

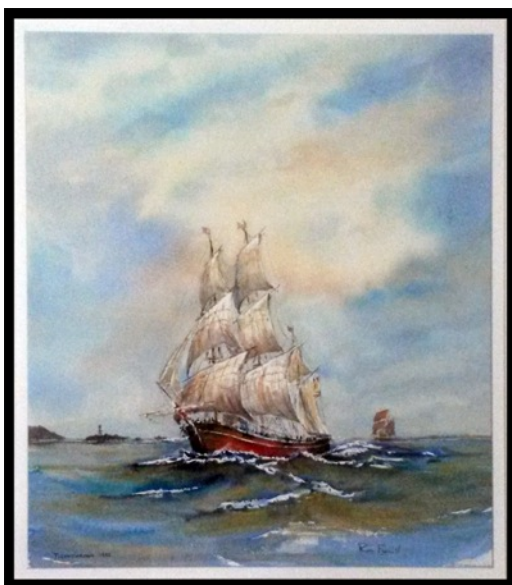


Nepean Historical Society
Sorrento

The Nepean

Volume 11 Number 1

March 2016



NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Photo: Ron Farnhill's impression of Ticonderoga See p.9 for more details

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy Chinese New Year – year of the Red or Fire Monkey, when Chinese astrologers believe 'anything can happen, all is in flux.' Maybe the Shire will get our storage facility moving ?

The end of year party was a great success thanks to brilliant co-ordination by Secretary Val Stieglbauer, and the Australia Day Lunch saw 84 guests enjoying a tasty meal and the charming Anthony Knight OAM of Beleura sharing his stories of John Tallis.



The Heritage & Planning Group are off and running under the energetic Frank Hindley. The Parks Vic review of the Point Nepean Quarantine Station situation is of interest to all of us. (See Frank's report p.4). The Archives team have welcomed Sally Robins, Shire Local History Coordinator, currently working with the cataloguing team which now includes Beck Hyde and Gary Naughton, and Frans Bos, who is working on our map collection.

Our webmaster Clive Smith has been updating our site frequently (www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au).

See the evolving ANZAC Honour Roll of local men.

The independent local History of Sorrento and Portsea Facebook site continues to encourage the sharing of useful information and photos. Thanks to Jenny Nixon for managing this.



Having the museum open for 5 days per week in January has attracted a steady stream of visitors. Over 5581 hours of volunteer work have been completed in this last year. Currently we have just under 300 NHS members, and we hope another group will renew their membership. Also, why not give an NHS membership as a special gift?

Please consider inviting your friends to meetings on the first Friday of each month: a General Meeting, as well as a time to enjoy great speakers. This is an appropriate forum for raising issues or questions re NHS activities or policies. You can email or phone if you wish me to raise matters.

Councillor Hugh Fraser generously undertook some research for us at the British Library on Harris's original documents on the Collins Settlement, and is now continuing this with other local researchers. We look forward to hearing about his findings at our May 6th Friday meeting.

Congratulations to Royal Historical Society of Victoria and Federation of Australian Historical Societies President, Associate Professor Don Garden, on his recent award of the O.A.M. for his long and committed service to history at Melbourne University and with local historical societies.

And, last but not least, Happy 85th birthday to Jo Davie, our very special Display and Collections volunteer and events caterer.

Joy Kitch

Please remember to use your NHS Ritchie's card at the supermarket. A small percentage flows to us – more cards are available at the Museum reception desk to give to your friends.

HERITAGE WATCH

POINT NEPEAN

In January-February Nepean Historical Society sent a submission and subsequent delegation to Parks Victoria, managers of the Point Nepean National Park and Quarantine Station, whom the State Government has asked to re-examine and, if necessary, update the site's 2010 Master Plan.

We confirmed our support for the Guidelines summarised in PV's Discussion Paper, and registered our strong approval for its recognition of the high heritage significance of the site, a vital feature and offering great scope for further enhancement through imaginative interpretation. We stressed that a crucial issue to be resolved is how Parks Victoria as Manager for the Point Nepean will obtain sufficient resources to carry out its responsibilities, particularly for the fulfilment of the special demands of maintenance and interpretation of unique built and cultural heritage at the site.

We also brought to the attention of the Planners the need for close cooperation between the two authorities who share jurisdiction over one single national heritage-listed place, i.e. the Quarantine Station and surrounding park. The Shire's recent developments at Police point, at the Eastern end of the site, highlight the traditional gatehouse and entry point to the area. Its "calling ground" provides dramatic evidence of the policed interface between the necessarily closed Point Nepean site (first for quarantine, then military, purposes) and the outside world.

Footnote: See our website (www.nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au) for NHS submission and associated reports, which were also available at our February meeting. We produced and distributed a flyer alerting the general public to PV's call for public comment on the Master Plan. At the kind invitation of the Nepean Conservation Group interested members also attended a meeting at Point Nepean on February 20th when PV's newly appointed Chief Executive was guest speaker and took questions.

COLLINS SETTLEMENT SITE

- The owner-developer of Lot 5 at the Eastern Sister headland has decided to go to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and challenge the Shire's decision to approve the public pathway to join the Camerons Bight and Sullivan Bay beaches, as was promised at the time the Shelmerdine sub-division was granted.
- Archaeological investigations are proceeding, in an attempt to locate the 19 gravesites of the free settlers and others who died at Sullivan Bay 1803-04.
- Iluka, the classic heritage-listed beachfront property held by the Western District Boyd family, was sold following the auction in February.

*Frank Hindley
Convenor Heritage & Planning Group*

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following new members to the Society and look forward to meeting them at meetings and functions:

Harry & Rita Varelas, Garry White, Beverley Gathercole, Stephen Ross, Jim and Elizabeth Vintan, Patrice Naughton, H Turner, Jennifer Nola, John and Margaret Marshall, Bruce & Lesley Morley, and Janette Moss.

Gary Naughton, Membership Secretary

Lambis Englezos - Finding the Missing Soldiers of Fromelles



On Friday February 5th many NHS members and friends heard Lambis Englezos describe his long and passionate commitment to find, recover and honour the Australian soldiers who died in the dreadful Battle of Fromelles on July 19th 1916 and whose bodies had never been found. For his 20 years of painstaking work Lambis was awarded an AM.

From his moving and fascinating presentation we learnt about the action on that terrible day in France and how, despite much official discouragement and disbelief, Lambis and his team doggedly set about finding the unmarked mass burial pits they had determined must exist. In 2008 the pits were found and finally excavated. And now more than a hundred and forty Australian soldiers have been identified, and others continue to be, through DNA testing.

Roving researcher Peter Munro, whose interest in WW1 and the fate of local enlisted men has become an obsession, he says, added 'breaking news', announcing that two names mistakenly entered on the memorial wall at Villers Bretonneux cemetery had now been transferred to that of Fromelles: William Brumby and Albert George Hibbert.

Lambis's focus on the individuals who were killed and their families who had waited for so long for answers makes for a poignant story. An extraordinarily moving letter, written in the 1920s by one of the mothers, Alice Goulding, on an anniversary of the battle, was read by Kate Baillieu. Alice wrote almost apologetically, but powerfully, to the authorities expressing her terrible grief and longing to know what had happened to her son John Joseph Goulding. Sadly, not long after Alice had died, Lambis and his team established that one of the bodies they recovered was indeed that of Alice's son.



Members & friends attending Lambis's talk

This story graphically demonstrates the importance of all Lambis's efforts and determination. The 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles will be honoured on July 19th 2016.

Joy Kitch

PROMOTIONAL STREET STALLS

Our street stalls have been excellent all summer. Sales for the last 3 months have totalled over \$4,380, and 199 jars of jam/relish were sold. Many thanks to the excellent cooks and stall helpers.

We all have family and social events, so if you would like to join our list of occasional helpers we would be grateful.

Coming Stalls

Sorrento February 27th
Sorrento March 12th
Sorrento April 9th

Blairgowrie March 26th
Blairgowrie April 23rd
Suzanne Ewart and Jan Weston

These humble-looking pieces have a bigger history



Marlborough House in Back Beach Road Portsea is an imposing example of Federation style architecture. It was designed by Beverley Ussher and Henry Kemp whose renowned partnership, dating from 1899, produced a large number of notable Melbourne buildings. Ussher died in 1908.

Marlborough House was constructed as a boarding house in 1902 for Mrs Matilda Reid by William Joseph Croad in conjunction with Charles Johnston and William Goss. In the Mornington Standard of October that year, it was described as having 18 rooms. In August 1905 the building was extended with the addition of a ballroom which completed the symmetry of the front façade.

It remained a guesthouse until 1955 when it was purchased by the Victorian Mental Health Authority. Donor, June Renwood's late husband, James, found the Marlborough House crockery in a cupboard. He was a psychiatric nurse in charge of the facility over a period of 15 years from the early 1970s when groups of patients from city mental health institutions like Larundel and Janefield were accommodated for holiday respite periods.



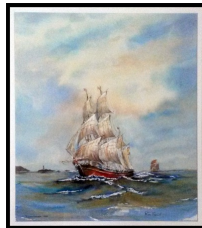
June remembers there was an associated bathing box where they stored beach balls and other recreational equipment. The groups would all walk through a cutting to reach the beach.

A change of government policy in the mid 1980s saw the building return to private ownership and so it has remained to this day. The building was classified by the National Trust in 1990 and, thanks to June, we now have this crockery as part of the NHS collection.

Bergliot Dallas

Photo Marlborough House, 1964. J.T. Collins Collection, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

RAFFLE



**PLEASE BUY SOME TICKETS TO WIN THIS BEAUTIFULLY
FRAMED WATER COLOUR OF A 19TH SAILING SHIP
Generously donated for our fundraising by
local award winning artist RON FARNILL.**

VALE FATHER JOHN ROBERT HANNAH OMI

6th March 1930 – 18th September 2015

Members of our society were saddened to hear of the death of one of Sorrento's most loved identities, Father John Hannah. His Sorrento connection began in 1953 at St. Mary's Star of the Sea, then the Novitiate of the order of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. His first vows were taken there in 1954 and he was appointed Assistant Priest of the Sorrento Parish in 1960, playing a significant role in the building of a new church, officially opened by Archbishop Simmonds on January 6, 1963 (just as Duffy and Coppin had been instrumental in founding the original Church of St. Mary's Star of the Sea back in 1880).

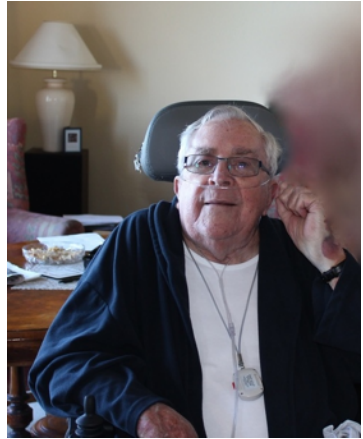


Photo: Supplied by Marie Clark

From Sorrento Father Hannah was sent to New Zealand as Parish Priest of Massey (1967-1969). He became the first Australian Provincial (1970-76), then returned to parish life at Springvale and Fremantle. Fortunately for the Sorrento community, he came back to Star of the Sea in 1996. This place was to be 'home' until his final days. Interviewed by us in 2011 he said quite lovingly, and longingly, that his two favourite places in Sorrento are Koonya Back Beach and Sorrento Park.

All who met Father Hannah were beguiled by him: he had the capacity to both love life and laughter, to be a true individual doing his God's work in his own inimitable way, and, as the young Polish Oblate Father Daniel says, to be 'a beautiful soul'. At the Vigil mass on Wednesday 23rd September at Star of the Sea Father Jim shared Father Hannah's last moments on earth with the congregation: 'As I was praying the prayer for the dying he breathed his last surrounded by his loved ones. He died in prayer' It is perhaps fitting that I am writing these words on All Saints' Day, November 1st, 2015.

Marie 'Alice' Clark

Vale the Old Sorrento Baths

In his 1876 Guide to Sorrento, Coppin described 'The Public Bath' constructed by his Ocean Amphitheatre Company in 1874-75, as 'superior to any in the colony', with its picket enclosure extending into the bay 850 feet, a clean sandy bottom, crystal clear water, safety from large fish, and convenient dressing rooms. Red or white flags showed when it was ladies' or gents' time to swim. Men who swam in the nude got into trouble. A single bath with towel cost sixpence, but a monthly ticket was only 5 shillings.

A café at the beach end of the jetty named The Rustic Retreat began to serve light refreshments.

The Manager at that time was Ben Sutton. Later ones included Ditchburn, Jackson, Erlandsen and Webb.



Photo: NHS Collection

By the 1930s, hot sea baths and special rooms for sunbathing (naked?), springboards and rafts, motor and rowing boats for hire, were all available. In spite of all these attractions, the popularity of 'bathing paddocks' like these was to fade with increasing freedom of manners and waning prudery. By the 1970s the baths proper had all but disappeared, and the jetty, with fishermen's shed half-way along, was gradually falling to pieces. The café and fish and chip shop developed into one restaurant and then another, under different names, altering several times, until only a few traces could be found of the Rustic Retreat and the ticket office for the baths.



Aerial view of The Baths, 2015

Photo: Murray Adams

Under its most recent, and appropriate, name The Baths restaurant became popular for parties and weddings as well as day to day catering ... and then, in October last year, a fire caused by an electrical fault destroyed most of the building, and the rest had to be pulled down, spoiling many party plans for the months to come.

It is being rebuilt, however, on the same footprint, and it is planned that the new Baths Restaurant will open later this year.

Janet South, Research Officer

Sources: *Guide to Sorrento*, 1876; Peter Collins' notes on 1917 *Guide to Sorrento*; *Sorrento, Portsea and Rye Guide*, 1936; author's own memories.

PUBLICATIONS

New to the Bookshop this quarter is *An Old and Respected Colonist*, a short biography of James Sandle Ford (who named Portsea) by his descendant Carol Darroch. We have also replenished the stock of *Sea Baths of Victoria*. This attractively priced beautiful book has a section devoted to the Mornington Peninsula. You may also be interested to collect our leaflet histories of Blairgowrie, Sorrento and Portsea.

*Jan Weston
Bookshop Manager*

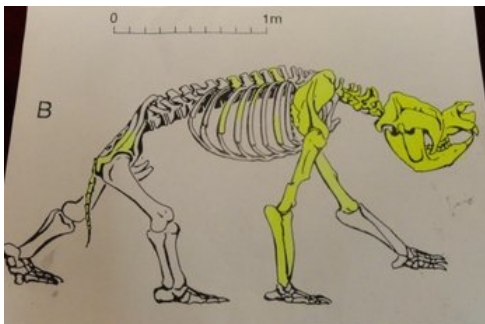
THE SORRENTO FOSSIL MONSTER



At our November meeting, David Pickering, Palaeontology Collection Manager for Museums Australia (Victoria), and Sorrento resident David Thomas the 'Accidental Palaeontologist' told a marvellous story of discovery and perseverance. In early 2012, bone pieces were spotted high up in a Bay of Islands rock

arch by keen eyed locals Chris and Allan Willox, and later by David Thomas, who alerted the police in case these were human remains.

David P held a meeting on site including Parks Victoria Ranger Bruce McFadyen who would issue the permit to explore the site, whose dangers featured very steep cliff access and frequent rock falls from the arch, and hence Occupational Health and Safety issues and procedures for workers there, and mining engineering advice.



A huge rock fall in a big storm led to a new modus operandi: carefully examining masses of rock pieces, until David T found the skull and jawbone complete with teeth, enabling identification of the animal as the rare *Zygomaturus*, sometimes called Pygmy Rhino, not the Giant Wombat as first guessed.

Photos: Joy Kitch

These large marsupials lived in groups; they had huge cheekbones (zygoma in Greek) and a large rubbery nose. Marks of predation on the pelvis prove it was attacked - by what or whom? This fossil is possibly 2.6 million years old.

A fascinated audience clustered round to see the actual Zygo skull and photos of the site; also a perfect shortfaced kangaroo jaw recently found at Gunnamatta beach. It had been an evening to remember, and we hope we can one day display a model of 'our' Zygomaturus!

Joy Kitch

Note: David Pickering, particularly adept at extracting minute fossil teeth, has two extinct animals named after him: Pleistocene marsupial Palorchestes pickeringi, and a Devonian fish from the Kimberley, Pickeringia.

Tours and Special Events.

Our bi-annual tours for the Defence International Training Centre are now in their ninth year and we are pleased to have Garry White joining Des Young, Richard Cotter, Natasha Wicks and me as a team guide.

The group of 32 senior officers who attended in December represented 19 countries: Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Ukraine and Vietnam. This was our most diverse group to date and it was heart-warming to experience the atmosphere of warmth and friendship among this league of nations at a time when there is so much strife in the world. The calendar is looking healthy with bookings for tours this year as popular as ever.

Bergliot Dallas

COMING EVENTS

**Our meetings are held on the first Friday of the month
at 8pm in the Mechanics' Institute**

Corner of Melbourne & Ocean Beach Roads Sorrento

Free and open to all - Tea or Coffee afterwards by donation

If you would like to join us for dinner prior to meetings

at 6.15 pm at *Sorrento Trattoria*, 20 Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento, please ring the restaurant by 12 noon on the day before the meeting. Tel: 5984 5655

Friday March 4th at 8 pm

Speaker: *Stuart Duff* from the Police Historical Society

Early Policing in Colonial Victoria 1834-1856

Friday April 1st 8 pm

Speaker: *Garry White*

Personal Recollections of Gallipoli and France

Saturday April 30th & Sunday May 1st - Heritage Festival 2016

1.30 pm to 4.30 pm at the Sorrento Museum

Discover Treasure at Sorrento - Childrens' Treasure Hunt

Friday May 6th at 8 pm

Speaker: *Councillor Hugh Fraser*

Researching the Collins Settlement documents in England in 2015

Friday June 3rd at 8 pm

Speaker: *Jenny Tomkins*

Sorrento Ghosts

Friday July 1st Midyear Luncheon with the Rye Historical Society at Rye Hotel

Speaker: *Adam Magennis*

Mornington Peninsula Shire Heritage Archaeologist

Cultural Heritage Management & Archaeology

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Office Bearers of the Society 2015-2016

PRESIDENT: Joy Kitch

VICE-PRESIDENT: Marie Clark

SECRETARY: Val Stieglbauer

ARCHIVIST: Janet South

DISPLAYS & COLLECTION COORDINATOR: Joy Kitch

TREASURER: Anna Hackwill.

COMMITTEE: Jenny Nixon, Clive Smith, Natasha Wicks



The Nepean Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of :



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