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Preserving our Heritage for the Future

Heatherdale Railway Station goes Gold!

It has been fifty years since this railway station was officially opened on Sunday 9th September, 1958. Even though the station was built on the east side of Heatherdale Road, the whole surrounding area was once defined as West Ringwood, one of the oldest parts of Ringwood's history.

On Monday 8th of this month, celebrations took place from the early hours when commuters started to arrive for the morning trip to work. We supplied a number of photographs, as well as some interesting historical snippets.

As more land was sold between the settlements of Mitcham and Ringwood, the greater became the pressure for a Railway Station between the two; the question was where? The Progress Association gave its support and a petition containing 145 signatures was raised. This action was the result of a previous meeting when A.V. Greenwood and F.J. Swann were appointed to collect data on a new station in the vicinity of Heatherdale Road. The Secretary of the Mitcham Pro-

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The Next Meeting

8pm Tuesday, 23rd September, Federation Estate, Greenwood Ave.

Again, this month, we have two fine speakers on subjects that form integral parts of Ringwood's history.

The Hunt Family

Steven Peake, will present a cameo on the research into the family history of the Hunt family. The Hunts were orchardists and had strong links to Bedford Road Catholic Church. Syd Hunt was a foundation member of the Ringwood Bowling Club, President of

the Club in 1946 and 1947, and Club Champion in 1936, 1939, 1946 and 1950, as well as running a very successful plumbing business in Ringwood.

Ringwood Athletics Club

Tony Lethbridge has been an icon at the club ever since I can remember. Its earliest beginnings can be traced back to a meeting called by the then Mayor of Ringwood, Cr. Bob Horman, when the women's club was formed in July 1961, and the men's club in

March of the following year.

Ringwood Athletics Club has been a presence in the community and in the athletics world, with many Olympic and other major competition representatives.

Certainly the club has been the most successful sporting body in the Ringwood area but it goes beyond that, with numerous stories of the personalities and feats of individuals through the years.

Fees

The principle of the society is that we only charge enough money in fees to cover our costs. We do not seek to make money in this area, so that the people of Ringwood can enjoy, appreciate and be involved in the history of the area.

To make this happen, the number of meetings have been doubled, which means double the newsletters and postage. Also our room rental has increased.

It is proposed to increase annual subscriptions, with the new rates of:-

- \$25 Individual
- \$30 Couple/Family

Fees are payable at the AGM each year.

Heatherdale Railway Station (continued)

gress Association attended a later meeting in Ringwood, but introduced a new note by suggesting Mitcham would benefit by being independent of Nunawading Shire and could be attached to Ringwood in a new borough.

Later meetings were told the site was likely to be moved closer to Mitcham because of 'outside' pressure on the Railways Commissioners, so it was decided to begin a movement to bring the proposed Railway Station nearer Heatherdale Road following the promise of Harold Clapp to agree provided the land holders raised the estimated cost of £1000.

However, it seems Clapp told Mitcham residents he thought the proposed station should be closer to Mitcham, and the final result was the rival parties agreed the station should be placed half-way between the two villages. The Railway Station was built at Mitcham, and it was not until more than two decades later that Heatherdale Road Railway Station became an actuality under vastly different political circumstances.



Heatherdale Road railway crossing, approx. 1924. Blocks for sale at £100 each.
In another 35 years, the station was built on the right.

Even after the Ringwood Mayor, Cr J.K. McCaskill, had indicated there were nearly 250 buildings erected or being constructed in the vicinity and some 40 new building plans were under consideration, the authorities represented by the Minister of Transport, the Hon. C.P. Stoneham, simply answered that they would consider the proposal.

Heatherdale Model Farms and Orchards

Louis Lawrence Smith for many years was the major settler in the south west. He owned several model farms, including 280 acres below Dandenong Creek and west of Heatherdale Road from 1856. When offered for sale in 1877, the property had water storages, an orchard of 2000 fruit trees, paddocks sown with various English grasses, 6 acres of vineyards, and a six roomed cottage. Smith was born in London in 1830, and after a distinguished medical studentship in Paris and London, he came to Victoria as a ship's surgeon.

He was an unsuccessful digger for a short time before setting up a widely advertised medical practice in Bourke Street, and in 1859 he was elected as the 'people's candidate' to the Parliament as Member for South Bourke. L.L. Smith represented other constituencies up to 1886 when he became the Member for Mornington. Dr Smith was a colourful, political figure with a flair for self promotion who became involved in many schemes, from irrigation loans to penny postcards, and had widespread interests in newspapers, horseracing, and model farms.

Joseph Maggs returned to Ringwood, bought land, and began planting an orchard in Heatherdale Road. This project was never completed by him as he died at Mitcham in October 1900, but it later became known as Pyke's orchard.

October 12th - 19th is History Week!

There is so much going on in this week, discovering Victoria's wide and wonderful past. See the website at www.historyweek.org.au

Some of the events taking place are:-

Sunday to Saturday

The changing face of Victoria This fascinating permanent exhibition highlights the people, places and events that have shaped life in Victoria over 200 years. Exhibits include treasures such as Ned Kelly's armour as well as photographs, artworks, maps and artefacts. State Library of Victoria, Dome Gallery, Level 5
328 Swanston Street, Melbourne 10am - 5pm

An exhibition of the State Library's Picture Collection Step back in time and explore the Cowen Gallery's permanent exhibition of 150 works of art from the Library's Pictures Collection, including portraits, early Melbourne scenes and European settlement. State Library of Victoria, Cowen Gallery, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Monday - Thursday 10am-9pm, Friday - Sunday 10am-6pm

Yarrambat Heritage Museum Open Day Come and explore a working collection of historic McDonald stationary engines, a working gold battery, historic woolshed and original primary school classroom. Free tea and coffee available! Yarrambat Heritage Museum, Yarrambat Park, Yan Yean Road, Yarrambat

Koorie Heritage Trust Tours Change your Reality! Connect with people, Connect with Place. With your Aboriginal guide, follow the course of Birrarung - today's Yarra River and you shall follow the course of this city's history. Enterprise Park, Cnr King and Flinders Streets Melbourne Daily Adult \$25

Chinatown Heritage Tours Watch Melbourne's historic Chinatown come to life with a guided tour at the Chinese Museum. Commences with a guided tour of the fascinating Chinese Museum, followed by a walking tour of the area, bringing back to life the 150 year history of Chinatown. Visit some of the local retailers and learn the history of the precinct. And what better way to finish the tour than with a delicious banquet lunch in one of Chinatown's world class restaurants! Chinese Museum, 22 Cohen Place, Melbourne, tour with or without lunch

The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing 1939-2008 Don your hats, grab your tote books and race back in time, at Champions new exhibition. Highlights of the exhibition include: Light Finger's Melbourne Cup, the first for both Bart Cummings and Roy Higgins in 1965; Big Philou's Caulfield Cup, 1969; Tulloch's colours; and Bernborough's Doomben Cup. Champions - Australian Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, Federation Square, Cnr Flinders Street & Swanston Sts, 10am - 6pm

Tour the Royal Exhibition Building Discover the history and beauty of this magnificently restored building, which recently became Australia's first World Heritage Listed building. Experience the life, stories and affections of millions of people that have contributed to this national icon, Museum Victoria's largest collection object. Tour starts in the foyer of Melbourne Museum 11 Nicholson St Carlton Daily at 2pm Please call 131102 to confirm.



*"A close friendship
developed between post
WWII families...questions
were raised...when was
Ringwood first
settled...how did it get its
name?...nobody knew."*

The beginnings that led
JK McCaskill calling
our society's first
meeting on 9th
September, 1958

News

RINGWOOD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Archives: North Ringwood Seniors
building (ring Russ to gain access)

Preserving our Heritage

Supper Roster

Please mark these in you diary. Bring milk and biscuits/cake. All the rest supplied. Others to assist.

Sept Smart/McKeons
Oct McKeons
Nov Ainslie Scott
and Francis McLean

2008-09 Committee

All committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

There are vacancies for committee members. Nominations can be made on the night or call the secretary.

Also there are positions for:-

- Archivist or Asst. Archivist
- Newsletter Editor
- Grants Officer
- Public Relations Officer
- Librarian

Pioneer Database

Arthur Lunt spent a couple of hours at the archives assisting with adding pioneers to our database. Not long after that, Joan Walker said she would have time to help in the new year. Joan originally started this exercise, and it has proved invaluable for answering enquiries from relatives and researchers.

Also we're discovering, again and again, that many members of early Ringwood families often inter-married. No doubt shopping day in Ringwood would open with a standard line of, "Morning, Cousin!"

Assoc. Eastern Historical Soc.

The AGM of the above consortium will take place at the refurbished Box Hill Historical Society rooms on 27th September at 1:30pm. Ringwood will be represented on the day.

Enquiries

Berry Family

An enquiry from Ian Taylor (9898-3797) looking for Eleazer and Ann Berry who moved from Carlton in the 1890s depression years, out to East Ringwood. He had a poultry farm somewhere in the area. There was a poultry farm at the corner of Alexandra and Dublin Roads but, I suspect, there may have been many around the area as egg production was an important

industry in Ringwood from the late 1800s to pre-WWII. He died in St Kilda in 1928 and had two girls, one of which was Ellie, grand-mother of Ian.

Bentley/Bently's Timber

Louise Webster made an enquiry about her grand-father James Bentley. Strangely, there is not much in our archives about the "other" timber mill and its owners.

Louise had no starting point, so I started to dig and delve in the family history CDs. I found some of James' children, so I back-tracked. This led me to Tasmania and, bingo, I found James Bentley at Longford. He married Mary Tubb, who had Tubb's Bridge named after them. At one time James was part-owner in Bentley & Tubb Timber Mill. I can see where sons Henry James and George Henry James Bentley got the skill and acumen to start the mill and furniture factory in Ringwood.

Altogether there were 11 Bentley children. HJ Bentley supposedly died in Surrey Hills in 1957. Another mystery is that the family name ended with "LEY" but Henry James changed that (see photo below), yet the Voter's Rolls continued with "LEY". A good start but the story continues.

