

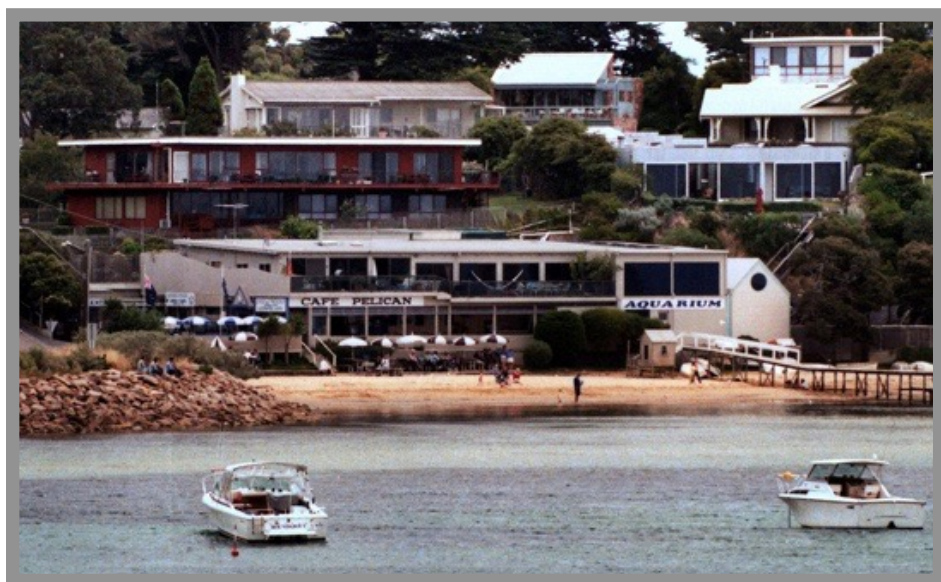


Nepean Historical Society
Sorrento

The Nepean

Volume 14 No 4

December 2019



NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Photo: NHS Collection, Aquarium 1998 [see p.4]

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

'What good is the warmth of Summer, without the cold of Winter to give it sweetness' - John Steinbeck Pity about the current cold of Summer!

Performance at The Point

The 'Performance at the Point' with Rebecca Barnard was a great success with two nights well received by the audience. The most important aspects of this were the multitude of comments as to the amazing venue and the wonderful feeling of a Community Event. The cooperation with the Sorrento Sharks running the bar was beneficial, with many of their supporters and sponsors also attending the event.

Point Nepean

Our continued use of Point Nepean is a fillip to the promotion of the Point Nepean Management Plan and is appreciated by the local Parks Victoria Management and most importantly, keeps us in 'the conversation'.

The Quarantine Station – Tours

There will be no tours until March. Please see the co-ordinator's report on p.6 for other information.

The Museum

The plans for the extension are, at our request, being reviewed to improve climate control and the use of the building. This will extend the process but will be worth it to 'get it right'. As always, we need more volunteers in The Museum.

The Continental Hotel

Latest news from our Ward Councillors is that the Shire is conducting weekly surveys of the site and that there are also occasional surveys being conducted by Heritage Victoria.

I look forward to seeing you at the Museum over the Summer and wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Clive Smith

HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT AT POLICE POINT

Following earlier representations, the Shire has planted lines of Moonahs along the old quarantine boundary adjacent to the Gatekeeper's Cottage at Police Point Park, Portsea. This makes for a clearer definition of the 'Calling Ground'. As members who heard John Dyke's presentation at an NHS general meeting several years ago will know, the Calling Ground is a key heritage feature of Police Point Park. It is where quarantined ships' passengers conversed with their visitors across a 40 feet wide reserve, under the supervision of police constables. Police Point Park occupies the area gifted by the Commonwealth to the Shire after the quarantine station was closed. Its significance has been recognised by inclusion on the national heritage register.

Frank Hindley



40-foot wide 'Calling Ground' between post-and-rail fences. To the right, a path marks the line of the original entrance boundary of the Quarantine Station. Note the Police Guard box and adjacent Gatekeeper's Cottage in the background. Photo: Frank Hindley



Quarantined passengers off the 'Otway' visited by friends, separated by the 40-foot wide 'Calling ground.' Photo: Weekly Times, 19 April 1910.

SORRENTO AQUARIUM

The Sorrento Aquarium or Marine Oceanarium began operating in the early 1960s. 'Jack' Farnsworth, who had started the passenger ferry service from Sorrento pier to Portsea and Queenscliff and wanted to share his love of the sea and its dwellers, returned from a visit to a Sydney aquarium keen to create one here, with financial and practical help from his younger brother Harry, a carpenter who had worked on fitting out the ferries, and his friend David Riley.

A property named Telofa, on St.Aubin's Way, with a 150-ft. beach frontage and close to the park and boat ramp seemed the perfect location. The building, 12 by 15 metres, was built right into the cliff face and had one large and two smaller tanks, made of thick Belgian glass, to house the great variety of sea creatures in water pumped directly from the sea. Seals entertained visitors with their antics on slides and a waterfall and were fed twice daily, and at various periods over the years giant crabs, octopuses, a monster 41/2 kg crayfish, eels, an 11 1/2 kg schnapper, huge sea salmon, and even a large shark were on show, as well as the smaller trigger and puffer fish, seahorses and sea urchins, etc..

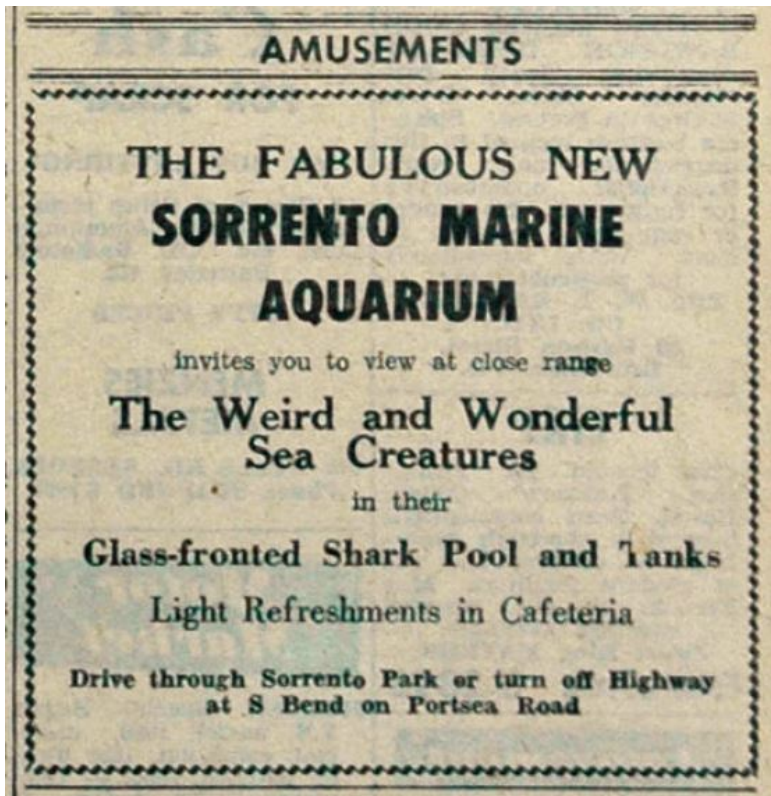
Visitors used to throw coins into the fish pools for good luck, and Jack would retrieve them and donate the money to the Royal Children's Hospital, recording the amounts on the wall.

A café run by Mrs Riley added to the aquarium's popularity, and grew over time into the Pelican bistro, replaced later by l'Aquarium restaurant, with tables set over water channels containing live fish. By this time, the aquarium itself had closed, but the little pump house still stood on the beach. Finally, even that disappeared, and a private residence took the place of the old building, leaving only happy memories of one of Sorrento's most popular attractions.

'Marty' and Sandy Mackinnon took over the business when a stroke made it impossible for Jack to continue. He would, however, keep an eye on everything happening on land and sea for hours at a time from a seat on the clifftop, until his death in 1984.

Incidentally, the beach by the aquarium was always known locally as Park Beach, and was linked to Sorrento Park by steps and a track. The recently approved (first in the State) Sorrento Coastal and Marine Management Plan now intends to call it Aquarium Beach.

Janet South, Archivist



Peninsula Post 24 January 1962

TOURS & SPECIAL EVENTS

NHS Volunteer Tour Guide Programme

Situations Vacant!

You are interested in history, or you wouldn't be reading *The Nepean*, so why not consider joining our group of guides? You need to enjoy being part of a team, enjoy chatting to people of all ages, and want to learn more about the fascinating history of our area and how to present it. If you would like to see what we actually do, please contact me, and I'll tell you when there's a tour on for you to join as an observer.

During 2019 we have delivered 13 tours to a total of 397 people. I should like to thank all those assisting this year. It couldn't have been done without your enthusiasm, laughter, knowledge and support.

Have a great Christmas, everybody, and I wish you health and happiness in 2020.

Natasha Wicks, Tours Co-ordinator

Contact details:

Email: natasha.wicks20@gmail.com

Mobile: 0466 597 365

DISPLAYS AND COLLECTION REPORT

Drawing in the Sorrento Museum.

Artist Trish Bourke loves to share her delight in experimenting with materials and techniques. A small but enthusiastic group joined her at the Museum to explore some of the artefacts there in November.

We were invited to consider using slightly textured, tan coloured papers with a botanical name beautifully copperplate written on each. These had been discarded from the Royal Botanical Gardens National Herbarium. I like to imagine that Ferdinand von Mueller, the first Victorian government botanist in 1853 who established Herbarium, had handled these papers. Pretty special.

I chose to use my paper for some rubbings of the beautifully textured brass on the 'Sierra Nevada' companionway. Others drew whatever objects caught their attention – delicately decorated gun powder flasks, the tiny baby boots, a sailing ship's dead eye, the 1803 leg irons.

It was a relaxing and enjoyable three hours. Thank you Trish.



Joy Kitch Coordinator

To All Members

An opportunity to contribute to YOUR Society

The Nepean

We have been producing this newsletter/journal now for five years, and think it's time to give others a go at this interesting but periodically demanding task.

As editor and publisher, we'd like to hear from anyone interested in discussing what's involved, and would be available to help anyone new to the job.

Janet South, Editor

Maggie Broadhead, Publisher

Nepean Historical Society acknowledges and pays respect to the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong people, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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

**Fiona Chirnside, Jennifer Reaks, Simon Knight and
David & Belinda Henry**

*Val Stieglbauer
Membership Secretary*



Volunteering CAN be Fun!

**Janet South. [Archivist] joining
Trish Bourke in 'Drawing in the
Museum'**

**Janet, Bergliot [Cataloguer]
& Joy Kitch [Display &
Collection Co-ordinator]
vacuuming the Archives!**

Photos: Mark Peasley [Map Curator]



PROMOTIONAL STREET STALLS - Takings Sept - October 2019

September 7th	Blairgowrie	\$342
September 21st	Sorrento	\$579
October 19th	Blairgowrie	\$481
October 26th	Sorrento	\$61 (abandoned due to weather)

Note: There were no stalls in August.

COMING STALLS

- to be held on the following Saturdays

Blairgowrie 21 December

Sorrento 4 January

Blairgowrie 25 January

Sorrento 8 February

Blairgowrie 22 February

Sorrento 21 March

Blairgowrie 4 April

Please Note that until further notice Sorrento Stalls will be held outside the Salt Building in Ocean Beach Road, next door to the Newsagents.

Suzanne Edginton and Jan Weston

NHS members are invited to contribute to this newsletter by submitting articles preferably of less than 500 words, unless by arrangement with the editor, who in consultation with the contributor reserves the right to edit, abridge or reject material.

COMING EVENTS

Our Monthly General Meetings are usually held on the first Friday of the month [unless otherwise notified], in the

Mechanics' Institute at the corner of

Melbourne & Ocean Beach Roads Sorrento.

Monthly General Meetings are free and open to all.

Tea or Coffee afterwards by donation.

You are invited to join us for dinner prior to meetings at 6.15 pm at Sorrento & Portsea RSL Club, 1-33 Hurley Street, Sorrento [off George Street].

Monday 13 January 2020

NHS Committee Meeting

Friday 7 February 2020 at 8 pm

Monthly General Meeting
To Be Confirmed

Monday 23 February 2020

NHS Committee Meeting

Friday 6 March 2020 at 8 pm

Monthly General Meeting.
To Be Confirmed

Monday 23 March 2020

NHS Committee Meeting

Note: *Committee meetings are usually held on the fourth Monday of the month, but date may change; please contact admin@nhs.asn.au for details.*

NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Committee 2019-2020

PRESIDENT: Clive Smith VICE-PRESIDENT: Joy Kitch

SECRETARY: Val Stieglbauer TREASURER: Clive Smith

OTHER MEMBERS: Annette Buckland, Marie Clark,
Jenny Nixon, Mark Peasley, Janet South, Cathy Stirling

Other NHS volunteer positions:

Archivist & Research Officer: Janet South

Collection & Displays: Joy Kitch

Cataloguer & Indexer: Bergliot Dallas

Map Curator: Mark Peasley

Librarian: Sally Payne

Photograph Curator: Maggie Broadhead

Volunteers Co-ordinator: Annette Buckland

Street Stalls & Bookshop: Suzanne Edginton & Jan Weston

Tours: Natasha Wicks

The Nepean Editor: Janet South

The Nepean Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of:



Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in *The Nepean* are not necessarily those of the Society, whose stated values are non-sectarian and non-political.

