

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

published monthly, except December

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm
in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall

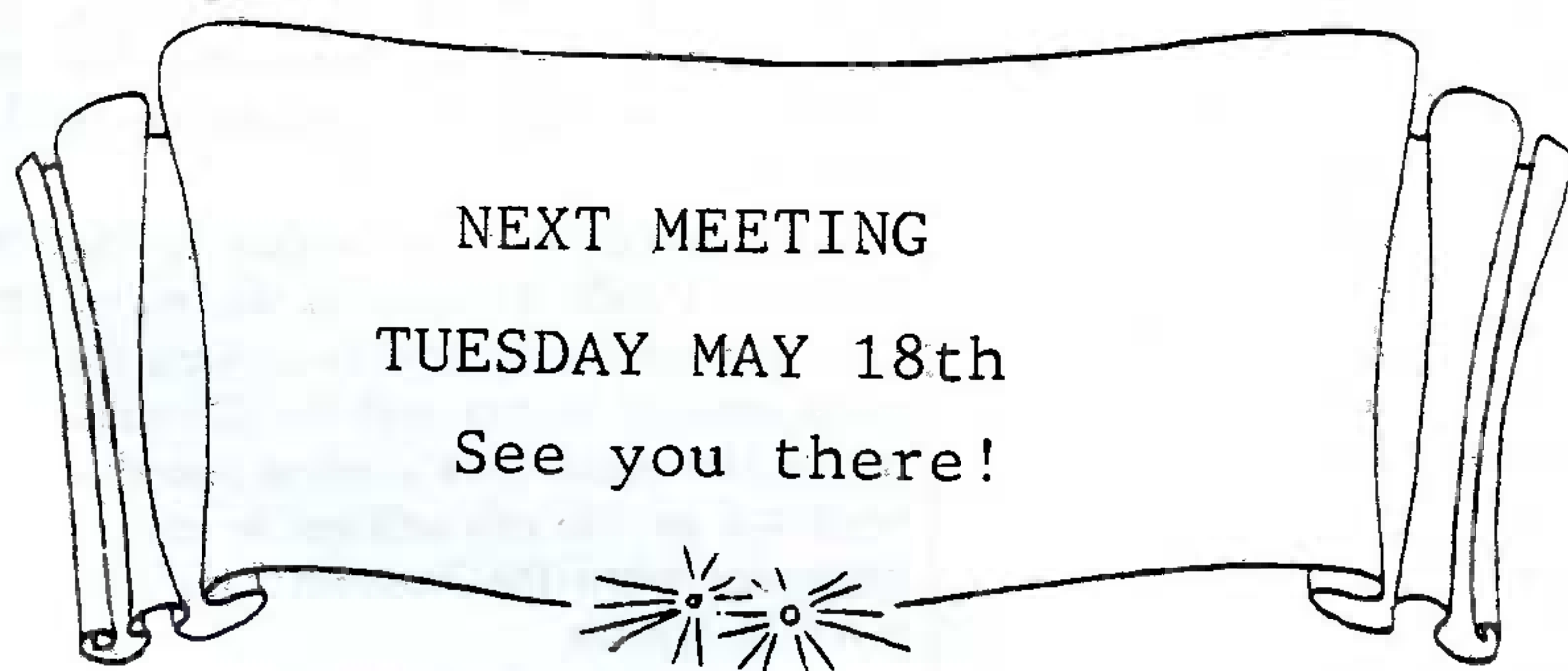
Vol. 9 No. 5

MAY 1993

WELCOME TO THE MAY NEWSLETTER

Our Society has finally taken possession of the Foyer and adjoining rooms of the Old Morwell Town Hall. The tiled floor and carpet have been professionally cleaned, the wall of the Foyer has had a coat of paint to cover up the ravages of Blu-tak, and some storage units have been moved in. It is hoped to hold a working bee in the near future to catalogue materials as they are stored.

We will also have to develop a Collection Policy to decide what materials and artifacts we will accept and to distinguish between those which we can care for satisfactorily and those which could be housed more appropriately elsewhere.



JUNIOR HISTORIANS AT COMMERCIAL ROAD

Students in Grades 5 and 6 at Commercial Road Primary School are really getting into local history. Under the guidance of teacher Debbie Edwards they are researching the history of the township of Morwell from the beginning to the present day.

Last term, accompanied by Elsie McMaster from Morwell Historical Society, the students did four 'history walks' through Morwell, making notes on places of historical interest. They also visited Hazelwood Cemetery, gaining a great deal of historical information from the inscriptions. Then, last week, Lou Bond and Elsie McMaster spent an enjoyable couple of hours helping the students get the information they had collected into perspective and answering numerous questions.

This information is now being entered on the class computers and when that is done the students plan to produce a book with illustrations from Morwell Historical Society's photographic collection.

It is great to see the interest this project has aroused in the students and members of Morwell Historical Society are delighted to be able to help.

Morwell Public Library

The library at the Town Hall, Morwell, is well worth a visit. It is a spacious apartment covered with imitation rubber lino, and comfortably furnished. The furniture was made in Australia, by Australians, of Australian timber. The window lighting is good, and at night it is lit by four powerful electric lights.

The public are welcome to read the books and papers, between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m. and also between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m.

The annual subscription for membership is 10/-, payable quarterly in advance, and the librarian (Mr Smithers) is in attendance during the hours mentioned, and will be glad to increase the number of subscribers.

Only subscribers may take books home with them.

There are 800 volumes in the library, mainly fiction; but there are nearly 100 classics. There are two Australian Encyclopedias, which may be consulted; but not removed from the library.

New books are expected shortly, and the Book Committee is planning to have new books every month.

The library subscribes to the following papers—"Argus," "Morwell Advertiser," "Bulletin," "Table Talk," "Walk About Australia," and the "Illustrated London News."

It is hoped that all Morwell people will make the acquaintance of their own library.

Morwell 'Advertiser & Gazette' MARCH 4 1937

Morwell Public Library

A Seasonal Reminder to Prospective Subscribers.

The Secretary of Morwell Town Hall Library (Mr J. Sinclair) has issued the following circular to prospective subscribers, which speaks for itself:—

Soon many of the trees in our parks and gardens will be denuded of their leaves as they fall to the ground—a sure indication that Winter is approaching.

Are you prepared for this season of long nights? Many cold and wet days also lie ahead. What does this conjure up in your mind? Closed doors, cosy chairs, cheerful fires—yes, but what of the fireside companion—the book?

You should be a subscriber to the Morwell Public Library as all members of your family will be looking for extra reading matter and the Committee of Management is sending you this reminder so that you will not be caught unawares when the Autumn days give place to Winter.

Let the rustle of the leaves continue throughout the Winter; but see that they are the leaves of your books from your library—the Morwell Public Library.

Morwell 'Advertiser
& Gazette' -

22 APRIL 1937

We have a very wide range of new fiction, travel and general literature and we feel sure that should you become a subscriber to the Library you will be prepared for the best reading season of the year.

A cordial invitation is extended to you to make an inspection of the Library during the hours of 2 and 5 p.m., and 7 and 9.30 p.m., on week days, and 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. on Saturdays, and the Librarian, Mr W. Smithers, will be only too pleased to give you any advice or information concerning the Library.

The subscription is very moderate, being 10/- per annum, or 2/6 per quarter. There are no other charges for book hire.

The next holder of Hazelwood was Mr John McMillan, a Highland Scotchman, standing over six feet and built in proportion, who took over in 1859. He had six daughters and three sons (Donald, John and Alexander) all born on Hazelwood. The latter served in the South African War of 1898-1902 and John, who stood over six feet six inches and like his father, built in proportion, served in the Great War of 1914-1918 and was with Throssell when that soldier won the VC.

An article in the Melbourne 'Argus' of that time commenting on this deed said Throssell was ably assisted by a big Gippsland sergeant named McMillan who was as game as he was big.

Hazelwood, under Mr McMillan's ownership, soon became famous for its magnificent breed of shorthorn cattle and although he did not register his stock, his herd was recognised as one of the best in Victoria. Buyers came from other states to purchase his young bulls and on one occasion he sent 30 bull calves to a Queensland station. His fat bullocks were also famous and when sent to Newmarket always topped the market.

It has just occurred to me that I have neglected to mention the late Mr Donald McMillan, who was the eldest son, born on Hazelwood as already mentioned, in 1860 and educated at Scotch College. He was the only member of the family who took up public life and was elected to the Morwell Shire Council in 1895 and after serving several years, proving himself to be a very able councillor, he resigned and went to live in Melbourne where he was a well-known figure, being a Justice of the Peace, he was for years Chairman of the Bench in the suburb he resided.

A mention of the natural features of this excellent station would not be out of place. Excellent I say it was because, if one glances at the magnificent farms which are providing for such a large number of families, and the splendid quality of the soil, it will not be hard to realise the sound judgement these hardy pioneers had when choosing land upon which they intended to make their homes.

This brings to my mind the homestead (what a beautiful position) situated on a hill near the river with sloping ground on every side and which ever direction one looked there was a view that would gladden the heart of the most fastidious poet or painter. In the spring the wattle blossom traced the course of the river as it meandered on its way to the Latrobe. The ghostly white gums with their strips of bark rattling in the breeze; the old stock-yard with its four rails and a cap and the old mulberry tree in the garden, now nearly 100 years old; all bring back kind memories of the pleasant times I spent there as a young boy.

But enough of this sentimental stuff, I've undertaken to write a record of

HARKING BACK (cont)

the doings of the pioneers, so let us get on. Somehow I cannot help thinking of the man who rode this station from one end to the other with the object of choosing the most suitable size (site?) to build his homestead, and now that the country is all opened up and we know it almost as well as we know the city streets, there is not a better spot on the whole of the run on which to build. This applies to all the stations and it would be interesting to know just how long it took to pick the spot upon which to build.

Now for the personalities who worked on this property in the old days. These men could not of course be classed as, shall I say, "drawing room loungers", nor had they the polish of the Oxford boy, but still they played their part on the stage of the station life, and I will mention their names as they come to my mind and the readers, if there happen to be any who have resided in the district long enough, will remember them and perhaps their peculiarities.

First of all I remember Finlay McRae and Donald McLeod, both of whom came from the northern portion of the British Isles, not far from Aberdeen. These men held very strong views about stock and both had the courage of their convictions, so needless to say many heated arguments occurred, especially when the boys from the homestead (who did not lack a sense of humour) made it their business to ask questions about the stock that they knew would start an argument.

Another who comes to my memory is Robert Burrows (Black Bob) a half-cast who later selected 320 acres, part of which is now occupied by Alf Bruce. He was a good-hearted fellow who could not read or write. My mother once told me that he was sent by Mr McMillan across the river, which was in flood, to enquire how my father was. He had been sick for about three weeks. When mother saw him riding up the track she met him saying, "Bob I want you to catch another horse and ride to Sale and bring the Doctor", and without any questions Bob set off about 5 pm on a July evening, arriving back with the doctor about 11 am the next day. I mention this to show what the women of those days (who are so seldom mentioned and who played such a big part) had to go through.

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Since my contribution on 6th August I have received a most interesting letter from Mr Cabourn Cox, of Mirboo North, and as it contains valuable early information I think it wise to publish some extracts herewith:- "William Westrope Waller (my grandfather) before coming to Morwell had or was in a shipping company at Port Albert and Welshpool trading to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and shipped a good deal of stock from the district and later sent cattle from Hazelwood and for a time lived at Foster, known then as Stockyard, getting its name from the yards which

HARKING BACK (cont)

(Continuing the letter from Mr Cabourn Cox) -

"were built to accommodate stock prior to being sent to Welshpool for shipment.

"Going by my mother's age, it must have been about the year 1856. Waller was pretty well to do then and was anticipating returning to England with his family, but fate decided aotherwise. He was persuaded to buy into Hazelwood with Kenneth Bennett, Geo. Axell and Samuel Bear. The latter I have heard very little about but Geo. Axell married Amelia Waller, a daughter of William Westrope Waller and at one time kept the first hotel in Morwell.

"Now the station must have been taken up about 1858 and proved a bad bargain for Waller. There was a lot of guesswork done over the whole affair and as business had to be transacted in New South Wales made it all the more difficult, as several trips had to be made to Sydney to get the matter fixed up. In fact I know my parents, six months after they were married, took one trip. I don't know how they went but I know they came back on horseback. They rode from Sydney to Morwell over the Black Mountains and across the Snowy River, where my mother narrowly escaped being drowned. She often told us about this escape. I may tell you Vary that I saw some of the papers about this transaction and an account for £1400 which was never paid.

"Another matter of interest was the station was overrun with wild bulls and the few years that Waller was on the station nearly 300 of these animals were destroyed. Waller imported from England some massive kind of bull dogs to cope with them and they did good work by what they used to tell me.

"Now a word on how my dad came into the picture. A few years before he came over from Manoro(sic) (Monaro?) across through Omeo to Gippsland he was employed by Angus McMillan and later by the late Alan McLean, who owne Paisly station, better known as Glenaladale.

"A photo of Angus McMillan is hanging in my sister's home in Bairnsdale (Mrs Clara Scott). No doubt he was a fine type of man. My dad often remarked how he used to hold the Sunday services when no minister was available.

"Now Lle, I could tell a good deal more about what happened those long years ago but I might weary you so I will conclude by giving you the names of the men employed at the station at the time, beside those I have referred to:- Findlay, McCray, Jim Hickey, Jim Lovall, Bob Burrows (Black Bob), Billy Windsor, who shot the blue bull, and Donald McCloud. F, McCray died at Foster, Jim Hickey died at Toowoomba Qld, W. Windsor died at Orbost and McCloud died at Boolarra. Jim Lovall, the best man with lasso in Gippsland, was married the same week as my father on Hazelwood and died in Bairnsdale."

(To be Continued)

Reprinted from Morwell Historical Society News 25/3/1963

6.

One of Morwell's oldest houses has just been demolished. It was the old Rintoull home at 33 George St, situated behind the first Blacksmith shop and built about 1879, when John Rintoull married Zenna McCrorey. This small 4-roomed house was enlarged from time to time and remained in the possession of the Rintoull family for the whole of its 83 years of existence, the last occupant being Miss Minna (Wilhemina) Rintoull.

Commercial Road or that section of it between Hazelwood Rd and Tarwin St together with George St immediately behind it, were the first residential streets of the township. Generally, a trader who established his shop in Commercial Rd would have his home in the same building or else in a separate house behind it and facing George St.

There are two other very old houses in George St on the opposite side from Rintoull's. One belonged to Jack Westley and his daughter still lives there; the other was occupied by John Lowe, a wheelwright employed by John Rintoull.

The main road to Traralgon in those days was the continuation of Commercial Rd as far as the ridge where it crossed to the other side of the railway line by means of a wooden bridge, which was burnt down in the big fire of 1944. The town tended to straggle along this road, and many of the older houses of the town are found in this part.

In 1897, the house further east along this road was that of the Rowell family the house next door was occupied by Mr Dusting, a saddler. This house became something of a derelict after the Dustings left it, and one night when two men were camped there, the place was destroyed by fire and the two men were burnt to death.

Irving's boarding house was on the corner now occupied by the Sacred Heart School, one of the boarders in 1897 being an early rector of the Church of England, Rev Frewin. On the opposite corner was the residence of the store keeper David Donaldson. After that came the Catholic Presbytery which had been built before 1897, while the Church was still at the old site in George St.

A little closer to the township centre was the first Morwell Hospital conducted by Miss Townshend in a private residence (258 Commercial Rd.) at the instigation of Dr McLean. The next house was occupied by Dick Date, the blacksmith, and then came the residence of Mr Tatterson the dentist. Finally there was Tim Kennedy's place on the corner, originally built for Miss Nichol, one of the teachers at Commercial Rd School.

EARLY MORWELL (cont)

Commercial Rd is the oldest street in Morwell. It is there and in George St, that the first buildings - shops, hotels and houses - were erected. Tarwin St must have been a very close second or an equal first because Breed's butcher's shop, which was also the first temporary home of the Morwell School, was in existence early in 1879 and probably before. Green's drapery store, with a residence beside it, was built in Tarwin St, perhaps as early as 1879. In those days, Tarwin /St was not blocked at Wallace St by the Morwell Project, but carried right on into the country. The two Misses Tonner, who conducted a private school (with boarders) in the 1880s and 1890s had their home and school in Tarwin St. One of the Misses Tonner was the organist for the Church of England.

Hazelwood Rd was another important branch road in the early days. As its name implies, it was the way out to Hazelwood, and there were houses along this road and in the side streets leading from it. Some of the old houses of Morwell still have underground tanks, the standard means in those days of assuring a household water supply. Off Hazelwood Rd in Ann St (named after Ann Keegan) lived another private-school teacher of the 1890s, a Miss King, whose sister was the post-mistress.

In those days an allotment stretched from one street to the next, so, instead of having two houses, back to back, facing parallel streets, each allotment had only one house with a very long back yard. This, together with vacant allotments, gave the town a pleasant spaciousness, or, as the more city-minded of us would think, a very scattered appearance.

Another subsidiary road led over the railway bridge at the western end into Jane St and out to the Old Coach Road, to Morwell West (or Morwell Bridge), and to the Latrobe River. One of Morwell's best known old homes is the old brick place in Jane St where Mr J B Hoyle lived. There is a picture of this house in the Cyclopaedia of Victoria published in 1905. This house was built for an Englishman named Cooper, who was engaged to a local girl. The parents of the girl did not look favourably on th match; the engagement was broken off and Cooper returned to England. The house was bought by a Mr Robertson, a printer, but he suffered from bad health and on his death the property was acquired by Mr J B Hoyle.

Other houses on the north side of the railway line and not mentioned in previous articles were the residence of Mr Symons, a builder, in Buckley St; the home of a family named Collins who lived where Collins St school is now; the house of Mr Smith who had an orchard property where the present Methodist Church is now; and the house of Mr Holloway, a boot repairer, who had the most easterly house in Princes Highway (that is, beyond Mr Smith's orchard).



FROM: R.H.S.V.

HISTORY NEWS

No. 137 MAY 1993

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JUNE EVENTS

EVENING MEETING

FELLOWS INVITATION LECTURE

Speaker: Dr Greg Denning FRHSV

Subject: 'Inventing Fletcher Christian. the Bounty Mutineer: Films, Poems, Ballets, Pantomimes, Histories.

Date: Tuesday, 15 June 1993

Time: 5.15 pm Wine and cheese: 5.45 pm Lecture

Place: Bullion Room, Royal Mint

Dr Denning will show film clips during his presentation.

EXCURSION - 'L'IL BOURKE' WALK

This afternoon excursion will include a visit to the Museum of Chinese Australian History, Cohen Place, and finish in time for members to attend the Fellows Invitation Lecture (see above). Full details of excursion in June History News.

'NOSTALGIA DAY' 1993

This was a first for the RHSV as part of the Victorian Heritage Festival - and it won't be the last! Although the time for planning was short (for reasons beyond our control), the day was a great success, in spite of an occasional shower in the afternoon. The Book Sale netted almost \$1700, thanks to those who donated items for sale and to those volunteers who manned the stalls.

The guided tours of the Mint, Flagstaff Gardens and St James' Old Cathedral were tremendously popular. There was no respite for the indefatigable guides who ran tours all day.

We thank our landlord, the Assets Management Division of the Ministry of Finance, for permission to use the Mint car park facilities on the day. Our thanks go, too, to the Veteran Car Club for their support and to everyone who contributed to the success of 'Nostalgia Day'.

NOTICES

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS ACT AMNESTY

On 1 April 1993 all shipwrecks aged 75 years or more in waters under Commonwealth control (i.e. on the seaward side of the low water mark) became protected under the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976. This is because shipwrecks are a limited source of unique information about Australian history and the Government is concerned to protect their archaeological integrity for study.

Protection under the Act means it is illegal to damage or disturb the remains of a shipwreck or to take souvenirs. Bona fide archaeological work can only be done with a permit. The Act requires any person who finds a shipwreck or a relic of a ship in Commonwealth waters, or who has possession of a relic from a protected shipwreck, to report it.

There is an amnesty from 1 May to 30 October 1993 in respect of due notifications that were not given prior to 1 April 1993 and where a person voluntarily submits the required notification within the period of the Amnesty. It does not apply in the case of an offence committed or detected after 1 April or where charges are current or pending.

For further information or to obtain reporting forms, contact the Director, Maritime and Historic Archaeology Unit, PO Box 262, Albert Park, Vic. 3206, Tel. (03)690-5322, or ring 008 819 461.

EXHIBITIONS

Lillydale Museum

A Sentimental Journey
Throughout 1993

An exhibition specifically focusing on Dame Nelly Melba's life in Australia and her famous outback tour of 1909. A recreated typical outback concert hall, original costumes and ephemera from the tour allow visitors to picture 'life on the concert trail'.

Mont de Lancey Historical Home, Museum and Gardens

Following the official opening this year in March, the beautiful gardens, original brick home and old style historical museum of Mont de Lancey will now be open to the public on a regular basis.

The Museum of Modern Art, Heidi Park

Modern Masters: An Exhibition from the Heide Collection
Until 9 May 1993

The Heide collection in the new gallery extension, opened in March, 1993.

National Gallery of Victoria

The Heritage of Namatjira
Until 31 May 1993

Albert Namatjira was the first Aboriginal Australian to paint in a European fashion. Works by his contemporaries and successors are examined in this study.

Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo

The Life of William J Liu
Until June 1993

26 hand painted scrolls depict the life of William J Liu, OBE (1893-1983) Pathfinder. Mr Liu dedicated most of his life working to improve Sino-Australian relations and to end discriminatory practices against Chinese Australians.

National Wool Museum, Geelong

Adventures in Fibre
Until 6 June 1993

This exhibition draws together a diverse group of textile and fibre artists from the Geelong region and features a stunning collection of wearable and decorative art which ranges from hand-woven linen articles, theatrical costumes and masks, beautifully textured hand-spun and woven fabrics and examples of smocking, felting, embroidery and intricate lace-making.

Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum

Trials, Training and Treasures
Throughout 1993

This major exhibition is drawn from the permanent collection and traces the progress of champions - from child athletes to sporting legends - through toys, trophies and artworks to accolades in gold and silver.