

Mornington Baths early 1900s

### **NEW MEMBERS**

*Ms Robin Bowman, Lynda McKenzie, Ms Deidre Mitchell,  
David and Val Tuckett, Ms Sally Wade and Ms Anne Watkins*

We hope you enjoy your membership with us

Mornington & District Historical Society Inc. A00041916W

PO Box 71 Mornington 3931

Museum: Corner Main Street and Esplanade

Open 1.30 - 4.30 Sundays or by appointment

**Page 7**

# MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC



Corner Main Street and Esplanade Mornington 3931

## NEWSLETTER

May 2013

Newsletter No. 261

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The sculpture of the little girl has been returned so she can once again 'post her letter'. We see a number of tourists posing to have their photograph taken with her and little children touching and even hugging her. So lovely to see.

If you walk up and down Main Street between the Esplanade and Barkly Street, you will find the plaques on the buildings and in the street, telling the history. The Chamber of Commerce have asked us to offer walks on the Queen's Birthday weekend which will be an exciting and busy time for Mornington as it coincides with the opening of the touring Archibald Prize Exhibition at the Regional Gallery.

We are pleased to be able to say that we have sold 70 copies of our Heritage Esplanade Walk brochure since the beginning of the year.

We had a good response to our request for members to help the committee with some of the jobs we have to undertake. Thank you to those who put their hands up.

Enclosed is the form for the excursion to the Werribee Mansion. With a guided tour, this day should be a very good treat for those who can go.

You will also find enclosed your membership renewal form. We have looked at our income and expenditure and we have decided that we are able to keep our membership fees at last year's rate. We have also put in a section for a general donation, should you feel you would like to contribute in this way.

*Diane White*

## **SCANNING DAY**

We have been able to add to our collection, copies of items brought in on the day. Some were family history items such as from the Downward and Burch/Pentecost families. We also now have more pictures of Tasma Court and Main Street in the 1960s. Many thanks to those who permitted us to copy their items and a big thankyou to Murray Adams and Val for being there all day to do the work.

## **THE MORNINGTON BATHS** [see pictures p. 7]

I was helping on the research team for our new publication that Vicky has put together "Heritage Esplanade Walk" and I was fascinated with some interesting facts I discovered about the Mornington Baths and the habits of the day.

Early reports tell of "Mr. Irvine's Royal Baths erected in 1892 and situated in a secluded position and within easy distance from the township. The bath's enclosure is all that can be desired and without contradiction it may be claimed as one of the most complete outside the city, surrounded with a substantial fence of hard wood, thoroughly shark proof and containing 30 to 40 bathing boxes with soft wood flooring makes it most comfortable for bathers."

Between 1902 and 1905 Cr. Cornford proposed to the Mornington Shire Council that a bylaw be adopted enforcing the compulsory wearing of bathing costumes at the Mornington Baths. This motion was consistently rejected and opposed on the grounds that it would be an infringement of the liberty and rights of the people using the baths. It would also harm tourism as the wearing of bathing costumes was not compulsory at any other baths on the Bay

Cr. Cornford was supported in his motion by Cr. Stephens who contended that: "Costumes should be worn. It was shameful to see the bathers; he would not say they were Mornington people, going along the spring board!" The motion was finally passed in December 1905.

I also found that originally sea bathing was something that one did for one's health. It was thought that salt penetrating the pores of the skin was beneficial; the more skin exposed the better. Until 1917 open sea bathing was illegal and the sexes were strictly confined to separate bath houses. High walls ensured that women were not exposed to the sight of male bathers who it seems in accordance with the practice of the day, took to the waters naked. Strict codes on the wearing of bathers were introduced by councils as mixed bathing became increasingly accepted. After all the years romping around naked, the times had changed and it was not until 1938 that men were officially allowed to bare their chests on Victorian beaches.

*Val Wilson*

# MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

## Dates for Your Diary 2013

Website: [www.vicnet.net.au/~mornhsoc](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~mornhsoc) Museum Phone ( 03) 5976 3203 ABN 7515 1057 105

**Visitors warmly welcomed**

### **3RD, 4TH and 5TH MAY BALCOMBE ARMY CAMP REVISITED**

The Australian Army Apprentice Association are holding a commemoration over this weekend. They will be unveiling histories of the place for future generations to understand what has gone before. The general public, particularly former "Boys and Girls" are invited to the following occasions: see their website: [www.austarmyapprentice.org](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)

Saturday 4th May 2 p.m. Balcombe Grammar School. The unveiling of the historic story boards and plaques. A walk down to Mace Oval and the old parade ground.

Sunday 5th May 9 a.m. March from the Mornington Football Ground to Memorial Park (Barkly Street) for a service at 9.20. Followed by morning tea at 10.30 at the Dava Hotel, Mt. Martha.

### **TUESDAY 14TH MAY COFFEE MORNING 10.30 a.m. \$5**

**St Mark's Uniting Church, Friendship Room.**

#### **MILITARY CAMPS AT MT. MARTHA 1889-1973**

Peter Muir will talk on the history of Balcombe Camp and surrounds and his time there as an apprentice.

### **9th & 10th June QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND**

**MUSEUM OPEN and CONDUCTED WALKS**

Sunday Main Street walk 10.30 and 2.30 \$5

Monday The Esplanade and surrounds 10.30 and 2.30 \$10

Registration at the Museum from 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The Esplanade walk includes our booklet.

### **TUESDAY 11TH JUNE COFFEE MORNING 10.30 a.m. \$5**

**The Old Post Office Museum**

#### **TREASURES**

Please bring along a treasure so you can share the connected story. This is always a popular coffee morning.

### **THURSDAY JULY 11th BUS TRIP Leave 8.50**

**WERRIBEE PARK MANSION and GARDENS**

See details enclosed.

### **TUESDAY 13TH AUGUST COFFEE MORNING 10.30 a.m. \$5**

**St. Mark's Uniting Church, Friendship Room**

#### **BELEURA TURNS 150**

Beleura historian, Prue Evans has been researching further into Beleura's history and has found some new information which she will share with us, particularly about the Scottish builder.

### **TUESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 10.30 a.m. FREE**

**Old Post Office Museum**

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Come and hear about your Society's work over the last 12 months. Morning tea and a chat will follow

## HERITAGE MATTERS

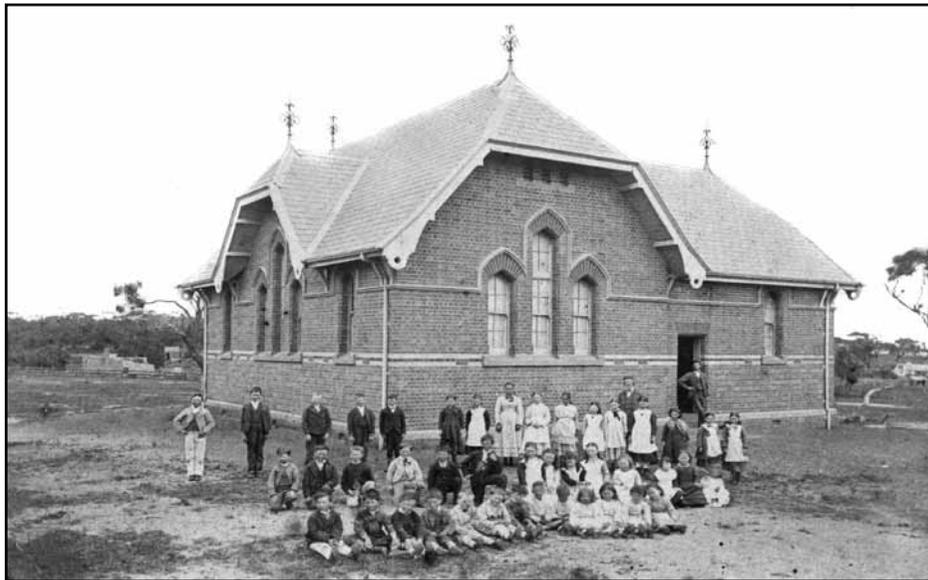
It is that time of year again when Mornington Peninsula Heritage Awards take place. This year we hope to enter the Mornington Primary School renovation and the work done at The Currawong Community Centre.

The Primary School needed extensive work due to neglect over the past years despite the tremendous efforts made by Mario Vitale and his dedicated staff. This has been completed in a sensitive fashion thus retaining the school's heritage. Even though the school doesn't have a heritage overlay, an oversight in the original heritage study, this should be rectified in the new study which comes to council in the near future.

The Currawong Community Centre also had extensive work done, again in the manner of the original building. The building was re-opened last year by David Morris MP. It is now well used and forms a useful addition to community activities such as U3A.

At the time of writing I am waiting for information from the school project managers and the architects involved with Currawong. As soon as this is received our submissions can be completed.

*Derek Smith*



Page 5

## Bus Trip to ANZCA Museum and Historic Iron Houses

On Tuesday 26th February, we went on the first of our two bus trips for this year. Our morning destination was the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists in St. Kilda Road.

After a long trip through rain and flooding roads we finally arrived. We had a guided tour of the lovely old St. Kilda mansion *Ulimaroa*, built in 1889, and an entertaining lecture by two retired anaesthetists, and a visit to the Geoffrey Kaye Museum of Anaesthetic History on the College's fifth floor. This Museum is one of only three in the world of similar collection size and standing.

The bus then took us to South Melbourne for lunch then on to the three National Trust Portable Iron Houses in Coventry Street. These were brought out from England around 1855 to accommodate some of the thousands of fortune hunters who arrived in Melbourne following the discovery of gold. The houses, occupied by people such as civil servants, builders, and business men, were shipped in wooden crates, the wood then being used as lining and partition walls for the corrugated iron outer walls and roofs. Canvas, newspaper and wallpaper were used as wall covering. Everything was provided to erect the houses – bolts, screws, floorboards, spouting, cast iron casement windows, fireplaces. A six-roomed house was about 60 pounds, smaller sizes were 30 pounds. Cooking was generally done in an outside add-on kitchen. We also had an interesting tour of the nearby streets.

Note. *Ulimaroa* was an interpretation of the name given by Maoris to “a land-mass a months’ canoe-trip away”, as recorded in a 1773 account of Captain Cook’s first Pacific voyage. At the house *Ulimaroa* is a 1795 map by German cartographer Friedrich Cantzler showing Australia connected to Tasmania, the land-mass titled “Ulimaroa oder Neu-Holland”.

Also note, *Ulimaroa* was probably designed by Leonard John Flannagan, a Mornington architect who lived on Beleura Hill and who designed the original fire station in Main Street, among other buildings.

*Janet Groves*

Page 2