happy to welcome Lorna Noonan (nee Serisier) and her daughter-in-law Kim Noonan, George and Nancy Lee, Charlie and Helen Ball, Grega and Pauline Watson and Sue and Andrew Pankhurst to our ranks in the last few months.

Readers wishing to become members are advised that annual membership charges are as follows;- \$20 per family , \$15 per individual, \$6 per individual pensioner, \$8 for a pensioner couple, \$6 for a junior student and \$20 for an institution. Our Treasurer's phone number is 298 8279 if you require a membership form. We would be delighted to have you join us. Simply turn up at our scheduled meetings (see front cover for details) at any time and you will receive a warm welcome.

4.

POLICY STATEMENT AND 5-YEAR PLAN.

With a great deal of help from Member Islay Kelly, who is studying for a Diploma in Local History at Edith Cowan University. these documents are almost finalised. With so much work in view, we are hoping all members will become active to help us achieve our aims.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

HISTORY SPOT at our March meeting was filled by Lorna Noonan's talk on her family's property, named Ellendale when built in 1900 by her grandfather Thomas John Serisier. The property is an old-fashioned 3/4 mile along Old Sawyers Rd and now belongs to people outside the family, who have given it a new name. Of course readers will know Lorna's mother, Eileen Serisier as a long-time resident of Sawyers Valley and a teacher for many years at the old Mundaring School.

Lorna recreated the old home by her descriptions of its sturdy iron/weatherboard frame, its exterior kitchen (moved lock stock and barrel along the side wall at one stage) which featured the reliable Metters No 2 wood stove and the house as it was warmed by open fires. Outbuildings like feed sheds and the like were cut by hand from sleepers by her grandfather and she recalled many instances of her childish delights in the old house and watching her grandparents demonstrate their versatility in practical pursuits. Later her family moved to the building previously known as "Nook and Cranny house" in Sawyers. I note it has a new name now. Lorna and husband Tom live in Glen Forrest.

SHIRE MAGAZINE.

Editor of this magazine, Maureen De La Harpe, has been along to Temuka to get information and photos for our contribution to the second edition. It is hoped to regularly include a contribution from us on some old building or site in the Shire, and its history.

HELENA VALLEY SCHOOL FETE.

At this fete we will be represented by a photographic display, the topic of which is FASHIONS. We have assembled a collection of photographs, which we have laminated so that people can handle them with impunity, showing some of our forebears in their glad rags.

MUNDARING ARTS FAIR.

Our contribution to this will again be photographic, this time the theme being THEN AND NOW. So we have assembled a series of photos showing Mundaring Buildings early in the century and these are accompanied by photos of the same buildings as they are now.

We are thus going out into the community with some proof of our industry and indeed our existence. Queries continue to come our way redirected from the Shire. A recent one (which did not finally reach us, owing to the unmanned nature of our headquarters) was from two women with a keen interest in local haunted houses! We hope that in the future - in that 5 year plan of ours- we will have a museum and easy access to the public, whose interest in history is obvious.

Another fascinating question to which members found the answer recently was "Where is the castle at Mundaring Weir"? Somebody came to us with a postcard featuring an elegant castle pictured near the weir. After much searching as to possible sitings of such a castle, it was found that the postcard was one of those photographic delusions, in which superimposition of one picture on another gives unusual effects!

FIRST SCHOOL VISITORS.

We were delighted to have our first school students visit our headquarters recently. 15 11-yr-old students and their teacher, Mr Richard Tonkin, came from the centre for talented children in our area. This is called PEAC (Primary Extension and Challenge) and is housed in the Helena Valley Primary school, though in fact no student from this school is in the local history course in which our visitors are studying. Many courses in unusual subjects are run by PEAC and gifted students come from all local primary schools for just half a day per week for up to 8 weeks for their chosen course. As mothers usually transport the students, we also had several mothers along - and they too were interested in Temuka and all it means. They were able to peep into our archives, received a talk from Mr Reece Gray and his sister Mrs Bending, and took part in our History Detective Quiz, in which everyday objects from the past such as a hurricane lamp, an "aeroplane" hair waver, a butter knife and a bootjack were handled by them as they tried to work out the name and use of each object. They showed intense interest in Briony's wind-up gramophone. We had over 30 such objects, and judging by the interest they showed, there is enormous scope for the establishment of a museum in Mundaring for our young people.

The youngsters of so many other Shires have already had such museums for years and years. On Tuesday March 24th, the same group came with us on an excursion in which Bilgoman Well and convict station ruins, the old Swan View tunnel and Mundaring Weir were visited by the children. Member, Mrs Briony Waterhouse gave the students the benefit of her extensive knowledge of Mundaring Weir's history on this occasion. She and I both found that pictures and actual objects extended the children's imaginations - they were quite excited to find old spikes from the demolished railway line. They find it hard to imagine a world without electricity, roads, supermarkets and cars! We have to help them!

WORKING WITH CALM.

Mrs Waterhouse is also the tour leader for one of CALM's "GO BUSH" tours on March 28th, when she will lead the guided walk entitled "Locos, Bogies and Sawpits" and show evidence of these in Mundaring's history early in this century. Briony is a speaker in high demand with local groups and puts in careful research before any such function. Probus and a local School for Seniors have had her address them recently.

HISTORIC HARTUNG STREET.

Three gracious old homes in this street were visited, with informative commentary from their present owners, when members and friends of MHHS took a Saturday afternoon stroll down memory lane on March 7th. 22 people and 2 children went to the three homes visited. The first, No 27, will by the time you read this, have been transformed into the Gallery Braun, where the best art and a changing display each month, plus catering for snacks, can be enjoyed. Owners Anita and Josef Braun have been hard at work for a long time ensuring that they, the seventh owners of the property, present it in an authentic and tasteful way. It was built in 1903 by solicitor O.L. Haynes and later occupied by the Lee Steere sisters, the Fishers, the Kendalls, the McNamaras and then Don and Bernice Chesson. It was interesting to have Bernice Chesson on our tour, as she remembered it over the 26 years of her occupancy until 1991. The wide verandahs, high ceilings, solid feel to the doors and windows and lovely finish to the jarrah board floors were a delight.

7.

Our next visit was to No. 21 Hartung Street, where (Councillor) Robert Atkins and his wife Janet showed us how they have pulled the house back to its original shape, taking away the expedient but flimsy additions put there by the first owner, Dr Humphrey who built the house in 1925 and later enclosed the verandah to make a surgery and some verandah sleeping space in the times when there was no hospital handy and some patients stayed under his care for some time after treatment. Member Ron Hancock recalls the rather austere Dr Humphrey riding his horse on house calls and extolling the virtues of fresh air and exercise. A much more ancient part outside the house, which is now a big birdcage, appeared to have once been either an early camp site or housing for members other than family ones. Nothing is known of this segment of the outbuildings. A stable was of course an essential one. Later owners were Dr Breckler, Guy Wallace and Kevin Warnes, with Members Robin and Norm Giles being the ones who sold to Robert and Janet and moved next door to Number 17.

Number 17 was originally the home block of a much larger property - 70 acres - being Lot 106 in a Land Grant in the name of Elizabeth Watson. There must be something in the names Elizabeth and John, for like Elizabeth MacArthur, this Elizabeth and her children managed the property and all its orchard and animals whilst husband John was away quite often as an engineer in the goldfields. It was interesting to see, now thoroughly embedded into an old tree on the property, the chain and support on which sheep were strung up for skinning and for cutting up. Elizabeth was memorable for her solid support in fundraising for the Church of the Epiphany in Mann Street. She is also remembered for planting some very large and rather hungry trees in Robin and Norm's front yard - a carob tree, 4 turpentine trees and some camphor laurels. But we were very grateful for their lovely shade as we enjoyed a long chatty afternoon tea on yet another shady elegant verandah. All were very grateful to our hosts, who had gone to a lot of trouble to make us very comfortable.

These walking tours are becoming a very enjoyable part of MHHS's calendar and members are urged to do a little research and permission-seeking in their own areas and let us in on the charms of some of their favourite spots.

8.

RESEARCH MEETING, MARCH 19TH

Our guest, Jan Di Rosso, the Senior Records Officer from the Mundaring Shire, came to talk to what was a very small (but appreciative) group of 5 Members about her job. She had gone to considerable trouble to bring materials to show us and to lend to us for our study purposes, all of which will be most useful in our task of record and archive keeping. She gave us a record of items already "archived".

In 1984 Jan began the huge task of sifting through materials such as rate books (going back to 1919), records of building registers and letters. She admits to many laughs e.g. early complaints about hygiene in a butcher's shop being replied to by said butcher in terms implying that the Coolgardie safe was O.K. and "there weren't too many flies". The copper-plate writing of most of these early writers was something she much admired and she confessed to keeping some bits of paper just for the writing and not necessarily the content!

She explained the great relevance to the public of the Public Records now that the Freedom of Information Law is about to enter the Statute Books. Access to all sorts of records will have to become easier - and her work has obviously organised it in readiness.

The Property base on which the records are kept was shown to us, and the subject files (Shire Based) were exemplified by the Yallambie Village file, which shows the whole wonderful project in photos, news articles and Shire and local involvement in all its phases. Such records are clearly history in the making, and future historians and interested people will bless Jan for her painstaking work.

She explained that at least ten items are needed for her to begin a subject file, so we made sure she left with a complete set of our newsletters. It is good to know that another set of records besides our own on MHHS is in careful storage and able to be easily retrieved.

Of great interest to us was a pile of original, untitled photos which the Shire had been given, clearly relating to the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. A caulking machine on the pipes, the chimney of a pumping station being erected, bush camps with superior floors and an early photo of the Clackline Railway Station were examined using our own reference books and at least some light thrown on their subjects.

BLACKBOY HILL (W.W.I). MEMORABILIA

Member Val Martin , on behalf of MHHS, set up the display of these items in the Mundaring Shire Library recently.

MEETING WITH SHIRE COUNCIL MANAGER MAX WILLIAMS AND KIM HASTIE. MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, MUNDARING SHIRE COUNCIL.

On March 11th, members of MHHS had the pleasure of showing these two gentlemen our headquarters and talking over the sort of plans we need to make to achieve our aim of a history museum . The informal discussion was most useful and we were most grateful that we are now able to have a certain amount of photocopying done by the Shire, since this was beginning to use up money needed for other projects, such as copying of historical photos which are lent to us.

AND NOW.....FOR THE FUTURE !

*PLEASE NOTE..... there will be no research meeting in April,

since it nearly coincides with Easter.

*APRIL GENERAL MEETING - APRIL 1st A good turnout is needed to give our policy and 5-year plan final approval. Our History Spot will be taken up by President Maureen Tie and her subject is the history of the Byfield family of Mahogany Inn.

*MAY GENERAL MEETING - MAY 6TH. Our History Spot should be most interesting - Jeff Murray has a sad tale of a historic and lost well to relate. Hopefully it will not be the tale of how Ron Hancock fell into it whilst looking for it.

*MAY RESEARCH MEETING - MAY 21ST- Please support this as we are assured of a most interesting night. Olga Wignall, recipient of a recent citizenship award and local author of "Chancy Times" is to talk to us about her history. "Chancy Times" is available from the Shire office for \$17 , with profits going to the Yallambie project .

The book is well worth a good read before you come to the meeting.

*****SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH AT 2
P.M.*****

A date to put in your diary, as we are hosting, for the first time, the quarterly meeting of the No. 1 Regional Council of W.A. Historical Societies.

Those of us who have attended these meetings over the last years are aware that our co-members (Hist. Societies of Bayswater, Belmont, North Suburban, Armadale/Kelmscott, Canning, Gosnells, Kalamunda and Swan/Guildford) have always taken great care both with presentation of their museum and with a truly great afternoon tea when they are hosting it.

All members will need to assist in making sure Temuka lives up to the meaning of its name - WELCOME- (in the Maori language) for June 13th.

This will mean yard and housecleaning , attendance on the day of a sizeable group and contributions towards the afternoon tea.

NEWS OF OTHER HISTORICAL SOCIETIES.

Some effort is being put into assessing the responsibility of a historical society for any accidents to visitors to museums. Not a problem we have at present, but one to take action on in the future.

Bayswater H.S. was pleased to be invited to open a restored 1892 house in which their Road Board held its first meeting. The stall which their Society ran on the day raised \$966. Anyone know of a restored house we could open ???

Canning Districts Woodloes Homestead Museum charges \$40 for the use of its grounds for weddings and has bookings ahead till Sept '93. They are sorry to have recently farewelled the old Canning Agricultural Hall, demolished. They obtained a Lotteries Commission grant to buy a videocamera to record their changing townscape.

Gosnells H.S. is concerned with damage done during Water Authority work near a 120 yr-old historic timber tramway route, now the Mason and Bird Heritage Trail. They also had a Lotteries Commission Grant to buy a new jarrah display case.

Kalamunda H.S. enjoyed a bus tour round old boarding houses in their district and in March had a vintage film night of Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel and Hardy in the grounds of their History Village as a good fund-raiser.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING US

Here are some phone numbers of members

President - Maureen Tie - 295 1601

Secretary- Val Martin - 294 1912

Treasurer- Bob Wiltshire- 298 8279

Past Pres.- Jeff Murray - 295 2469

Pub. Off. - Judy Love - 299 6989

Members - Research Chairperson- Briony Waterhouse
298 9058, Ron Hancock - 295 1586, Islay Kelly -
2988296 .

Duty Roster.

TYPE OF DUTY	MAY	JUNE	* JUNE 13*	JULY	AUG
SUPPER- GEN .MTG	Maureen T.	Briony W.	<u>AFT. TEA - EVERYONE!!!</u>	Judy L.	Phyllis C.
SUPPER- RES. MTG.	Val M.	Phyllis C.	<u>HELP DURING AFTERNOON - EVERYONE!!!</u>	Islay K.	Val M.
GARDENING	Jeff M.	Bob. W.		Ron. H.	Norm. G.
HOUSE- CLEANING	Maurseen T.	Val M.		Judy L.	Islay K.