



Preserving our Heritage for the Future

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A Dark Day on Black Saturday

Victoria has witnessed this country's greatest natural disaster. Black Friday on 13th January, 1939, which affected nearby areas of Warrandyte and the Yarra Ranges, destroyed 2 million hectares and 71 lives were lost. Until the first Saturday in January, 2009, this was our worst disaster in history.

On 14-16th January, 1962, fires on the outskirts of Melbourne caused 32 fatalities and destroyed over 450 houses.

Ash Wednesday, 16th February 1983, had over 100 fires state-wide burnt 210,000 hectares and caused 47 fatalities, in-

cluding the Belgrave Heights, Cockatoo and Beaconsfield Upper areas.

Victoria has had a history of fires since the first major fire on 6th February, 1851 "Black Thursday". This fire covered a quarter of Victoria but with only 12 lives lost.

There have been many fires in Victoria but the most extensive fires occur in a roughly 20-year cycle. These coincide with a period of hot weather and drought conditions, preceded by a build-up of vegetation and regrowth.

All this takes nothing away from the tragedy of such events.

The image of a true Australian turns into reality when we see so many instances of volunteers helping and assisting their neighbours, without hope of reward or recognition.

Again, if history teaches us anything, there is the obvious need to be very wary of the power and unpredictable power of nature.

But also history reinforces to us the strength of a close-knit community, the numerous volunteer organisations, that give so much of their time and effort, and the generous nature of the people of Victoria.

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The Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Tuesday, 24th February, 8pm at Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood

Christian Science at Ringwood

Norm Hutchinson has done considerable research into this move-

ment, culminating in the book *Christian Science in Victoria*. The site on the corner of Station and Kendall Streets, was where the two Kendall sisters first started a private hospital in a house owned by Frank Kendall.

They moved to Adelaide Street where they named

the Ringwood Private Hospital, later called The Pines. The hospital was built by Captain Miles in 1916.

The Kendalls left the hospital in 1922. The pines were planted to give privacy to patients on the verandah. This will be a most interesting evening.

Raffle Takings

The entire profit of the next meeting's raffle will be donated to the Red Cross Fire Appeal.

Fire Tribute - Charm & Leigh Ahern



The author has known Leigh for many years as we both went to the East Ringwood State School back in the 1950s and early 1960s. He was a couple of years older but his brother, Frank, was in my class. From memory, his parents were involved in doing things for the school, either in the canteen or on the council. His father, Des, was also President of the Ringwood RSL. Then we went our own ways and lost contact.

Also, Leigh was involved with the Yarra Glen Historical Society, along with the iconic Eric Tetlow, who had a harrowing time in Yarra Glen in the fires but managed to overcome some difficulties.

Leigh contributed a number of photographs to the Ringwood archives and related some of its history, that is now recorded for prosperity.

Both Charm and Leigh were highly educated people who loved the Australian bush. Leigh had more than 30 years' experience in fauna survey, biodiversity planning and habitat conservation.

They had a fire plan in place but the force of the fire was beyond belief.

A Memorial Service will be held at Yarra Valley Grammar School, Kalinda Road, Ringwood on Monday, 23rd Feb at 12 noon.

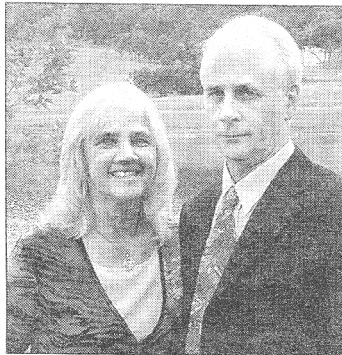
"How sad that in the transition to a more 'developed' district we have had to sacrifice so many elements of a landscape that today would undoubtedly bring great joy to those who live in, or visit, the area."

Leigh Ahern

East Ringwood Recollections

45 years later, when the East Ringwood Heritage Weekend was in its formative years, Marie (Meyland) Ricardo remarked that she remembered the Aherns, neighbours at no. 6 Old Lilydale Road. Of course, this was Meyland country, in a fascinating and exciting era of our history.

Marie contacted Leigh to ask if he would contribute to the East Ringwood Recollections and a terrific letter came back straight away, which is the first story in the book.



Charmian and Leigh Ahern

Couple lost at home

CHARMIAN and Leigh Ahern were at home at Steels Creek when fire tore through their property on Saturday.

The couple are believed to have died in the fire.

Mr Ahern had a Bachelor of Science (Honours) majoring in zoology from La Trobe University.

He joined the Department of Sustainability and Environment in 1978.

For the past 10 years he has been a private biodiversity consultant.

TOGETHER

Shelley Hadfield

Recently Mr Ahern was appointed to the Environment Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

Charmian Ahern had a PhD in botany and was a special aid teacher at a primary school.

Family said she was very well-loved there.

Marysville Historical Society

According to all reports, the historical society has lost all its archives, including the building, a number of very old photographs and artefacts. It has been also reported that Mary and Reg Kenealy of the Marysville Historical Society are fine. It is not yet known if their house is OK but we must expect the worst. They tried to drive out of Marysville and were injured on Saturday night.

Glen Turnbull, AEHS President, reported at the latest RHSV Council meeting, it was decided that the RHSV will make available digital copies of Marysville images from its collection and donate these to the Marysville Historical Society. If you have anything from this area, please let me know.

The 2009 Programme

The year's programme is now finalised and should present a varied coverage of our local history. All speakers have donated their valuable time to research and prepare their subject. Throughout the year, we may slip in a cameo speaker or other items of interest.

Tuesday, 24th February

Ringwood Christian Science Norm Hutchinson, author of the book *Christian Science in Victoria*, will take us through the history of this organisation and, particularly, the historic Ringwood site.

Saturday 21st March

History of the Country Women's Association Last year the CWA celebrated its 80th birthday Brenda Stevens-Chambers, who presented *The Women of Kyneton* to our society, a few years ago, has written the history of the CWA and will be our special guest. Note the change to a Saturday meeting to fit in with the speaker.

Tuesday, 28th April

Hunt Family/ Orchards of Doncaster Steven Peake will present the family history of the Hunts of Ringwood and Judith Leaney, President of the Doncaster and Templestowe Historical Society, will talk about orchards

Tuesday, 26th May

Warranwood Bush Care Groups The reserve has had a long history, since the creation of the allotment back in 1854. Margaret Baber will present a very interesting talk on this vital environment.

Tuesday, 23rd June

Lead-Pipe Welding & All Park Orchards historian and our heritage tour bus driver has offered to talk to the society again, on a number of interesting subjects including lead-pipe welding!

Tuesday, 28th July

The History of Eastland Richard Carter has spent considerable time researching and documenting this history, since the first land sales, the opening in October 1967 and further expansions over the years.

Tuesday, 25th August

Film Night We'll blow the dust off some of the old videos that are in the archives.

Tuesday, 22nd September

Fraternal Organisations of Ringwood "Secret Men's Business" has been quietly going on in Ringwood for well over 100 years. Russ Haines will show what they did and some of the regalia.

Tuesday, 27th October

"Botanical" Suburbs of Melbourne Gardener and historian, Gerry Robinson, has combined both subjects to talk about such suburbs as Sassafras, Boronia and Gardenvale, to name a few.



"We had fruit trees and berry fruits of every kind, planted over about two acres. There were fowls and ducks, with a plentiful supply of eggs; two cows supplied our milk requirements; and 20 hives of bees produced a considerable surplus of honey for sale."

*Sir Ronald East
Pioneer of East Ringwood*

**RINGWOOD &
DISTRICT HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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

Preserving our Heritage

Sick List

Neville O'Connor was first cab off the rank to get his hip done in early January. Everything worked as planned, did his rehab at Donvale Hospital, only to collapse. He's home now and getting better every day, except for the odd day of tiredness.

Both Sandra and Pat had their hips done in the same week, both at Knox. Pat to fix the other one and Sandra for the first time. Again things went fine until Pat dislocated the new one and had to go back for repairs. Sandra is still feeling a bit of pain, especially the hip that hasn't been fixed as yet.

North Ringwood

The North Ringwood Heritage Weekend has been locked in on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th November, 2010.

Already a small committee has been formed with Russ, Gerry and two other members. We will put together another recollections book, so please let us know of any older residents of North Ringwood, particularly relatives of orchardists.

Greetings from Paynesville

Stan Pump recently moved to Paynesville and is our most remote member. He recently offered to start putting together the history of Heathmont, from the material we gathered over the last few heritage weekends at that suburb.

Any assistance would be grateful. This project may take a number of years to complete.

Miner's Hut

A number of members opened the hut during the hot January months. Generally there were 50-70 guests each Sunday but the Australia Day crowd went just over 300 people. Thanks to all who helped.

Grant

We have been given a grant by the Department of Families, Housing, community Services and Indigenous Affairs (DFHCISA) for \$1,917 to purchase a new computer and A3 scanner. This is to be used to index and back-up all our valuable documents and newspapers.

Any assistance will be gratefully received, and you can have first crack at the new computer.

90th Birthday

Gretli Cole turned 90 during the break and we hoped that she enjoyed the celebrations.

The Historical Society managed to track down this photograph of TRG Williams, Mayor of Ringwood in 1943, in the Tasmanian Archives. Thomas owned the old hardware store next to the State Bank yet his claim to fame was as a very good photographer. He travelled around the Eastern seaboard and produced many postcards of natural settings. Supposedly, he was killed in 1964 whilst riding a bicycle.

**We have a
website at
www.rhs.org.au**

