

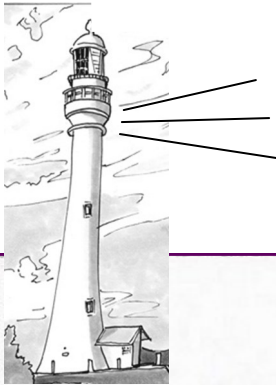
Coastal Current

Quarterly Newsletter Of The

Anglesea & District Historical Society

Issue No. 124
Spring 2019

The Anglesea & District Historical Society is a not for profit organisation staffed by volunteer members of the community, whose aim is to research and preserve history of the local area.



Active Researchers

Preservers of Local History

Keepers of the Museum



Marilyn Robinson

Proudly supported by

Anglesea & District
Community Bank® Branch



Are you financial? Historical Society is \$20 for the first family member per year and \$15 for other family members (this includes insurance). People over 90 are free (no insurance). Family History (optional extra) is \$15 per family. Please notify if extra \$15 is Family History or extra Historical member. FEES DUE 1 SEPTEMBER_Pay direct: Bendigo Bank—BSB 633 000, Account 1430 28421—reference, your name, **OR** post to PO Box 98, Anglesea, 3230

Meetings & Activities

Meetings are held at History House
5a McMillan Street, Anglesea
Entrance 4 of the McMillan Street
Community Precinct

The Historical Society meetings are usually on the first Sunday of the even months (February, April, June, August, October & December). Meetings start at 2.00pm followed by a speaker and afternoon tea.

Historical Society Committee

President: Jan Morris Phone 0448 526 311

Email - davejanmorris@bigpond.com

Sec. & Vice Pres.: Karl Jacklin Phone 0412 619 219

Email - karlj@netspace.net.au

Treasurer: Chris Guerow Phone 5264 7602

Email - chrisguerow@gmail.com

Museum Curator: Susan Clarke 0438 070 560

Email - susanclarke3230@hotmail.com

Researcher - Bruce Bodman Phone 5263 1249

Email - bodman@netspace.net.au

Committee Members:

June Ford: Phone:5263 1874

Email - juneford2@bigpond.com

Keith Hornibrook: Phone 0425 893 230

Email - gleebrook@gmail.com

Jim Tutt Phone 5263 1227

Email - tutthj@yahoo.com.au

MUSEUM OPEN TIMES

Open & Staffed the second Sunday of the month
2.00 - 4.00 pm or by appointment - Ph.0448 526 311

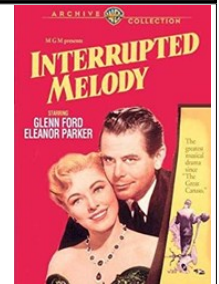
Unstaffed but open for browsing

Mondays & Thursdays 1.30 pm - 3.30pm

Tuesdays & Saturdays 10.30am – 1.00pm

Open every Sunday during School Holidays
2.00-4.00pm

SEPTEMBER: Thursday 19 Sept;
Outing to Dean's Marsh & Film at
Waterlands 'Interrupted Melody' - story
of Marjorie Lawrence
Cost: \$15 plus lunch at Moriac Hotel |
Leave History House 9.30am



OCTOBER: Sunday 6th 2.00pm
Annual General Meeting
Speaker: Martin Hooper
Topic: Who Discovered Australia?



NOVEMBER: Thursday 7
Outing to Queenscliff Fort and
Queenscliff Historical Society
Museum. Cost \$17 plus lunch



DECEMBER Sunday 1st 2.00pm
Christmas break-up meeting



Members & Visitors welcome to all activities.

Transport can be provided to all meetings and activities by phoning 0448 526 311.

It is the policy of this society that no activities will be held on days of code red or extreme fire danger.

STOP PRESS. - SENIORS WEEK

10.00am Wednesday 16 October

- * Entry—gold coin donation
- * Anglesea History Story
- * Play - Anglesea 1891
- * Morning Tea
- * Cooking in the 1800s
- * Early Kitchen Equipment



All Welcome, Bring a Friend & Join the Fun

Anglesea & District Historical Society Inc.

Box 98 Anglesea 3230 Victoria Australia.

Alice, Agnes & Anna



Forty people enjoyed our Winter Feast held on 18 July in conjunction with the Surf Coast Family History Group. John Stewart gave a most interesting illustrated talk on pioneer artist, Alexander Webb. Everyone had a good laugh at our re-enactment of 1891 in Anglesea River. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch, with special thanks to The Hub (formerly Angahook Café) for their generous donation of hot savouries and cakes. A big thankyou also to those who worked in the kitchen, Ilma, Barbara, Heather and others.

With the assistance of a grant from the Royal Historical Society we have at last produced an information leaflet, advertising both the Historical Society and the Family History Group. If you have anywhere you could leave some for potential visitors, please take some from the box under the front desk at History House.

GARAGE REBUILD

As you know, we have applied to the Shire to have the garage rebuilt as a two-storey addition to the meeting room. Local architect Tony Hobba, has offered to do the drawings free of charge. We have proposed that the Shire do the project on a dollar for dollar basis with us raising half the cost, mainly through in-kind contributions.

SCOUTING

Currently we have a display about the history of local scouting in the museum. If you haven't seen it, do drop in and have a look. It is most interesting. Susan and Marilyn have done a wonderful job of organising the display. We are planning a Great Ocean Road display to coincide with the ANGAIR weekend. This year is 100 years since work on the road commenced. We will have History House open on the Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 September. If you are able to assist with supervision please let a committee member know.

GOLFING

The cataloguing group are currently collecting material for a golf display. There have been several golf courses here over the years. We have had a set of wooden handled clubs with a bag donated by Jim Tutt. They belonged to his late father-in-law. If anyone has old golfing memorabilia, or old golf clothing they would be willing to loan or donate, please speak to Susan Clarke.

INDIGENOUS

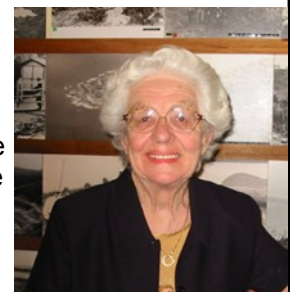
We wish to develop a file on indigenous use of this area. We have limited information, but would like to extend this. We have recently purchased a book 'My Country all Gone...' By Fred Cahir. Fred will be our speaker early next year and is willing to help us develop a file of information about the Wadawurrung tribe.

VALE - VALERIE JOYCE AMERY

It is with great sadness that we report the death of our past President, Valerie Joyce Amery who passed away on 11 July 2019 at the age of 91.

Val was a visionary leader and hard-working president for eight years from 2000 to 2008. She worked closely with her close friend and golf partner Shirley Forsyth who was secretary of the Historical Society. They gave our meetings purpose and decorum, while organising interesting speakers and outings. It was Val who took us to Historic Birregurra in 2002 and on the William Buckley trail in 2003.

Val was honoured with a life membership of the society in 2008. She has left her imprint on our society in many ways through the museum collection and the way we do things. Four of our members attended her funeral. Our sympathy goes to her children Vivienne and Clive, and their families.



UPCOMING OUTINGS

Our next outing is to Dean's Marsh to see the World War 2 curtain and also see where Marjorie Lawrence once lived. We will then go to Mt Moriac hotel for lunch and then to the Waterland theatre to see the film *Interrupted Melody*, the life of Marjorie Lawrence. Bookings are limited to 22, as that is the capacity of the theatre. Book early.

NOVEMBER SAUSAGE SIZZLE

On Saturday 2 November we are having our annual fund raising sausage sizzle. We need people to cook and serve. If you can help please speak to a committee member.

PHAR LAP

An item from the collection: Phar Lap memorabilia

Susan Clarke

As the annual Spring Racing Carnival approaches, it seems appropriate to highlight an unusual item from our textiles collection. The embroidered apron, which was donated by Edna Stevens, honours the great racehorse Phar Lap. The fact that somebody, perhaps Edna herself, took the time and trouble to embroider a simple piece of utilitarian domestic apparel with this design shows how important this horse was to the Australian public.

Phar Lap was an outstanding champion thoroughbred racehorse. He was foaled in 1926 in New Zealand, but came to dominate Australian racing. He then raced in Mexico, and after a sudden and mysterious illness he died in 1932 in Atherton, California. Phar Lap's mounted hide first went on permanent display at the Melbourne Museum in 1933. He immediately became one of the Museum's most popular exhibits, and has continued to draw visitors ever since.

The exploits of this horse captured the imagination of the Australian public at what was a difficult time for so many people: the early years of the worldwide Great Depression. Unemployment reached a massive high of 29% in some places in Australia in 1932, with incidents of civil unrest becoming common. After 1932, an increase in wool and meat prices led to a gradual recovery.

Racing was the first sport covered live by radio in Australia, from about 1927. With radio, Phar Lap's success could be followed by anyone without the need to set foot on a race course. Phar Lap became a National Hero.

The Melbourne Museum holds over 350 items of Phar Lap racing equipment, and memorabilia. Since the late 1980s the Museum has actively extended the collection with items that demonstrate the social and historical context of the horse's career. Items include a range of commercial and handmade souvenirs and memorabilia. Our apron would certainly fall into the latter category, so we are fortunate to have it in our collection.

Sources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phar_Lap

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression#Australia

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/3205>

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1628>



Item 573/1335. Donor: E Stevens

ENTERTAINMENT SAVED THE DAY—100 years on

Jan Morris

Day after day the sound of the pick and shovel filled the air with monotonous repetition. The returned WW1 soldiers had a job and a place to camp but they were isolated, away from their families. They had no entertainment and their living conditions were described by some as no better than during the war. There was no comfort fund or parcels. Enter the Salvation Army, experienced in supporting soldiers. Things began to improve.

A report at the time in the War Cry, the paper of the Salvation Army gives us an idea of the needs of those working on the GOR. To set history right, 75 years later, the War Cry of 17 November 2007 brings to light the otherwise forgotten story of the Salvos' role over 75 years ago in the building of the GOR.



In 1918, the Great Ocean Road Trust was formed and, under the guidance of its founder, Howard Hitchcock, the Trust set about raising funds to construct the road. The establishment of the Trust coincided with the end of the First World War. This project provided an ideal opportunity for employment of 'diggers' returning from the war. It was also thought that the road would serve as a fitting memorial to those soldiers who never returned. Some criticized the plan as cruel and punitive for men home from battle. But others felt the opportunity for 'fresh coastal air, swimming, fishing, shooting and camp life would restore jaded war nerves'.

The men lived in camps established along the route. To describe conditions as primitive would be an understatement. In 1922, concerned about the welfare of ex-servicemen, the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSLIA, the forerunner of the RSL) approached the Salvation Army and asked for help. A report in The War Cry dated 5 August 1922 details the Salvos' contribution to the construction of the Road.

'The need was certainly the call at the Great Ocean Road camp, a couple of miles from Lorne, where sixty or more returned soldiers are employed on the task of cutting a road around the cliffs from the south of Geelong right down

to Warrnambool. It will be long before that road is completed, but when it is, it will be a highway of which Australia will be proud.'

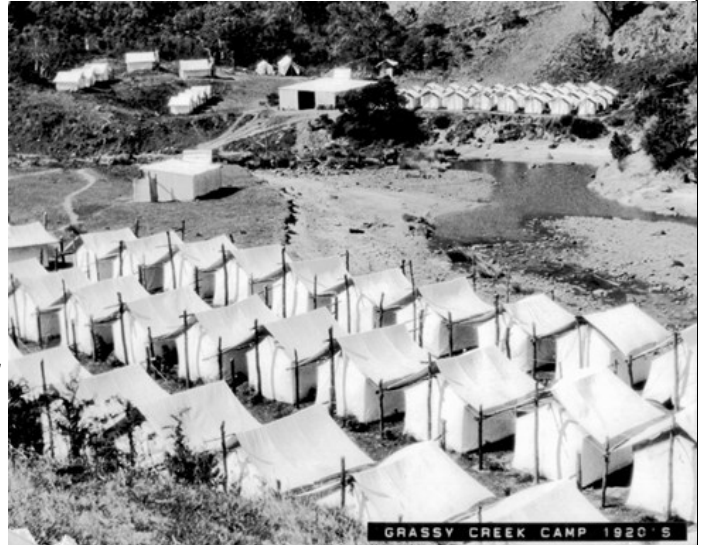
The War Cry correspondent goes on to vividly describe conditions of the camp.

'Two men living in a little tent, barely 8 ft by 6 ft in length and breadth and width, only just five feet six inches from the ground to the ridge pole! Hardly a man in camp can stand up in his tent. On dull, gloomy days, the light in such tents is very poor... Under-foot, the ground is cold and damp. The only relief was to get away from the camp and go to Lorne, and what was there in the towns but the pubs outposts of hell—where little is sold but that which turns a man into a beast?'

George Ellis, a former archivist for the Salvation Army, speaks with authority and passion as he reflects on the important role of the Salvos in the construction of the Great Ocean Road. Ellis is in no doubt that the reputation the Salvos established on the battlefield led to them being asked to help the returned diggers.

'We were much more than padres, we provided a social connection and outlet and were prepared to roll our sleeves up,' explains Ellis. 'The military saw this—that the Salvos were a practical group of people. There was an automatic trust in the Salvos given what we did in the war.'

When asked by the RSSLIA to provide assistance, the Salvos swung into action. A team of men arrived at the Lorne site and built a large wooden hut that was to become the centre of camp life for the diggers. Salvo Captain Hector Reeve was appointed to the camp and, according to Ellis, he soon became a jack-of-all-trades.



Roadworks Camp at Grassy Creek c. 1919

'Hector was the barber, the medical officer, the ambulance driver, the postman, he could turn his hand to almost anything,' says Ellis. 'He even mended socks.' As well as providing the diggers with practical help, Captain Reeve was able to offer them a sanctuary from the harsh conditions.

The hut became the hub of social life for the diggers. It was equipped with a gramophone, library books, an open fire, comfortable chairs and letter writing material. Sing-a-longs were held in the evenings, and it was even used as a mess hall for meals. Previously meals had been served in a draughty, floorless tent.'

Captain Reeve's son, George (a retired bandmaster with the Salvos), says of the stories his father told of the Great Ocean Road, the most vivid recalled the day he arrived at the camp. 'He got the train to Colac and from there took a coach-and-four across the Otway Ranges. It was no better than a mud track and the horses were up to their flanks in mud,' says George. 'It didn't really faze him because he'd grown up on a farm. Hector Reeve's country upbringing probably contributed to the level of acceptance he was to find among the men. His knowledge of the land allowed him to offer advice when it came to the practical aspects of the work, such as drilling and blasting rocks.

'My father was happy doing the job, the men accepted him, because they respected the Salvos from the war, but he also knew what he was doing.

Throughout the years, work progressed in stages. The Trust became adept at fundraising, at one stage even selling special solar eclipse-viewing glasses to raise money. Finally, on 26 November, 1932, Victoria's Lieutenant Governor, Sir William Irvine, declared the road open at a ceremony held near the Lorne Grand Pacific Hotel.

In his later years, Hector Reeve had fond memories of his time working with the diggers on the road. The Great Ocean Road is undoubtedly the (geographically) longest war memorial in the world. Many modern-day travelers are reminded of the contribution of the Anzacs through plaques and sculptures positioned along the route. While some lament the lack of recognition for the Salvo contribution, perhaps this is typical of the work done by the Salvos. It reflects the back-ground role they often take in times of need.

References

War Cry - 5 August 1922 & 17 November 2007.

Nancy McDonald - former resident of Anglesea

Marianne Messer

The first time I ever saw Nancy McDonald, was at a 1997 public meeting about the surprisingly short tenure of doctors in Anglesea. The community was concerned. Elderly and young families alike took time to build relationships with their medical practitioners, and over a matter of months we had successively lost more than six.

Hoisting herself gingerly to her feet, 79 year old Nancy leaned forward, put some of her considerable weight on the chair in front of her and fixed her suddenly steely gaze onto the group of Health Centre Management Committee lined up on stage in front.

"I have one question for you", she said sternly, "and here it is: why are you allowing poor management to cost us good doctors in this town?" The whole room gasped and then applauded.

Nancy McDonald was singularly the most impressive intellectually gifted and community minded person I ever had the privilege of getting to know. Her amazing life spanned WW1 and 2 Melbourne, the great depression, post war England and Europe. She met royals, was once engaged to the royal game keeper at Balmoral and observed Prince Philip putting what she saw as unreasonable pressure on a young Charles, teaching him to row. During the war years, Nancy was personal assistant to WH Coulson, world expert and author on wartime explosives, and personal advisor to Winston Churchill. Several times during the war Nancy travelled to Britain with WH Coulson to attend top level secret briefings with Churchill at the famous London underground war office. In 1999 I took Nancy on a road trip back to the Maribyrnong Factory site where she once worked, and lost colleagues to experimental explosive testing.

I once asked her what her best memory of her long and amazing life was and she said she couldn't choose between two: riding an elephant back through a rhododendron forest in the Himalayas, or sailing on a private superyacht through the Norwegian fiords!

But Nancy's arguably most significant work was as Matron of Pirra Children's Home in Lara, during the 1950's and 60's. Product of an enlightened upbringing herself where her parents treated her as an equal voice in all family decisions, Nancy brought her considerable life experience, her natural expertise with children and her overriding sense of justice into the lives of her young charges, many of whom had been labelled incorrigible. One story Nancy told was of a young 10 year old "Jo", who came to her as an addicted smoker, swearer and discipline refuser. One afternoon "Jo" knocked tentatively on Nancy's office door to report she had been sitting up in the big gum tree next to the home, smoking ("Yes, I know I shouldn't have been!") when the tree she was sitting in gave out a huge cracking sound. Nancy ignored the misdemeanour and thanked "Jo" for the report. A tree surgeon that afternoon took the tree down declaring that left any longer it would have taken down the house and all its occupants. Nancy saw her chance. She ordered sponge cakes from Bon Accord, and turned the evening meal into a party. "You were very brave. Your honesty kept us all safe," Nancy told "Jo" as she presented her with her gift, a writing compendium embossed with her name. Years later I was with Nancy when she received a letter from "Jo" in London. "I am writing on the paper you gave me all those years ago, to tell you I have just graduated from University with a Masters in English Literature."

"Jo's" story was just one of many. Pirra children remember Nancy as firm but fair. Every night she spent 15 minutes with each child before bedtime, debriefing their day and looking for ways to encourage them. She could be very strict too. Late one night after warning the kids to put their bicycles away, Nancy drove into the long Pirra driveway to find it strewn with bikes. She drove over the lot. Future bicycles were treated with a lot more respect..

The 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires was a time when Anglesea especially appreciated Nancy. With so many people in Anglesea and Aireys Inlet in trauma after losing their homes, Nancy with her skills of compassion and counselling was invaluable. Nancy spent her time not bemoaning her own losses but listening to grieving residents and giving them hope for the future, while also attending to their immediate needs.

By necessity I have left out so much of Nancy's life: her years developing the talking book library for blinded returned service men, surviving the 1983 Anglesea bushfire but losing a lifetime collection of her personal photo journalism. If you want to read more look for Nancy's autobiographical memoirs edited by Carole Hamilton Barwick and available from the Historical Society's Library.



Pirra Homestead site of Pirra Children's Home