

MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC



Corner Main Street and Esplanade, Mornington 3931

NEWSLETTER

May 2020

Newsletter No. 289



President's Report

Hello everyone. Your committee trusts that you are keeping well in isolation. It will be good for everyone when things are relaxed. Just like me, I feel you might be missing your grandchildren and the rest of your family if they are distant. Keep finding that laugh and enjoy the little things.

Although the Museum is closed and we have had to postpone all our activities, the committee has been meeting via the internet, answering queries and making a submission about the proposed development at Moondah in Mt. Eliza. We will let you know as soon as we can begin to have our coffee mornings again. We are still going to issue a newsletter each quarter and because we have the centrefold free for now, we are wondering whether you might like to submit a story about a piece of history, yours or something you have at home. A picture to accompany it would make a great addition. We will then see if it can be published.

Please send it to me at redhillsouth@icloud.com

Just after Christmas, we received a card from the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria - Emeritus Professor Richard Broome AM. We send the RHSV a copy of our newsletter each issue and it is great that we now know that it has been read. His comments about Joy's piece on Lady Tallis were very welcome. Also, the Gippsland Anglican has published a review of Joy's book on Rev. George Cox.

We have some interesting articles in this issue. I am sure you will enjoy Malcolm Rosier's piece on clocks. Libby's account of our visit to the Nobelius Museum is fascinating as we come from one of the largest pome fruit growing areas of Somerville and Tyabb and in Emerald, there had been another one! It was an eye opener. We had to cut the following paragraph from Libby's piece due to space reasons...

"It was, unfortunately too wet to explore these beautiful grounds but we did enjoy seeing Puffing Billy chuffing past. It would be a great day out when times return to some normality. Let us all hope by the time our next newsletter goes to print that we can plan another MDHS bus trip." Indeed!

Diane White

Bus Trip Emerald & Nobelius Nursery Museum

On a day in late February a busload of us set off from Mornington to Emerald. Some folks had been worrying that we might have a scorcher of a day but as everyone made their way to the bus the skies above Mornington opened!

As we were nearing Emerald the President of the Museum called us to warn that the road to the Museum was closed as they were removing a tree. Our bus driver deposited us at a pathway with a short walk to the museum. Prior to the day I had assured travellers that there would be very little challenging walking so imagine my horror when I found myself ankle deep in freshly laid aggregate! However our intrepid travellers took to the sides of the path and made it to the museum where a morning tea welcomed us.

The museum preserves the history of Carl Axel Nobelius (1851-1921) and his family and the Nobelius wholesale nursery that he founded.

Carl Nobelius migrated to Australia from Sweden in 1872 as a 21 year old. He had trained in horticulture and quickly obtained work in a nursery. Whilst working for South Yarra nurseryman Joseph Harris he purchased 63 acres in Emerald and worked on this land at weekends for some years. Eventually he was able to leave his employment at South Yarra and move to Emerald with his family in 1892. Just 7 years later he had a wholesale business of mainly fruit trees and employed 23 workers. In time the nursery exported fruit and ornamental trees to five continents.

Imagine the transport of these trees by bullock dray to Narre Warren station and train to Melbourne. The museum was purpose built to display the collection of ledgers, wage books, stock records, nursery catalogues, photographs and tools and a wonderful story of early settlement of Emerald and district.

The Nobelius Heritage Park is 4.5 hectares and contains many specimens of the trees once stocked by the nursery.

Libby Gillingham

NOTE: Joseph Harris of South Yarra is the same (Sir) Joseph Harris of Marina House, on the Esplanade. The shared horticultural interests of Joseph and Carl are still evident today in the remainder of the Marina gardens. Read more about Joseph Harris in the Pioneer Graves link on the Mornington cemetery website. *Joy Cullen*

MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Dates for Your Diary 2020

Website: <http://morningtondistricthistory.org.au> Follow us on Facebook Museum Phone (03) 5976 3203

Visitors warmly welcomed

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The annual membership renewal is included with this issue. Your continuing support is essential for us as we still have costs to cover, like the newsletter, insurance and electricity.

If it is at all possible could you please arrange to make the payment by direct debit to our account, the details of which are on the form enclosed. Like all places, we are trying to avoid contact with cash or cheques, particularly at the moment. We hope you are becoming more comfortable and familiar with internet banking and with FaceTime or Zoom.

CAN YOU HELP PLEASE?

We also would like help with our collection of clothing and linen. We need people who would be willing to sew cotton labels onto these items. If you are able to assist, could you please call Diane on 0403 077 053. You would be given say ten items at a time to do at home at your leisure.

SCHOOL VISITS TO THE MUSEUM

Before this virus took our lives into uncharted waters, school visits to the museum were really taking off. An email to all local Primary schools had been sent out and we were working with the volunteers at the Court House to ensure a beneficial and happy local history lesson for all the children. Most schools have local history in their curriculum in Grade 3 so we have children around eight years old.

A typical school outing of say 100 grade 3 children means that we have 4 groups of 25 who alternate between a street walk, a play in the park with a visit to Matthew Flinders, a mock trial at the Court House and half an hour in the museum.

The children sit on the floor and are fascinated with such items as candles, lanterns, hipbath, steamships and the potty that went under the bed! They become so enthusiastic about contemplating life without electricity, television, computers cars etc.

Janis Lambert (MDHS member and primary school teacher) is a perfect person to partner me as she knows exactly how to have fun whilst maintaining order in our compact museum.

Mt Martha Primary and St Macartan's visits in early March were a great success, but Benton Junior College had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

The children are an absolute joy and I like to think the visits might spark an ongoing interest in history for one or two of them.

A little boy from St Macartan's asked me "Where do you get all this stuff?" I replied that lots of people have donated things to the museum so that they could see what life was like in the olden days. He said, "Is that why you have a crunchy face?"

I can't wait for school visits to be happening again.

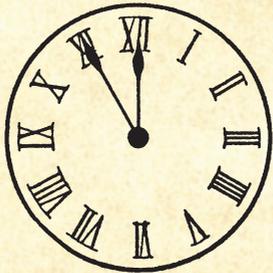
Libby Gillingham

IIII CLOCKS

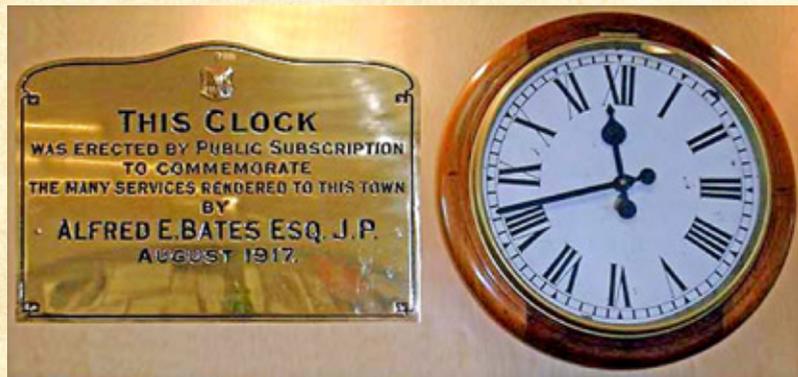
Be warned! Once you read this article you will never again look at a clock in the same way. You will become obsessed to check the clock face to ensure that it is correct.

We understand that Roman numerals run I, II, III, IV. But not for clocks. They run I, II, III, IIII. Have you a clock or watch (or sundial) with Roman numerals? Check it now.

Here is a typical traditional clock face with Roman numerals.



Here is the Alfred E. Bates clock in the foyer of the Mornington Shire office.



Google for yourself on cathedrals, town halls and other public buildings. For example, the earliest surviving clock in England is on Wells Cathedral, built between 1386 and 1392. Or check your own photo collection from your visits to England and Europe.

There are two of the theories behind the tradition of IIII clocks.

First theory: Jupiter

When Roman numerals were used by the actual Roman Empire, the name of the Romans' supreme deity, Jupiter, was spelled as IVPPITER in Latin. Hesitant to put part of the god's name on a sundial or in accounting books, IIII became the preferred representation of four. The first mechanical clocks were created in Europe during the 13th century at a time when Roman numerals were still in use. Most clocks were mounted on churches, and Latin was the official Roman Catholic language. It thus made sense for most of the ancient clocks to feature Roman numerals on their dials. Of course, IVPPITER wasn't being worshipped much by the time clocks and watches replaced sundials, but clockmakers stuck with IIII for the sake of tradition.

Second theory: Symmetry

Imagine a clock face with a vertical line down the middle. The four and the eight are opposite each other. A Roman IV would be "lighter" than a Roman VIII. For the sake of symmetry, the optical balance is restored with a Roman IIII opposite the Roman VIII. A further aspect of symmetry is that using IIII instead of IV means that the first four numbers (I, II, III, IIII) require only I; the next four (V, VI, VII, VIII) only use I and V; and the final four (IX, X, XI, XII) only use I and X.

Note also that the numbers point outwards from centre. Perhaps they are easier to read in a mirror. Perhaps it was because Roman clocks were initially sundials, and were thus positioned horizontally, rather than vertically. Sundials can be viewed from any angle. Or perhaps if IV were written upside-down it would offend Jupiter.

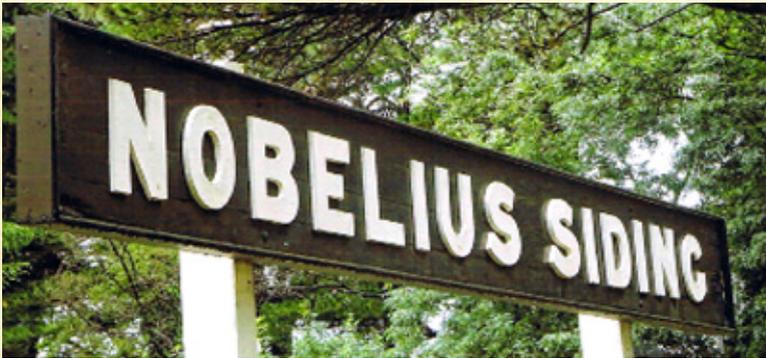
Big Ben

But despite these theories, the Great Clock on the Palace of Westminster in London (designed in 1852 and erroneously called Big Ben) uses IV. Big Ben itself is the hour bell.

Malcolm Rosier



Libby and Emerald Historical Society President Pauline Murphy



Just for a laugh, remember....

Behind every successful man . . . there is a very surprised woman

Thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their support.

Mornington & District Historical Society Inc. A00041916W

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Museum: Corner Main Street and Esplanade

Open 1.30 - 4.30 Sundays or by appointment

Donations to the Historical Society of \$2 or more are tax deductible